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SCHOOL”**

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**TEACHING IDIOMS TO INCREASE INTEREST IN LEARNING ENGLISH
AMONG YOUNG LEARNERS (GRADE 8): AUTHENTIC ACTIVE LEARNING
ACTIVITIES WITH IDIOMS TO SUPPLEMENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE
COURSEBOOKS**

Master's Thesis

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PREFACE

Idioms, being language units which are defined as figurative expressions in which the meanings of integral words do not directly constitute the meaning of the whole expression (Hung, 2019) have been long considered as language units with unique culture-based meanings that are used in everyday speech and literary works to add expressive colouring to speech/written texts. Hence, they are generally believed to be bridges to connect learners with native speakers, thus increasing genuine interest in language learning. According to Lennon (1998) learning idioms improves students' vocabulary and helps develop conversational skills. Also, Cornell (1999) believes that idioms can be difficult to remember and reproduce, but nevertheless they can greatly improve students' reading and listening comprehension. In addition, Andarab (2014) argues that idioms can generate interest in learning English because some expressions may be the same in the English learner's native language, while others may be similar with slight differences or even really weird for non-native speakers. The role of textbooks in teaching idioms is crucial as they present idioms according to unit topics in clusters and groups.

Although the use of idioms in teaching English is important it is rather challenging, especially for non-native teachers of English. The research problem lies in identifying reasons why it might be that challenging, and how additional to course books authentic activities to learn idioms can support students' interest in learning English and teachers' desire to give more attention to using idioms in the class. The aims of the present research are to reveal teachers' attitudes to the place of idioms in their teaching and the approaches they use to teach idioms to young learners of lower-secondary school, to explore how rich the exercises offered in the English coursebook "Enterprise 2" for grade 8 to teach idioms are and to reveal how the inclusion of authentic active learning exercises to teach idioms as a supplement to the coursebook can influence students' interest in learning English.

The thesis consists of the following parts: the Introduction, Chapter I, Chapter II and the Conclusion. The Introduction discusses the role of idioms in the English language, the importance of teaching idioms to students, and increasing interest in learning English through the study of idioms. Chapter I "Teaching Idioms in the EFL Classroom" is aimed to research different approaches to learning idioms and effective activities to supplement the coursebook. Chapter II "Idioms in the English Class: Teachers' Opinions and Activities to Supplement Coursebooks" presents teachers' opinions on idioms and their

use in teaching, discusses the use of idioms in the class, and its results. The Conclusion sums up the results of the research and gives comments on the hypothesis.

PREFACE	2
<i>Contents</i>	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
Idioms: Icing on a Cake for a Language	5
Why Teaching Idioms?	5
Increasing Interest in Learning English through Teaching Idioms	7
CHAPTER I: TEACHING IDIOMS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM.....	10
1.1 Definition of Idioms.....	10
1.2 Classifications of Idioms.....	11
1.3 Issues in Teaching and Learning Idioms.....	13
1.4 Approaches to Teaching Idioms.....	14
1.4.1 Traditional Approach to Teaching Idioms	14
1.4.2 Cognitive Approach to Teaching Idioms	16
1.5 Activities to Teaching Idioms	18
CHAPTER II. IDIOMS IN THE ENGLISH CLASS: TEACHERS’ OPINIONS AND ACTIVITIES TO SUPPLEMENT COURSEBOOKS	24
2.1 English Language Teachers’ Opinions: Idioms and Readiness to Teach them	24
2.2 Teaching Idioms with Supplementary to Coursebook Activities to Increase Students’ Interest in Learning English	32
2.3 Analysis of the Coursebook “Enterprise 2”	33
2.4 Idioms Used in the Experiment.....	34
2.5 Authentic Active Learning Activities with Idioms to Supplement the English Language Coursebook “Enterprise 2”.....	36
2.6 Results of the Experiment.....	37
CONCLUSION.....	42
SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN.....	43
REFERENCES.....	44
APPENDICES.....	50

INTRODUCTION

Idioms: Icing on a Cake for a Language

Idioms are integral parts of any language: they enhance expressiveness, accuracy and figurativeness of the subject of conversation. According to Bromley (1984), idioms exist in all languages and are widely used by speakers of all languages around the world. The English language is no exception in this regard and contains a huge number of idioms that are considered bright and well-aimed (Brenner, 2011; Zyzik, 2011). Also Elkilic (2008) mentions that English is abundant with idioms and learning them constitutes the soul of the language. De Caro (2009) argues that without the use of idioms, English would lose much of its diversity both in spoken and written texts. Many scholars talk about the uniqueness and originality of idioms in the language. Johnson-Laird (1993) believes that idioms are mysterious, pervasive, and poetic. Levorato (1993) claims that idioms intrigue and engage people's imagination, as they can transform abstract meanings into more concrete ones and enrich the meaning of simple concepts. Savitsky (2019) states that idioms become the vehicles of thought, which are reborn in speech in the form of living images, contributing to the creation of a figurative portrayal of the world, transmitting native speakers' cultural codes. Cooper (1999) notes that idioms provide the language with diversity and imagination, their acquisition embodies understanding a particular culture. Bromley (1984) promotes the use of idioms by stating that "idioms add humour, imagery, and spice to the language" (p.272).

Despite their unique nature, idioms are widespread and used in all types of language, formal and informal, spoken and written (Karunakaran & Maisa, 2013). They play a vital role in media, standard speech, business, and education (ibid.). Thus, for non-native speakers, the study of idioms is a prerequisite for successful language acquisition. According to Cowie et al (1993: 10), being familiar with a wide range of idioms and being able to use them accurately and appropriately are among the distinguishing marks of a native command of the language and trust-worthy indicators of the proficiency of foreign learners.

Why Teaching Idioms?

The importance of teaching figurative language, namely idioms, in the context of a foreign language has been recognized by many scholars (Wilk, 2015; Thyab, 2016;

Cooper, 1998; Ambrose, 2008). The main reason for the paramount importance of idioms is that they are widespread (Bortfeld, 2003). Native speakers use idioms frequently and they find it hard to speak or write without such expressions (Seidl & McMordie, 1978). Crystal (1995) states that idioms are found in all genres and registers, including mass media (journalism and advertising), political discourse, as well as oral speech and everyday conversation. In turn, Simpson (2003) asserts that academic prose is not devoid of idioms either. Considering the fact that there is a wide range of situations in which people encounter idioms both in speech and in writing, we can say that it is very important to pay significant attention to teaching idioms.

In addition to frequency, idioms include cultural aspects. Ovando and Collier (1985) argue that learning of idioms certainly teaches non-native speakers of a language the culture of its people. Moreno (2011) states that idioms widen people's understanding of a language and provide learners with cultural and historical information about the target or foreign language. Rizq (2015) also says that idioms carry within them the history, heritage, culture and customs of its native users. Ambrose (2008) adds, since vocabulary and culture are intertwined, non-native speakers can gain more vocabulary through idioms and conversely, can learn more about idioms from being exposed to the target culture. Moon (1998) mentions that teaching idioms is effective, since they occupy a large place in culture and civilization and reflect the image of the community. Thus, idioms help to expand the student's knowledge in the field of culture and language history. Language development is incomplete without understanding the culture of this language. Taking this into account, it can be stated that idioms are vital for mastering a foreign language.

Another reason for the importance of idioms is that they indicate the level of language proficiency. Non-native speakers who use figurative language in spoken and written discourse are considered as more proficient. Landolf (2008) argues that in order to achieve a high level of language competence, it is necessary to correctly understand and use figurative language. According to Belousova (2015), understanding and using idioms fluently could be viewed as a sign of language proficiency, as they could be an effective way to provide students with better conditions to improve their communication skills in the daily context. Thyab (2016) adds that learning idioms not only increases the vocabulary of the target language, but also helps non-native speakers speak more fluently and sound more natural and native-like. In addition, Ray (2000) suggests that mastery of idioms is necessary for successful language education and understanding of the language

as a mother tongue. It can be said that the more a non-native speaker is able to understand and use idioms, the closer he or she is to the level in the target language proficiency as a native speaker.

Finally, idiomatic expressions reflect a figurative sense, which adds a special effect or imaginative descriptions. These expressions are important because they give language a peculiar flavour and colour, or in the words of Rodrigues and Winnberg (2013) „make a language more vibrant“ (p.8).

Summing up the above, it can be noted that the lack of knowledge in idioms makes it difficult to comprehend the English language as a whole. Strutz (1996) states, “no one can be said to be really proficient in a language until he or she possesses an ‘idiomatic’ control of it” (p.vii). Therefore, English teachers should inspire their students to learn idiomatic expressions so that they improve their English skills and would be on an equal footing with native speakers.

Increasing Interest in Learning English through Teaching Idioms

Interest has a great influence on the study of foreign languages. According to Irsal (2019), interest is a factor that is very calculated in terms of language teaching and can be a basic capital to accelerate language acquisition. Idioms are a rich linguistic material that increases students' interest in learning the English language and develops their linguistic intuition. Cacciari and Tabossi (1993) state that idioms are a fascinating phenomenon in language and the interest in them has a long tradition. Andarab (2014) also argues that idioms are interesting to learn because some expressions may be the same in the English learner's native language, while others may be similar with slight differences or even really weird for non-native speakers. The latter includes the expression “break a leg”. Indeed, it is not easy to guess that it is uttered with the best intentions, since it conveys a sincere wish of good luck. Grimes (2018) believes that this opaqueness in meaning makes idioms so intriguing and inviting to learners; successfully using them can feel like cracking a secret code.

Idioms increase interest in learning and significantly improve vocabulary and general knowledge of the language. Syunina et al. (2018) claim that most of the new words can be perceived through the study of idioms, which serves as a tool for consolidating vocabulary. Furthermore, Liu (2008) affirms that learning idioms for non-native speakers

increases their level of general language proficiency. Schmitt and Rodgers (2020) state that idioms play an important role in facilitating language, they contribute to fluency and inspire learners. Improving the fluency of speech and understanding, in turn, increases students' self-confidence. As a result, mastery of idioms is an indicator of second language fluency (Junus, 2021). The acquisition of these figurative formulaic sequences is a key element of linguistic competence (Boers et al., 2009; Cooper, 1999; Liu, 2008) as foreign or second language fluency depends on accurately using figurative lexical items. The study of idioms also develops the language competence of students, arouses their interest in the expressive means of the language. The neutral phrase "very fast" is much less expressive than its corresponding idiom "before you can say knife". In addition to the emotional content, students get used to capturing connotative shades of meaning. Ambrose (2008) believes that understanding English vocabulary requires more than knowing the denotative meaning of words. It requires its speakers to have connotative word comprehension and an understanding of figurative language, and idioms fall into this final category (ibid.).

Idioms are interesting to study because they not only enrich the vocabulary of students, but also introduce the culture and style of thinking of native speakers. According to Liontas (2017), teaching and learning idioms have many advantages for learners, such as enhancing receptive and productive competencies, as well as understanding the culture of target language speakers. Many idioms have an interesting etymological background, acquaintance with which makes the study of idioms even more exciting for students and simultaneously expands their horizons. When teaching English idioms, students would learn that the formation of British culture was largely influenced by the fact that Britain has been a maritime power for centuries. Therefore, many idioms common in English are originally associated with the sea and navigation. For example, the idiom "all hands on deck" means as a call for the immediate assistance of everyone present or available (Barrett, 2019: 6). Initially, it was a command for all the sailors to come to the deck of the boat to help navigate the storm. Another idiom "to know the ropes" has the meaning to have knowledge and experience of the appropriate procedures (ibid.) Previously, this was said about an experienced sailor who knew the location and purpose of each rope on the ship. According to Nilsen and Nilsen (2003), by knowing the origins of idioms, students can more easily figure out the metaphorical meanings. Al-Houti (2018) suggests that the etymological elaboration method helps language learners master the target idioms, and also enhances students' motivation to learn as it arouses their curiosity. Thus, making

acquaintance with the etymological side of idioms helps their better assimilation, and also awakens interest in students when studying them.

Thus, idioms are widespread figurative expressions that make speech more expressive, give originality and accuracy to the language. Learning idioms enhances students' level of language proficiency, increases the vocabulary, helps speak English more fluently and native-like, and expands students' knowledge in the field of culture and language history. Due to their intriguing nature, idioms are very attractive to students and can positively influence their interest in learning English.

The proposed research hypothesis that supplementary sets of authentic active-learning activities for young learners of lower-secondary school to teach idioms increase students' interest in learning English.

Research questions are the following:

- 1) What are the approaches teachers use to teach idioms to young learners of lower-secondary school?
- 2) What are teachers' attitudes to the place of idioms in their teaching?
- 3) How rich are the exercises offered in the English language coursebook "Enterprise 2" for grade 8 to teach idioms?
- 4) How can the inclusion of authentic active learning exercises with idioms as supplementary to the coursebook activities influence students' interest in learning English?

CHAPTER I: TEACHING IDIOMS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

1.1 Definition of Idioms

Idioms belong to the category of non literal or figurative language, i.e. the language that refers to words or phrases that are meaningful, but not literally true (Rodriguez & Winnberg, 2013).

There are many definitions of idioms. The Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms (2004) defines an idiom as “a group of words in a fixed order that has a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word on its own” (p.81). Bateni (2010) interprets the idiom “an expression whose meaning cannot be deduced from the literal definitions and the arrangement of its parts, but refers instead to a figurative meaning that is known only through common use” (p.592). Yunus (2021) draws attention to the fact that idioms have traditionally been defined as multiword units whose figurative meanings cannot be derived from their individual words. Liu (2008) also defines an idiom as a multiword expression that is invariant or variance-restricted in structure and often non-or semi-literal in meaning. Lontas (2017) focuses on the syntactic indecomposability of an idiom and defines it as “a figure of speech, used as an integral entity, not subject to further decomposition and usually not allowing for the rearrangement of its constituent parts” (p.7). Moreover, Baker (2018) defines idioms as “frozen patterns of language that allow only minor changes in their form and usually carrying a meaning that cannot be predicted from their individual components” (p.94)

Ghazala (2003) identifies five common points in all definitions of the idiom:

1. Idioms are all in all metaphorical and cannot be understood directly.
2. They should not be taken literally; in the sense that their meanings are not the outcome of the individual meanings of their constituent words taken collectively.
3. Their syntactic form is usually fixed and cannot be changed or described as ungrammatical. Moreover, no word can be added, deleted or replaced.
4. Their meanings are also invariable.
5. They are mainly cultural and informal.

In linguistics, the term "idiom" has both broad and narrow meanings (Moon, 1998). In a broad sense, this is a term denoting verbose elements based on the customs of the culture of native speakers (Belousova, 2015). In its narrow sense, the term is limited to a certain type of unit whose meaning cannot be fully inferred from the meanings of its constituents

(ibid.). In this paper, the term "idiom", including its synonym "idiomatic expression", would be used in its narrow sense, i.e. an idiom is limited to a certain type of unit whose meaning cannot be fully inferred from the meanings of its constituents.

1.2 Classifications of Idioms

Different researchers have classified idioms in different categories. There are known classifications of idioms by Makkai (1972); Nunberg (1978); Strassler (1982); Halliday (1985); Irujo (1986); Cacciari and Glucksberg (1991); Fernando (1996); Grant (2003), Yoshikawa (2004). Idioms can be classified according to their “semantic”, “syntactic”, and “functional properties” (Grant & Bauer, 2004). The following is the description of three of the most used classifications.

Nunberg (1978) proposed a typology for characterising how literal meanings of idiom components contribute (or do not contribute) to the overall interpretation of idiomatic phrases. He categorises idioms as follows:

- **Normally decomposable idioms:** are expressions in which a part of the idiom is used literally (e.g., *break the ice* means to do something to make people feel relaxed and comfortable at a party or meeting, or in a new situation; *clear the air* means to get rid of stale or bad air).
- **Abnormally decomposable idioms:** are expressions where the referent of an idiom's parts can be identified metaphorically (e.g., *spill the beans* means to reveal the truth about something secret or private; *bury the hatchet* means when people who have quarrelled agree to forget their quarrel and become friends again).
- **Semantically non-decomposable idioms:** fit the traditional definition because the idiom meaning is less likely to be derived compositionally from the words that comprise the string (e.g., *chew the fat* means to chat with someone in an informal and friendly way; *pack a punch* means for something to have a very powerful effect).

Apart from Nunberg, other scholars, Makkai, Strassler and Halliday, conducted studies on idiom decomposability, and their conclusion is that decomposable idioms are syntactically more productive, lexically more flexible and more quickly processed than non-decomposable idioms (Funtec, 2015).

Cacciari and Glucksberg (1991) proposed a functional approach based on degree of compositionality and semantic transparency. They classify idioms as:

- **Opaque idioms:** are phrases, in which it is impossible to infer the real meaning of the idiom from the meaning of its individual elements (e.g., *kick the bucket* means to die).
- **Transparent idioms:** are phrases, in which there is a direct mapping of literal word meanings to idiomatic meanings. (e.g., *play your cards right*, means do the correct things to achieve a desired result.)
- **Quasi-metaphorical:** are phrases, in which the overall literal meaning metaphorically maps onto the idiomatic meaning similar to metaphorical expression. For example, *don't give up the ship* is simultaneously an exemplar of the act of fighting and also a phrase that can refer to any instance of keeping on trying or working on something until getting it right.

Fernando (1996) applied a semantic approach to his classification. He groups idioms into three classes:

- **Pure idioms:** a type of conventionalized, non-literal multiword expression whose meaning cannot be understood by adding up the meanings of the words that make up the phrase. (e.g., *blowing the gaff* means to reveal a secret).
- **Semi-literal idioms:** these contain one or more literary elements and at least one with a non-literal sense. For example, idiom *foot the bill* (i.e. pay), in which *foot* is the non-literal element, whereas the word *bill* is used literally.
- **Literal idioms:** are semantically less complex than the other two, and therefore easier to understand even if one is not familiar with these expressions (e.g., *teacher's pet*; on foot).

However, the traditional principle of classification of idiomatic expressions for students of English as a foreign language (EFL students) is still the thematic principle (Ahmadi, 2019). It is most popular because it divides idioms into thematic groups, for example, nature, animals, food, weather, body parts, colours, etc. This classification makes it easier to memorise the meaning of idioms, and also allows correlations between the topics of lessons and thematic groups of idioms. The advantage of this classification is that when a foreign language student encounters a certain speech situation, he or she can select the necessary thematic group and choose an idiom that corresponds to the speech context.

1.3 Issues in Teaching and Learning Idioms

Idioms present many difficulties for English language learners. Buckingham (2006) notes that idioms are widely recognized as a stumbling block in the acquisition of a foreign language. The complexity of idioms may be related to the fact that they are deeply rooted in the culture of the target language. These cultural-specific expressions require knowledge of the culture of the target language in order to minimise the difficulty of learning them (Al-Houti, 2018). According to Pimenova (2011), the difficulty of learning idioms is explained by cultural differences, the lack of similar idioms in the native language of students and other challenges. On the other hand, Cooper (2012) states that idioms are difficult for language learners because the figurative meaning can be unpredictable. Learners should go beyond word-by-word interpretation and resort to a figurative meaning. (Al-Houti, 2018) For example, “once in a blue moon” means rare occurrences. As discussed above, idioms are classified from transparent to opaque, or decomposable to non-decomposable. Transparent/decomposable idioms are easy to understand due to the clear relationship between individual lexical components and figurative meaning (Cooper, 2012; Gibbs, 1993). Idioms such as “a storm in a teacup” (great outrage or excitement about a trivial matter), “to break the silence” (to end a period of silence by talking or making a noise), “from top to bottom” (completely) may be considered as decomposable because of the obvious connection between the figurative meaning and the literal reading of the phrase. Whereas, non-decomposable idioms, such as “to talk through one’s hat” (to say something that is ridiculous or totally incorrect), “to be in the soup” (to be in an unpleasant or difficult situation), “to pull someone’s leg” (to tease someone), are recognized as confusing to EFL student due to unrelated literal and nonliteral meanings. In turn, Irujo (1986) discussed the difficulties involved in learning idioms.

According to Irujo (1986), non-literalness is among the reasons why idioms are difficult to learn in a second language. Language learners have difficulties with understanding the non-literal meaning of idioms. The second factor compounding the difficulties associated with learning idioms is that idioms are difficult to use correctly (ibid.). Idioms have grammatical constraints and should be used in appropriate situations. For example, “make head or tail of” is an idiom that is used in a negative sense, as in “I couldn't make heads or tails of her reaction”. Some idioms are flexible idioms that allow grammatical transformations; however, most idioms are frozen/fixed, which do not tolerate changes. For instance, it is impossible to passivate the idiom “kick the bucket” while retaining its

idiomatic meaning. Furthermore, Irujo (1986) argues that idioms that are present in a student's first language are easy to learn. There are many identical idioms particularly if the languages are related. Positive transfer can be used with identical idioms. Similar but not identical idioms can be problematic for learners (ibid.). They can lead to interference or negative transmission. The third factor complicating the study of idioms is the lack of familiarity of students with idioms (ibid.). She emphasised the fact that idioms tend to be omitted in the speech addressed to learners of English. According to Asl (2013) and Wray (2000), idioms receive less attention in particular in EFL settings because teachers try to simplify the English language to their students and most of the focus is directed to grammar rules. Furthermore, Lontas (2017) claims that EFL teachers are left to their own devices regarding the place of idioms in the second language curriculum. Some teachers of English take a neutral approach to idioms, feel that idioms are difficult to teach and that they create more problems than they solve, while others maintain that it is better not to focus on idioms since there is so much non-idiomatic material to learn in second language class (ibid.) In addition to that, many foreign language teaching materials either ignore idioms or consider idiomatic language of peripheral importance (Panou, 2013) Evidence of this belief are "the countless separate little books of idioms for various foreign languages often published as a sort of optional adjunct to grammars and dictionaries" (Lennon, 1998: 6).

Despite the difficulty of teaching English idioms, it is still necessary for EFL teachers to teach their students these idioms. The reason is that idioms are common in daily life and provide a rich source of English culture (Cooper, 2012). Therefore, learning the English language is not merely learning the system of the language but it also covers the cultural part of the language or more precisely the native speaker of the English language.

1.4 Approaches to Teaching Idioms

1.4.1 Traditional Approach to Teaching Idioms

Idioms are an important part of language acquisition, but at the same time they are difficult to learn. In this regard, there are many methods of teaching idioms. All of these teaching methods can be organised under two general methods - the traditional and the cognitive linguistic approaches. (Rizq, 2015)

The traditional approach to teaching idioms involves working on understanding the meaning of the idiom, memorising its form and activating the idiom in speech (Temnikova, 2020). As a rule, idioms are grouped into blocks either by communicative topics or by keywords, and the presentation of a new idiom is carried out in context, with the help of definitions, pictures (ibid.).

Esayan (2016) emphasises the effectiveness of grouping the studied idioms not only by thematic blocks, but also by similarity with idioms of the native language:

- 1) idioms that have a complete analogue in the native language
- 2) idioms, the meaning of which can be guessed
- 3) idioms that have no analogue in the native language.

The traditional approach focuses on enriching students' vocabulary, developing language guessing and language thinking (Temnikova, 2020). According to Rizq (2015), the traditional approach encourages teaching idioms in context. Liontas (2003) states that the context can effectively facilitate understanding as well as learning and teaching of idioms. Liontas's study concludes that "the absence of context" creates obstacles "on learning and comprehending idioms" (p.12). Furthermore, there are two competing views in the method of teaching idioms in context - teaching idioms with an extended context and with a limited context. In her research, Kainulainen (2006) emphasises the role of extended context over limited context. Moreover, she notes that the more contexts surrounding an idiom, the more likely the EFL learners will come to the correct meaning. Also, Asl (2013) argues that an extended context, such as stories, has a significant effect on learning idioms than directly teaching the meaning of the expressions, since teaching vocabulary in context is better than teaching laundry lists of vocabulary alone.

However, some scholars oppose the traditional approach to teaching idioms. Boers, et al., (2004) and Mäntylä, (2004) do not consider the traditional approach as a sufficiently effective way, and believe that in this case, the only available strategy for mastering idioms by students is rote learning and memorization. Chen and Lai (2013) rate this method as time- and effort-consuming, as students must learn idioms without associations or previous knowledge.

Nevertheless, Kövecses and Szabo (1996) assert that the traditional method should not have a negative connotation. Lee (2010) believes that the traditional method should not be abandoned, since some idioms have a literal meaning. Nation (2001) notes the

advantages of the traditional approach, stating that “vocabulary items must not only be known, they must be known well so that they can be fluently accessed. Repetition thus adds to the quality of knowledge and also to the quantity or strength of this knowledge” (p.14).

Thus, it can be concluded that the traditional approach to teaching idioms is a reasonable method that enhances students' knowledge of the language.

1.4.2 Cognitive Approach to Teaching Idioms

In cognitive linguistics, scientists have developed a completely different approach to the interpretation of idioms. Cognitive linguists, including Lakoff (1987), believe that idiomatic expressions are directly related to our conceptual thinking. For this reason, and contrary to the traditional opinion, the meaning of most idioms is not arbitrary, but rather motivated by conceptual metaphors, cultural and historical context in which they originated (Achour & Kouraba, 2016). According to Lakoff (1987), conceptual metaphor refers to the connection between two semantic domains at the level of thought. The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphor is not a "matter of language", words. Samani and Hashemian (2012) state that it is our conceptual system that is metaphorically structured and defined, and the meaning of many idioms depends on the metaphorical conceptual system. Conceptual metaphor can facilitate the comprehension of idioms (Rizq, 2015). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) recommend teachers and learners of English to be aware of the conceptual metaphor of the target language to be able to understand idioms. According to Rizq (2015), in order to apply the conceptual metaphor method, English learners need to obtain some knowledge of literature terms such as metaphor, metonymy, simile and personification.

Research by many scholars (Cakir, 2011; Samani & Hashemian,2012; Kömür & Cimen, 2009) revealed the effectiveness of a method based on the theory of conceptual metaphor. Hung (2019) confirms that students who received semantic explanations outperformed those students who learned the idioms without paying attention to the conceptualization behind the idioms. In addition, their results showed that the use of a cognitive approach in the EFL classroom makes the learning process interesting and insightful, since idioms are considered as “semantically motivated” expressions (Boers, 2001: 38). Kömür and

Cimen, (2009) conclude that, according to their research, language learners can find the cognitive approach as extremely helpful and at the same time create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom. Berendi, Csabi and Kövecses (2008) agree that a cognitive approach to teaching idioms improves students' understanding of figurative language, and they argue that students' awareness of the motives behind meanings helps to memorise figurative phrases better than the traditional method of memorising words using translations. Samani and Hashemian (2012) oppose the traditional method of teaching idioms, preferring the conceptual metaphors instruction, since it allows students to express inner thoughts, views, ideas and emotions the way native speakers do.

In order to apply conceptual metaphors in teaching idioms, Li (2010) proposed to consider three aspects. The metaphorical competence of EFL teachers should be developed because, firstly, they are the developers of the conceptual metaphor theory. Secondly, students' awareness of metaphors should be increased by informing them that metaphors are considered not only as “poetic or rhetorical embellishments” (ibid :p.208). Thirdly, the cultural background of idioms should not be underestimated because the presence of different religious beliefs and world views, as well as living in a different environment and geographical location affect our “metaphorical mode of thinking” (ibid.:p.209).

Speaking about the cultural and historical context of idioms, it is necessary to mention the method of etymological elaboration, which is widely used in the cognitive approach to teaching idioms. According to Skoufaki (2008), etymological elaboration refers to the practice of informing students about the historical, cultural and etymological origin of idioms. It is believed that this practice causes mental images of specific scenes in the minds of students, which can be stored in memory along with the verbal form of the idiom, so lexical information can be encoded in a double way (ibid.). Boers (2004) states that providing explanations of the origin of idioms plays a significant role in building the etymological awareness of learners. Cakir (2011) suggests that teaching idioms only is not enough; they should be practised and produced by learners. A research study conducted by Zarei and Rahimi (2012) provides considerable support for the use of etymology on idiom production when compared to other strategies. They investigated the influence of etymological elaboration on the understanding the metaphorical meanings of idioms, and claimed that knowing where words and phrases come from contributes to the overall idioms production.

However, despite the many advantages of the cognitive approach to teaching idioms, scientists note significant shortcomings in it. In this way, Rodriguez and Moreno (2009) argue that the disadvantage of this method is the huge amount of time and effort that the teacher would have to invest in it, since processing the material and creating connections between conceptual metaphors can be time consuming and labour intensive. Tyler (2012) emphasises that the cognitive approach focuses on explanations stemming from the everyday world and learners' experiences, but since each language illuminates slightly different aspects of human experience, therefore learners may have difficulty mapping the differences between their first and second language. He adds that the cognitive approach is not perfect, and although several studies have shown that it can be used in the EFL classroom, it still needs some modifications to become a full teaching method (Tyler 2012)

To conclude, there is no single ideal approach to the study of idioms. Both approaches, both traditional and cognitive, have their strengths and weaknesses. However, they can be perfectly combined, as one method can complement the other. Chakir (2011) emphasises the importance of the teaching of idioms and the use of all possible means to develop students' pragmatic competence.

1.5 Activities for Teaching Idioms

Because of the importance of idioms in successful language learning, finding more effective ways to teach idioms has been a longstanding concern of many practising teachers and researchers (Zarei, 2020) As a result of common efforts, several techniques have been proposed to improve the study of idioms. Asri and Rochmawati (2017) in their article “Innovative Teaching of English Idiomatic Expressions for EFL Learners” consider the most recent and effective strategies for the successful teaching of idioms. Some of these methods would be used in the empirical study experiment of this study. The innovative strategies for teaching English idiomatic expressions are described below:

- 1) using idioms in essay writing
- 2) creating conversations using idioms
- 3) using real life or authentic materials
- 4) using exercises of problem solving

5) making idiom posters

Using Idioms in Essay Writing

According to Chen and Lai (2013), one of the ways to represent idiomatic expressions in EFL contexts is to integrate them into the teaching essay writing. They integrated the teaching of metaphorical idioms into the teaching of narrative and descriptive essay writing (Asri & Rochmawati, 2017). When writing a descriptive essay, the teacher asks students to write 3-4 paragraphs on a specific topic (for example, on the topic of experiencing intense anger). The teacher then introduces students to idioms related to the topic of anger and asks them to complete tasks with these idioms. After working with idioms, students return with their essay and finalise it, including idioms in its content. A week later, students give the teacher both versions of their essay.

Creating Conversation Using Idioms

The benefit of using this learning strategy is that students not only understand the idioms but also learn to use them in context. For example, to introduce students to the idiom “to give someone a hard time”, the teacher offers students a dialogue that includes a new idiom and asks students to guess the meaning of this idiom. Students assume the meaning of the idiom from the context of the dialogue. Students also give other examples of what “to give someone a hard time”. The teacher then asks the students to continue this practice by working in pairs. Each pair of students gets one or two idioms to work with. They must write a conversation using the idiom indicated in it. Students act out their recorded conversations in front of their classmates. Thus, students not only practise using idioms, but also hear other examples from classmates, other ways in which these idioms can be included in the conversation (Asri & Rochmawati, 2017).

Using Real Life or Authentic Materials

Bernardo (2006) argues that the sources of authentic materials that can be used in the classroom are endless. Using authentic materials, the teacher can demonstrate how idioms are used in the media, in newspaper and magazine articles, as well as in songs, cartoons, videos, advertisements, etc. This, in particular, concerns the use of authentic texts. For

example, when using a newspaper, students do not need to read the entire article, they can only use newspaper headlines. The important thing is that students can understand how this idiom is used in the newspaper headline. Students should know that there are real people who actually speak such idioms. Subsequently, they may feel that they are ready to start using some of them themselves.

Tafari (2009) considers movies to be one of the most effective authentic materials. She says that watching movies in real life is usually fun and relaxing. Teachers should try to create a similar atmosphere in the classroom so that both the teacher and the students enjoy the movie and the tasks along with it (ibid.). Yazici (2020) claims that movies should be included in the curriculum because of their contribution to the development of language skills.

Another authentic resource that may be used for teaching idioms is the Internet, since a large amount of diverse material is easily available on it. The Internet contains educational materials that make it possible to teach every language skill. In addition, it is constantly being updated, becoming more visually stimulating as well as interactive (Berardo, 2006). There is a wide range of websites available for learning idioms such as discussions, definitions, categorization of idioms, drawing, dramatisation, storytelling, games, audio and video activities, etc. On the most popular video hosting platform YOUTUBE, the programme Let them talk TV (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olRY2fLpLOU&feature=youtu.be>) has meanings of more than 100 idioms and examples of their use in speech. Video lessons are accompanied by subtitles. For those who have difficulty with listening, the pace of watching videos can be slowed down. Another resource Learn English Today (<https://www.learn-english-today.com/idioms/idiom-categories/communication/communication-contact.html>) organises idioms by topics and alphabet. An explanation of each idiom and an example of its use in speech is given. Another approach to the systematisation of idioms is on the website British English https://britlish.com/public/britlish_library/category-za.php?id=24&pageno=1. Here idioms are presented in groups according to the keyword. Each group of idioms is accompanied by a set of Activation pack exercises, including a video clip. Another way to systematise and optimise the study of idiomatic expressions can be found on the resource <https://www.engvid.com/>. On this website, idioms are grouped according to the degree of frequency, but by setting certain filters, it is possible to form groups according to the thematic principle, keywords. Website

<https://moviesegmentstoassessgrammargoes.blogspot.com/search?q=idioms> is designed for movie lovers who want to learn English and enjoy their hobby. The site contains a collection of movie fragments in which the characters use idioms.

The number of online materials is so large that it is impossible to list even a small part of it. The use of computer technology makes the learning process more interesting and effective, and, therefore, helps students not only learn new material, but also enhances their level of knowledge, and encourages them to work.

Using Exercises of Problem Solving

The students should also be provided with problem solving exercises to help them understand the hidden meaning of idioms (Asri & Rochmawati, 2017). This strategy allows students to use their cognitive abilities to correlate and compare the meaning of these expressions with their own native language and culture (ibid.). Lennon (1998) argues that comparing differences between metaphors in the target language and students' native language is effective in learning idiomatic expressions. Students are motivated to translate the metaphors of their language into the target language in order to share with the class their own cultural method of encoding metaphors. Problem solving exercises stimulate students' mental activity and help them to perceive language meaningfully.

Making Idiom Posters

Tompkins (2001) suggests that specific student-created tools such as idiom posters can be used for developing students' idiomatic competence. These posters illustrate the literal and figurative meanings of idioms as part of the figurative language learning process.



Figure 1. A sample idiom posters (Miller, 2012)

These posters are colourful and self-explanatory. They show idioms, their definitions or meanings used in a sentence, along with an image of what they actually mean. These posters help students memorise idioms (Asri & Rochmawati, 2017).

The conducted literature review reveals that the use of idioms in teaching English is important, although quite difficult, especially, for non-native speakers. Due to the difficulty of idioms, teachers try to simplify the English language to their students, and more often concentrate on learning grammar (Asl, 2013; Wray, 2000). Studies have also shown that the difficulty of teaching idioms lies also in the fact that most textbooks tend to ignore idiomatic material, considering it secondary (Panou, 2013). Nevertheless, studies have found that the teaching of idioms has a beneficial effect not only on improving students' language proficiency (Thyab, 2016) and expanding students' horizons by getting acquainted with the cultural and historical aspects of native speakers

(Moreno, 2011), but it may also enhance students' interest in learning English (Grimes, 2018).

CHAPTER II. IDIOMS IN THE ENGLISH CLASS: TEACHERS' OPINIONS AND ACTIVITIES TO SUPPLEMENT COURSEBOOKS

Teachers' attitudes to the use of idioms in their teaching and their choice of activities with them to increase students' interest in learning English are of primary importance to answer the research questions of the present study.

2.1 English Language Teachers' Opinions: Idioms and Readiness to Teach them

The teacher's perspective on teaching idioms is essential, as the teacher's decision on this issue can significantly affect the language proficiency of their students. In order to gather and analyse opinions of English language teachers a survey was conducted among English language teachers. The questionnaire (Appendix No 1) created for English language teachers helps to reveal whether teachers consider teaching idioms important for young learners (grade 8); what they see as the advantages of teaching idioms; what methods in teaching idioms they use; what activities they apply in the classroom; what they see as the difficulty of teaching idioms; how they evaluate the presence of idiomatic material in textbooks; whether they use additional material, and also express their opinion on whether the learning of idioms can increase students' interest in learning English.

English language teachers from different counties of Estonia (n=37) took part in the survey.

The survey was created in the Google Forms web application platform. This application was chosen because it is a quick way to ask questions too many teachers from different places in Estonia and it is easy to use. Teachers could open the link on their computer at work or at home and fill in the information by selecting the answers that were suitable for them. The questionnaire is anonymous, and it, supposedly, takes a few minutes to complete.

Table 1. *The importance of idioms in teaching English to young learners (grade 8)*

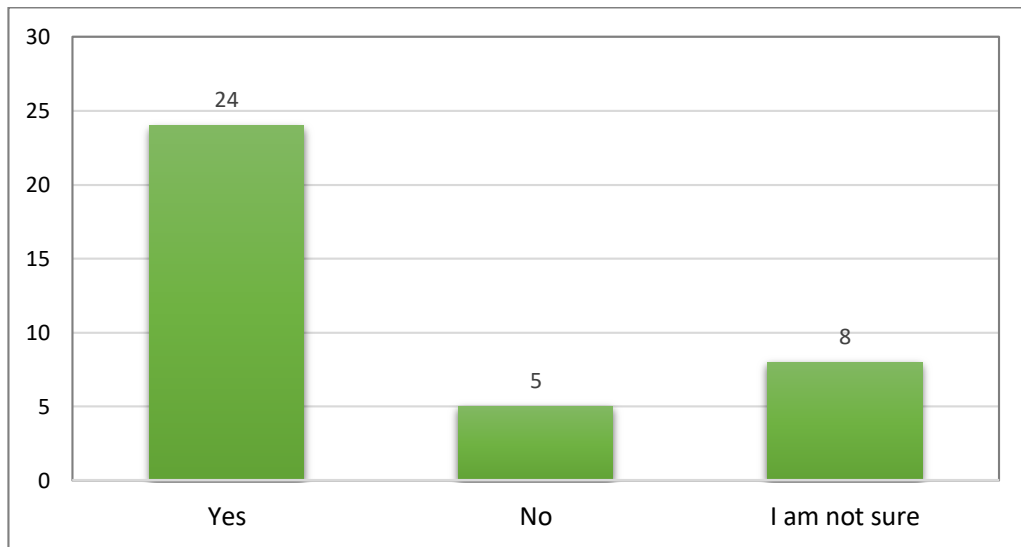
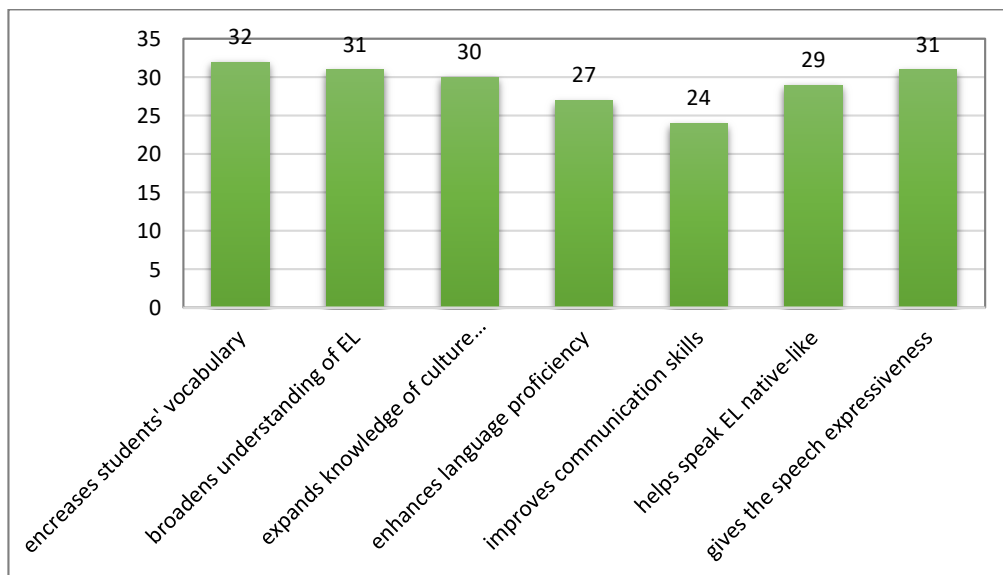


Table 1 above shows teachers' opinions on the importance of teaching idioms to young learners (grade 8). According to the results, the majority of the respondents (65%) assert that idioms play an important role in teaching English to young learners. The smallest part of the respondents admits that idioms are not an essential aspect in teaching English. A fifth of all respondents are not sure whether teaching idioms is important for young learners or not.

Table 2. *The benefits of idioms' mastery*



The data in Table 2 provides an overview of what the English language teachers consider as the benefits of idiom mastery. It should be noted that all aspects of this issue are of almost equal importance for the respondents. However, most of all, the teachers note that mastering idioms increases the vocabulary of students. “The broadening of students' understanding of the English language” and “giving the speech originality and expressiveness” is rated as number two. Such an advantage as “expanding students' knowledge in the field of culture and language history” was rated as number three. This is followed by the statement that the mastery of idioms helps students speak English more fluently and native-like, and that it enhances students' level of language proficiency. Slightly less than other statements, the respondents note that mastery of idioms improves students' communication skills in daily context.

Table 3. *Learning idioms increases students' interest in learning English*

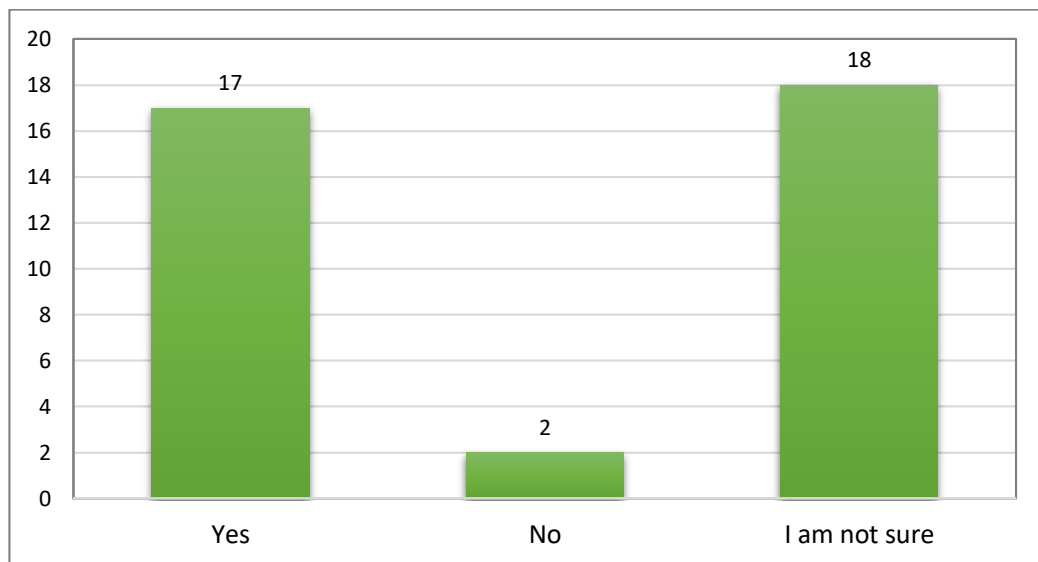
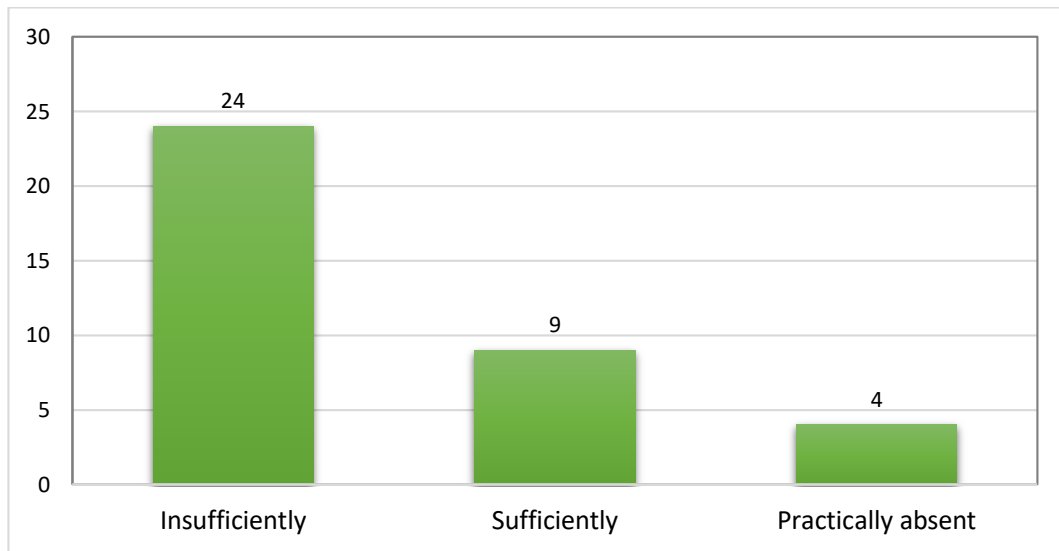


Table 3 above shows the English language teachers' opinions on whether learning idioms could increase students' interest in learning English in general. Only two of all respondents believe that learning idioms cannot increase students' interest in learning English. However, the other votes are divided almost equally. Half of the respondents agree that learning idioms increases students' interest in learning a language, and the other half consists of the teachers who are not sure of an unambiguous answer to this question.

Table 4. *The presence of idiomatic material in coursebooks*



The data in Table 4 provide an opportunity to understand how, in teachers' view, idiomatic material is presented in coursebooks. The great majority of the all respondents (76%) claim that idiomatic material is presented in coursebooks insufficiently (i.e., idioms rarely appear in coursebook tasks), what is more, 10% of the teachers note its practical absence. Less than a quarter of the respondents consider the presence of idiomatic material in coursebooks as sufficient.

Table 5. *Difficulties in teaching idioms*

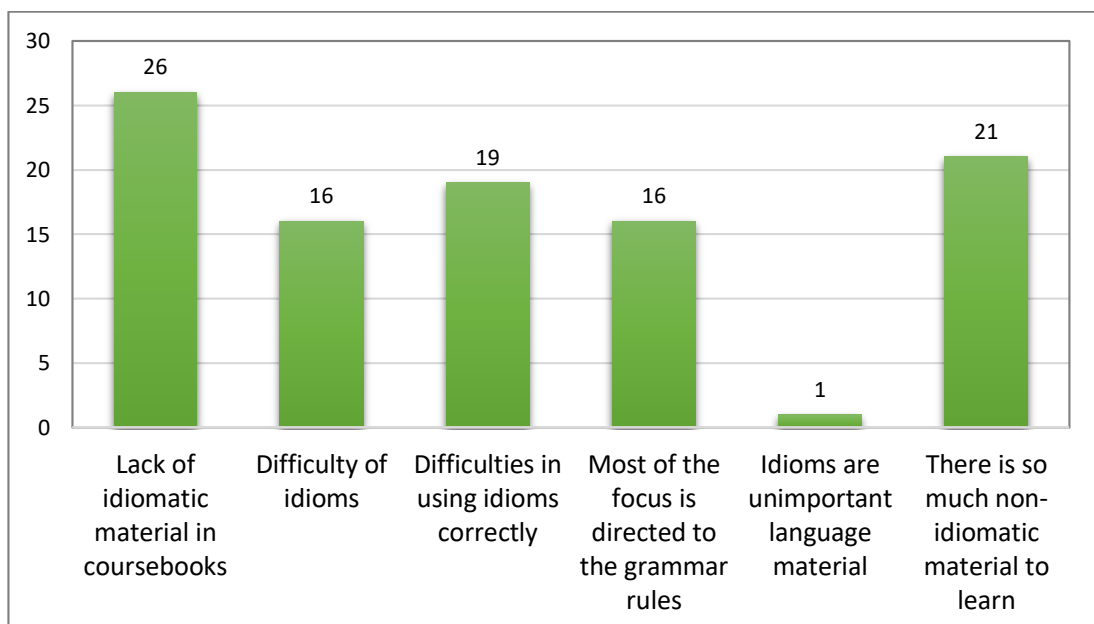
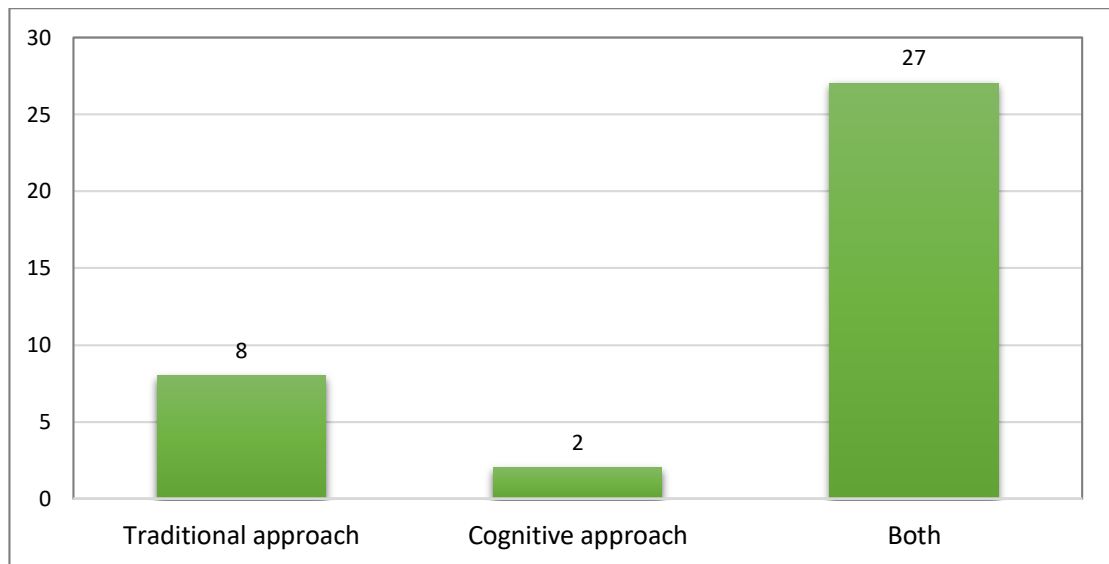


Table 5 above shows the views of the English language teachers on the possible reasons for difficulty of teaching idioms. The respondents identified the lack of idiomatic material in coursebooks as the biggest challenge in teaching idioms. This problem was noted by 70% of the teachers. As the second difficulty of teaching idioms, the respondents (56%) state that there is so much non-idiomatic material to learn. In the third place, teachers put “the difficulty in using idioms correctly”. Further reasons for the difficulty of teaching idioms are the complexity of idioms, and the focus on grammar rules. Only one respondent believes that idioms are unimportant language material for teaching English.

Table 6. *Methods used in teaching idioms*



The data in Table 6 illustrate the methods of the English language teachers to teach idioms. Only 5% respondents admit that they use the cognitive approach in teaching idioms. This means that in their teaching they focus mainly on semantic interpretation, explanation of cultural and historical background. A fifth of all respondents prefer to use the traditional approach in teaching idioms. In this way, they mostly practise translation into their mother tongue and memorization. The vast majority of the respondents (73%), however, use both cognitive and traditional methods in teaching idioms.

Table 7. *The activities used in teaching idioms*

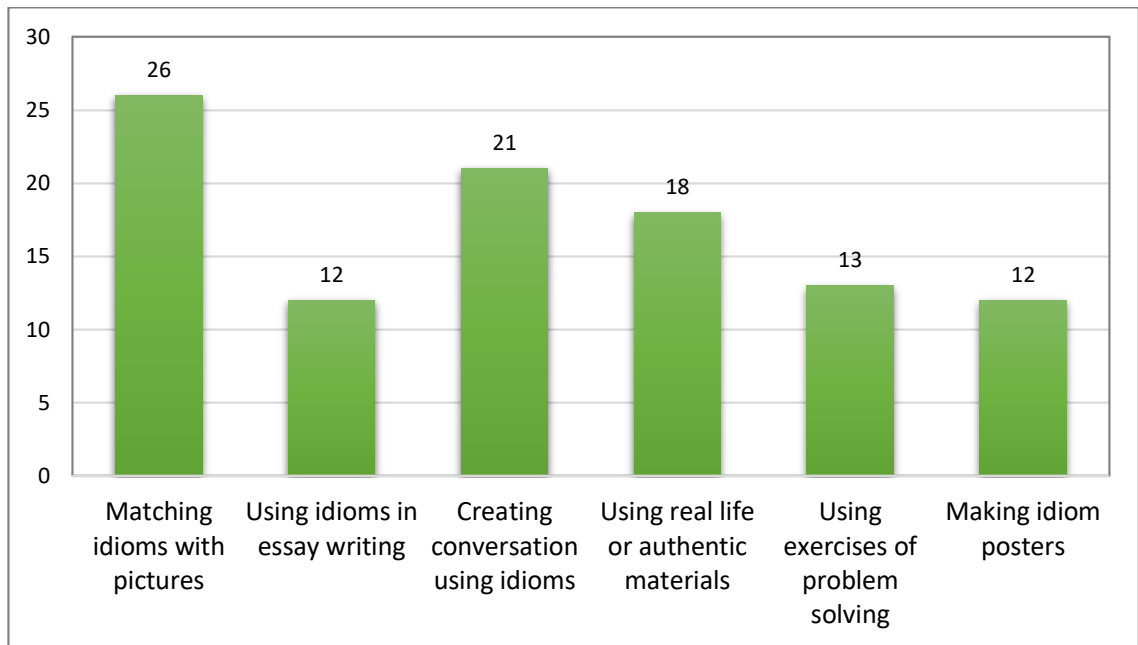
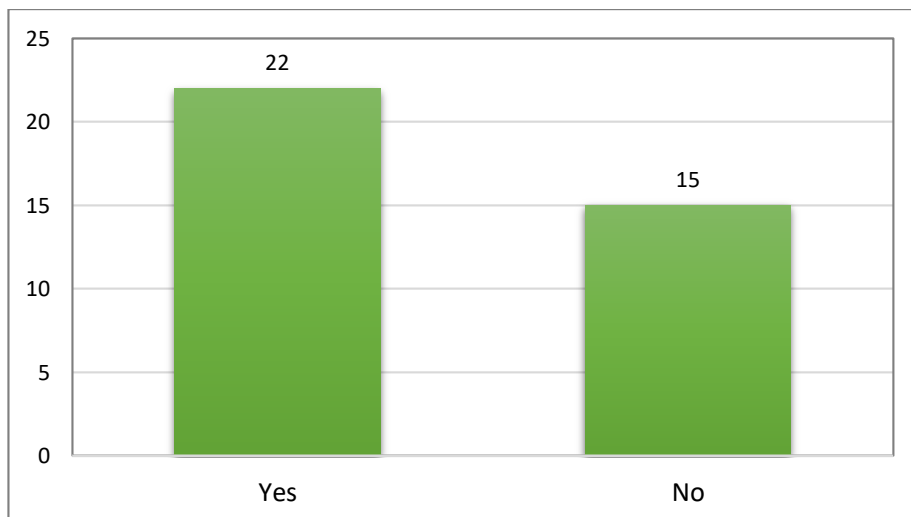


Table 7 above provides an overview of the activities that the English language teachers use when teaching idioms to their students. The survey results show that most of all respondents (70%) prefer matching idioms with pictures. The second place is occupied by such an activity as “creating conversation using idioms”. The respondents put “the use of real life and authentic materials” on the third place. The least popular (32%) are such activities as “using idioms in essay writing”, “and making idiom posters”.

Table 8. *Providing students with additional materials*



In Table 8 above, it can be seen whether English language teachers consider it necessary to provide their students with additional material for teaching idioms. According to the results, the majority of the respondents (60%) provide their students with additional materials in teaching idioms. Respectively, the remaining 40% of the respondents do not consider it necessary.

The survey results show that two-thirds of the respondents consider the teaching idioms important for young learners (grade 8). This gives hope that the majority of the English language teachers do not ignore, but, on the contrary, welcome the development of students' idiomatic competence. The need to teach idioms is also confirmed by respondents' answers to the question about the advantages of using idioms. Almost all of the proposed options were marked by the teachers as equally important. However, the respondents consider the increase in the vocabulary of students to be the greatest advantage of mastery of idioms. This is, indeed, one of the important advantages of teaching idioms, since a large vocabulary helps students communicate freely and effectively, express thoughts accurately and adequately. Least of all respondents believe that the mastery of idioms improves students' communication skills in daily context. It is difficult to agree with this, since many scholars (Bortfeld, 2003; Seidl & McMordie, 1978; Crystal, 1995; Simpson, 2003) emphasise the high frequency of the use of idioms in the speech of native speakers. Thus, it is necessary to master idioms in order not to get into an awkward situation when communicating with native speakers, but be able to understand their speech and maintain a conversation with them. On the question of whether the study of idioms can increase interest in learning English, the opinions of teachers are divided almost equally. Half of the respondents believe that learning idioms helps to increase students' interest in learning English. However, the other half of the teachers express their doubts, answering the question that they are not sure about it. Most likely, the doubt of teachers is connected with the difficulty of learning idioms. As discussed in Chapter 1, idioms are difficult for language learners because their figurative meaning can be unpredictable. This is especially true for opaque idioms, which can be really confusing because of their non-literary meanings. Learning such idioms requires a lot of effort and time from students. Thus, the complexity of idioms could make teachers doubt that learning idioms can increase students' interest in learning English. When asked how idiomatic material is presented in textbooks, the vast majority of the respondents state that it is presented insufficiently. An analysis of the textbook "Enterprise 2" revealed that there are only five idioms in it: two idioms are found in the names of units and three

idioms in the texts. The survey of English teachers and the analysis of the textbook confirm the statements of the scholars mentioned in the theoretical part of this study that many textbooks consider idioms to be secondary or simply ignore them. Such approach to idiomatic material is clearly undeserved and requires revision and improvement. Moreover, the survey results reveal that most of the English language teachers are forced to provide students with additional material for learning idioms. However, if this material were present in English textbooks in the proper volume, the teacher would not have to spend time searching for additional idiomatic material and developing exercises with it. The insufficient inclusion of idiomatic materials, in the teachers' opinions, influences their readiness to teach idioms. The issue of the lack of idiomatic material in English textbooks was raised again by the respondents when discussing the difficulties in teaching idioms. As the survey results show, the lack of idiomatic material in textbooks is the biggest difficulty for English language teachers in teaching idioms. Definitely, the lack of idiomatic material in textbooks makes teachers ignore its teaching. Secondly, respondents expectedly put a large amount of non-idiomatic material for study. Indeed, there is so much non-idiomatic material that teachers barely have time to teach it, and there is simply not enough time for something else, including idioms. However, if teachers really aim to improve the language skills of their students, then they need to introduce them to idioms. Usually in teaching idioms, each teacher has his own approach. The survey results showed that the vast majority of respondents prefer to combine both traditional and cognitive approaches. This suggests that teachers would not deny the traditional method of teaching: translation into the mother tongue, memorization, but also use elements of a cognitive approach in their practice – they introduce students to the semantic meaning and etymology of idioms. It means that teachers try to choose the best option for teaching different idioms. In order to teach idioms successfully, teachers use various kinds of activities. The survey reveals that English language teachers most often use the task of combining idioms with pictures. It is not surprising that this type of activity has become the most popular. Firstly, the combination of a visual image with an idiom allows to remember it better. Secondly, this task can be completed much faster and easier than, for example, using exercises of problem solving. And thirdly, it should not be forgotten that the current generation of children prefers to use visual content to obtain information. Therefore, this kind of activity is so effective and interesting to perform. The least popular among respondents is writing an essay using an idiom, as well as making idiom posters. Essay writing is often one of the most difficult tasks for students, as it

requires a certain level of critical thinking and good vocabulary. It also takes time and some effort to write an essay. Thus, all this complexity makes this task the most unpopular. However, the most creative of all the proposed activities - making idiom posters - also receives the least amount of votes. This decision is a little unexpected, since students are usually happy to complete creative tasks where they can use their imagination. Apparently, the teachers consider such activity to be rather time-consuming, preferring to use more efficiently other types of activities during the same amount of time.

2.2 Teaching Idioms with Supplementary to Coursebook Activities to Increase Students' Interest in Learning English

In order to reveal how the inclusion of authentic active learning activities to supplement English language coursebooks can influence students' interest in learning English, an experiment was conducted. Students of Narva Paju School (n=21) participated in experiment activities. The experiment was performed with two classes of pupils studying in grade 8. All students are native Russian speakers and study English as their second foreign language. The classes were divided into group A, which was the control group, and group B, which was the experimental group. Both groups have approximately the same number of participants: there are 11 students in group A and 10 students in group B. All participants learn English according to the National curriculum programme and use the same coursebook "Enterprise 2" (Evans and Dooley, 2002). The students, as well as the school principal, were informed about the experiment in advance and assured that participation was voluntary and that the information received would be used only for academic purposes. The experiment consists in the fact that students of the experimental group (group B) study unit 10 "Stick to the Rules" and unit 11 "Our Precious Planet" of the coursebook with the addition of idiomatic material and completing tasks with idioms, and students of the control group (group A) study the same units, only without the addition of idiomatic material. At the end of the experiment, students of both groups fill out a questionnaire in which they evaluate how interesting it was for them to learn English by working with tasks on the topics "Stick to the Rules" (unit 10) and "Our Precious Planet" (unit 11). In conclusion, the results of the students' survey are compared and analysed.

Before starting the experiment, it was necessary to analyze the textbook "Enterprise 2" in order to evaluate to what extent it includes idiomatic material. The analysis of the

textbook “Enterprise 2” also provides additional information on one of the survey’s questions about how idiomatic material is presented in coursebooks (sufficiently/ insufficiently/ practically absent).

2.3 Analysis of the Coursebook “Enterprise 2”

For teaching English in the 8th grade in Narva Paju School the coursebook “Enterprise 2” (Evans and Dooley, 2002) is used. The coursebook is divided into four modules, each module contains four units. The analysis of this coursebook reveals the presence of five idioms in it. The idioms found are listed below:

1.”To have a brush with something” means to have an experience with something. (The idiom is in the name of the unit 8 – “Brush with Danger“, module 2)

2. “Shop till (one) drops” is an American idiom which means to buy things until you are physically tired and cannot walk around the shops anymore. (The idiom is in the name of the unit 3 – “Shop till you Drop!”, module 1)

3.”From rags to riches” characterises a rise from poverty to great or exceptional wealth. (The idiom in the title of the text “From Rags to Riches”, unit 2 “Night and Day”, module 1)

4.”To make ends meet” means to have just enough money to pay for the basic necessities. (The idiom in the text “From Rags to Riches”, unit 2 “Night and Day”, module 1)

5.”Heart and soul of something” is the meaning of the most essential or important part, a core of something. (The idiom in the text “All Things, for All People, Everywhere”, unit 3 “Shop till you Drop!”, module 1)

The above examples of idioms allow us to conclude that the English coursebook “Enterprise 2” used in the 8th grade contains a few idioms, which is insufficient for the development of students' idiomatic competence. Moreover, there is not a single exercise for working with idioms in the textbook. This analysis supports the assertion of Panou (2013), who states that many foreign language teaching materials either ignore idioms or consider idiomatic language to be of secondary importance.

Thus, to the question of the survey about how the idiomatic material is presented in the coursebooks, one could answer that there is practically no idiomatic material in the textbook of the 8th grade "Enterprise 2".

2.4 Idioms Used in the Experiment

Due to the insufficient inclusion of idiomatic material in the textbook “Enterprise 2”, it was necessary to prepare additional material that would correspond to the topics studied. Twenty idioms and their meanings are taken from the book "English Idioms in Use" by Felicity O’Dell and Michael Mccarthy (2010). The idioms were chosen in such a way that some of them coincided with the idioms of the students' native language, the other part allowed a guess, and the last part of the idioms would be completely unknown to the students. Ten idioms were selected for unit 10 "Stick to the Rules", the meaning of which correlates with the main theme of the unit - danger and safety. The idioms chosen for working with the topic "Stick to the Rules" (unit 10) are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. Idioms on the topic "Stick to the Rules" of the unit 10

№	Idiom	The Meaning of the Idiom
1	Play with fire	To do something that could have a very dangerous or harmful result
2	Put all eggs in one basket	To depend for your success on a single person or plan of action
3	Skate on thin ice	To do something that is dangerous or involves risks.
4	Keep your head down	To try to avoid trouble or involvement in a difficult or dangerous situation by behaving in a quiet way, so that people will not notice you
5	Sail close to the wind	To do something that is dangerous or that may be illegal or dishonest
6	Be on the safe side	To avoid potential dangers, problems, or challenges
7	Look before you leap	To think carefully before taking action
8	Save one’s neck	To rescue someone from failure, danger, or disaster.
9	Fly into the face of danger	To take great risks
10	Safety in numbers	A better chance of avoiding danger in a group of other people than when a person is alone

In addition to unit 11 "Our Precious Planet", 10 idioms were also chosen, the meaning of which corresponded to the theme of the unit - environmental issues, danger warning, making decisions and improving the situation. The idioms selected for working with the topic "Our Precious Planet" (unit 11) are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2. *Idioms on the topic "Our Precious Planet" of the unit 11*

№	Idiom	The Meaning of the Idiom
1	A drop in the ocean	A very small amount compared to what is needed
2	The tip of the iceberg	A small noticeable part of a problem, the total size of which is really much greater
3	A hot potato	A problem that is controversial and difficult to solve
4	Set alarm bells ringing	To make people start to feel worried and to suspect that something is wrong
5	Can't see the wood for the trees	To be unable to understand the situation or the problem as a whole because one is focused on its small details
6	To move heaven and earth	To put a lot of effort into helping someone/getting something done.
7	In hot water	To be in trouble or in a very difficult situation
8	Hang by a thread	To be in a very dangerous situation or state: to be very close to failure or even death
9	Make a fresh start	To take the opportunity to begin something again
10	Raise a red flag	To identify or draw attention to a problem or issue to be dealt with

When getting acquainted with idioms, their meaning was not offered to students so that they could guess the meaning of idioms themselves. The students were given vocabulary exercises to help the students learn these idioms better. Then the students were offered to perform authentic active learning activities with these idioms.

2.5 Authentic Active Learning Activities with Idioms to Supplement the English Language Coursebook “Enterprise 2”

When working with idioms, students were offered the following tasks (Appendix № 2):

- Search for studied idioms in famous movies/ TV series.
- Making a video
- Pantomime theatre

Similar activities were recommended by Asri & Rochmawati (2017) for working with idioms (see Chapter 1). In the first task, students had to find on the Internet a piece of a famous movie/ TV series in which one of the characters of the film uses an idiom in his/her speech. Idioms to search in movies were offered to students in advance. To complete the task, the students had to use sources of authentic materials. According to Bernardo (2006), authentic materials are useful because they demonstrate the actual use of the language and often present content of great interest to students. Tafani (2009) states that movies enable more interactive and engaging ways of teaching and learning English. Also Qiu (2017) claims that the use of English movies increases students' motivation, improves their oral and communication skills, and develops their cultural awareness. This task was performed in the computer class. Students searched for information on the Internet, copied and sent it to the teacher's email. Then, in the English class, the students in pairs had to show a piece from a movie with an idiom they had found and tell them about it.

In the second task students had to make a short video on the topic "Safety and Dangers in the Learning Environment". In their video, students had to use some learned idioms. The students created videos using their smartphones. According to Leis (2015), the smartphones are recognized as a powerful educational tool that could be used both by the students and teachers to facilitate the learning or teaching process. Wali (2020) suggests that the use of smartphones, tablets, and laptops in the classroom not only helps to capture attention and excitement during the class, but also invigorates the traditional learning experience. To complete this task, the students created a performance, distributed the roles, conducted a rehearsal and eventually made a video. The students coped with the task completely independently.

If the first and second tasks involved the use of technology in the classroom, then the third task was related to a pantomime theater. Carels (1981) states that through

pantomime, language learners can be encouraged to participate orally in classroom activities. In small groups, students prepared a theatrical pantomime of idioms and showed it to their classmates, so that they could guess which idiom was meant. This task gave students the opportunity to move around and use their imagination. Students could use props in their pantomimes. Before showing their pantomimes, the students had some time to rehearse. All the idioms shown in the pantomimes were guessed by the students.

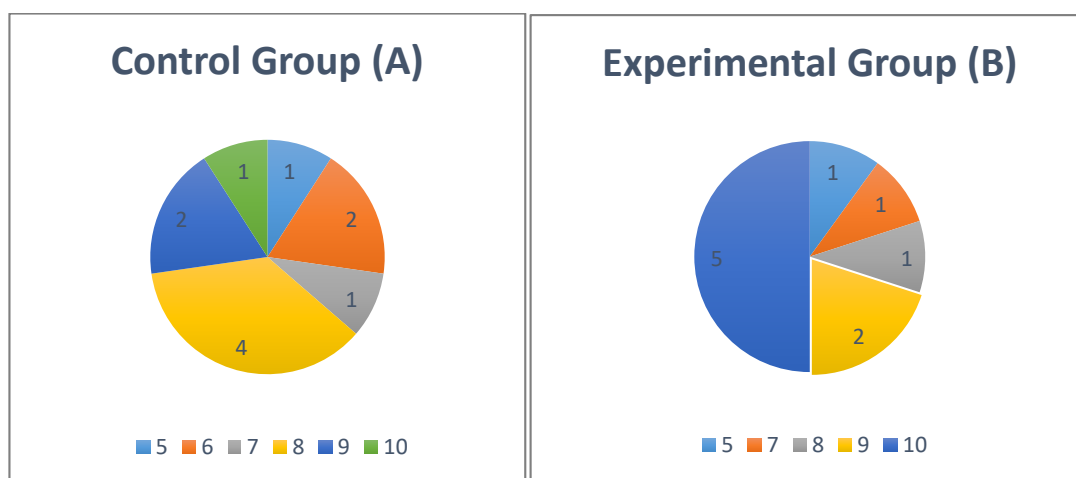
2.6 Results of the Experiment

At the end of the experiment, both experimental and control groups of 8th grade students answered the following questions.

Question 1. It was interesting to me to learn English while working on tasks on the topic “Stick to the Rules” (unit 10).

To answer this question, the students had to choose a number from 1 (not interesting at all) up to 10 (very interesting). The answers of students to question 1 of the groups, both control and experimental, are illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Students’ interest while working on tasks on the topic “Stick to the Rules” (unit 10)

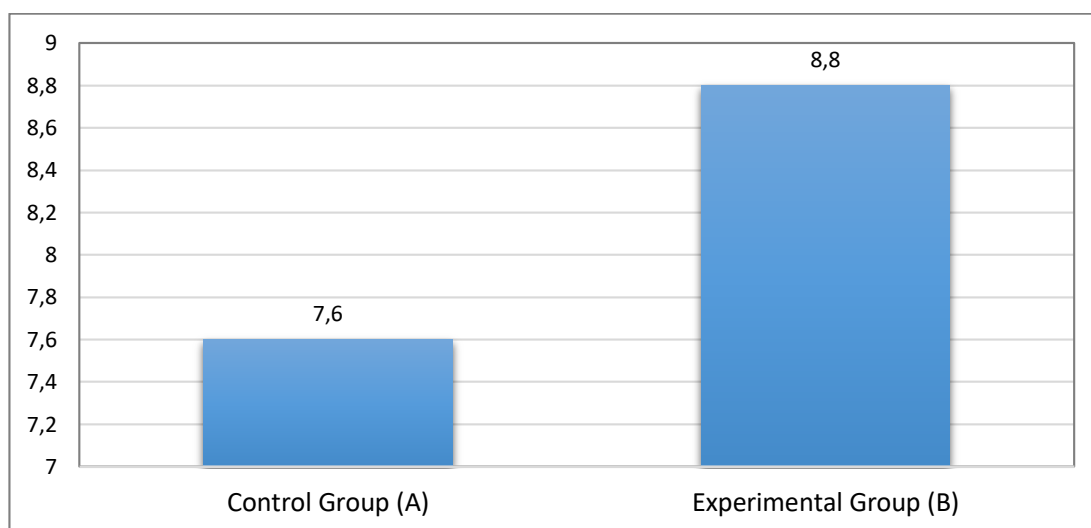


As can be seen from Table 1, in the control group (A) the highest score of 10 points was marked by one student and 9 points by 2 students. In the experimental group (B), half of the students rated their interest at 10 points, and 2 people - at 9 points. This means that

most of the students in the experimental group gave the highest scores, assessing their interest in learning English.

The average score of students' interest while working on tasks on the topic "Stick to the Rules" (unit 10) is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2. The average score of students' interest while working on tasks on the topic "Stick to the Rules" (unit 10)



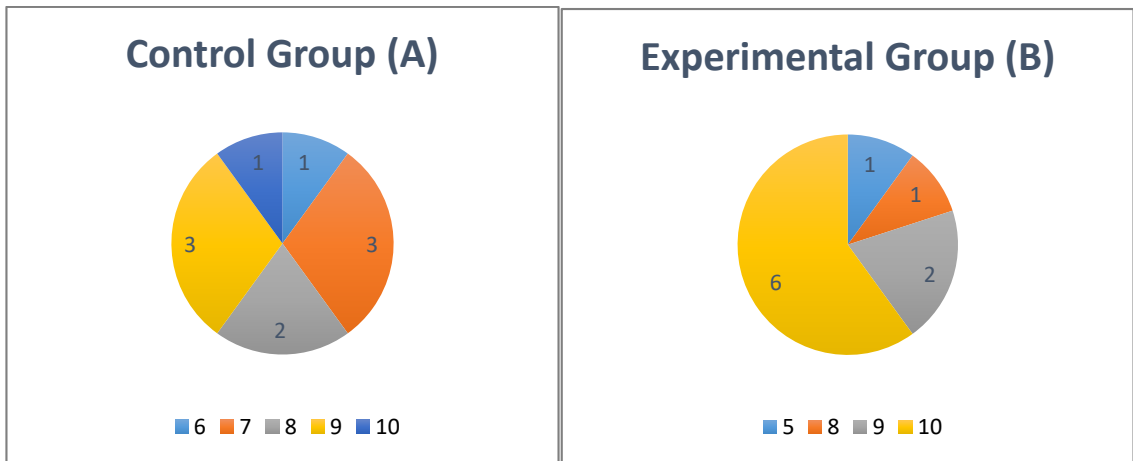
The data in Table 2 show that the average score of interest in the control group (A) is 7.6, and in the experimental group (B) – 8.8. Thus, the average score of the experimental group is 1.2 points higher than of the control group. This means that the interest in learning English is higher in the experimental group.

As mentioned above, the experimental group studied unit 10 "Stick to the Rules" using idioms related to the topic of this unit, and also completed tasks with idiomatic material. The control group (B) studied material of unit 10 of the textbook, without using idiomatic material on this topic. The results show that the study of the topic "Stick to the Rules" (unit 10) using idiomatic material enhanced students' interest in learning English.

Question 2. It was interesting to me to learn English by working with tasks on the topic "Our Precious Planet" (unit 11).

To answer this question, the students also had to choose a number from 1 (not interesting at all) up to 10 (very interesting). The answers of students to question 2 of the groups, both control and experimental, are demonstrated in table 3 below.

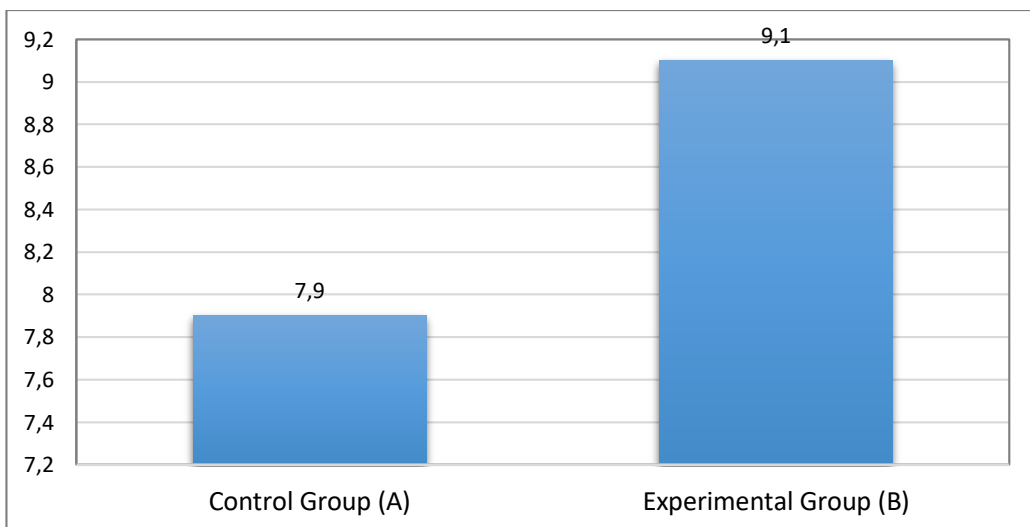
Table 3. Students' interest while working on tasks on the topic "Our Precious Planet" (unit 11)



As can be seen from Table 3 above, in the control group (A) the highest score of 10 points was marked by one student and 9 points by three students. In the experimental group (B), six students rated their interest at 10 points, and two people - at 9 points. That means that the vast majority of the students in the experimental group rated their interest in learning English with the highest scores.

The average score of students' interest while working on tasks on the topic "Our Precious Planet" (unit 11) is presented in table 4 below.

Table 4. The average score of students' interest while working on tasks on the topic "Our Precious Planet" (unit 11)



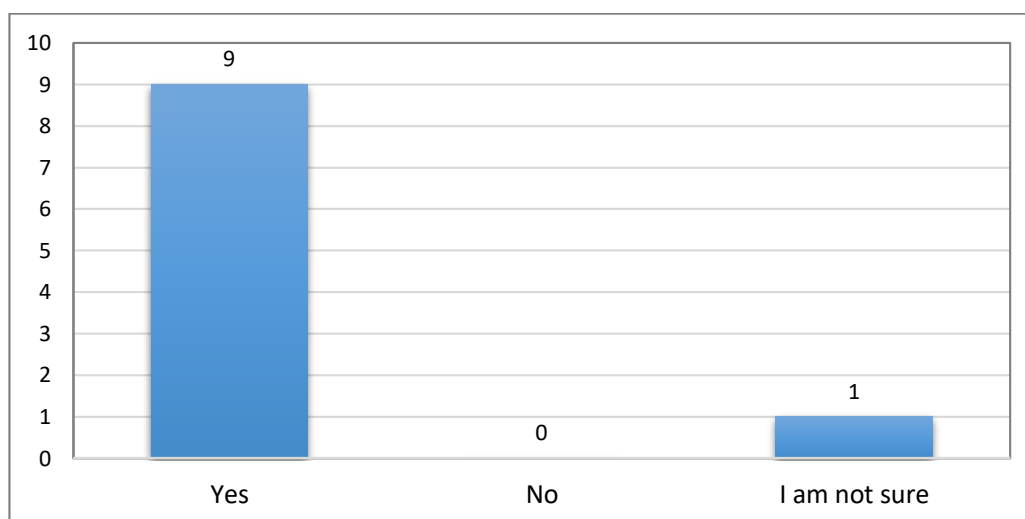
The data in Table 4 demonstrate that the average score of students' interest in learning English in the control group (A) is 7.9, and in the experimental group (B) – 9.1. The average score of the experimental group is 1.2 points higher than of the control group. This means that the interest in learning English in the experimental group (B) is again higher than in the control group (B).

In addition to the above listed questions, the students of the experimental group (B) were asked to answer one extra question.

Question 3. Learning idioms increases my interest in learning English. The options to choose are Yes/ No/ I am not sure.

The students' answers to this question are illustrated in table 5 below.

Table 5. *Increasing interest in the English language through learning of idioms*



The results in Table 5 clearly demonstrate that the vast majority of students (90%) believe that learning idioms increases their interest in learning English. Only one student replied that he was not sure about it.

The results of the experiment revealed that the interest in learning English in the experimental group was higher than in the control group, both in the case of working on tasks on the topic “Stick to the Rules” (unit 10), and in the case of working on tasks on the topic “Our Precious Planet” (unit 11). This suggests that even despite the inclusion of quite extensive idiomatic material in these topics, the students of the experimental group enjoyed working with it. Moreover, a separate survey of the experimental group reveals that almost all students (90%) believe that learning idioms increases their interest in

learning English in general. Thus, the results of the experiment allow to conclude that teaching idioms has a positive effect on increasing interest of 8th grade students in learning English. When teaching a foreign language, it is important to arouse the interest of students, since interest is the main factor in accelerating language acquisition. Idioms are unique authentic material that arouses students' curiosity, and, consequently, their interest in learning English. Idioms themselves are original and expressive, they evoke the emotions of students. This could be verified during the experiment. When working with idioms, the students often expressed their emotions: they were surprised, smiled and laughed a lot. They were especially happy when they discovered that English idioms had the same counterpart in the students' native language. There were many such idioms, for example *a drop in the ocean*, *the tip of the iceberg*, *play with fire*, *save one's neck* etc. However, opaque idioms, such as, for example, *a hot potato* or *can't see the wood for the trees*, caused no less joy. It must be said that the students did not feel at all confused by the impossibility of literal translation of the idiom. They tried to solve them like a puzzle or as a riddle, immediately trying to remember the equivalent of these idioms in their native language. While completing tasks with idioms, especially finding idioms in famous movies/ TV series, the students were again surprised by how many idioms there are in the English language and how often they are used in speech. One student even noted that English idioms were a whole wonderful world that had been hidden from him for a long time and which he had just discovered for himself. All this proves once again that idiomatic material is an important, and rather interesting part of the English language, so it cannot be ignored and considered secondary. Teaching idioms intrigues and inspires students to learn English, as well as increases their vocabulary, develops linguistic intuition and expands their horizons by introducing them to the cultural and historical background of native speakers. Thus, it can be concluded that idiomatic material should become an integral and full-fledged part of teaching English.

CONCLUSION

Teaching idioms are both challenging and beneficial. The challenge is due to the fact that idioms are non-literal expressions and their figurative meaning can be unpredictable. Because of the complexity, idioms are considered to be secondary and are often ignored by teachers. At the same time, teaching idioms is beneficial for students' language proficiency. Mastery of idioms increases the vocabulary of students, broadens their understanding of the English language, expands knowledge in the field of culture and language history, helps students speak English more fluently and native-like, and, finally, gives the speech originality and expressiveness.

To achieve the objectives of the study, a survey was conducted among English language teachers and an experiment among 8th grade students using experimental and control groups.

The survey results showed that English language teachers consider the teaching of idioms important and realise the advantages of mastery of idioms. In their practice teachers prefer to combine both traditional and cognitive approaches for teaching idioms. However, the analysis of the 8th grade textbook and a survey of teachers reveal the problem that the idiomatic material is not sufficiently presented in the textbooks, and this creates a real obstacle in the teaching of idioms.

The results of the experiment show that the interest in learning English in the experimental group after studying each of the two topics was higher than in the control group. Considering the results of the experiment, it can be concluded that the inclusion of authentic active learning activities to teach idioms as supplements to the coursebook enhances students' interest in learning English.

In conclusion, the findings of the study have shown that the proposed research hypothesis that supplementary sets of authentic active learning activities for young learners of lower-secondary school to teach idioms increase students' interest in learning English, has been proved.

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Idioomid on keelte lahutamatu osa: need suurendavad vestlusobjekti väljendusrikkust, täpsust ja kujundlikkust. Idioomide õpetamine on nii keeruline kui ka kasulik. Väljakutse tuleneb asjaolust, et idioomid on mittesõnasõnalised väljendid ja nende kujundlik tähendus võib olla ettearvamatu. Keerukuse tõttu peetakse idioome teisejärguliseks ja õpetajad eiravad neid sageli õppeprotsessis. Samal ajal on idioomide õpetamine õpilaste keeleoskusele kasulik. Idioomide valdamine suurendab õpilaste sõnavara, avardab nende arusaamist inglise keelest, laiendab teadmisi kultuuri- ja keeleajaloo valdkonnas, aitab õpilastel inglise keelt ladusamalt ja emakeelepärasemalt rääkida ning annab kõnele originaalsuse ja väljendusrikkuse.

Käesoleva magistritöö teema on “Idioomide õpetamine 8. klassi õpilastele inglise keele õppimise vastu huvi suurendamiseks: autentset aktiivset õppetegevused inglise keele õpikute täiendamiseks”. Uurimistöö eesmärgid on selgitada välja õpetajate suhtumine idioomidesse õppetöös ja meetodid, mida nad kasutavad idioomide õpetamisel põhikooli õpilastele. Samuti teada saada, kui rikkalikud on 8. klassi inglise keele õpikus pakutavad harjutused idioomide õpetamiseks ja kuidas autentsete aktiivõppeharjutuste lisamine idioomide õpetamise õpiku täiendusena võib mõjutada õpilaste huvi inglise keele õppimise vastu.

Magistritöö koosneb järgmistest osadest: sissejuhatus, esimene peatükk, teine peatükk ja kokkuvõtte. Sissejuhatuses antakse ülevaade idioomide omapärasest, idioomide õppimise eelistest ja sellest, kuidas need mõjutavad õpilaste huvi inglise keele õppimise vastu. Esimene peatükk “Idioomide õpetamine EFL-klassis” annab idioomide määratluse ja klassifikatsiooneid ning teoreetilise tausta idioomide õpetamise meetodite ja õppetegevuste kohta, samuti käsitleb idioomide õpetamise ja õppimise probleeme koolis. Teises peatükis “Idioomid inglise keele tunnis: õpetajate arvamused ja õppetegevused õpikute täiendamiseks” uuritakse õpetajate arvamusi idioomide kasutamise kohta õpetamisel ja käsitletakse katset, mis hõlmab idioomide õpetamisega täiendavaid õppetegevusi. Kokkuvõttes esitatakse uuringu tulemused ja kommentaarid uuringu eesmärkide ja hüpoteesi kohta.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire for English language teachers

Teaching idioms

Idioms (e.g. it's raining cats and dogs; pulling your leg; under the weather, etc.) are a part of any language. The English language is especially rich in idioms. However, not much attention is paid to the teaching of idioms. The reasons for this are being investigated in this study.

1. Are idioms important for young learners (grade 8)?

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure

2. Mastery of idioms:

- increases the vocabulary of students
- broadens students' understanding of the English language
- expands the students' knowledge in the field of culture and language history
- enhances students' level of language proficiency
- improves students' communication skills in daily context
- helps students speak English more fluently and native-like
- gives the speech originality and expressiveness

3. Could learning idioms increase students' interest in learning English?

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure

4. How is idiomatic material presented in coursebooks?

- Sufficiently (i.e. every coursebook unit offers various topic-related practice)
- Insufficiently (i.e., idioms rarely appear in coursebook tasks)
- Practically absent

5. Teaching idioms to young learners is challenging due to the following:

- Lack of idiomatic material in coursebooks

- Difficulty of idioms
- Difficulties in using idioms correctly
- Most of the focus is directed to grammar rules
- Idioms are unimportant language material for teaching English
- There is so much non-idiomatic material to learn

6. What methods of teaching idioms do you use?

- Traditional approach (translation into mother tongue and memorization)
- Cognitive approach (semantic interpretation, explanation of cultural and historical background)
- Both

7. What activities (from Asri and Rochmawati, 2017) do you use in teaching idioms?

- Matching idioms with pictures
- Using idioms in essay writing
- Creating conversation using idioms
- Using real life or authentic materials
- Using exercises of problem solving
- Making idiom posters
- Using games

8. Do you provide your students with additional materials in teaching idioms?

- Yes
- No

Appendix 2. Tasks for students from the experimental group (B)

Task 1. Search for idioms in famous movies/ TV series

Working in pairs. Each pair gets three idioms to choose from. The task is to find a piece from an English language movie that uses this idiom. Students should show this piece of the film with an idiom, name the movie, its director, explain the meaning of this idiom, and in what context it was used.

Example: <https://m4uhd.tv/watch-movie-max-steel-2016-22942.html> (2.25)

Movie “Max Steel” (2016)

Director: Stewart Hendler

Idiom: Make a fresh start.

Meaning: To take the opportunity to begin something again.

Context: A mother and son often move from house to house. On their next move, the mother tells her son that here he can start his life from the beginning - to make a fresh start. He replies bitterly - fresh start number nine. This suggests that the son is tired of constantly changing houses and wants to have a permanent place of residence.

Exercise 2. Making a video

Students should make a video on the topic "Safety and Dangers in the Learning Environment". In their video, students should use a few learned idioms. Video time length is up to five minutes.

Exercise 3. Pantomime theater

Working in small groups of three people. Each group of students randomly receives two or three idioms. The task of each group is to prepare a theatrical pantomime of idioms and show it to their classmates, so that they can guess which idiom is meant. Students can use props in their performances.

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TEACHING IDIOMS TO INCREASE INTEREST IN LEARNING ENGLISH
AMONG YOUNG LEARNERS (GRADE 8): AUTHENTIC ACTIVE LEARNING
ACTIVITIES WITH IDIOMS TO SUPPLEMENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE
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