



Types and Sources of Difficulties in English Number-related Idioms Kurdish Students Encounter in Oral Communication

Dr. Paiman Zorab Azeez

Department of English Language, Faculty of Education, Koya University, Koya KOY45,
Kurdistan Region - F. R. Iraq

paiman.zorab@koyauniversity.org

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ABSTRACT

Native speakers' spontaneous use, recognition, and comprehension of idioms without thinking of the figurative and metaphorical meaning is not a matter of surprise; whereas, it is natural for non-natives. Many English learners lack adequate competency in recognizing, understanding, and using number-related idioms. This study aims to explore the types and sources of difficulties that Kurdish undergraduates encounter in number-related idioms in speaking productions on the one hand and identify the relationship between gender and the type of difficulties on the other. The subjects are 170 male and female English major university students from the departments of English language at Faculties of Education and Arts of many Universities in Kurdistan Regional Government. Two data collection instruments, a closed-ended questionnaire of a 5- Point Likert Scale to explore the types and sources of difficulties the participants face and two sets of multiple-choice tests were employed to know their ability of numerical idiom understanding and recognition. The tests composed of ten cardinal number-related idiomatic expressions from one to ten were subjected to the analyses which are at the beginning, middle, and end of the test items respectively. The results revealed that the participants have difficulties mostly in understanding number-related idioms and their sources of difficulties were various. The participants performed better in understanding number-related idioms in the tests



rather than their recognition. It was also concluded that gender has no relation with the types of difficulties.

1.Introduction

Speakers of the English language must become aware of and proficient in using English idiomatic expressions since idiomatic expressions are essential and considered a big part of English language proficiency to be able to use when communicating in the English language. Idioms, also, make the delivery of the message easier and more interesting for speakers of languages. However, many English learners, especially those of Kurdish origin, lack the competence to use English idiomatic expressions and especially those number-related idioms adequately in their daily communications. The incompetency of Kurdish learners in using number-related idioms could be due to a lack of exposure to such types of expressions.

Generally speaking, learners of different languages find idioms hard to use and understand in their daily communications. Learners' ability to understand native speakers' use of idioms is one of the biggest challenges. Idioms cannot simply be used and understood from one language to another and their precise form, wording, and usage will often differ across languages. Idioms are used figuratively not literally; each language has different idioms from the other. Idioms are not arbitrarily combined set of words but rather are the products of our encyclopedic knowledge (Kovecses, 2002, 2005).

Speaking spontaneously is difficult without the proper use of idioms (Johnson-Laird, 1993). "Idioms are an important part of any language and may be said to be an indicator of one's fluency in that language" (McDevitt, 1993, p.4). In 60 years of one's lifetime, a person would use nearly 20 million idioms (Cooper, 1998, p.255). Idioms are crucial for language, reading, and social communication (Secord and Wiig, 1993). Although complete mastery of idioms may be nearly impossible, every language learner must be prepared to meet the challenge because idioms occur so frequently in spoken and written English such as textbooks, novels, and conversation (Cooper, 1999, pp.233-234). Mastery of idiom comes only slowly, through careful study and



observation, through practice and experience. Learning idioms, practicing, and applying them on daily basis is the best way to master idioms (Seidl, 1978, p.8).

2.The Problem and Aim of the Study

Teaching many oral courses such as communication, speaking, advanced conversation, and academic debates for years, students' difficulties not only in the daily usage, understanding, and recognizing of idioms but also in oral exams in general, and number-related idioms could be noticed in particular. The objectives of the current study were to explore the types, and sources of difficulties that students face in the number-related idioms in speaking productions of themselves or other interlocutors. Also, another aim is to pinpoint the kind of relationship between gender and the type of difficulties in the number idiom. The researcher has realized from his experience in teaching English to the Kurdish learners in the department of English at the Faculty of Education, Koya University, that most of them encounter difficulties in comprehending, recognizing, and producing English number-related idioms. This research attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the types of difficulties in number-related idioms that Kurdish EFL students encounter in oral communication?
2. What are the sources of difficulties in number-related idioms that Kurdish EFL students encounter in oral communication?
3. What is the relationship between gender and the type of difficulties in number-related idioms?

3.Literature Review

3.1 Types of Difficulties

The research by Nikitkova (2013) aimed to investigate typical features and meanings of number idioms in both English and Lithuanian languages. Carrying out the study, the researcher employed not only qualitative but also quantitative methods to explore the relationships between number idioms in the two languages. For this end, 156 English and 212 Lithuanian idioms of both cardinal and ordinal numbers from one to ten were chosen. The research tools for the data analysis were contrastive,



descriptive, and statistical analysis. The study demonstrated that the most productive numbers in the English idioms for number one were 170 instances and number two 47 instances; in contrast to the Lithuanian most productive number idioms which were 99 instances for number one 35 instances for number two and number nine 39 instances in common. The choice of numbers in the idioms might be ascertained by logic and reality or reflects some cultural point of view. The analysis indicated that the numbers one, three, six, and ten are used in different senses in the idioms of both languages. The numbers two, four, and five can be used based on similar associations. The main goal of the study (Elkilic, 2008) was to explore Turkish students' comprehension of transparent and opaque English idiomatic expressions. To do so, the researcher randomly selected 35 intermediate and 36 advanced-level students in the English department and literature at Kafkas University, Kars, Turkey who were given 40-item various idiomatic expressions of Turkish and 40-item of English. The objects were required to write the equivalences in English and Turkish. The results showed that the participants can understand transparent and common opaque idioms more easily; whereas, they cannot understand opaque and common idioms if they have not learned them directly. Further, the study demonstrated that there is no significant difference between intermediate and advanced-level participants in comprehending transparent, opaque/common/uncommon idioms.

The primary aim of the study by Lin (2015) is to investigate the effective factors of the EFL learners' making transparency judgments of idioms; doing so, the researcher compared four groups of participants' transparency ratings of 18 number idioms whose total number 191 English major from Taiwan university. The first and second groups were required to pass their transparency judgments on the meanings of the idioms which were in L1 and L2. The third and fourth groups were demanded to work on various activities for two weeks before making transparency judgments. While the third group was asked to simply choose a number to complete the number idioms; the fourth group's job was to complete the sentences by choosing number idioms. Results indicated that to relate the literal meanings of the idioms to their figurative meanings, the translation did not work well. What helps the participants significantly



raise their transparency level was choosing a suitable idiom to complete the sentences.

Rakhmyta and Rusmiati (2020) carried out a study entitled ‘EFL learners’ production of idiomatic expressions in speaking’. The study aimed at representing the EFL learners’ use, type, and the most frequent idiomatic expressions in English oral production. It was carried out in the English Department in IAIN Takengon-Indonesia. The descriptive qualitative method was adopted and the recordings of 20 students were collected and analyzed. The result demonstrated that learners use idiomatic expressions in their spoken English, they produced merely three types of idiomatic expressions which are phrasal verb idioms, tournures idioms, and irreversible compound idioms. Among all types, phrasal verbs are used frequently.

Almogheerah’s (2020) study entitled ‘Exploring the effect of using WhatsApp on Saudi female EFL students’ idiom-learning’ attempted to explore the effect of adopting an alternative method of learning (WhatsApp) on improving Saudi EFL students’ idiom heritage compared to a traditional method. The study investigated the students’ insights about the integration of WhatsApp into idiom learning. In the study, 70 EFL female undergraduates were recruited purposefully from the seventh level of the Department of English Language and Literature at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU). The sample was convenient as there were only three intact classes available. Their level is supposed to be upper-intermediate or advanced proficiency level. A quasi-experimental method was used in which the participants were split into two groups of experimental and control groups of 35 in each group. The experimental group was taught English idioms through WhatsApp-based activities while the control one conventionally. To collect data, two instruments a pre-post idiom achievement test and a post-study questionnaire was used. The study found that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in the idioms achievement post-test. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that the majority of the experimental group had a positive perception of learning English idioms via WhatsApp.

Al-kadi (2015) conducted a study to find out the Yemeni EFL juniors’ competence in English idioms’ recognition, comprehension, and usage. For this aim, the researcher enrolled 60 undergraduates in the English department at the faculty of Education-Taiz



University as a sample to investigate the link between their English proficiency and idiomatic competence. The research instruments were three idiom tests and a questionnaire. It is concluded that the students with high scoring points in idiom tests are scoring high points in listening and speaking achievement tests. It also shed light on some challenges that face Yemeni EFL learners and the strategies they tend to use to overcome those challenges. Linguistic features, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic were identified as the difficulties they encountered.

Hayati, Jalilfar, and Mashhadi (2013) conducted a study to measure the effectiveness of three means of instruction of English idioms namely: Short Message Service (SMS)-based activities, contextual learning, and self-study learning. The study also sought to depict the participants' perceptions and attitudes toward mobile-based learning and the use of SMS in teaching and learning English idioms. The sample was 60 Persian learners of English, whose ages ranged between 19–24 years. The used tools were a pre-and post-test and a post-survey questionnaire. The results indicated that those of the students who received micro lessons on their mobiles through SMS were more thrilled and learned more compared to those who were taught conventionally on paper and pen or situational learning. Their attitudes and perceptions were positive about the use of mobile devices in learning and teaching idioms.

3.2 Sources of Difficulties

Noor and Fallatah (2010) investigated the difficulties Saudi English major female students encountered to recognize and comprehend English idioms in certain contexts. The participants were fourth-year English department students at the College of Education, Taibah University in Almadinah Almunawwarah. Amongst, 60 students were randomly chosen aged between 21 to 24 years because they had more experience with the English language and were expected to be more familiar with English idioms than the students in the other levels. Translation and multiple-choice tests were used to collect data. The finding indicated that the insufficient coverage of idioms in language curricula is one of the problems that make idioms difficult for EFL students. The results showed that context plays a crucial role in facilitating the processes of recognizing and understanding English idioms. The idioms frequently



used, transparent, and had simple vocabulary and structure were those which were more easily recognized and comprehended.

In a qualitative study, Parvaresh and Ghafel (2012) attempted to show the comparison and contrast Idiomatic Expressions of Numbers (IENs) in English and Persian and the relationship between language and culture in the construction of idiomatic expressions of numbers in English and Persian. The result showed that IENs cannot be understood without addressing cultural assumptions.

Alhaysony's (2017) study had two aims; one to explore the difficulties that Saudi EFL students come across in learning and understanding English idioms; and the other, to identify the strategies they use to comprehend idioms. The participants were 85 male and female English undergraduate university students at Aljouf University. The two employed data collection instruments were a questionnaire, a semi-structured interview, and the national vocabulary level test to measure their language proficiency. The results demonstrated that the students face difficulty to understand idiomatic expressions. The study also found that guessing the meaning of idioms from context, predicting their meanings, and figuring out an idiom from an equivalent one in their language were the most frequently used strategies. Moreover, it revealed that low-proficiency students encounter more difficulties compared to high-proficiency ones. It also indicated that the students with vocabulary knowledge use greater idiom learning strategies.

Mousa (2017) carried out a study that aimed to explore Sudanese students' difficulties in understanding English idiomatic expressions. The research method adopted was descriptive analysis. One of the tools was a questionnaire on idiomatic expressions administered to Sudanese students to figure out their difficulties with idiom understanding. The study revealed that the Sudanese students had a low ability in understanding idiomatic expressions. Moreover, they do not use any specific strategy if they come across any unknown idiom. The idiom comprehension is context-based.

The result of many researchers (Andreou & Galantomos, 2007; Chen & Lai, 2013; Ghazala, 2004) revealed that what makes it difficult for EFL learners to recognize the

idiom structures and comprehend their meanings are pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic features.

What differentiates this study from the ones in the literature is here only the cardinal number-related idioms were chosen and more specifically from one to ten. It was not a comparative study. Also, studies have been carried out on the learners' recognition, understanding, and use separately, but the current one has dealt with all of them together.

3.3 The Difficulties of Learning English Idioms

Proficiency in the meaning of English idioms has been an argumentative issue among EFL learners (Almogheerah, 2020). Learners of a second language are confronting difficulty during the acquisition of the English language. Understanding 'idioms' is one of those difficulties. The learner of a second language might encounter all types of communication; news, lectures, movies, books, and daily conversation (Cooper, 1999). This difficulty in understanding idioms might be due to all those above-mentioned types of discourse. Supporting this idea, Seccord and Wiig (1993) stated that in all forms of discourse, idiomatic expressions are used such as conversations, lectures, movies, radio broadcasts, and television programs, as well as their usage, is so common in English that it seems very difficult for L2 learners to function effectively in a L2 communication context without the knowledge of idioms. Therefore, learning English idioms is essential to L2 learners, and every L2 learner must prepare themselves to meet these challenges. L2 learners should learn not only the grammatical structures and vocabulary of the target language but also the idioms to integrate into the culture of the L2. That is why the knowledge of idioms is essential in reading and social communication.

In another research Chuang (2013) indicated that comprehending these multi-word units or language chunks is not clear for language learners and that the meaning of the text cannot be resolute through the analysis of their word meaning. On one hand, the study conducted by Holsinger and Kaiser (2013) demonstrated that an idiomatic text dominates more time to be comprehended than a literal one. On the other hand, (Gibbs and Nayak, 1989) associated the difficulty of idiom with its types as



decomposable and non-decomposable. In the former, each component overtly contributes to the overall meaning of the entire phrase. For instance, idioms like *pop the question* refers to a marriage proposal, and *spill the beans* are decomposable because each component contributes to the overall meaning of the phrase. Nonetheless, in the latter, individual parts do not semantically contribute to the overall figurative meanings. Examples are: *kick the bucket* (“to die suddenly”) and *shoot the breeze* (“to talk without significant purpose”). This is because of experiencing difficulty in breaking these phrases into their parts.

Since idioms are figurative expressions that do not give the sense of what they state and are so frequently encountered in both oral and written discourse, comprehending and producing idioms presents language learners with a special vocabulary learning problem (Cooper, 1998). Mäntylä (2004) figures out that a large number of second language learners are not capable enough of identifying an unknown chain of words as a figurative expression, which is the first essential step to understanding and acquiring a new idiom.

Appropriateness is another difficulty at the level of style which means knowing the appropriate situation to use an idiom. While some idioms are neutral i.e., can be used in most situations, others are informal that can be used in everyday spoken English (Seidl and McMordie, 1988, p.13).

Additionally, Bromley (1984, pp.274-275) argues that knowledge of the major components of (definition, usage and, application) seems useful to effectively teach idioms. To begin with the definition, it can be said that most idioms can be taught directly, just like any new word or concept, by defining and explaining them when they are found in context. In this way, the idiom’s actual meaning is clarified immediately. The second main element is using. Once the idiom has been defined, its origin explained, and its meaning compared to its literal interpretation, students can be given a variety of opportunities to use it in class. A simple way to demonstrate knowledge of something is to identify its equivalent from many alternatives, using both oral and written exercises. Finally, the third component is application. Understanding idioms used in class needs to be accompanied by opportunities to apply this new knowledge outside the school.

Rohani, *et al.*, (2012, p.105) states that idiom comprehension has three main factors: semantic transparency, familiarity, and context. The first factor is transparency. It is the extent to which the literal and figurative meanings of an idiom agree with each other. The meaning of a transparent idiom matches well with the image it describes. Second, familiarity is the frequency of occurrence of an idiom in the language. High-familiarity idioms are easier to understand than those of low familiarity. The third dominant factor influencing idiom comprehension is context. Idiomatic expressions are understood concerning the context in which they are used. As a result, the skills used to process and understand language in context are thought to be important for the development of idiom understanding. According to Boers (2008), idiomatic expressions give arbitrary meanings. Liu (2017) stated that there is a correlation between the acquisition of second-language idioms with the learner's proficiency in the target language. Advanced learners could acquire idioms better than low-proficiency ones.

3.4 Cardinal Number-related Idioms

Some examples of cardinal number-related idioms are from (1-10) explained below.

Number 'One' Oneself [Someone who] usually looks after/takes care of/thinks about themselves. e.g. Max is very selfish. With him, he is looking after number one and letting the rest of the world go to hell. The/one's number 'one' is the head person, one's direct boss. e.g. my number one is in Japan for three weeks, so I'm in charge until he gets back.

Number 'Two' to kill "two birds with one stone": Achieving two aims with only one effort/action. e.g. 'Andy's in Sheila's office.' 'Good! I need to speak to them both, so I can kill two birds with one stone.' Mr. Walker couldn't attend to our order personality, but his number two looked after us.



Number 'Three' Three cheers for someone! An expression of praise, approval, or enthusiasm for something someone has done well. e.g. 'Now, *three cheers* for our competition winner!

Number 'Four' "On all fours": On one's hands and knees. e.g.: The children love to have Uncle Albert *on all fours* playing donkey with them.

Number 'Five' "Take five": To take one brief (about five minutes) rest period e.g. 'The city workers stopped to *take five* after working hard all morning'

Number 'Six' "At sixes and sevens": In a stage of confusion, muddle, and disorder. e.g.: We moved into the house last week, but I'm afraid everything is still *at sixes and sevens*.

Number 'seven' "Seven lives" e.g.: Mr. Smith has been missing for a few days, but I wouldn't worry about him. Everybody knows he seems to have *seven lives*.

Number 'Eight' "Eight ball": In trouble e.g.: If I am behind the *eight ball*, I will be in a trouble.

Number 'Nine' "On cloud nine": Very happy. e.g.: She is *on cloud nine*.

Number 'Ten' "Ten in a penny": So common as to be practically worthless. e.g.: It would seem that Mrs. Thatcher is at *number ten* for a further period of office. (Seidl, 1978, pp.112-207)

4. Methodology

4.1 Setting and Participants

The participants of this study were third and fourth-year students in the English departments at the Faculties of Education and Arts of Koya, Salahaddin, Garmian, and Halabja Universities. Their ages ranged from 21 to 24. For the present study, the third and fourth-year undergraduates were recruited in particular because they had more

experience with the English language and were supposed to be more familiar with English idioms than the students in the other levels. They are supposed to have the same language proficiency level.

5. Data Collection Tools

The researcher developed a questionnaire with a flashback on the literature review, a careful examination of previous questionnaires, and adapted some items from (Al-kadi, 2015; 3 items from Ababneh, 2016) and 1 item from Alhaysony, 2017). The rationale behind this questionnaire was to investigate idiom difficulties. The questionnaire for this study comprised three parts. The first part is related to general background information. The second part consisted of statements related to the types of difficulties and the third part was about their sources of number-related idiom difficulties. The second tool was two tests administered to a randomly selected sample consisting of 10 cardinal number-related idiomatic expressions from one to ten that were subjected to the analysis which is at the beginning, middle, and end of test items respectively.

5.1 Validity of the tools

Validity of the tests, five faculty members at the University, non-native speakers of English but fluent in English, were asked to judge the process of selecting the idioms comprising the tests and their effectiveness and appropriateness. For the validity of the questionnaire, the construct validity showed a strong relationship among the constructs.

Table (1): Construct validity of the tool

Construct	Items	Correlation	Items	Correlation	Items	Correlation
Using	Item 1	0.672**	Item 2	0.783**	Item 3	0.731**
	Item 4	0.733**	Item 5	0.727**		
Understanding	Item 1	0.742**	Item 2	0.766**	Item 3	0.476**
	Item 4	0.803**	Item 5	0.787**		
Recognizing	Item 1	0.666**	Item 2	0.717**	Item 3	0.407**
	Item 4	0.682**	Item 5	0.610**	Item 6	0.615**

5.2 Reliability of the tool

Cronbach’s Alpha was used to find out the reliability of the questionnaire as shown in table (2). The reliability of the using items is (0.780) which is regarded as good and for understanding (0.763) which is considered as an acceptable level of reliability and the reliability of the recognizing is (0.713) after deleting the third item. So the measurement has the necessary reliability.

Table (2): The Reliability of the tool

	Cronbach’s Alpha	No. Items	deleted
Using idioms	0.780	5	-
Understanding idioms	0.763	5	-
Recognizing idioms	0.713	5	1

6.Results

6.1 Types of number-related idiom difficulties

To answer the first research question ‘What are the types of difficulties that Kurdish EFL students encounter in number-related idioms in oral communication?’ a one-sample t-test was conducted and the answers are as follows:

When it comes to the difficulty of understanding, the p-value is bigger than 0.05, which can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the mean (M=14.66) and the test value (15). So, if the mean is divided by the number of items it becomes (2.93) that is, the participants’ understanding ability is lower than uncertain.

In the recognition aspect of the type of difficulties, the p-value is smaller than 0.05, which shows that there is a significant difference between the mean and test value as the mean (M=16.66) is bigger than the test value (15). If the mean is divided by the number of items, it reaches (3.33) which shows the participants’ recognition ability is higher than uncertain.

In the usage type of problem, the p-value is smaller than 0.05, it shows that there is a significant difference between the mean and test value as the mean (M=16.34) is

bigger than the test value (15). If the mean is divided by the number of items, it reaches (3.27) that show the participants’ ability in using numerical idioms is higher than uncertain.

Table (3): Types of difficulties in English number-related idioms students encounter

Factor	Mean	test Value	mean Difference	Std. Deviation	T	p-value	sig.
Understanding	14.66	15	-.338	4.037	-1.057	.292	not sig.
Recognizing	16.66	15	1.663	4.204	5.002	.000	sig.
Using	16.34	15	1.338	4.325	3.912	.000	sig.

P-value=0.05 df=159 N=160

To figure out the participants’ practical ability in number-related idiom recognition and comprehension, two tests were administered. The test of recognition demonstrates that the lowest (minimum) score is zero and the highest (maximum) is 10. (M= 4.11, SD=2.455) and the Mode=3. In the understanding test (M=4.36, SD= 2.486) and the Mode=4. This result demonstrates that the participants perform better in understanding number-related idioms.

Table (4): Practical ability in number-related idiom recognition and comprehension

	Test of idiom recognition	Test of idiom understanding
Mean	4.11	4.36
Mode	3	4
Std. Deviation	2.455	2.486
Range	10	10
Minimum	0	0
Maximum	10	10

6.2 Sources of number-related idiom difficulties

As shown in table 5, the answer to the second research question ‘What are the sources of difficulties in number-related idioms that Kurdish EFL students encounter in oral communication?’ the participants considered all the items as sources of difficulties especially items 5 and 7 which were ‘English number-related idioms are

not given enough attention in the syllabus of my department and Lack of exposure to English number-related idioms in spoken discourse interactions is a factor in not being able to use them in speaking.’

Table (5): Sources of number-related idiom difficulties

Sources of difficulties	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Source 1	3.46	1.137	5.074	.000	.456
Source 2	3.63	1.014	7.796	.000	.625
Source 3	3.56	0.909	7.737	.000	.556
Source 4	3.65	0.979	8.398	.000	.650
Source 5	4.06	0.998	13.382	.000	1.056
Source 6	3.43	1.013	5.384	.000	.431
Source 7	4.01	1.025	12.420	.000	1.006
Source 8	3.71	1.185	7.540	.000	.706
Source 9	3.83	0.940	11.188	.000	.831
Source 10	3.59	0.934	7.954	.000	.587
Source 11	3.34	0.990	4.313	.000	.337
Source 12	3.61	0.938	8.257	.000	.612
Source 13	3.45	1.039	5.479	.000	.450
Source 14	3.74	0.906	10.385	.000	.744
Source 15	3.48	1.021	5.882	.000	.475
Source 16	3.64	0.871	9.346	.000	.644

6.3 Gender and types of number-related idiom difficulties

An independent samples t-test was used to know the relationship between gender and the types of difficulties. The p-value is bigger than 0.05 (P-Value>0.05), and it could be concluded that in the types of number-related idiom difficulties there is no significant difference between both males and females.

Table (6): Gender and types of number-related idiom difficulties

Constructs	Gender	N. Sample	Mean	Mean difference	Std. Deviation	p-value	t	sig.
Item 1	Male	74	3.64	0.33	1.054	0.062	1.876	not sig.
	Female	86	3.30		1.189			
Item 2	Male	74	3.68	0.09	1.008	0.559	0.586	not sig.
	Female	86	3.58		1.023			

Item 3	Male	74	3.54	-0.03	0.894	0.840	0.203	not sig.
	Female	86	3.57		0.927			
Item 4	Male	74	3.76	0.20	1.018	0.204	1.274	not sig.
	Female	86	3.56		0.941			
Item 5	Male	74	4.07	0.02	0.970	0.894	0.133	not sig.
	Female	86	4.05		1.028			
Item 6	Male	74	3.54	0.20	0.968	0.204	1.276	not sig.
	Female	86	3.34		1.047			
Item 7	Male	74	4.05	0.09	0.935	0.581	0.553	not sig.
	Female	86	3.97		1.100			
Item 8	Male	74	3.76	0.09	1.108	0.615	0.504	not sig.
	Female	86	3.66		1.252			
Item 9	Male	74	3.82	-0.01	0.927	0.931	0.086	not sig.
	Female	86	3.84		0.956			
Item 10	Male	74	3.57	-0.04	0.938	0.803	0.250	not sig.
	Female	86	3.60		0.937			
Item 11	Male	74	3.41	0.13	1.072	0.428	0.795	not sig.
	Female	86	3.28		0.916			
Item 12	Male	74	3.70	0.17	0.975	0.263	1.129	not sig.
	Female	86	3.53		0.904		1.123	
Item 13	Male	74	3.59	0.27	1.006	0.101	1.648	not sig.
	Female	86	3.33		1.057			
Item 14	Male	74	3.89	0.28	0.885	0.054	1.939	not sig.
	Female	86	3.62		0.910			
Item 15	Male	74	3.59	0.22	1.059	0.173	1.370	not sig.
	Female	86	3.37		0.983			
Item 16	Male	74	3.69	0.08	0.875	0.542	0.611	not sig.
	Female	86	3.60		0.871			

7. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that the participants had difficulties mostly in understanding compared to recognizing and using types of English number-related idioms. Regarding the sources of the difficulties, it was concluded that the participants had difficulties with almost the entire questionnaire items especially a lack of attention to the syllabus of the departments and exposure to number-related idioms in the classes. The participants perform better in understanding the number-related idioms test rather than the recognizing one. It was also concluded that gender did not have any effect on using, recognizing, and understanding English number-



related idioms. It is recommended that idioms in general and number-related idioms, in particular, should not be forgotten or neglected in the teaching classrooms and even allocate a lot of time to teach them as they play a focal role not only in communication but also in writing activities.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Types and sources of difficulties in English number-related idiom

This study aims to explore the types and sources of difficulties that Kurdish EFL students encounter in English number-related idioms (i.e., idioms including numbers) in speaking productions. Please read each statement carefully and choose the number (1-5) that best indicates to which extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

**1= Strongly Disagree (SD) 2= Disagree (D) 3= Uncertain (Un) 4= Agree (A)
5= Strongly Agree (SA)**

Section one: background information

Age: A. 18-19 B. 20-21 C. 22-23 D. 24-25

Stage: A. Third B. Fourth

Faculty: A. Education B. Arts

Section two: Types of Difficulties in English Number-related Idioms in Oral Discourse

A. The use of number-related idioms

Items	SD (1)	D (2)	Un (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
1. I can use English number-related idioms.					
2. I find the use of number-related idioms difficult.					
3. I tend to use number-related idioms.					
4. Learning to use number-related idioms in oral communication is necessary for developing speaking skills.					
5. Learning to use number-related idioms is necessary for achieving effective communication.					
6. I am a high-proficient student in using number-related idioms.					

B. Understanding number-related idioms

Items	SD (1)	D (2)	Un (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
1. I can understand number-related idioms.					
2. I find understanding number-related idioms difficult.					
3. I can't understand the use of number-related idioms.					
4. I understand number-related idioms.					
5. Understanding number-related idioms is easy.					

C. Recognizing number-related idioms

Items	SD (1)	D (2)	Un (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
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1. I can recognize number-related idioms.					
2. I find the recognition of number-related idioms difficult.					
3. I can't recognize number-related idioms.					
4. I recognize English number-related idioms but can't use them as easily as native speakers do.					
5. I recognize English number-related idioms but can't understand as easily as native speakers' do.					

Section three: Sources of number-related idiom difficulties

Items	SD (1)	D (2)	Un (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
1. When facing a difficult English number-related idiom, I ignore it.					
2. I don't know the appropriate situation to use English number-related idioms.					
3. The level of style of English number-related idioms is difficult.					
4. I'm not satisfied with my present knowledge of English number-related idioms					
5. English number-related idioms are not given enough attention in the syllabus of my department.					
6. I am a low-proficient student in English number-related idioms.					
7. Lack of exposure to English number-related idioms in spoken discourse interactions is a factor in not being able to use them in speaking.					
8. Lack of exposure to English number-related idioms in spoken discourse interactions is a factor in not being able to understand them in speaking.					



9. Lack of exposure to English number-related idioms in spoken discourse interactions is a factor in not being able to recognize them in speaking.					
10. The structure of English number-related idioms is different from my language.					
11. The number of words in English number-related idioms is too much.					
12. The meaning of idioms is the greatest challenge for me.					
13. Comprehension of idioms is another difficulty.					
14. Interpreting the meaning of idioms is another difficulty.					
15. The grammar structure and word order are sometimes very odd in idioms.					
16. Lack of information is another source of my difficulty.					

Appendix B: A Test in Understanding Number-related Idioms

Choose the correct number-related idiom to replace the expression in the brackets.

- After finding many problems with the engine design we decided to (**go back and start over**).
 - know a trick or two
 - take five
 - stand on our own two feet
 - go back to square one
- I was (**very happy**) when I won a vacation trip during the winter.
 - on cloud nine
 - a nine-day wonder
 - dressed to the nines
 - one for the books
- Our teacher makes sure that we have a good knowledge of (**reading, writing, and arithmetic**).
 - Six of one and half a dozen of the other
 - the three R's
 - number one
 - two of a kind
- Solving a difficult problem by yourself is not easy and usually (**it is better to work with another person to solve the problem**).
 - there are no two ways about it
 - two can play that game



- C. two wrongs don't make a right D. two heads are better than one
5. The workers were **(in a state of confusion)** after the company announced that it was going out of business.
- A. at sixes and sevens B. two wrongs don't make a right
C. on cloud nine D. seventh heaven
6. People with your skills are **(so common as to be practically worthless)** these days.
- A. take five B. ten in a penny
C. go back to square one D. at sixes and sevens
7. I was **(going down and looking for the ring)** that Zhina dropped.
- A. eight ball B. the three R's
C. on all fours D. dress to the nines
8. The workers took a **(short rest)** because of all morning load.
- A. stand on our own two feet B. two heads are better than one
C. on all fours D. take five
9. Mr. Smith has been missing for a few days, but I wouldn't worry about him. Everybody knows he seems **(to get away with dangerous things)**.
- A. a cat has seven lives B. in two shakes of a lamb's tail
C. give me five D. six feet under
10. I am **(in trouble)** because I have failed the exam again.
- A. on cloud nine B. eight ball
C. one for the road D. the lesser of the two

Appendix C: A Test in Recognizing Number-related Idioms

Choose the correct options

1. If you are dressed up to the ____, you are wearing fancy clothes.
A. Six b. nine c. three d. four
2. If you are at ____, you are confused and don't know what to do.
A. sixes and sevens b. sevens and eighths c. ones and twos d. nines and tens
3. A ____ letter word is considered rude.
A. Two b. three c. four d. ten
4. If you begin to conclude about something, you put two and ____ together.
A. Seven b. four c. five d. Two
5. Cats seem to get away with dangerous things as they have lives.
A. Seven b. six c. five d. four
6. Someone who looks out for number ____ is someone who only thinks about his or her interests.
A. Two b. One c. three d. four
7. The basics of education are sometimes called "the ____ R's."
A. Three b. four c. five d. six
8. If a man hasn't shaved for a day or two, you say he has a ____ o'clock shadow.

- A. Ten b. three c. five d. two
9. Things that are very cheap and common are ___ a penny.
A. Ten b. nine c. thirteen d. seventeen
10. If I am behind the ball, I will be in a trouble.
A. Nine b. three c. one d. eight

سەرچاوه و جوړی ئاریشه‌کانی خویندکارانی کورد له ئیدیۆمی ژماره‌ییدا له ئاخاوتنیاندا

پووبه‌پوویان ده‌بنه‌وه

پوخته:

به‌کاره‌پێنان، ناسینه‌وه و تیگه‌یشتنی خوڤسکانه‌ی ئیدیۆم به‌ بن بیرلیکرنه‌وه له مانای خواراو و فیگیوره‌تی له لایه‌ن ئاخیه‌رانی ئینگلیزی زمان جیگای سهرسوپمان نییه، له کاتیکدا، ئاساییه‌ بۆ ئاخیه‌رێک زمانی دایکی ئینگلیزی نییه. ئینگلیزی لیهاتوویی زۆرێک زۆرێک له ئاخیه‌رانی ئینگلیزی پپووستیان نییه له به‌کاره‌پێنان، ناسینه‌وه و تیگه‌یشتن ئیدیۆمی ژماره‌یی. ئامانجی ئەم توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ ده‌رخستنی جوړ و سەرچاوه‌ی گه‌رفته‌کانی خویندکارانی کورده له به‌کاره‌پێنانی ئیدیۆمی ژماره‌ ییه‌ که‌ پووبه‌پووی ده‌بنه‌وه له لایک و ناسینه‌وه‌ی په‌یوه‌ندی په‌گه‌ز و جوړی گه‌رفته‌کان له لایکی تره‌وه. به‌شداربوانی توێژینه‌وه‌که‌ له 170 خویندکاری زانکۆ پیکهاتبوون که‌ پسرپوریان ئینگلیزییه‌ له ره‌گه‌زی نیر و مێ له به‌شه‌کانی ئینگلیزی فاکه‌لتی په‌روه‌رده و ئادابی زوړیک له زانکۆکانی حکومه‌تی هه‌ریمی کوردستان بوون. دوو کۆمه‌له‌ که‌رسته‌ی کۆکردنه‌وه‌ی داتا پرسیارنامه‌یکی کۆتایی داخراوی پپوه‌ری لیکه‌رتی 5 خالیی بۆ ده‌رخستنی جوړ و سەرچاوه‌ی گه‌رفته‌کان به‌شداربوان پووبه‌پوویان ده‌بنه‌وه و دوو کۆمه‌له‌ تاقیکردنه‌وه‌ی چوار وه‌لامی به‌کاره‌اتوون بۆ زانینی توانای تیگه‌یشتن و ناسینه‌وه‌ی ئیدیۆمی ژماره‌یی تاقیکردنه‌وه‌کان پیکهاتبوون له ده‌سته‌واژه‌ی ئیدیۆمی ژماره‌یی ساده له یه‌ک تا ده‌خراوه‌ ژیر شیکردنه‌وه‌وه‌ که‌ ریز کرابوون له سه‌ره‌تا، ناوه‌په‌ست و کۆتایی تاقیکردنه‌وه‌که‌ دا بوون. ئه‌نجامه‌کان ده‌ریانخست که‌ به‌شداربوان زۆرتر گه‌رفتیان له گه‌ل تیگه‌یشتنی ئیدیۆمی تاییه‌ت به‌ ژماره‌یه‌ و سەرچاوه‌ی ئاریشه‌کانیان جوړاوجوړن. له تاقیکردنه‌وه‌کاندا ده‌رکه‌وت که‌ به‌شداربوان له

تتبعه يشتمل على ثماره يى باشر بوون تا ناسينه وهيان. ههروهها بهو نه نجامه گه يشتمل كه ره گه ز هيج په يوه ندى به جوړى گرفتته كانه وه نيبه.

وشه كلييه كان: ئاريشه، ئيديؤمى ژماره يى، ئينگليزى وهك زمانى بيگانه، رووبه روو بوونه وه، ئاخوتنى زاره كى.

أنواع ومصادر الصعوبات في المصطلحات المتعلقة بالأرقام باللغة الإنجليزية التي يواجهها الطلاب الأكراد في الاتصال الشفوي

الملخص:

إن الاستخدام العفوي للمتحدثين الأصليين والتعرف عليهم وفهمهم للتعبير دون التفكير في المعنى المجازي ليس أمراً مفاجئاً؛ في حين أنه طبيعي للمتحدثين غير الأصليين. يفتقر العديد من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية إلى الكفاءة الكافية في التعرف على المصطلحات المتعلقة بالأرقام وفهمها واستخدامها. كان الهدف من الدراسة هو استكشاف أنواع ومصادر الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلاب الجامعيين الأكراد في المصطلحات المتعلقة بالأرقام في إنتاج النطق من جهة وتحديد العلاقة بين الجنس ونوع الصعوبات من جهة أخرى. شارك في الدراسة 170 طالباً وطالبة من اختصاص اللغة الإنجليزية من أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية في كليات التربية والفنون في العديد من الجامعات في حكومة إقليم كردستان. تم استخدام أداتان لجمع البيانات، استبيان نهاية مغلقة بمقياس ليكرت من 5 نقاط لاستكشاف أنواع ومصادر الصعوبات التي يواجهها المشاركون، وتم استخدام مجموعتين من اختبارات الاختيار من متعدد لمعرفة قدرتهم على فهم المصطلح العددي والتعرف عليه. تم إخضاع الاختبارات المكونة من عشرة تعبيرات اصطلاحية مرتبطة بالأرقام الأساسية من واحد إلى عشرة للتحليلات الموجودة في بداية عناصر الاختبار ووسطها ونهايتها على التوالي. كشفت النتائج أن المشاركين واجهوا صعوبات في الغالب في فهم المصطلحات المتعلقة بالأرقام وأن مصادر الصعوبات كانت مختلفة. كان أداء المشاركين أفضل في فهم المصطلحات المتعلقة بالأرقام في الاختبارات بدلاً من التعرف عليها. استنتج أيضاً إلى أن الجنس لا علاقة له بأنواع الصعوبات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصعوبة، المصطلح المرتبط بالأرقام، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، اللقاء، التواصل الشفهي