A HOLISTIC VIEW TO THE DIFFICULTIES OF IDIOM LEARNING

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Abstract
Holistic education is a complete approach used in language learning. It is based on life long learning. It is student centered. Fragment based learning, rote learning and grammar translation method are accepted as insufficient in holistic approach. According to holistic approach everything must be learned as a whole.

Idioms are among the most difficult items of language for foreign language learners. The reason of this are that idioms are shaped by one or more words which are used out of their original and real meanings. This situation makes idioms incomprehensible and forces learners to identify and define the idioms while reading them. This study aims to find out how and how much do students understand idioms and what are the reasons of this difficulty in learning idioms.

In the introduction part the aim of this study and problem statement is mentioned. In the first part, the definition of idioms and classifying of idioms is given. In the second part, the importance of idioms in language learning and communication is discussed. In the third part, the difficulties of learning idiom and research method and results of analysis are shown and the last part contains comments of the results and advices for solution of the problem.

Keywords: Idiom, Foreign Language Learners, Language, Student Centered, Holistic

Öz


Giriş bölümünde çalışmanın amacından ve sav’ın konusundan bahsedilmiştir. İkinci bölümdede dil öğrenme ve iletişimde deyimlerin önemi tartışılmıştır. Üçüncü bölümde deyim öğrenmenin zorlukları ve araştırmalar method ve analiz sonuçları gösterilir ve son bölüm sonuçların yorumlanması ve problem çözümü için önerileri içerir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Deyim, Yabancı Dil Öğrencileri, Dil, Öğrenci Merkezi, Bütüncül
INTRODUCTION

In this study, holistic education and its aspects are introduced and as well, the word holistic is defined and its origins, curriculum, usage in education is mentioned and all its special features are given in detail. The features of idioms and the degrees of difficulties of idioms is researched. Before doing this, origins of idioms, types of idioms and categorisation of them is discussed. Before reading all this findings, the spring point of writing this study should be said as: 'there is and at the same time there is not a relationship between the meanings of singular word and idiomatic meaning'. The purpose of this study is to show the difficulties of learning idioms and show the degree of understanding of them by students. Because of their mysterious nature, they can not be understood easily. For the reason that this study will show how, why and where idioms used -and will show- what are the learning difficulties of idioms. While showing this, proved research methods and proved results will be handled and analysed, new methods will be discussed. This study will argue the difficulties and prejudices about idiom learning among foreign language learners, especially among Turkish students.

Idioms consist of one word or more words and have a different meanings the out of the real meanings. For example; walls have ears. When we consider the 'dictionary meaning', we can estimate that walls do not have ears in real. But as an idiom, "walls have ears" can be estimated that when we speak to each other, one can hear us. In the example, " walls have ears" has an idiomatic meaning and real meaning of it only can be estimated by adult learners. It has also a figurative meaning and metaphoric meaning. Any wall on earth has realistic ears, ear is an body part which belongs to only living creatures. This metaphoric usage can be taken serious by child learners they can dream a real ear on a wall.

Idioms disguise another meaning so they became problematic for language learners. They are very hard to be understood with their bare meanings. For the reason that idiom is a serious problem for the foreign language learners. It forces learners to learn metaphoric meaning of idioms. It makes the learning process longer and longer.

The use of idioms is not an easy mission for language learners. Since idioms are often used in communication and holistic method is practiced as a life long learning method, students learn these phrases easily. To learn them easily, holistic method is the most suitable one for idiom teaching because it is a complicated method.

There is a relationship between the meanings of singular word and idiomatic meaning. Idioms can be divided into three parts. One group of idioms can easily be understood. The reason of this is that they are formed in singular words and have generally real meanings or they are easy to estimate. Another group requires contextual information. For the reason that the meaning of this idioms is not obvious such as the former group of idioms. The other and the last group is the group that which have no the relationship between the meaning of individual words and the total meaning of the idiom. These idioms is the significant problem for students. Students need to learn these phrases.

In this study, there are another factors which influence the comprehensing of idioms can be considered. When the students know English very well, they will understand idioms very well. The reason of this is the level of English education in comprehending of idioms.

HOLISTIC AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

What Is Holistic?

Language is the center of human life. Through language we: design our lives, the idea is located in the shopping, remember our past and shape our social and individual identity (Cook :2001, p. 1).

Whereas many researches are done on language learning and cognitive learning, there is almost no research done on teachers presence in classroom and on other important aspects of learning a new language. The aim of this study is to discover, document and define the new methods which are practiced alongside the curriculum of holistic.

This study was created to make us understand better the the importance of the experiences of teachers and teachers’ perception on understanding the students as a whole with all their mind, spirit emotion, body...etc. For the reason that this study is focused on theses questions which stem from that root question: how is
holistics practiced in classes?:

1. Who are the language teachers?
2. How do teachers perceive the students with their bodies, mind, spirit... etc.?
3. What do teachers think about teacher's presence classes?
4. How do students evaluate the presence of teacher and his/her technique and methods he/she used in class?

Wholism means all, the whole... etc. It is originated from the Greek word ‘holos’ and shares the same meaning with the English word the ‘whole’. At this point it is necessary to give the definition of what holistic is: “Holism (from Greek ὅλος holos ‘all, whole, entire’) is the idea that systems (physical, biological, chemical, social, economic, mental, linguistic, etc.) and their properties should be viewed as wholes, not as collections of parts. This often includes the view that systems function as wholes and that their functioning cannot be fully understood solely in terms of their component parts.” (en.wikipedia.org)

According to this approach, in any field (physics, chemistry, biology, economy... etc) the complete of a natural system constructs a different system from the fragments and sub-systems which form the whole. For instance, human body even consists of the immune system and the respiratory system; human cannot be identified with these systems. Human is a completely different creature from the systems which forms him/her.

In fact, the sub-system usually executes only one function of the ‘whole’ for the reason that sometimes to look only fragments blocks us to see the whole.

The main idea of this approach is to handle the system as a whole. Holistic approach accepts that the fragments, the connections between fragments, the problems between them, cannot be divided from each other. The problems occurred between the parts and the connections are also connected together so if one of it can be solved, a solution for all can be found. Holistic sees the system concept as a whole which is connected together and in interaction with its environment. According to this point of view system generally creates ‘synergy’.

The whole creates an effect bigger than the collection of the fragments effect. It can be summarised with the phrase “the whole is more than the collection of the fragments”. For instance, one produces 5 unit per day, other one can produce only 4. When they work together, they are expected to produce 4+5=9 unit but they can produce 11 unit. This is the positive effect of the synergy. The reasons of this effect, can be different. Sometimes synergy works opposite and they produce 8 unit. This takes us to structuralism in other word it is holistic.

Holistic aims happiness and holistic education too. We do not taste the real happiness with materials such as house, car, money... etc. We want these because we believe them to make us happy. The same as this idea, educators must perceive happiness as a target and always should toil to enable happiness in education environment. We must teach to be happy by learning and teaching new things. Another important factor for holistic education is Spirit which is the essence of the human and enables us to see the ‘deep human’ and it is necessary to examine the spirit for a real understanding.

Holistic is a learning method which is not connected to time and place. Learning continues after class and it is life-long. Because holistic is student centered, even student cannot reach the teacher, s/he goes on learning and exploring new things. For the reason that holistic involves the best examples of self-learning.

In fragment based learning the fragments of an ‘whole’ is taught one by one by the teacher. Fragmentalisation divides the relation between spirit and the body. This situation can be resembled to the jobs of the industrialisation period and afterwards. Workers do only ‘one’ part of the whole job, and in time they begin to lose their sense of ‘producing something’ and constructing a ‘whole job’. Students are expected to learn these fragments as a whole but they could never achieved this goal. Holistic opposes this type of learning even working, and it says “rote learning” is disadvantageous.

In the same way in language learning words, grammar and examples are given as fragments and students cannot compose this and cannot learn anything. This type of learning is not suitable for holistic thinking. This fragment based learning blocks learning idioms.
Holistic is suitable for adults to learn a foreign language, but it is critised because it does not approve of using materials and teacher centered education. Cognitive language learning method can be resembled to holistic method and they can go on learning life long period.

Cognitive method is inspired from holistics but there is less research done on usage of holistics in language learning classes. This study aims to fulfill this empty area in education.

“Savignon (2007) draws our attention to “a disconnection between the theory explained in university methods classes and classroom teaching practices [and that] …there persists considerable confusion among classroom teachers and their students as to the meaning.” (p. 215).

The following observation by Freeman and Hawkins (2004) on both a personal and professional level:

“Teachers generally work in isolation. They spend much of their time in individual pursuits without the chance to confer or collaborate professionally with others: teaching in their classrooms, planning lessons, and communicating with their students. Opportunities to exchange ideas or discuss with colleagues what they know or believe are rare and valued. Most professional development fails to counteract such isolation. The chance to think together, in disciplined ways, through collaborative exploration, reflection, and conversation is key (p. 3).”

The ‘curriculum’ and the aims of curriculum are difficult to define in holistic and all other teaching methods. Various theorists, researchers and teachers gives various definitions for this concept. The simplest and narrowest meaning of the curriculum is defined as: ‘what will be learned and how will be learned’. As well, John DEWEY’s studies enlarges the definition of the curriculum, but more important he brought with his new ideas was the idea of ‘student centered’ approach. It is the inspiration for the other student centered methods. ‘Curriculum refers to the experiences, both planned and unplanned, that enhance the education and growth of students” (Parkay et al: 1996). This definition is more satisfying. It emphasises the development of the student. Allingham’s definition is more complex than others: “the curriculum is text books and storybooks, and the pictures -- and the seating plan and the group work and the posters and the music, the announcements, the prayers and readings the language spoken in the school, the food in the cafeteria the visitors to the classrooms, the reception of parents in the office, the race (or races) of the office staff, the custodial staff, the teachers, the administration, the displays of students’ work, the school teams and sports played, the clubs, the school logo or emblem, the field trips, the assignments and projects the facial expressions and body language of everybody, the clothes everybody wears...it is the whole environment(Allingham 1992). As well, Kentli describes and concludes that “the hidden curriculum involves an exploration of how students are informed and socialized by pedagogical practices, and the need to take these factors into consideration in educational research”.

Attention is another important aspect in education. It is very important in all methods and in holistics also. Attention shapes the self and attention is shaped by self. To improve the qualities of our experiences attention is important.

Process of flow-training exercises with teaching, learning is more common than passive listener type. Emerson(2003, p. 324) said that ‘nothing in the world could not be achieved without a request.’ It is also very effective for language training. Second language instruction should only be based on material preparation. Students and teachers should be prepared to be ready mentally for the environment and also the idea of each other.

As Rousseau, who is among the founders of holistic, says teachers who are practising holistic must respect the personality of students and this must occur the basis of the communication between students and teachers.

Some private schools, such as Waldorf and Montessorri; are the schools where holistic education method was practiced and proved; after that, some state schools in many countries tried the same curriculum to practice but they could not achieve to practice it regularly and efficiently. Because of the expectations of the state and governments. This may be the reason of not using holistic as basic method in state schools.

To achieve to support the whole necessities of a person or a group of people who
are growing rapidly is only possible with holistic. Because holistic constructs a relation between 'body' and 'spirit', 'knowledge' and 'consideration', 'individual' and 'society' and 'world' etc.

At this point spirit gains importance. “The English word spirit comes from the Latin spiritus, meaning "breath", but also "spirit, soul, courage, vigor", ultimately from a Proto-Indo-European *(s)peis. It is distinguished from Latin anima, "soul" (which nonetheless also derives from an Indo-European root meaning "to breathe", earliest form *h2enhi1). In Greek, this distinction exists between pneuma (πνεῦμα), "breath, motile air, spirit," and psyche (ψυχή), "soul" (even though the latter term, ψυχή/ψυχή=psykhé/psůkhē, is also from an Indo-European root meaning "to breathe": *bhés-, zero grade *bhés- devoicing in proto-Greek to *phs-, resulting in historical-period Greek ps- in psůkhē, "to breathe", whence psůkhē, "spirit", "soul" .”(http://en.wikipedia.org)

The word spirituality means inspiration and spirit is accepted as a mysterious power which moves the leaves on the trees and it is an unseen power and this power is resembles to our spirits. Teachers and learners are trying to find a deep meaning in everything nowadays. And they try to do this on conceptual area. The idea of 'Spirituality is the essence of person' is the point they viewed the case.

Holistic learning, is independent from time and space; Therefore, learning is not only occurred in the class. When you climb out of the classroom, the learning continues. Moreover, the holistic learning is student-centered, teacher, if not next to the student, the student will continue to learn new things, continue to explore. Therefore, holistic or integrated approach that incorporates the best examples of the individual working methods. Student continues to learn from both the teacher, and the classroom, teaching hours and, therefore, the time and the venue of that school, etc. independently and continue to learn as a student-centered.

Learning to learn, learning to do, learning to live together, to live what they learn, is very important to learn in holistic approach and education.

Working together is a method used since the 1800s and is only efficient and reliable, where students feel confident in the environment. Compared to methods based on individual races, collaboration method is more efficient. However, the proper implementation of this technique requires a very appropriate set of learning environment. If the trainer does not pay attention to individual differences, if the capable person and uncapable person are not well distinguished, if individual differences are ignored, the students will feel insecurity.

One of the aims of holistic education is; not only in the classroom, but also in the community where learners lived and learn new things, to develop a sense of cohesion. Taken hand as linguistic, in today’s educational approach, the objective of establishing a link between the real world and students have learned in the classroom trainings, is an adaptation to life.

When we want to talk about the origin of holistic education, in learning environment, "the teacher's presence" would need to be discussed. The importance of education and technical method is stem from the teachers’ choices; The importance of the teacher must be taken consideration. No matter how well a curriculum prepared, how well the books are employed; if, during the training of teachers, they are not allowed to express themselves and their souls, if they aren’t permitted to develop their ideas, and if they are prevented from changing their social and emotional expression as creating a comfortable environment where they can; other items that does not make sense to establish a good education system. Because it is teachers who will handle all other items like embroidery.

In holistic education ‘well being’ or ‘feeling good’ is inevitable, especially for teachers, it is essential; because when the teacher feel well, he or she gives the power to be good students to motivate. This refers to the psychological side of the holistic education. As stated in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs within and as stated in all education methods, and of course, in holistic method, first physical needs, then housing needs love-belonging, respect, and, finally self-proving should be supported. Therefore, these needs must be met for both students and for the trai-
ners, so he can learn fully realized.

Teachers teach whoever and whatever they are. If this sentence must be explained: whoever the teacher is, he/she shares his or her own experiences with students, reflects his or her own personality, teaches lots of things related to his or her own former knowledge, gives examples about his or her own former educational background, reflects himself or herself and his or her soul to be together with students or to be whole with students or to be one part of the student group.

Cooperative learning with a group aims to provide a learning with sharing knowledge and attantive. It is thought that it will be more favourable when cooperative learning should be added to the teacher training programmes. To understand differences, develop relationships, to construct new relationships, to appreciate differences, to teach something to the groups, and learn something from them are the indispensables of the cooperative learning.

All these aspects are the same as in holistic point of view, because holistic learning is based on the relationship between the individual and the group.

The presence of teachers can not be ignored in any learning method. Also the origin of a holistic training method 'teachers' presence' is created. However, the teacher's presence is ignored in teacher training programmes in Turkey.

whatever materials are : books, magazines, dolls, wood; and no matter how expensive they are; the most important thing in education is the teacher factor. Because it is the teacher who applies the method, it is the teacher who choses the book. To understand what the student will do, make, teachers have to be in class for students to be an example and role model. The best curriculum, the best book is useless as long as teacher is unskilled.

When we spoke about teacher's presence, the word presence must be analysed. The English word 'presence' is stem from the latin word 'esse' which means 'to be' in english. The word 'pre-esse' means 'fact of being present'.(en.wikipedia.org)

The oldest and deep-rooted method used in foreign language learning is grammar translation method. Even if this method is very old and mostly used, it has to be replaced by other methods because of its teacher centered nature.

In traditional method, fragment based teaching and teaching without establishing relationships creates big problems. Grammar patterns and other language fragments are memorized and there is no interaction between student and target language.

Contemporary methods are structured on interacting between student and the target language. The mental process of students' activating is important in these methods. Traditional method is based on the Cartesian philosophy in which body and spirit is thought separately and gives training according to this doctrine. In past centuries in Europe, Latin and Greek languages are taught and taught as 'the training of the mind' and in the same way in contemporary methods it targets the same process.

During twentieth century lots of new language teaching methods are developed. But most of them, are on the individual aspects of language teaching and they could not encounter the needs of the various students and their various needs.

Collaborative learning, teaching and learning with the participation of the full members, being implemented in a number of educational institutions; or it is trying to apply. Teachers, during their school period, for twelve years, after receiving training in a traditional classroom, the teacher raised revenues to schools. It should be noted; teaching is done, often as 'imitation'. Therefore, teacher learned the traditional methods for twelve years, he was one of the students. when the teacher himself is educated by using conventional methods, it should not be surprising when he/she used in teaching. 'Teacher teaches that he learned' should not be surprising considering the logic of the traditional method is still finding support.

Teachers' knowledge is the experiences that are reflected by himself/herself or is reflected to him/ her by others, traditionally...etc. Teachers knowledge or experiences effects students directly or indirectly. Teachers' individual studentship experiences and sharing of them with students are important for students beside teachers' choice of clothes, words chosen in speech, stories they told...

Social aspects of the language stems from its structure. Because it is learned, shaped
and used in society. Beside this, language is shaped by society and shapes the society, also. Communicative language teaching system is based on the knowledge that student handled from the daily life experiences. It supports interaction. Student-student, student-teacher, student – others outside the class interaction and communication is important and is supported. Learning by communication and interaction enable student to 'open new doors' and enlarge his or her horizon. Student both became more social and more intellectual outside the class by interaction.

Flow theory is another subject which must be handled in this approach. In the essence of the flow theory there is to enjoy learning and to enjoy teaching to learn. In flow theory student learns while playing a game, acting a role, competing in a race and so on. Students think they are playing a game; teachers think they are learning something; but, both of them are done.

When we thought the flow theory for foreign language learning, language learners that is students, take responsibility for learning a language. They learn throughout the enjoyable activities. They learn new things without thinking them as a new subject or without taking them serious.

In transferring the information who will take the responsibility? Teacher or student? This is another question which must be consired on. When this question is asked teacher must instill not covardice and shyness, but bra- veness and self-esteem. Unconditioned love and respect to students individual differences confronts us as an inevitable reality. Student is not seen as ‘tabula rasa’ any more. Teacher's role gains importance. Teacher must be in such a mood that he must give chance to all his/her students, listening them, encouraging them, courageing them, appreciating them...

As well, whichever knowledge we want to handle and practice it is dependent on our knowledge and understanding level. Holistic education also supports multi-intelligence and multi understanding and multi-ideas.

Beside this researches enabled to be created new theories which forseen that a lot of new techniques can be develope. For instance, teaching and holistic is described as if it is a chryrystal. In holistic education all techniques and all informations are applied and come together. Then, as in the real crystallization process (transformation in holistic) unnessary parts are evaporation and essence is concentrated. And each crystal consists every part. It looks like colours of a rainbow.

**LANGUAGE AND IDIOMS**

Language has the most significant place in society. Language has a great importance in our daily lives. It helps people to communicate with each other. Language is used as an instrument to divert thoughts to other people that surround us. Language and communication carry the vital importance for people in our lives. For the reason that people require language and communication. On the other hand, Idiom is among the most important parts of language. Giving meaning to idioms has never been easy. Idioms can be thought as independent words. They are shape-able as fast as a play-dough. But; if you are not talented enough to shape it, it will be only a mass-dough. And if you are talented enough, you can do the best 'statues'. That is, if you know how to use the idioms and language; you can express yourself more and more clearly. Despite many linguistic works that have been studied on idioms, there is no exact definition of idiom. Academicians in the field make various studies to define what constitutes an idiom.

The term idiom originates from the Greek word ἰδίωμα (idioma) which means pecu- liarity, separate, distinct (Liddell and Scott, 1891; Taule, 2003). Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms defines an idiom as “a special kind of phrase. It is a group of words which have a different meaning when used together from the one it would have if the meaning of each word were taken individually” (1995, p. v). That is, the expression has both a literal and a figurative meaning.

Charles F. Hockett is one of the earliest writer who studied idioms in 1958. He is one of the linguistist who has studied idioms broadly (Makkai,1972,P.28). In his book, A Course in Modern Linguistics, Hockett defines the term idiom as follow:

"Let us momentarily use term Y for any
grammatical form the meaning of which is not deducible from its structure. Any Y, in an occurrence in which it is not a constituent of a larger Y, is an idiom. A vast number of composite forms in any language are idioms. If we are to be consistent in our use of the definition, we are forced also to grant every morpheme idiomatic status, save when it is occurring as a constituent of a larger idiom, since a morpheme has no structure from which its meaning could be deduced.” (Makkai,1972,P.25).

When and how idioms reveal is an unknown topic. In Strassler’s book, it is defined as ”The ultimate root of the term idiom is the Greek lexeme idios, meaning ‘own, private, peculiar’”. (1982,P.13). Idioms first revealed in Greek language”.

Fellbaum defines idioms that ”Idioms are a class of multi-word units which pose a challenge to our understanding of grammar and lexis that has not yet been fully met.”(2009,P.309).

Shelley defines idioms that ”Idiom is a group of words that means something different than the individual words it contains. Idioms add color and texture to language by creating images that convey meanings beyond those of the individual words that make them up.” (2010,P.1). According to this explanation, it can be said that idiom enriches and colours language and communication. Idioms are an important parts of every language. As a language learner, knowing idioms is useful for foreign language learners. The more idioms you know, the more native-like your language will sound. By learning idioms, you learn a lot about the culture of the community speaking the language you are learning.

Idioms have played an important and huge role in the English language. The reason of this is that idiom enriches language with vivid colours and alters languages. On Wikipedia web-site, idioms is defined as: “An idiom is a combination of words in common use, that have a figurative meaning, and sometimes a literal meaning.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idiom). When the explanation is analyzed, this can be stated that idioms can be meant metaphor. For the reason that idioms like metaphor and idioms express metaphorical meaning. They say something indirectly.

One of the definitions is ”An idiom is an institutionalized construction that is composed of two or more lexical items and has the composite structure of a phrase.”(Muhammet, Hassan,2013,P.69).

Online Oxford English Dictionary defines “An idiom as a group of words established by usage and having a meaning not deducible from those of individual words.” (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/idiom).

According to Seidl and Mordie in English Idiom and How to Use, ”An idiom is a number of words of which, taken together mean something different from the individual words of the idiom when they stand alone.”(1979,P.20).

The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics regards an idiom as ”An expression which function as a single unit and whose meaning can not be worked out from its separate parts.”(1992,P.198).

According to Jonathan Crowther in Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English (Oxford University Press-1995) defines idiom that ”A phrase or sentence whose meaning is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learnt as a whole unit.”(1995,P.67).

From all that descriptions it can be concluded that idioms cannot be understood easily, they have disguised meanings, they say something in different ways or indirectly, they are metaphorical, they must be evaluated both as single word and whole sentence, they are independent and separate but they are also inseparable part of language. It can have a literal meaning in one situation and a different idiomatic meaning in another situation. It is a phrase which does not always follow the normal rules of meaning and grammar. So idiom is a serious problem for the foreign language learners.

In language learning, there are four basic branches. These are writing, listening, speaking and reading. In language learning, it is important to improve these four skills. Learners and teachers generally think grammar as the basic. The first aim is always to enable communication between learners and native speakers. Not only grammar but also vocabulary is important. Besides simple vocabulary, idioms are another important point. Idioms can be considered as the color of language. If words are tho-
ought as basic colors such as yellow and red, idiom is sometimes orange but sometimes not. Because it is neither red nor yellow; it is completely a new colour. On the other hand, if one does not know how to use them, listeners can misunderstand the speaker. One must use the right colours to shape a new one, one can sometimes use black and white to make it purple, does not use black and white. For the reason that idioms sometimes is very far from original meaning of the word.

Vocabulary is the other subject which is among the mostly ignored topics in foreign language learning. Vocabulary is the most important aspect of language for learners among learning patterns in target language. The reason of this is that vocabulary supplies the learner understand and convey informations.

There are few difficulties in vocabulary learning. Vocabulary is the most comprehensive and most difficult aspect of English for foreign learners to master thoroughly. They should concentrate first on learning the most frequently used and at the same time most important English words for their practical real life needs.

Wilkins explains on the importance of vocabulary over grammar:

"There is not much value either in being able to produce grammatical sentences if one has not got the vocabulary that is needed to convey what one wishes to say. One is literary at a loss for words." (Wilkins, 1977, P. 110).

Thus, vocabulary constructs a important part of language. Therefore, vocabulary learning needs to be contain as schedule. A list of words should be taught. There should be a balance between grammar and vocabulary since "without gramer we can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (Wilkin, 1977, P. 11).

Vocabulary teaching should not be limited to simple words only but should also consider idioms which are "Essentially a part of language of everyday life" (Brook, 1981, P. 15).

Idioms exist in every language. Idioms consist of an important part of the English word.

"An idiom is a combination of words that has a meaning that is different from the meanings of the unique words Idiom is used in a different meaning, out of its meaning and ; is used out of the real meaning." (Curry, 1981, P. preface)

While people are talking, if they use a simple language, the one who is opposite of them can think what an illiterate speech and what an illiterate person this is. Not to be behaved so, we can decorate our speech with idioms. They will seem like a star in a dark night.

If idioms are not known, idioms can cause misunderstanding. Students have to control them from dictionaries to know them when used in class. Therefore there is a problem between native speakers and language learners. To solve this case it can be a solution to use idioms frequently but it is necessary to know the meaning of them otherwise we can be misunderstood. Both sides, speaker and listener or teacher and learner, must know the meaning when an idiom is used.

All languages contains phrases or sentences which can not be comprehended simply. Even if a person knows the whole words in a phrase and understand all the grammar structures and the words completely, the meaning of the sentence might be confusing, many proverbs, informal phrases, and common sayings creates this problem. These are named as "idiomatic". For instance the phrase "Once in a blue moon" means, 'rarely', 'seldom'. "Snow falls on the city of Aydın once in a blue moon, when that sentence is read" under normal conditions it is considered by everyone that "what is blue moon? , what does it mean?" only if the listener knows the idiomatic meaning, he or she can understand: it means "rarely" or "seldom" or "almost no". To know idiomatic meaning of it you have to study it specifically. Especially if you are a foreign learner of the English language.

Idioms can also be thought as dependent part of language. This different "world" is seperated from each other in usage and style. Basicly, they can be seperated into two categories as "idioms in real meaning" and "idioms in metaphoric meaning". Former is considered as a normal clause but latter is not. But, learners can add another group of idiom which have both real and metaphoric meaning. The ones that are problematic for learners are second and third group of idioms. Both of these have metaphoric meaning and is hard to understand. Idioms in
real meanings are easy to understand and use. Even a child can use them in his/her sentences. For example, “better late than never” is the example of a real meaning structured idiom. It is an easy to understand idiom. “Better late than never” can be understood and guessed by foreign language learners. For the reason that it is a comprehensible idiom. Its meaning is “to arrive or do something later than expected is not good, but it is better than not at all” (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/better-late-than-never). Children can understand and use this idiom.

In normal situations, children cannot understand idioms and metaphoric meaning and can not use them even if they became in their mother tongue. They are impossible to be learned for child learners to understand and use. They can only understand idioms in real meaning because they cannot understand abstract ‘words’. this is completely about cognitive development. “Cognitive development refers to the development of the ability to think and reason. Children (6 to 12 years old) develop the to think in concrete ways (concrete operations), such as how to combine (addition), separate (subtract or divide), order (alphabetize and sort), and transform (change things such as 5 pennies=1 nickel) objects and actions. They are called concrete because they are performed in the presence of the objects and events being thought about.”(Http://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=cognitive-------development-90-P01594).

Yet, metaphoric meanings of idioms are a mysterious for children in native language and magical for (foreign) child learners. They can not understand them, they can not use them despite this, they want to use them. For the reason that they are in “abstract era” and they think its real meaning and children can not understand metaphors till they are eleven and twelve years old. Idioms in adult language metaphoric meanings are words for “mature” or “mature brain”. Because people’s cognitive development is completed after teenage era. “During adolescence (between 12 and 18 years of age), the developing teenager acquires the ability to think systematically about all logical relationships within a problem. Adolescence marks the beginning development of more complex thinking processes (also called formal logical operations) inclu-
A Holistic View To The Difficulties Of Idiom Learning

0.html) and so on. This is an idiom from famous writer William Shakespeare. Everybody uses the idiom but does not know its origin.

"To be on one's toes" this is also an idiom whose origin is anonymous. Both of them is used by people by not thinking their origins. In fact, it is not necessary to know the origin of the idiom for a speaker for the reason that almost all of the speakers do not wonder the origin of the words or idioms. Because speakers are not etymologist.

Turkish learners as a foreign learner group, in our country, generally learns idioms only when they are forced by their teacher. The earliest way for Turkish learners may be to learn idioms with their "equals". "Equals" gives the same meaning in both languages (Turkish-English) with different words and phrases. In fact, in idioms, situation is that: conditions, situations, cause and results are the same but words and phrases are changing according to the language. For example, in Turkish "Elim kolum bağlı" and in English "My hands are tied" has the same meaning. They both mean "there is nothing to do" but they are written with different words they are used in their own language and culture. They can show multicultural meaning as in the example there are two different languages and culture but has the same meaning and word and aspects. Idioms are universal, even if we do not understand them in foreign language. When they are tried to be translated, we see that, to give its real meaning completely, we have to use another idiom from our language and our idioms. An idiom only can be (told) translated with another idiom. That is, they are unique in meaning in different languages. They are special as a genre.

There are different approaches according to which idioms can be classified. The understanding of idiom by particular linguists varies and therefore different categorizations arise.

Glucksberg divides the compositionality of idioms:

"Non-compositional idioms: There are no relations between the idiom's constituents and the idiom's meaning can not be discerned.

Partially compositional idioms: There are some relationships between an idiom's constituents and its idiomatic meaning can be discerned and exploited.

Fully compositional idioms: The constituents correspond directly with their idiomatic referents."


According to the classification of Glucksberg, partially compositional idiom and full compositional idioms can be understood by foreign language learners. For the reason that the meaning of fully compositional idioms is clear and understandable. Like fully compositional idioms, partially compositional idioms can be understood by foreign language learners. But the meaning of partially compositional idioms is some difficult to understand and use. For the reason that the meaning of this idiom is understood and exploit from sentences. Unlike partially compositional idioms and fully compositional idioms, non-compositional idioms is hard to understand. They have a very metaphorical meaning. Even native learners can not understand this idiom. So non-compositional idioms is learned difficult for foreign language learners, too, naturally.

According to Seidly and Mordies, the degree of difficulty in comprehension of idioms is divided into three groups. These are:

1-Idioms whose meanings can easily be guessed in even without a context,

2-Idioms whose meanings can only be guessed in a context, more information about the situation is needed to determine the meaning.

3-Idioms whose meaning are very difficult to guess even in a context (1979,P.132).

If idioms are grouped in the degree of difficulty, these groups help student for learning idiom and enable them for learning idioms. For the reason is that idioms are grouped the degree of difficulty. This type of classification may be helpful to foreign learners. If idioms are taught to students according to this categorization, foreign language learners can learn and understand idioms more easily.

Taking into account the notion of invariability, Fernando (32) offers a classification of idiomatic expressions as follows:

1-Pure idioms – conventionalized, non-literal multiword expressions, the non-literal meaning is imposed on the idiom as a whole,
e.g. spill the beans.

2-Semi-literal idioms – include one or more literal constituents where at least one has a non-literal subsense, e.g. foot the bill.

3-Literal idioms – meet the essential criterion for idioms, which is invariability or restricted variation, they are less semantically complex than pure and semi-idioms, e.g. on foot, on the contrary.

We can also classify them according to their translation. Translating of idioms is a very difficult task for a translator; especially, if learners are not aware of the cultural differences of the source and target languages. The main problem for them is recognizing idioms and distinguishing idiomatic from non-idiomatic expressions. In order to help to understand idioms better, there is a classification of them. Idioms can be grouped into five categories of colloquialisms, proverbs, slang, allusions and phrasal verbs. Below is a brief definition of each with some examples. For instance the idiom “it is raining cat and dogs” cannot be understood if its cultural background is not known. It has a story and a brief title for it is given as “The phrase might have its roots in Norse mythology, medieval superstitions, the obsolete word catadupe (waterfall), or dead animals in the streets of Britain being picked up by storm waters” (https://www.loc.gov)

As an example, “jump for joy” is an easy and clear idiom. It has a real meaning. This idiom can be understood by foreign language learners easily. Students can understand and learn this idiom simply. “Jump for joy” is used in happy situations. For instance, he jumped for joy when he passed the exam. It can be said that there is a happy situation in this sentence, he is happy for his passing the exam. This idiom is clear and students can understand this sentence much more easily than the former one.

Phrasal verbs are the most famous words which have different meanings from their written form, this makes them to be accepted as idioms by some authorities. “Put on” for example, “put” means to leave something to somewhere, “on” means over; but when they are combined it means to wear. Almost all phrasal verbs includes this change. “Informal phrases” and “common sayings” are another category. Common sayings can be included into idioms. Among these ‘slang’ has a special place. “Slang” is a sub-language which is spoken daily, local and without taking care of grammar rules(http://wikipedia.com). It consists of idioms such as ”what's up?” and so on.

Idioms which were much more meaningful are the and observations and observation results of a society, especially, on different matters. Also it includes moral of the society. Humanity has such a long historical background that none of the idioms we used are newly found. They all have historical backgrounds. Most of the idioms have an history which lasts for centuries. When we looked the their origins, folk is the creator. Folk creates them with their experiences and with the memories of their ancestors. Anonymous idioms cannot be dated certain but the words of the famous people can be dated a thousand years back.

If people exposes to famine, they produce idioms such as : “Save up something for a rainy day” in English which means we must think bad things and must take precautions and “Ak akçe kara gun içindir.” in Turkish. It is obvious that all cultures produce its own idiom according to its own of traditional and moral and also linguistic tendencies. Linguistic tendencies are also another factor which affects using of idioms. Linguistic tendencies are determined by our education level, family backgrounds, curiosity for learning language, reading habits, writing habits and such like this. All these construct our speech. Even occupations affect our language usage and frequency of using idioms. A farmer and a lawyer speaks different languages, different subjects. Farmer speaks about crops, lawyer speaks about criminals. Their idioms, phrases and language they speak differs. Already, their working areas are different, their matters are different. For the reason that, each job group has its own sub-language. “It is raining cat and dogs” can be a vital clause for a farmer and rain can effect all his/her year long but it is not a matter for a lawyer if he is not working for a farmer.

Linguistic tendencies notice the using of idioms. A shopkeeper, a teacher, a doctor and a linguistics professor use idioms in different ways, of course. This is because of the level of education that people have taken; and also is related to the skill of the speaker’s using language. Under normal conditions, of course, a linguistic professor uses language and idioms more
effectively than the others who are mentioned above. Its opposite is also possible but controversial situations are completely extreme and marginal and rare situations. For instance, there are some people, who speak like a poet, whose words are as fluent as a poem; in spite of this, they are not well-educated (in schools). They may be ignorant but they use words so talentedly that you assume yourself speaking to a linguist or poet. These extreme people can use idioms as if they are their creator. Maybe, the best and most famous person to be given as an example is the ancient poet Homerus. His idiom “Asyclus Tyndome” is still used in almost all languages, in medicine, literature and even in sport presentation. It is also still used to tell “Everybody has a fatal point even if she/he seems /becomes the strongest person.”

In everyday use, idioms can seem unnecessary but when they are used speech becomes more effective. An conversation full of idioms can be illegible for a new learner for instance:

“A: Do as I say, not as I do
B: Easier said than done.
A: Empty vessels make most noise; do not forget no pain no gain! Also, easy come easy go. Enough is good as a feast. If your eyes are bigger than your stomach, you make your bed and you must lie on it.
B: Exception proves the rule, but charity begins at home. Between the devil and the deep blue sea. All is fair in love and war. All is well that ends well. Rome does not built in a day. I will be the son of my father.”

This dialogue between two people who are using idioms effectively, is comprehensible even illegible if you are a new learner. To understand that speech, meanings of these idioms must be learned.

Importance of idioms is better understood when the whole language is analysed. We can not separate language from other aspects, which are verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, phrasal verbs, proverbs...etc., while learning. They fulfill language and its holes metaphorically and specifically. This is an absolutely accepted fact that all humans have a tendency to shorten language and tongue is lazy in speaking. This is called economy by martined as: “Martinet (1955) provided a coherent definition of linguistic economy as the unstable balance between the needs of communication – which are always changing – and human inertia, two essential forces contributing to the optimization of the linguistic system. That is, the act of communication requires, on the one hand, clearness and precision, which multiply conspicuous units, and, on the other hand, a remarkable organic inertia, which produces effort relaxation, less numerous, less specific and more frequently occurring units, whose result is a hasty and careless expression. While inertia is a permanent, immutable component, man’s communicative needs change constantly, so that the nature of this balance will be modified over time”.

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and humor both in speech and writing." (2009, P.124).

Idioms are an important part of every language. As a language learner, knowing idioms is useful for foreign language learners. The more idioms you know, the more native-like your language will sound. By learning idioms, you learn a lot about the culture of the community speaking the language you are learning.

Idioms are a part of daily speech. Idioms are everywhere. People can find them in newspapers, books, magazines, on the radio, on the television, in everyday conservation and at work. Foreign language learners can face them everywhere. Everybody try to use idioms to make their language richer and more colorful and to convey subtle shades of meaning or intention, that is 'Idioms are the salt and pepper of any language' as Makkai said. Idiom is used in the spoken or the written language in communication.

On the other hand, idioms reflect the characteristic aspects of the nation they are created. Idioms are shaped by the aspects of a nation and culture. They represent the aspects of a nation. Martirosyan states "Idioms reflect certain cultural traditions and depict the national character." (P.220). Idioms are also an important part in the process of acculturation. According to the Wikipedia’s web site: Acculturation is the exchange of cultural features that results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact. (http://en.wikipedia.org). A learner of a foreign language is considered sophisticated when and if he/she learns the usage of idioms professionally.

It is a fact that second/foreign language learning/teaching has been a complex process. Using a proper approach or method in language teaching has always been a matter of concern among language learners and teachers. On the other hand, idioms have rather rigid structures, quite unpredictable meanings and fairly extensive uses, and that they are "notoriously difficult" but at the same time a very useful aspect of English for language learners.

Among learners, among Turkish learners in our country, learning English is the most important problem. When our students are handled in our country, learning a new language and its idioms can be said as the biggest problem in Turkey. For the reason that our people do not like learning English or other foreign languages. Learning English is a difficult issue for Turkish students. Idioms are the most confusing topic. It is because of the structure of the idiom. They are used seldom in daily usage in learning environments and never used out of the classroom. It is hard to teach grammatically and is not involved in grammar subjects. It must be taught and considered separately. In addition to these, idioms are a different space, even learners do not feel themselves as astronauts. For the reason that learners enter into a new universe. That new universe bewilders students and attracts some of them who are curious about learning language. But most of them are having trouble in learning idioms. Many language learners approaches English as one of the most challenging languages to learn because of the rules and unusual exceptions.

"Idioms are specific to one culture and language and their meaning is peculiar to that language (institutionalised), otherwise idioms defined as proper language of a people or country, dialect; specific character of a language; expression peculiar to a language" (The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, 1966). When idioms in one language are translated in to other languages they may lose their actual meaning because many idioms are specific to the culture. Idioms are special mode of expression, use or grouping of words, peculiar to a specific language (The Universal Dictionary of the English Language, 1958).

Idioms are grouped according to the difficulty degrees of idioms. Idioms can be grouped as easy, middle and difficult. They can have the real meaning and metaphorical meaning. Idioms have a specific aspect in communication.

In the present work, the English and Turkish idioms taken from English and Turkish dictionaries were analysed. According to their content, they were classified into different groups. The similarities and differences of English and Turkish idioms giving the same ideas were given, and some unique idioms, which had no equal idiomatic expressions in another language were analysed to demonstrate their special essence. The idioms, their differences and ways of translation were analyzed. The advice as to select the proper translation method, based on
the type of idioms, were also given.

The analysis of English and Turkish idioms is problematic. Existence of various ‘fragments of saying’ in languages are seen among similar shape. In the case of idioms, these different approaches may be explained by different point of view beside different sense of humour, cultural and of the different languages speakers' social background. As an example ‘drunk as a lord’ may be considered. It is evident that this idiom could be said only in a country, where such a ‘noble rank’ exists. At the same time, the Turkish idiom with the same meaning ‘dut gibi şarhoş’ (translation of it in English: drunk as a slipper) is considered; the comparison is in bare meaning is absurd. In translating idioms, translation methods such as alteration, subtraction and addition, generally accepted as adjustment, may be used to convey the required meaning to the native speakers of the main language. The most difficult in idioms is the metaphor (used in the idiom), it is more difficult to understand and translate this idioms into another language. When encountered such specific idioms, whose literal translation is senseless, the translator must apply to a special dictionary, find the respective definitions. Translator must use them as a basis point and must translate them in essence and must provide adequate translations, must adjust the meaning into the target language.

When idioms are deeply analysed, these findings appear about their origin:

Most of the idioms are formed by work-life and technology, a great number of idioms originates from a time while people were working on their farms and they were farmer at that time, also there have been many idioms which are created by being inspired to farm animals, for example, take the bull by the horns, the black sheep of the family, don’t count your chickens before they hatch, etc.

Some idioms are created in country life or traders' transportations for example, put somebody through the mill, eat like a horse, put the cart before the horse; strike while the iron is hot, etc.

As well, several idioms are created thanks to the science and technology, for example, she has a short fuse, we are on the same wave length, I need to recharge my batteries etc.

Year after year many idioms enter into the English language from the world of sports and entertainment, for example, have a good innings, dice with death, behind the scenes, play the second fiddle, etc.

Most of the idioms have been inserted English from the language of literature and history, for example, sour grapes, the goose that laid the golden eggs, the streets are paved with gold, etc. Some Idioms came from the Bible and Shakespeare’s works, for example, the salt of the earth, fall by the way side, your pound of flesh, ships that pass in the night, etc.

There are a lot of idioms in which body parts are used metaphorically, for example, use your head, the idea never entered my head, she broke his heart, he opened his heart, I speak from the bottom of my heart, the news finally reached her ears, keep your mouth shut, etc.

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

CONCLUSION

All these findings make clear that idiom learning is a difficult job for learners. One, who is learning a new language (and all its aspects, naturally idioms), must learn grammatical patterns, cultural and traditional features, new words...etc. Among all these, the most difficult one for learners is idioms. Because they need both cultural and grammatical and vocabulary study. This makes learners’ learning process more difficult. Best solution for this learning difficulty is the holistic method. It enables life long, contextual, cooperative, cognitive, student centered learning. Idiom teaching needs all these. When student continue to learn out of the class it will be life long, when idioms learned in a context and is not taught with rote learning it will be contextual, when students try to learn together (not teacher centered) it will be cooperative, when they discover new idioms and their meaning it will be cognitive, when all these are done by student it will be student centered and if all of these practiced in learning it will be holistic.
If language is considered as the center of our lives, teaching and learning of it, is another ‘center’ to be thought. Also, if language learning and foreign language learning must teach the learner the life, it must contain idioms because idioms are the refined words of the society. Society lives, society thinks, society sees, society faults, society corrects, society experiences and than society speaks. First society speaks long, then shortens it. When this refine process is completed ‘idiom’ is created. This refined words or phrases is problematic while teaching. The happiness of learning something new, learning to learn, learn in a life long process, learning all the time and learning cooperatively must be the basis features in idiom learning.

“How and why holistic is suitable for idiom learning?” was the beginning question for this study. It is because idioms are used in real life and daily language, and holistic is a life long method and in interaction with the life itself. On the other hand, language learning and idiom learning is some disadvantageous for Turkish students because they cannot go on learning English and its idioms in their social life and society because there is almost no place where only English is spoken. Turkish is everywhere in students’ life. To practice English daily, Turkish students have to go abroad. This is both vital and fatal side of language learning in Turkey. Other disadvantage is the students’ attitude. If student is reluctant, holistic is useless. Holistic education system has voids in practice and cannot be effective in foreign language teaching in countries such like Turkey where English is rarely spoken. Learners in Turkey have to and are forced to learn foreign languages in class. That is, problem is not the idiom itself, problem is the rare usage of the foreign languages in real life.

Teachers should give much more importance to idioms and proverbs in foreign language teaching, because they are an important part of the culture without which learning a foreign language is neither feasible nor easy. The basic point in idiom learning is to encourage learners because the biggest problem in learning is the discouragement of students. Prejudice for difficulties make learning impossible. Idioms also must be taught in an enjoyable way which can include special dramas that aims to teach idioms. They can be asked in riddles whose answers are complete idioms, they can be taught via videos or demonstrations. They can also be learned by classical teaching methods such as writing, listening, reading or speaking. Another preferred method is translation. A foreign learner can learn idioms by translating them into target language or target language to mother tongue. That is, they are not difficult or learning of them is not difficult; the thing which is difficult is to demolish the prejudice. To demolish this prejudice it is best to apply holistic method.

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