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IDIOM LEARNING MATERIALS
FOR ESTONIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
MA thesis

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TARTU
2015

Abstract

Idioms should be taught to L2 learners as they need to understand native speakers' discourse, sound native-like, and thus show their language mastery, and grasp the target-language culture and identity of the native population. Used as a primary source in most Estonian EFL classrooms, coursebooks, though carefully designed, may not entirely meet students' needs in learning idiomatic phrases. The purpose of the worksheets designed is to demonstrate how *Upstream Intermediate B2* student's book's (2008) exercises on idiomatic phrases can be supplemented to meet EFL learners' demand to comprehend, practise, and produce target-language idioms.

The thesis falls into the four sections. The Introduction studies the characteristics and classifications of idiomatic phrases developed so far and outlines the rationales for learning them. Chapter 1 provides an insight into the comprehension of idioms in L2 learners along with factors influencing it and suggests a guide for designing study materials for idiom learning. Chapter 2 presents the findings of the analyses of the *National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools* (2011) and coursebook exercises on idioms and explores the reasons for the idiom learning materials development. Chapter 3, which opens with the decisions and procedures governing the materials design process, overviews the idiom worksheets created and the details of the evaluation and piloting phases. Likewise, it describes and interprets the results of the teachers' and students' surveys, states the limitations, and offers the directions for future research.

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List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
BYU-BNC	British National Corpus
CALD	Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary
CIDOI	Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms
COCA	Corpus of Contemporary American English
FL	Foreign Languages
NCUSS	National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools
NDNE	neither difficult nor easy
OHPC	Oxford Hector Pilot Corpus
OLD	Oxford Learner's Dictionaries
Ss-A&H	students who learned the idioms describing anger and happiness
Ss-Ed	students who were exposed to the learning of the idioms in education
Ss-P&P	students who learned the idioms describing people's personalities
Ss-W&B	students who were taught the work and business idioms
U/S INT B2	Upstream Intermediate B2

INTRODUCTION

As a social phenomenon, language is composed of words and multi-word units or multi-word (lexical) items (Lewis, 1993: 90), with the latter encompassing idioms and collocations as the two main categories (Grant & Bauer, 2004: 39). In a widely-held view, idioms are believed to constitute a highly problematic area for second/foreign language (L2) learners (Cooper, 1998; Irujo, 1986a; Lattey, 1986; Moon, 1998; Sparado, 2013) because even knowing the meanings of the individual words within a phrase, its overall meaning is often almost impossible to comprehend unless the idiom has been learned or heard before. Some people recognise the necessity of integrating idioms into the language curriculum along with other aspects of learning a language. Others adhere to the idea that acquisition of idioms occurs incidentally as part of the general process of language and world knowledge development. This is the controversy the current thesis is attempting to address.

In linguistics, the term 'idiom' has both broad and narrow meanings (see Moon, 1998, for instance). In its broad sense, it is an overarching term for different kinds of multi-word items based on customs in native speakers' culture. In its narrow sense, the term is restricted to a particular kind of a unit whose meaning cannot be entirely deduced from the meanings of its constituents. In this thesis, the term 'idiom', including its synonyms, like 'idiomatic phrase' and 'idiomatic expression', is going to be used in the narrow sense.

0.1. Characteristics of idioms

In addition to the feature of non-compositionality introduced in the narrow definition of idiom and referring to the situation where a phrase gains its meaning from the whole, not from the sum of individual literal meanings of the words within (Grant & Bauer, 2004),

seven more characteristic features have been identified on the basis of research literature: conventionality (Nunberg, Sag & Wasow, 1994; Vega-Moreno, 2003), institutionalisation (Grant & Bauer, 2004; Moon, 1998), flexibility (Cooper, 1998; Grant & Bauer, 2004; Moon, 1998; Nunberg et al, 1994), semantic transparency (Cooper, 1998; Gibbs, 1993; Vega-Moreno, 2003), figurativeness, formality, and affect (Nunberg et al, 1994).

The properties of conventionality and institutionalisation are true of and compulsory for the whole class of idioms. Conventionality applies to the connection between "a certain string of words and a certain semantic representation" (Vega-Moreno, 2003: 306), which is arbitrary (i.e. no predictable link exists between the form and meaning of a phrase) and determined by conventions adopted by speech communities. For example, something costs *an arm and a leg* in English and not *an eye of your face* as it does in Spanish (ibid.). As follows from the above discussion, the principle of conventionality applies both to idioms and single words as the particular combinations of morphemes constituting idiomatic phrases and the meanings encoded by them are established by convention rather than by rule, as it is in terms of ordinary words.

Institutionalisation refers to the process by which an idiom enters the common usage of a speech community; that is, becomes accepted as a lexical item of its language and used by its speakers in their spoken and written discourse (Bauer, 1983 cited in Moon, 1998: 7; Grant & Bauer, 2004: 44). Hence, newly coined non-literal phrases become a part of language, literature, and culture as soon as they become institutionalised.

The idiom features like flexibility, semantic transparency, and formality are likewise peculiar to the category of idiomatic expressions but, in contrast to conventionality and institutionalisation, they are divided into sub-features varying from item to item. Flexibility relates to the ability of idiomatic phrases to undergo grammatical transformations and

lexical variations (Moon, 1998: 7). Idioms that tolerate such changes are characterised as flexible; the ones resistant to them are termed inflexible, frozen or fixed.

Grammatical transformations of idioms can be classified into the following most common types: polarity (e.g. (*not*) *to lift a finger*), passivisation (e.g. *to roll out the carpet for the king → the carpet was rolled out for the king*), nominalisation (e.g. *to break the ice – ice breaker*), transformation to adjectives (e.g. *with tongue in cheek – tongue-in-cheek*), and transformation to predicates (e.g. *don't look a gift-horse in the mouth – to look a gift-horse in the mouth*) (ibid, 106-15). The most common examples of frozen idioms which cannot be passivised without losing their idiomatic meaning include *to kick the bucket* and *to beat around the bush* (Liu, 2008: 81).

Besides allowing or restricting the amount of grammatical flexibility, idioms can likewise exhibit lexical fixedness or unfixedness, that is, either afford or restrain addition, substitution or deletion of elements without affecting an idiomatic interpretation (Grant & Bauer, 2004: 44). Among the most common kinds of lexical variations Moon (1998: 124-38) identifies are verb variation (e.g. *to cost/pay/spend/charge an arm and a leg*), noun variation (e.g. *to burn your boats/bridges*), adjective and modifier variation (e.g. *to bleed someone dry/white*; *there are plenty more/other fish in the sea*), particle variation (e.g. *with egg on/all over one's face*), conjunction variation (e.g. *to hit and/or miss*), specificity and amplification (e.g. *a tough nut (to crack)*), truncation (e.g. (*speech is silver but*) *silence is golden*), reversals (e.g. *you can't have/eat your cake and eat/have it*), register variation (e.g. *to beat one's breast/chest*), and variations between British and American English (e.g. *to touch wood – to knock (on) wood*).

Semantic transparency pertains to the relatedness between the literal and figurative meanings of an idiomatic phrase. Depending on the degree to which the literal meanings of the individual constituents contribute independently to the comprehension of the entire

idiom's metaphorical meaning, idiomatic phrases are categorised on a continuum from transparent to opaque or from decomposable, also referred to as normally decomposable, to non-decomposable. The first are reasonably easy to comprehend due to a clear relationship between the individual lexical components' surface meanings and the overall figurative meaning of an idiom (Cooper, 1998: 257; Gibbs, 1993: 62). Thus, for instance, *to button (up) one's lips* viewed by Gibbs (1993: 62) as being normally decomposable is particularly unlikely to cause interpretation difficulties because of the visible connection between the figurative meaning of *to stop talking* and the literal reading of the phrase. Unlike the previous example, a non-decomposable idiom *to kick the bucket* is acknowledged to be highly confusing for L2 learners by virtue of the obscure link between its literal and nonliteral interpretations; it is practically impossible to decipher the meaning of *to die* by analysing and synthesising the meanings of the idiom's lexical components.

Between the discussed extremes of decomposable and non-decomposable idioms lie abnormally decomposable idioms (Gibbs, 1993: 62; Liu, 2008: 80). According to Liu (2008: 80), the idiomatic phrase *to give the green light,* which denotes *to give permission*, is decomposable but abnormally because the figurative referent in it can only be identified by virtue of the knowledge of 'green light' as a conventional metaphor for 'permission'.

Formality indicates the degree to which idioms are appropriate in formal, neutral and informal contexts. The extent of formality of a particular idiom is stated in some idiom dictionaries, including *CIDOI* (1998), which indicates, for instance, that *to be on cloud nine*, signifying *to be extremely happy and excited*, is informal, while *to bear fruit*, to be interpreted as *to produce successful results*, is an example of a formal idiomatic phrase. Despite idioms being generally associated with informal or colloquial use of language, a sufficiently large proportion of English idiomatic phrases are stylistically neutral (e.g. *to be part and parcel of*).

The last two characteristics Nunberg et al (1994: 492-3) have listed for idiomatic expressions – figurativeness and affect – can be grouped and discussed together because they are both specific to particular types of idioms, not to all the idiomatic phrases, in a given language. Figurativeness concerns the metaphorical nature or non-literalness of idioms. Most phrases that people commonly call 'idioms' are figurative (Grant & Nation, 2006: 8) in the sense that they involve figures of speech such as metaphor (e.g. *to take the bull by the horns*), metonymy (e.g. *to lend a hand*) and hyperbole (e.g. *not worth the paper it is written on*).

Concerned with emotions and attitudes assigned to and expressed by particular idiomatic expressions, the property of affect suggests that idioms are not exclusively used to denote neutral activities (e.g. *talking informally – chewing fat*) but also emotionally positive (e.g. *having a great success – making the killing*) and negative events and states (e.g. *failing – dropping the ball*) (ibid.). Hence, evaluation is what idioms can apply to the things they figuratively describe.

0.2. Classifications of idioms

The previously reviewed characteristic features of idiomatic phrases clearly indicate that idioms vary with respect to a great deal of the established properties. For the purpose of categorising them into specific types, a considerable number of different classification systems for idioms have been elaborated over the years. Alan Healey (1968) and Adam Makkai (1972), the pioneers in developing the idiom classification frameworks, proposed to group idioms according to their length and syntactic functions respectively. The later classifications have been predominantly syntactic (i.e. describing idioms in terms of their syntactic forms) and semantic (i.e. defining idiomatic phrases in terms of their semantic

roles and using either idiom compositionality and transparency or idiom compositionality and figurativeness as the criteria for determining the idiom categories).

0.2.1. Makkai's classification of idioms and its derivatives

Based on the phrase length, Makkai divided a wide range of idiomatic expressions into two distinct categories: lexemic and sememic idioms.

Defined by Moon (1998: 4) as functioning at the level of words and acting as "non-compositional polymorphemic words /…/ and collocations", for Makkai (1972: 123-72), lexemic idioms contained six subcategories, such as phrasal verb idioms (e.g. *to make up*), tournure idioms (e.g. *to rain cats and dogs*), irreversible binomial idioms (e.g. *pepper and salt*), phrasal compound idioms (e.g. *blackmail*), incorporating verb idioms (e.g. *sight-see*), and pseudo-idioms (e.g. *kith and kin*).

Tournures, according to Makkai, are phrase-like structures which consist of at least three parts. Pseudo-idioms, on the other hand, are idiomatic phrases one or more of whose constituents cannot operate independently in any other context, except for the one it is conventionally part of. The other terms, namely, phrasal verb idioms, irreversible binomial idioms, phrasal compound idioms, and incorporating verb idioms are self-explanatory.

Represented by "not freely formed constructions" (Moon, 1998: 4) functioning at the level of phrases and sentences, sememic idioms were classified by Makkai (1972: 172-9) into nine types: 'first base' idiomatic expressions arisen from culture-specific fields, such as baseball, (e.g. *never to get to first base*), familiar quotations as idioms (e.g. *Brevity is the soul of wit*), proverbial idioms with moral (e.g. *Don't count your chickens before they are hatched*), idioms of institutionalised greeting (e.g. *How do you do?*), politeness (e.g. *May I ask who's calling?*), understatement (e.g. *I wasn't too crazy about him*), hyperbole (*e.g.*

won't even lift a finger), detachment or indirectness (e.g. *Could you do me a favour?*), and idioms of proposals encoded as questions (e.g. *How about a drink?*).

Moon's (1998: 11) claim that Makkai's study on the structure of English fixed expressions and idioms remains one of the most useful ones and proceeded to influence the Anglo-American studies is confirmed by the fact that at least two more scholars created their idiom classification systems using Makkai's idiom subcategories. Thus, Alexander (1984: 129) distinguishes seven and five classes of phrase-long and sentence-long idioms respectively. In terms of the first group, he added proverbial idioms (e.g. *the land of Nod*), metaphorical/allusive idioms (e.g. *a hot potato*), and idiomatic similes (e.g. *as bold as brass*) to phrasal verbs, tournures, irreversible binomials, and phrasal compounds from Makkai's lexemic idioms and eliminated incorporating verb idioms and pseudo-idioms. Along with proverbs and quotations assigned by Makkai to the sememic class, the second group incorporates allusions (e.g. *Play it again, Sam*), catchphrases (e.g. *Read my lips!*), and discourse-structuring devices (e.g. *Long time no see!*) and omits the remaining seven idiom classes occurring in Makkai's classification system.

Although McCarthy (1998) used some idiom category names similar to those found in the above-described classifications, like phrasal verb idioms and irreversible binomial idioms, his classification model is different in the sense that it does not group idioms according to their length. In addition to phrasal verbs and irreversible binomials, he lists eight more idiom types: clause-idioms of the type verb + complement (e.g. *to hit the sack*), trinomials (e.g. *ready, willing and able*), prepositional expressions (e.g. *in two shakes of a lamb's tail*), frozen similes (e.g. (*as*) *keen as mustard*), possessive's phrases (e.g. *a king's ransom*), opaque compounds (e.g. *a mish-mash*), idiomatic speech routines, gambits and discourse markers (e.g. *by the way*), and cultural allusions (e.g. *to be or not to be*) (McCarthy, 1998: 130-1; O'Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007: 81-2).

0.2.2. Syntactic classifications of idioms

The second of the earliest ways of categorising idioms – syntactic classification – aimed at grouping idiomatic expressions according to their grammatical types.

Healey (1968), the pioneer in the investigation of syntactic functions and internal structures of idioms, compiled a list of 21 distinct idiom categories which can, in turn, be grouped under the broader categories of single words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Inasmuch as each of the 21 idiom types is further illustrated with large quantities of examples of idioms displaying different kinds of internal structures, it seems unfruitful to list the categories along with just a few relevant examples when the full syntactic classification is easily accessible in Healey (1968: 81-91). Just to provide some examples, the idiom categories the linguist determined include, among others, nouns as idioms, noun phrases as idioms, adjectives as idioms, and intransitive verbs as idioms.

With regard to the later research, Moon (1998: 85-6) reports on 12 most common types of grammatical structures of idioms she detected while exploring the Oxford Hector Pilot Corpus (OHPC henceforth). Based on the data obtained, three idiom categories such as subject + predicator + object (e.g. *X steals Y's thunder*), subject + predicator + object + adjunct (e.g. *X lays Y's cards on the table*), and subject + predicator + adjunct (e.g. *X comes to grief*) accounted for almost 70% of the encountered idioms, with the other nine categories covering the remaining 30%.

In collaboration with his colleague O'Dell, McCarthy (2002: 6) developed further his earlier classification into a syntactic one. In particular, they discerned seven structurally differing types of idioms: idioms of the type verb + object/complement (e.g. *to kill two birds with one stone*), prepositional phrases (e.g. *in the blink of an eye*), compound idioms (e.g. *a bone of contention*), similes (e.g. *as dry as a bone*), binomial idioms (e.g. *rough and*

ready), trinomial idioms (e.g. *cool, calm and collected*), and whole clause or sentence idioms (e.g. *to cut a long story short*).

0.2.3. Semantic classifications of idioms

With the aim of producing such a representation of idiomatic phrases which would likewise establish clear criteria for what are and what are not idioms, the possibility to categorise idioms along the dimension of semantics has been established. In accordance with a semantic classification, idioms, as summarised by Mulhall (2010: 1358) from the studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s, can, for instance, be ascribed to the following four classes: pure idioms, figurative idioms, semi-idioms, and pseudo idioms.

As defined by Mulhall (2010: 1358), pure idioms, such as *red herring*, are fixed, invariant, non-compositional, and semantically opaque expressions. Figurative idioms, like *to catch fire*, are also described as non-compositional lexical units, but, differently from pure idioms, have a more realistic link between their figurative and literal meanings, which thus enables their logical interpretation. Semi-idioms, like *white lie*, differ from the rest in being constituted of partially compositional phrases including at least one lexical component retaining its literal meaning in the overall figurative meaning of an idiom. Pseudo idioms, such as *spic and span*, likewise identified as non-compositional, contain at least one unique element which has no meaning on its own.

Grant and Bauer's attempt to establish the criteria for redefining idioms has resulted in another kind of a semantic classification of idiomatic expressions. As the basis of its development, two grouping criteria were established: the criterion of non-compositionality and the one of figurativeness (Grant & Bauer, 2004: 52). As a result, a three-class idiom classification framework incorporating core idioms (non-compositional, non-figurative), figurative idioms (non-compositional, figurative), and ONCEs (<u>o</u>ne <u>n</u>on-<u>c</u>ompositional

element, can also be figurative) has been devised (Grant & Bauer, 2004: 52-3; Grant & Nation, 2006: 2-3). This classification does not distinguish any longer between pseudo idioms and pure idioms but merges them into a single category of core idioms (e.g. *by and large*). As to the remaining categories – figuratives (e.g. *give the green light*) and ONCEs (e.g. *dog days*), they are similar, in terms of their properties, to the earlier developed semantic categories of figurative idioms and semi-idioms.

Based on the overview of the classification systems offered herein, it is to be noted that although Makkai and Alexander categorise idioms into only two types according to the phrase length, their classifications are particularly over-elaborate and ambiguous because of a vast number of sub-categories the linguists identify. The same comment applies to the syntactic classifications, which distinguish between seven and 21 types of idioms. In terms of the semantics-driven classifications, they are 'of another kind' since they account for a couple of the most important idiom features, and thus have the advantage of allowing for an easier understanding of what idioms are.

Since a semantic approach to idiom classification enables not just the description but equally the definition of what is being arranged in classes, this is the one adopted in the present thesis. Based on Grant and Nation's explanation of figuratives, the following definition has been formulated: The figurative idiom is a conventional non-literal phrase which refers to unreal events or situations and can be pragmatically reinterpreted to make sense in the context. A more learner-friendly explanation can be stated as follows: "If you break the phrase, it means one thing, but if you treat it whole, in its accustomed way, it possesses a meaning that is something other than, or in addition to, its constituent parts" (Wray, 2002: 4). The figurative idiom is a clear example of this. These are expressions with a special meaning different from the usual meanings of the individual words in the phrase. One example of the figurative idiom is *to bring home the bacon* meaning *to earn a*

living as in *Both Richard and Stephanie got jobs to bring home the bacon for their children*.

0.3. Reasons for learning and teaching L2 idioms

As it was mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter, idioms are confusing for non-native speakers. Wray (2000: 463) insists on idioms being, along with collocations and sentence frames, a vital element of successful language learning; the possible reasons for this statement are varied and include, for instance, the need to understand native speakers' discourse, sound native-like, and thus demonstrate language mastery, and grasp the target-language culture and identity of the native population.

Idioms are generally acknowledged to form a significant part of both oral and written discourse produced by native speakers of a language (Alali & Schmitt, 2012; Conklin & Schmitt, 2008, 2012; Cooper, 1998; Ellis, Simpson-Vlach & Maynard, 2008; Hopkins & Potter, 2001; Martinez & Schmitt, 2012; McDevitt, 1993; Moreno, 2011; Schmitt, 2005; Seidl & McMordie, 1988; Wood, 2009; Wray, 2002; Zarei & Rahimi, 2012; Zyzik, 2009). To illustrate the point, idioms are frequently encountered in a broad spectrum of social situations, from friendly conversations to business meetings (Hopkins & Potter, 2001: 8), as well as in the media (Irujo, 1986a: 237; Trudgill, 1986 cited in Stuart-Smith, 2007: 140). Regarding written language, they are especially prevalent in newspapers, whose writers aspire to capture readers' attention and engage them in an article with striking headlines and lively contents (Hopkins & Potter, 2001: 9). Moreover, idioms commonly occur in horoscopes (Holmes & Moulton, 2005: 55; McCarthy, O'Dell & Shaw, 1997: 158), travel guides, teenage magazines, literature (Siefring, 2004: vii), from poems and plays to novels and fairytales (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2010: 50), and social media. Likewise, the corpus studies performed by Moon (1998) have identified 6,776 fixed expressions and idioms

across the original 18-million-word OHPC, with a high proportion of journalism and comparatively little spoken text. As for spoken English, Liu's (2003) corpus search of three corpora of Spoken American English comprising 6,000,000 tokens has resulted in the recognition of 9,683 idioms. Thus, the understanding of L2 idioms' meanings is likely to minimise difficulties non-natives may experience in understanding native speakers' oral and written texts.

In view of English being a highly idiomatic language, a large group of linguists and language researchers has arrived at the conclusion that the achievement of native-like ability to comprehend, produce, and select target language idiomatic phrases appropriate to the context and the message to be communicated can help L2 learners become more proficient and fluent language users (Buckingham, 2006; Cooper, 1998; Moreno, 2011; Roberto de Caro, 2009; Saberian & Fotovatnia, 2011; Thiel, 1979; Wood, 2009; Wray, 2000; Zarei & Rahimi, 2012). In other words, idiomatic competence is widely thought to assist non-native language learners in attaining a high level of communicative competence, the major goal of foreign language acquisition. In particular, as specified by Lattey (1986: 224), idiomatic competence may prove useful in communicating one's attitude, opinion or personal feelings, which are not always easy to express literally. As an example, native speakers consider it more socially acceptable to use idioms like *I will keep my fingers crossed for you*, *I have butterflies in my stomach* or *It's not my cup of tea* than their non-idiomatic counterparts to convey the same messages.

Apart from improving learners' communicative skills, learning of idioms contributes to the knowledge development of the target-language culture and the people inhabiting it. Providing proof of this point, Casas and Campoy (1995: 48) claim that "idioms [based on nature, customs and traditions, religion and beliefs, tales and fables] show the influence of the cultural values of society on language". Idioms are a reflection of "the way of thinking

and behaving not just of the individuals (microlevel) but also of the whole community (macrolevel)". Also, they indicate the modes "of conceptualising reality and experience" (ibid, 58). By way of illustration, L2 learners receiving instruction of popular sporting idioms in American English like *to get to first base* and *to keep your eye on the ball* ultimately learn about Americans' vision of life as a competitive sport (Liu, 2008: 152).

In contrast to the authors establishing single idiom learning motives, like the ones mentioned above, Liu (2008: 103-4) has compiled a list of reasons why idiom teaching should receive adequate attention in second or foreign language education. In addition to the reasons already discussed, he writes that L2 idiom acquisition evokes immense interest on the part of intermediate and advanced EFL learners appreciating the contribution of idiomatic competence to augmenting the level of the overall language proficiency.

0.4. Thesis overview

The purpose of the current thesis is to determine whether and how idiom learning is addressed in the *National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools* (*NCUSS*) (2011), analyse the vocabulary exercises on idiomatic phrases in *Upstream Intermediate* (*U/S INT* henceforth) *B2* student's book (2008), widely used by Estonian teachers of English, and compile a set of worksheets as a supplement and an independent tool aimed at Estonian secondary school students to support their learning of idioms.

To guide and focus the paper-writing process, the following research questions have been framed:

RQ1: How are idioms addressed in the Foreign Languages (FL) subject field in the *NCUSS* (2011)?

RQ2: How are idioms dealt with in *U/S INT B2* student's book (2008), one of the widely used EFL cousebooks in Estonian secondary schools?

RQ3: Where is the gap in the coursebook's approach to teaching idioms and how could it be filled in?

Chapter 1 provides insights into the hypothetical mechanisms of comprehending idioms by L2 learners and factors influencing it as well as suggests a guide for designing teacher-made materials for idiom learning.

Chapter 2 is concerned with presenting the findings emerged from the analyses of the *NCUSS* (2011) and EFL coursebook exercises on idioms and exploring the reasons for the idiom learning materials development.

Chapter 3, which opens with the decisions and procedures determined to govern the process of designing materials, overviews the structure and content of the idiom worksheets designed and the details of the evaluation and piloting phases. Likewise, it describes and interprets the results of the surveys obtained by means of the questionnaires completed by three English teachers and 48 students and states the limitations and offers the directions for future research.

CHAPTER I
L2 IDIOM COMPREHENSION AND TEACHING

This chapter outlines the background to L2 idiom comprehension and provides an overview of some notable advances in idiom teaching in an EFL context. In particular, Section 1.1 discloses the factors influencing the comprehension of L2 idiomatic phrases and yields insight into the issue of idiom comprehension in non-native speakers. Section 1.2 discusses the pedagogical approaches implementable in teaching figurative idioms – a proactive and a retroactive one – along with the most written-about ways of organising figurative idiomatic expressions for learning – the conceptual metaphor approach and etymological elaboration. Finally, the chapter proposes some criteria to consider when selecting idiom items and a variety of teaching techniques advocated by methodologists in the field of L2 idiom learning to support the materials development process.

1.1. Comprehension of L2 idioms

The answer to "Why teach and learn L2 idioms?" given in the introductory chapter of the thesis has entailed another question pertinent to the paper's purpose: "What should an EFL teacher be knowledgeable about before deciding to teach idioms?" Given that Ellis et al (2008: 379) consider it of paramount importance that L2 teachers should develop a clear understanding of the psycholinguistics of idioms in L2 learners as well as discover the factors affecting idiom learnability and processing fluency, these matters are explored in the following sub-sections.

1.1.1. Factors affecting idiom comprehension in L1 and L2

Idiom comprehension has been studied both in native (Cacciari & Levorato,1989; Cronk, Lima & Schweigert, 1993; Cronk & Schweigert, 1992; Gibbs, 1980; Gibbs &

Gonzales, 1985; Levorato & Cacciari, 1999; Nayak and Gibbs, 1990; Nippold & Martin, 1989; Nippold & Rudzinski, 1993; Nippold & Taylor, 1995; Ortony, Schallert, Reynolds & Antos, 1978; Schweigert, 1986; Schweigert & Moates, 1988) and non-native speakers (Abdullah & Jackson, 1998; Bulut & Çelik-Yazici, 2004; Cooper, 1999; Irujo, 1986b). As a result, nine idiom comprehension-related factors, namely familiarity, transparency and semantic analysability, syntactic analysability, context of use, age and cognitive ability, learner cognitive style, knowledge of the metaphorical links between the source and the target domains, L1, and L2 proficiency have been determined. Liu (2008: 77), in turn, has systematised the factors into two categories: "those on the part of the idiom and its use" (i.e. idiom-dependent) and "those on the part of the language user" (i.e. learner-dependent). Except for L1 and L2 proficiency, the remaining seven factors are associated with idiom comprehension both in L1 and L2. However, because of the contradictory data, namely Trosborg (1985) finding a positive correlation between English non-native learners' L2 proficiency and their understanding of unfamiliar idioms and Johnson and Rosano (1993) (as cited in Liu, 2008: 88), on the other hand, confirming a negative correlation between these measures, the factor of L2 proficiency is not included in the discussion.

The category of idiom-dependent factors embodies familiarity, transparency and semantic analysability, syntactic analysability, and context of use (Liu, 2008: 77-84), the second and the third ones of which derive from the list of idiom characteristics. Idiom familiarity, typically measured by means of surveys conducted among users of a given language, refers to the degree of recognisability of idioms revealed from the respondents' answers. Thus, for instance, as stated by Schweigert (1986: 34), the idiom *to have a big head* meaning *to think of oneself as superior* ("have a big head" (n.d.)) is an example of a highly familiar idiom due to it being extremely frequent in everyday discourse when used in its figurative sense.

With respect to transparency and semantic analysability, research findings indicate that these factors affect both speed and accuracy of idiom processing and comprehension. In particular, it has been proved that familiar and semantically transparent or analysable idiomatic utterances are understood faster and more accurately than less familiar and semantically opaque ones (Cronk, Lima & Schweigert, 1993; Cronk & Schweigert, 1992; Levorato & Cacciari, 1999; Nippold & Rudzinski, 1993; Nippold & Taylor, 1995; Schweigert, 1986; Schweigert & Moates, 1988).

Syntactic analysability applies to the degree to which idioms are consistent with a language's syntactic rules in terms of its syntactic structure (Liu, 2008: 81). Based on the syntactic principles by which idiomatic phrases are constructed, Liu suggests classifying idioms into syntactically flexible/frozen and syntactically normal/abnormal (i.e. obeying or disobeying syntactic rules in a given language). As an illustration of the latter group, the idioms like *bite the bullet* and *break a leg* follow the established verb-object rule, while the idiomatic phrases such as *by and large* and *happy-go-lucky* are not grammatically sound. As to the main point of the discussion, after considering the examples of both syntactically frozen and syntactically abnormal idioms, one is tempted to suggest that these kinds mostly appear semantically opaque. Nevertheless, even though their comprehension takes more time because of the compositional analysis being precluded (ibid.), the speed of their learning is faster than that of syntactically flexible or normal expressions as they are encountered in fewer syntactic forms (Cooper, 1998: 257; Gibbs & Gonzales, 1985: 243).

The factor termed "context of use" concerns the effect produced by the contextual surroundings of an idiom on its non-literal interpretation. Empirical research attributes a vital role to contextual information in discovering the meaning of unfamiliar idiomatic phrases (Cacciari & Levorato, 1989; Gibbs, 1980; Nippold & Martin, 1989; Ortony et al, 1978). Besides the finding that context, unlike a context-free setting, facilitates the correct

reading of an idiomatic phrase (Gibbs, 1980: 151, Nippold & Martin, 1989: 64), it has likewise been determined that the processing speed of an idiom is affected by the amount of contextual information provided. Namely, the study of Ortony et al (1978: 25) suggests that the larger informational environment surrounds an idiom the faster and the better it is understood.

The category of learner-dependent factors is composed of age and cognitive ability, learner cognitive style, knowledge of the metaphorical links between the source and the target domains, and EFL learners' L1 (Liu, 2008: 84-8). As stated by Michelon (2006), cognitive abilities are mental functions that one needs in order to fulfill a task of any difficulty level, from the easiest to the most complex. Being able to be enhanced at any age due to a systematic practice, cognitive abilities are to a great extent determined by the brain mechanisms of how we acquire knowledge or skill, retain, problem-solve, and concentrate. The importance of the age and cognitive ability in children's idiom comprehension has been proven by revealing that children's success in comprehending figurative language improves with maturation (Cacciari & Levorato, 1989; Nippold & Rudzinski, 1993; Nippold & Taylor, 1995).

Learner cognitive style, otherwise referred to as learning style, indicates a dominant approach of an individual to organising and processing new information being transferred in the learning process (Salvisberg, 2005: 2). The relationship between students' learning style and their learning performance in specific situations can be either positive or negative depending on whether the preferred style corresponds or does not correspond appropriately to the given task (Riding & Sadler-Smith, 1997: 200). As to the effect the learner cognitive style produces on idiom comprehension, research findings suggest that non-native English speakers adopting an analytical cognitive style when interpreting idiomatic expressions particularly succeed in the task (Bulut & Çelik-Yazici, 2004; Cooper, 1999). Recognising

an L2 idiom as a problem, they try to solve it by using a variety of strategies such as, for instance, guessing from the context, using the literal meaning, and referring to an L1 idiom (Bulut & Çelik-Yazici, 2004: 110; Cooper, 1999: 246-52).

Students' knowledge of the links between the source domain (i.e. where the primary meaning comes from) and the target domain (i.e. where the basic meaning is supplemented with some new ideas) can considerably facilitate the comprehension of culture-specific idioms. Thus, for instance, learners who know the "three strikes and you're out" baseball rule are more likely to overcome the difficulty of guessing the meaning of *to have two strikes against someone* signifying *to place someone in a disadvantageous position* than those who do not. The lack of knowledge of such a culture-specific source domain would make the figurative reading of the idiom practically impossible for non-American speakers. Nevertheless, even though the knowledge of the metaphorical links is mostly missing in L2 learners, Nayak & Gibbs (1990) (cited in Gibbs, 1993: 70) state that this factor is "the basis for the appropriate use and interpretation of idioms in particular discourse situations".

As for L2 learners' native language, research demonstrates its influence on both the comprehension and production of L2 idioms. Specifically, in Irujo's study, learners of English with Spanish as their L1 showed the tendency to use it in comprehending both identical and similar idioms and produced the highest proportion of correct responses with English idiomatic phrases having equivalents in Spanish (Irujo, 1986b: 294). The Syrian subjects, as determined by Abdullah and Jackson (1998), proved to successfully resort to their mother tongue not only when attempting to comprehend English cognate idioms but also when producing them because of the occurrence of positive language transfer.

1.1.2. Theories of L2 idiom comprehension

Besides the factors influencing the ability of learners to comprehend idioms, the mechanisms involved in the way people process and comprehend idioms have likewise been of interest to researchers. A number of hypotheses accounting for idiom processing and comprehension have been developed. The most recently constructed models of L2 idiom comprehension are the following: *idiom diffusion model* by J. Liontas, *model of dual idiom representation* by B. Abel, and *literal salience resonant model* by A. Cieślicka. Two of them, namely, the *idiom diffusion model* and the *literal salience resonant model*, assume that literal translation of idiomatic phrases is prior to and obligatory in idiom processing; the *model of dual idiom representation* sees it as inescapable only in the case of a lack of idiom entries for decomposable and non-decomposable idioms in learners' mental lexicon.

The *idiom diffusion model* consisting of two successive phases – a 'prediction phase' and a 'confirmation phase' – is based on the series of studies started by Liontas in 1999 and performed with adult learners of a variety of foreign languages (Liontas, 2015: 303). The type of idiomatic phrases included in the studies allowed both literal and figurative interpretations, like *bury the hatchet*, and created concrete mental images in learners' minds. According to the theory summarised in Cieślicka, (2008: 13-4), in the 'prediction phase', in the absence of context, non-native learners are involved in a literal analysis of the lexical components of an idiom to construct further predictions on the overall meaning of the phrase. In the 'confirmation phase', after examining the contextual information that surrounds the idiom, they either confirm or replace their initial hypotheses.

Subsequent to Liontas's theory, Abel (2003: 330-49) developed the *model of dual idiom representation* to explain how 169 graduate and undergraduate native speakers of German comprehended English decomposable and non-decomposable idioms. Among 320 idiomatic expressions studied, 190 were verbal idioms, whereas 130 were different in

terms of their syntactic forms. As the name of the model suggests, it combines two levels of idiom processing: a lexical and a conceptual processing routes. The model posits that non-decomposable idioms are stored as idiom entries, while decomposable idioms which undergo a compositional analysis are represented as lexical entries, with the possibility of later developing idiom entries. Specifically, Abel's model assumes that the probability of an idiom entry to be developed increases with the frequency of an idiom as an idiomatic configuration. Thus, apart from an idiom's degree of decomposability, it is its frequency which determines the development of an idiom's entry at the lexical level. With regard to decomposable idioms, after the literal meanings of the individual words within them are activated, learners access the mental lexicon to retrieve idiom entries. If idiom entries are non-existent, non-native speakers use non-linguistic conceptual knowledge represented at a general cognitive level in order to interpret idioms' figurative senses. With respect to non-decomposable idioms, Abel's studies showed that non-natives lacking idiom entries tended to rate these idioms as decomposable as they considered their constituent meanings, while the ones who developed idiom entries judged them as non-decomposable inasmuch as they retrieved these idioms directly from the mental lexicon.

Cieślicka's (2006: 115-21) *literal salience resonant model* of L2 idioms was first employed in 2004. It found support in later studies, too, for instance, in the one on 43 advanced learners of English with Polish as their native language where the subjects were asked to explain the meanings of 40 idiomatic phrases belonging to two distinct types: literal (i.e. allowing both literal and figurative interpretations) and non-literal (i.e. allowing exclusively figurative interpretations). The model assumes that because literal meanings are more commonly used by non-native speakers than idiomatic ones, they must be activated first and most strongly at the time of idiom processing in the mental lexicon, regardless of the type of an idiom, its familiarity to a learner, and contextual bias. The

model suggests that L2 learners' mental lexicon is divided into two hierarchical and interconnected levels: language-specific lexical level and language-independent conceptual level (Cieślicka, 2008: 14-5). In Cieślicka's view, the comprehension of L2 idioms occurs when a set of conditions is met: (1) links between an idiom's constituents are developed and strengthened as a result of repeated exposure to an idiom; (2) literal meanings of an idiom's constituents are accessed at the lexical level; (3) an idiom's figurative meaning is built at the conceptual level; and (4) conceptual links are created between an idiom's literal and figurative meanings (ibid.).

Based on the assumptions of the theories of L2 idiom comprehension discussed, it can be concluded that three models approach the issue from slightly distinct perspectives. Namely, Abel's *model of dual idiom representation* primarily focuses on how L2 idioms are represented in learners' lexicons, while Liontas's *idiom diffusion model* and Cieślicka's *literal salience resonant model* attempt to explain how non-native speakers make sense of them.

Another conclusion concerns the limitations of these models. In contrast to Abel's relatively straightforward model, Liontas's and Cieślicka's ones seem to have limits in the sense of being ill-suited to exploring the idiom comprehension processes in children. Turning to the reasons for the claim above, Fusté-Herrmann (2008: 23) identifies the necessity of having a high level of metalinguistic awareness to name the inference strategies used in predicting the figurative meanings of idioms and inference confirmation strategies. In terms of Cieślicka's model, Nunes and Bryant (2009: 140) suggest that children's unstable reaction times, as they are still learning to read in L2, is an obstacle to their participation in the priming of idioms.

To summarise, the comprehension of L2 idiomatic expressions is possible but not guaranteed; its effectiveness is equally affected by two kinds of factors – idiom-dependent

and learner-dependent. Two of the idiom-dependent factors – transparency and semantic analysability and syntactic analysability – overlap with such idiom properties as semantic transparency and flexibility. The most recent theories explaining the comprehension of L2 idioms include the *idiom diffusion model*, the *model of dual idiom representation*, and the *literal salience resonant* model, with each based on adult data.

1.2. Teaching figurative idioms to L2 learners

As stated by Boers, Demecheleer and Eyckmans (2004a: 54, 2004b: 375), before the 1990s, figurative idioms received very limited consideration in EFL literature. They were not recognised as worthy of a proper discussion due to three by then obsolete assumptions. Firstly, regarded as neither grammar rules nor individual words, the combination of which language was generally viewed as, there seemed to be no place for figurative idioms and other multi-word phrases in the teaching syllabus. Secondly, seen as just an ornamental device used to embellish one's language, they were considered relevant to advanced-level students only. Thirdly, since the figurative meaning of idioms was firmly believed to be unpredictable from their lexical components, a systematic way of teaching them seemed to be non-existent. Thus, the only possible way for L2 learners to master figurative idioms was blind memorisation or rote learning.

Since then, scholars and researchers have devoted their efforts to compensating for past inaction by developing pedagogical approaches, modes of organisation, and teaching guidelines for figurative idioms.

1.2.1. Proactive and retroactive approaches to teaching figurative idioms

Since the late 1990s, two opposing approaches have been designed to guide idiom instruction: a proactive and a retroactive approach, as termed by Richards (1996) (cited in

Liu, 2008: 136). The former of them implies conscious selection of idioms to teach on the part of the teacher and their active use and practice on the part of the learner, whereas the latter entails assisting students at their request to comprehend and come to use only those unfamiliar idioms which they sporadically encounter during the language learning process – for instance, in a reading text.

Richards and Liu do not concur with each other as to which of the two approaches is most effective. As indicated by Liu (2008: 136), Richards argues for a retroactive teaching of idiomatic phrases because, unlike a proactive approach, it does not allow the likelihood of idiomatosis or excessive and inappropriate use of idioms on the part of learners. Liu (2008: 136-7), however, strongly believes that it does not behoove teachers to completely abandon pre-planned and practice-involving idiom teaching for two reasons. First, errors and overuse of certain linguistic structures are an integral part of the language development process. Second, the probability of overusing or inappropriately using idioms learned reduces provided the teacher ensures students' understanding of their register and function(s), repeatedly advises them not to use idiomatic phrases just for the sake of using them or engages learners in identifying and correcting the problems of misuse and exorbitant use of idioms in speech or writing samples. Thus, in the present study, the proactive approach to teaching figurative idioms was adopted to guarantee and promote students' noticing and use of these specific language features in meaningful L2 contexts (Lyster, 1998: 80).

1.2.2. Organising figurative idioms for instruction

Within the proactive approach to teaching L2 idiomatic expressions, several ways of organising phrases selected for learning have been devised. Two of the most popular in research literature include the conceptual metaphor approach and etymological elaboration,

both drawing learners' attention to the meaning of idioms rather than to their form (Boers, 2011: 236). The other approaches to grouping idiomatic phrases recommended are dividing them into thematic categories (Cooper, 1998) and according to pragmatic functions they fulfill (Lattey, 1986).

The term 'conceptual metaphor', introduced in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980a), is defined by its coiners as an understanding of an abstract concept or domain in terms of a concrete one (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980b: 455). What is more, based on their hypothesis which posits that people think and act by means of metaphorical concepts, they attribute conceptual metaphors a central role in thought and language (ibid, 454). Figurative idioms as an integral part of the latter have likewise been determined to reflect metaphors. Thus, such expressions as *He's blowing off steam*; *She reached her boiling pot*; and *It just added fuel to the fire* are all underlied by the metaphor ANGER is HEAT (Boers, 2011: 229), while *I'm crazy about her*; *She drives me out of my mind*; and *He's gone mad over her* are the special cases of LOVE is MADENESS (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a: 49).

The effectiveness of conceptual metaphors in learning idioms has been investigated in 72 intermediate university learners of English speaking Turkish and Persian as their native languages (Kömür & Çimen, 2009; Samani & Hashemian, 2012). In Kömür and Çimen's (2009) study, 32 participants were exposed to the learning of idiomatic phrases presented in five lesson plans, developed with the help of the Onestopenglish website, highlighting the metaphorical meanings of idioms related to anger, happiness and sadness, making mistakes, money, and life. Besides the warmers, practice and production activities, each lesson engaged students in thinking on a specific metaphor, interpreting the idioms by paraphrasing them in their own words, finding the equivalents in L1, and comparing them. Samami and Hashemian's (2012) 40 L2 learners received conceptual metaphor instruction,

based on *Idioms Organiser* (1999), which encouraged them to study the literal senses of the words from a concrete domain as well as the metaphors and idioms generated from it, complete the gaps with the appropriate metaphors and idiomatic expressions, translate the metaphorical sentences into L1 if possible, and use the idioms for comprehension in oral and written production tasks. The findings of the studies above have clearly indicated that a conceptual approach to grouping idiomatic phrases considerably enhances L2 learners' success in understanding their figurative meanings.

Introduced by Boers et al (2004a), an etymological elaboration approach refers to the categorisation of idiomatic phrases under source domains they originally derive from. As an illustration, the idioms *to be on an even keel*, *a steady hand on the tiller*, *to run a tight ship*, *to take the wind out of someone's sails*, and *to clear the decks* are tied to the source domain of sailing (ibid, 377). Hence, etymological elaboration consists in establishing a link between idiomatic expressions and their literal origins (Boers et al 2004b: 53).

Etymological elaboration has received ample attention in L2 idiom learning studies. Boers, Eyckmans and Stengers (2007: 48-56), for instance, have conducted a series of experiments in order to estimate the effect of knowing the literal meaning of 500 figurative idioms on the comprehension of their meanings and assess the contribution of etymology to interpreting contextually presented idiomatic phrases. The online idiom-learning tool implemented with 54 Dutch-speaking college students of English comprised such types of exercises as "identify-the-meaning", "identify-the-source", "gap-fill", and "identify-the-informal-idioms". The findings have shown that hypothesising on the origin of idiomatic expressions enhances their comprehension, and that etymological awareness facilitates the interpretation of unfamiliar idioms in context. The latter conclusion is supported by the fact that in 29.5% of the cases when students failed to interpret an idiom despite the contextual setting the etymological information helped solve the problem.

The study carried out with 50 advanced Iranian students of English has shed new light on a positive impact exerted by etymological elaboration on the learning of idiomatic phrases. In particular, Bagheri and Fazel (2010), who replicated the idiom exercises used by Boers et al (2007), have established the fact that etymological elaboration is equally effective for the comprehension and retention of idioms.

However, despite its pedagogical advantages, as stated by Boers et al (2004b: 377-80), etymological elaboration has limitations that may create problems for students. To begin with, the awareness of the origins of idiomatic phrases does not yet ensure proper interpretations of their meanings. Thus, even knowing that *the gloves are off* is linked to the source domain of boxing, learners may not decipher it correctly because of being confused whether it originally signified stopping the fight or preparing to inflict extra damage by using one's bare fists. In the light of the previous example, methodologists emphasise the effectiveness of etymological elaboration only with regard to idioms whose origins are effortlessly identifiable and sufficiently enlightening to decode their figurative senses; more opaque idiomatic expressions will necessitate explicit instruction or guidance. Other limitations may arise if an idiom keyword is unfamiliar to learners (e.g., 'mould' in *to break the mould*), is a homograph (e.g., 'chips' in *to have had one's chips* may be mistaken for French fries while referring to gaming chips) or has a cognate (e.g., *a bone of contention* may be misinterpreted because of 'content' and 'contend' being cognates). Furthermore, the origins of idioms may be difficult to trace if they derive from domains that are not popular in learners' culture. For example, students whose culture is not marked by history of cricket will apparently be challenged by such idioms as *to bat on a sticky wicket* and *to hit someone for six*.

Although the effects of the traditional grouping of idiomatic phrases into thematic categories advocated by Cooper (1998) as a tool for facilitating their learning have not

been found to be studied in the literature, the thematic approach to grouping idioms has been widely used by writers of idiom teaching materials. To give some examples, Feare (1996) organises over 700 common idioms into thematic groups, whereas McCarthy and O'Dell (1994, 2010) have repeatedly adopted this kind of grouping when writing their reference and practice books.

As an alternative to Cooper's thematic categories, like 'idioms expressing emotions: happiness', Lattey (1986: 218) advocates learning L2 idiomatic expressions by pragmatic categories such as focus on the individual (e.g. *to show one's true colours*), focus on the world (e.g. *something is touch and go*), interaction/interrelationship of individuals (e.g. *to lend someone a helping hand*), and individual and the world (e.g. *not to know the first thing about something*). In her opinion, classifying idioms from the pragmatic viewpoint is reasonable and useful for EFL learners as idiomatic phrases usually describe interactions and interrelationships occurring in particular situational contexts (ibid, 221).

According to Lattey (1986: 226), one of the pedagogical advantages of her approach to grouping idioms is that it enables learners to gain insight into idiomatic expressions with reverse (e.g., individual and the world: *to beat around the bush* and *to call a spade a spade*) or opposite (e.g., focus on the world: *something is no bed of roses* and *that's a piece of cake*) perspectives by presenting them together. Another benefit consists in the possibility of discussing similar idioms in the same lesson (e.g., focus on the individual: *to be on the skids* referring to the individual being on the way down and *to go to the dogs* indicating the endpoint of ones' development), and Lattey considers it important to grasp the nuances in the meanings of idioms because they affect the use of the latter.

Although widely studied, the conceptual and etymological approaches to grouping idiomatic expressions are not common in Estonian EFL classrooms. The typical one is a thematic categorisation being the easiest to implement in teaching-learning situations. One

of the possible reasons why the pragmatic grouping is disregarded is insufficient data on its use and effectiveness.

1.2.3. Selecting idioms for instruction and idioms teaching techniques

Idiom selection is an important task when it comes to classroom teaching and L2 materials development. Based on the criteria for selecting idiomatic items for teaching to L2 learners proposed by Irujo (1986a), Cooper (1998), Liu (2008), and Zyzik (2009), the following list of criteria has been compiled: frequency of use, transparency of figurative meanings, simplicity of vocabulary and syntax, similarity to L1 idioms, appropriateness of an idiom, and students' needs.

The fact that the criterion of frequency of use has been specified by all four authors indicates that they concur in the necessity of teaching idioms that are frequently used in English-speaking communities to enhance non-natives' comprehension of native discourse and successful interaction with native speakers. To determine the frequency of an idiom, Liu (2008: 109) suggests conducting corpus searches, consulting the list of the 302 most frequently used spoken American English idioms (Liu, 2003) as well as studying Grant's (2007) work on frequently spoken figurative idioms.

The idiom selection criteria like transparency of figurative meanings, simplicity of vocabulary and syntax, and similarity to L1 idioms have likewise been identified by three of the previously mentioned methodologists, but not by Zyzik. The appropriateness of an idiomatic phrase and students' needs have been proposed for consideration by Irujo (1986a: 238-9) and Liu (2008: 108-11) as they both disapprove of teaching slang idiomatic expressions, like *don't sweat it,* and suggest having students compile a list of idioms they encounter and want to learn to serve as the basis for idiom activities.

The teaching techniques for learning idioms are extremely diverse. Thus, among the types of activities recommended for learning idiomatic expressions through metaphors might be grouping idioms listed under given conceptual metaphors and hypothesising on a metaphor which might underpin a sample of preselected idioms (Boers, 2011: 230).

Boers et al (2007: 56) have created a chronological sequence of procedures to guide the teaching of idiomatic expressions with a touch of etymology: (1) asking to guess the origin of an idiom, (2) refining or rectifying guesses, (3) asking to identify the figurative meaning of an idiom presented in context and accompanied with etymological information, and (4) refining or rectifying interpretations.

Most of the idioms teaching techniques are, however, closely related to the strategies for learning idiomatic phrases emerged from various research studies. Compiled by Liu (2008: 139-59), the set of strategies revealed in L2 learners comprises: (1) noticing and identifying idioms; (2) understanding idioms and developing interpretation strategies; (3) analysing idioms for connotation, register, and other in-depth understanding; (4) retrieving and using idioms for comprehension; and (5) retrieving, generating, and using idioms for production.

The first strategy is reflected in such teaching techniques as reading passages and discussing the meanings of idioms highlighted; identifying idioms in written and oral texts and discussing their meanings and usage; conducting corpus searches for idiom examples and determining the context, register, and meaning patterns.

The second strategy finds its expression in the types of activities like hypothesising about and finding the origin of idioms; guessing the meanings of idioms using contextual information; guessing the meanings of idioms using pragmatic and conceptual knowledge as well as imagination; guessing the meanings of idioms in isolation using knowledge of L1 idioms; drawing and dramatising idioms (Irujo, 1986a: 239-40; Cooper, 1998: 263-4).

The third strategy can be implemented by searching through corpus material to find register and connotation information; identifying attitudes expressed by idioms presented within corpus examples; identifying the origin and meanings of idioms in isolation and deciding what they reveal about attitudes and worldviews of the native speakers of the language.

The fourth strategy is made use of while telling what the idiom is from its definition or explanation; matching idioms with their definitions; filling in entire missing idioms; filling in part of an idiom; replacing underlined expressions with appropriate idioms from the list.

The fifth strategy can be illustrated with the types of activities like completing a story or paragraph with an idiom; writing sentences/passages/dialogues/short plays/stories using idioms learned; reading sentences/dialogues/passages and replacing underlined expressions with idioms learned; role-playing dialogues/plays/stories created by students; telling stories based on pictures using idioms where appropriate; telling an 'add-on' story using idioms given in the task and retelling a story the teacher has told including as many of the idioms heard as possible (Irujo, 1986a: 240; Cooper, 1998: 264).

Assuming that the conceptual metaphor approach and etymological elaboration are not popular among Estonian teachers of English, one can suggest that the techniques for teaching idioms related to these groupings are likewise scarcely common in Estonian EFL classes.

Studied both in L1 and L2, the comprehension of idiomatic expressions has been found to be affected by idiom-dependent and learner-dependent factors. One of the recent theories developed to explain the processing and comprehension of idioms by L2 learners – the *model of dual idiom representation* being relatively easy to understand – reveals that

the way of how they determine the meanings of idioms depends on the existence or non-existence of idiom entries in their lexicons. In terms of teaching idiomatic phrases, L2 teachers are advised to implement both proactive and retroactive approaches and, as part of the proactive teaching process, group together conceptually, etymologically, thematically, and pragmatically related idioms. The most recommended criteria for selecting idiomatic expressions include frequency of use, transparency of figurative meanings, simplicity of vocabulary and syntax, and similarity to L1 idioms. The diversity of teaching techniques allows L2 learners to grasp target-language idioms fully through identifying, interpreting, analysing, and using them for comprehension and production.

CHAPTER II
IDIOMS IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND *UPSTREAM INTERMEDIATE B2* STUDENT'S BOOK

Despite idioms being challenging for L2 learners because of their literal meanings often not giving much of a clue to their real meanings, it was demonstrated in Section 0.3 that they definitely deserve attention in the language classroom. This chapter will provide the answers to the two research questions mentioned in the introductory chapter: How are idioms addressed in the FL subject field in the *NCUSS* (2011)? (RQ1) and How are idioms dealt with in *U/S INT B2* student's book (2008), one of the widely used EFL coursebooks in Estonian secondary schools? (RQ2). Likewise, it will identify the reasons for designing supplementary idiom learning materials by summarising the findings from the national curriculum and coursebook analyses.

2.1. Idioms in the *NCUSS*

The examination of the *NCUSS* (2011) indicated that idioms are not mentioned in the text of the FL subject field, whereas they could have been referred to under "Cultural traditions and customs" section, along with proverbs and sayings that are already there. Nevertheless, idioms appear in the learning outcomes in listening and reading for B2.1, B2.2 and C1 levels. This finding allows the materials designer to conclude that idiomatic phrases should be taught to Estonian EFL learners as learning outcomes in the curriculum are the basis from which the learning process is derived.

2.2. Exercises on idioms in *Upstream Intermediate B2* student's book

The choice of the EFL coursebook to analyse exercises on idiomatic phrases in has fallen on *Upstream Intermediate B2* student's book (2008) widely used among Estonian

English teachers. It comprises ten units dealing with such topics as dwellings (Unit 1), life events (Unit 2), travel, holidays, and festivals (Unit 3), environment and energy (Unit 4), health and daily routines (Unit 5), technology and crime (Unit 6), shopping and advertising (Unit 7), food, healthy eating, and eating habits (Unit 8), sports and entertainment (Unit 9), the media and disasters (Unit 10). Thus, the topical content of the selected coursebook is closely related to the learning content of the NCUSS (2011, section 3.1.4).

Each unit contains the *Idioms & Fixed Phrases* subsection in the *Grammar in Use* section, with mostly a couple of exercises primarily focusing learners' attention on the linguistic forms of idiomatic expressions and encouraging them to guess what given idioms mean by using their sentence contexts. The idiom activities, whose total number is 19, are organised around colour idioms, similes, animal idioms, body idioms, clothing idioms, food idioms, sports idioms, and topically-unrelated phrases. Owing to the fact that in the instructions for the exercises, both idioms and fixed phrases are frequently referred to as 'phrases', all the exercises constituting the previously mentioned subsection are discussed below.

2.2.1. Idiom exercises in Unit s 1, 3, 5 and 8

Units 1, 3, 5 and 8 include identical types of idiom activities: a gap-fill exercise and a choose-the-right-word exercise. In Unit 1, Ex. 30, which is on colour idioms, asks students to complete six idiomatic expressions (*Sophie goes to the cinema **once in a ... moon***) with the correct colour names (***black***, ***green***, ***blue***, ***white***) and explain what these expressions might mean. In Ex. 31, which is on some topically-unrelated fixed phrases, students are supposed to underline the correct words in six phrases (*Ian is very active. He is always **out and about/around***) and guess their meanings. The remaining expressions to generate and

interpret are *clear the air*; *vanish into thin air*; *take no for an answer*; *play ball*; *drive a hard bargain*.

In Unit 3, Ex. 29 provides a list of words (*feet*, *time*, *suitcase*, *move*, *line*, *weather*) to choose from to fill in the blanks in six phrases surrounded with contextual information (*This new job in sales means that I'll have to **live out of a** … for months*) and to be explained later. However, since the second part of the exercise expects students to identify similar idioms in their native language, its overall aim is not only to highlight idiom structures and develop learners' interpretation skills but also to stimulate their analytical skills. Among the idioms taught through this exercise are *drop someone a line*; *put one's feet up*; *get a move on*; *feel a bit under the weather*; *in the nick of time*. Encouraging students to hypothesise over the figurative meanings of the idioms like *early days*; *cost the fortune*; *on the edge of one's seat*; *make ends meet*, Ex. 30 presents phrases in five small contexts (*That's what we like about Phoebe. She's willing to **lend an ear/eye** and give her advice*).

In Unit 5, Ex. 29 is built around body idioms presented within six sentence contexts (*Martin loves chocolate and biscuits – he's really got **a sweet** …*). The task is to complete the phrases with such words as *mouth*, *finger*, *stomach*, *tooth*, *chest*, and *bones* and guess what they signify. Ex. 30 enables students to make five phrases by choosing the right word (*At the start of the meeting the boss told a few jokes to **break the ice/pace***) and determine their meanings using the context of sentences. The expressions to learn by the way just described are *do impressions of someone*; *have no intention of doing something*; *have itchy feet*; *hit the jackpots*.

In Unit 8, Ex. 25 engages students in comprehending six food idioms. According to the instructions, learners have to decide which of the food items given (*beans*, *cake*, *soup*, *potato*, *nutshell*, *tea*) is suitable to complete the idiomatic expression, explain its meaning

using available contextual information (*I thought it would be really difficult to cook that Thai recipe, but in the end it was **a piece of cake***), and present in class some other target-language food idioms they have once encountered. In Ex. 26, students form the phrase by selecting the right word (***the good past/old days***; ***place in the sky/sun***; ***just a drop in the sea/ocean***) and then explain how they understand it (*Publishing his new cookery book has brought him **into the public eye***).

2.2.2. Idiom exercises in Unit 2

Unit 2 incorporates two choose-the-right-word exercises. Ex. 24, being on idiomatic similes, expects students to complete six idioms with the right words (*Let's put on some music. It's **as silent/quiet as the grave** in here*) and guess what they might mean. Another exercise, Ex. 25, requires learners to circle the appropriate words in five expressions and speculate on their meanings (*Things are going very well at work at the moment. I think a promotion might even be **on the books/cards/letter/papers***). Other phrases to learn are ***a good cause***; ***make it clear***; ***have one's head in the clouds***; ***hot under the collar***.

2.2.3. Idiom exercises in Unit 4

Unit 4 enables learning idioms through a gap-fill exercise and a matching exercise. Ex. 30, which deals with English animal idioms, requires learners to decide which of the given fauna representatives (***birds***, ***butterflies***, ***bull***, ***lion***, ***crocodile***) is suitable to complete the expression (*Ben was so nervous he **had … in his stomach** before he gave his speech*), decipher its idiomatic meaning, and recall in pairs some other idioms with animals. Ex. 29 gives students an opportunity to learn eight expressions (*I really **take my hat off** to those eco-warriors. At least they are standing up for what they believe in*) by finding their definitions ('admire'), think of similar phrases in their native language and compare them

with those from the exercise. The remaining seven idioms and their definitions are ***be on the go***, ***hold still***, ***have a heart of gold***, ***have a go at someone***, ***lose heart***, ***take for granted***, ***keep one's head***.

2.2.4. Idiom exercises in Unit 6

In Unit 6, idioms are taught through an exercise combining matching and gap-filling techniques, Ex. 29, and a choose-the-right-word exercise, Ex. 30. The former one invites students to build the phrases by joining their parts with a conjunction (***safe***, ***alive***, ***clean***, ***hit***, ***law***, **right** ***AND run***, ***order***, ***tidy***, ***wrong***, ***sound***, ***well***) and afterwards use them in six gapped sentences without preliminary explanation of their meanings (*The missing climber was found two days later, **safe and sound***). The latter presents four fixed phrases in sentential contexts (*I think if you interfere, you will only **make/do matters worse***), asks to choose one word from two given which might be part of the phrase and suggest the possible meanings of the phrases made (***once in a blue moon***; ***on the road***; ***keep in mind***).

2.2.5. Idiom exercises in Unit 7

Unit 7 contains two gap-fill exercises: one on clothing idioms, Ex. 24, and another on some conventional fixed phrases, Ex. 25. The first provides students with five gapped idiomatic expressions to complete with the clothing items from the list (***hat***, ***glove***, ***shirt***, ***trousers***, ***shoes***) and explain using the context given (*I love your new dress, it's such a beautiful colour and it **fits you like a glove***). Thinking of similar idioms in native language which provokes the development of analytical skills and ability to discover similarities between languages is likewise promoted in Ex. 24. Ex. 25 has students complete seven phrases with the correct words from the given string (***night***, ***name***, ***trouble***, ***nerve***, ***here***,

tail, *dearest*), guess their meanings from context (*I better go and talk to her now before I lose my nerve*), and hypothesise over the origin of *nose to tail*.

2.2.6. Idiom exercises in Unit 9

Unit 9 is the only coursebook unit designed to enable students to both understand and practise idiomatic expressions. It deals with idioms and fixed phrases through an exercise combining in itself matching and gap-filling techniques, Ex. 25, and a choose-the-right-word exercise, Ex. 26. The former presents eight sports idioms in isolation (*to be thrown in at the deep end*; *to be on the ropes*; *to throw in the towel*; *to hit* (*somebody*) *below the belt*; *to move the goalposts*; *to box somebody into a corner*; *to be out of one's depth*; *to be on the ball*) to have learners identify their origin by matching them to the kinds of sports they are derived from (football, swimming, boxing) and hypothesise over their meanings. The second part of Ex. 25 asks students to insert the idioms in the gapped sentences (*We're never going to get this finished on time. We might just as well be thrown in at the deep end* now). In Ex. 26, learners are invited to gain an understanding of six fixed phrases (*hit the road*; *close shave*; *sleep on it*; *second to none*; *come rain or shine*) by underlining the words that form them (*I've been very busy – in fact, I've been rushed off my feet/legs*) and using context clues to interpret their meanings.

2.2.7. Idiom exercises in Unit 10

Unlike the previous units, Unit 10 contains just one idiom learning activity – a gap-fill exercise, Ex. 29, which aims at developing learners' understanding of ten body idioms. More precisely, students are supposed to complete the phrases with *eye(s)*, *ear(s)* or *nose* and, if necessary, use context to explain what each of the expressions means (*We haven't planned what we're going to do, we'll just play it by ear*). The list of idiomatic phrases to

comprehend is as follows: ***catch the waiter's eye***; ***turn one's nose up***; ***have a good eye for***; ***look down one's nose at***; ***be all ears***; ***there's more to it than meets the eye***; ***wet behind the ears***; ***pay through the nose***, ***under one's nose***.

To sum up, the national curriculum analysis revealed that although idiomatic phrases are not mentioned under what should be taught to upper-secondary school students, they are included in the learning outcomes. The analysis of the coursebook exercises on idioms showed several results. Firstly, the total number of idiom activities in it is 19, with 18 gap-fill, matching, and choose-the-right-word exercises on comprehension, and a practice gap-fill exercise. Based on this conclusion, one can suggest a definite need to offer a larger quantity of practice-oriented activities to L2 learners and design the ones enabling the use of idioms learned for production. Secondly, the number of items taught is 116, and they range from core and figurative idioms to fixed phrases. Therefore, it may be concluded that the coursebook contains a sufficient amount of the examples of figurative language.

2.3. Reasons for developing supplementary learning materials

The above analyses of the *NCUSS* (2011) and *U/S INT B2* student's book's (2008) exercises on idioms and fixed phrases revealed the need for extra study materials on idioms as: (1) idioms are mentioned in the *NCUSS* (2011), in the learning outcomes, and thus are ought to be incorporated into the learning process; (2) students should learn English idioms associated with a wider range of the coursebook topics; (3) students should master idioms beyond receptive comprehension in order to grasp their use; (4) students should make the most of their learning styles by completing a variety of different learning activities; and (5) students should grasp the appropriate use of some idioms. Since reason (1) was already explained in Section 2.1, the following discussion is concerned with exploring reasons (2)-(5).

First and foremost, a study of the topical content of the coursebook analysed revealed many appealing topics which could but were not used for teaching idioms. For instance, apart from dealing with the topic of describing people, Unit 2 discusses feelings while teaching topic-related vocabulary and touches upon such themes as human relationships, education, and work while treating the general topic of life events. Thus, one of the major reasons for devising extra idiom activities is to familiarise students with L2 idioms used to comment on a broader range of the coursebook topics.

In terms of the idiom exercises *per se*, it was discovered that all the units, except for Unit 9, contain exclusively comprehension exercises. Considering Liu's (2008: 132-156) claim that in order to grasp an idiomatic phrase, L2 learners should be exposed to it in the form of practice and/or production activities, another reason for producing supplementary idiom learning materials is to assist students in acquiring target idioms by enabling their use for comprehension and/or production. Moreover, a variety of types of idiom activities can promote the accommodation of the many different learning styles and intelligences students possess, which can also be treated as an adequate reason for preparing the teacher-made study materials. For instance, according to Cooper (1998: 260), discussing idioms befits linguistic intelligence, whereas completing passages with appropriate idioms suits logical-mathematical learners.

Furthermore, it was detected by the analysis of the cousebook idiom exercises that none of them draws learners' attention to such issues as register and context of use which Boers et al (2007: 46) and Liu (2008: 113) see as the most important information to provide students with in order to teach them how to use idioms appropriately. In the light of the assumptions above, the last but not least reason for supplementing the coursebook exercises with specially developed ones is to enable the learning of how to use certain L2 idiomatic expressions properly.

To recapitulate, the coursebook analysis led the material's designer to the decision to expand the amount of topics for teaching idioms as in the coursebook there are too few of them. Moreover, given the lack of practice- and production-oriented activities on idiomatic expressions identified in the coursebook, they were determined for the worksheets along with comprehension-centred activities to likewise meet different learning styles of students and help them grasp the appropriate use of certain idioms.

CHAPTER III
MATERIALS DESIGN, EVALUATION AND PILOTING

As an attempt to bridge the gap identified between what *Upstream Intermediate B2* student's book (2008) writers offer to enhance L2 learners' idiomatic competence and what Estonian secondary school students probably need, supplementary materials for learning idioms were designed. Based on the findings of the analyses described in the previous chapter, it was decided to select for the worksheets the topics covered in the coursebook but disregarded in teaching idioms, namely, Home, Work & Business, Education, Money, People & Personalities, Feelings & Mood, Human Relationships, Health, Environment, Science & Technology, and Sports. Section 3.1 reviews the decisions made and procedures followed in the development of the idiom worksheets, whereas Section 3.2 provides an overview of the study materials created. When the process of designing worksheets was complete, the learning materials were evaluated by specially selected Estonian English teachers and piloted with some of their students. Thus, Section 3.3 describes the details of the evaluation process, while Section 3.4 focuses on the piloting procedure. Finally, the chapter reveals whether or not the aims assigned to the materials developed were fulfilled, discusses the limitations imposed on the applicability of the survey data obtained, and makes suggestions for future research.

3.1. Preparation for materials development

The development of the study materials on idiomatic phrases was conducted in the following five phases: the selection of the type of idioms, the determination of the topics of the worksheets, the selection of the idiomatic phrases, the organisation of the idioms, and the selection of the types of idiom activities and the teaching techniques.

In terms of the first step which was about deciding the type of idioms for instruction, owing to the fact that figurative idioms represent a large group of idiomatic phrases (Grant & Nation, 2006: 11), require the use of interpreting strategies (ibid, 9), and thus stimulate students' cognitive analytic thinking and imagination, it is precisely this type of idioms that was selected for receiving language learners' attention in Estonian gymnasiums.

The second step involved the choice of topics for discussing idiomatic phrases. To identify them, the materials designer studied the topical content of *U/S INT B2* student's book (2008) and the learning content specified in the *NCUSS* (2011) and selected those which coincided fully or in part. As a result, the list of 11 topics already provided in the opening paragraph of this chapter was created.

The third step required selecting the idiomatic expressions to be introduced under the previously established topics. The final list of 95 idiom items taught through the designed activities was compiled in several stages. First, idioms were looked up in *CIDOI* (1998) by the key words and concepts associated with the determined worksheet topics among the ones highlighted in grey as being common and useful for L2 learners to learn. Next, *Theme panels* section at the end of the dictionary where idiomatic phrases are presented under the topics they are used to comment on (e.g., business, money, happiness and sadness, anger, liking and not liking, health) was addressed. Then, from among the idioms found were chosen the ones which met the definition of 'figurative idiom': a non-literal phrase that can be pragmatically reinterpreted to make sense in the context (see p. 15). The section's figurative idioms were further searched for within the BYU-BNC (The British National Corpus) and COCA (The Corpus of Contemporary American English) to identify their frequencies in native use, and thus decide on their usefulness to learners. As a result, 31 items were selected for the idiom worksheets from *CIDOI* (1998). The dictionary idiomatic expressions were additionally complemented with 64 figurative idioms derived from the

online resources and blogs (*Learn English Today*, n.d.; *English Idioms Daily Blog*, 2011; *EnglishClub*, 2012; *Using English.com*, 2013; *English Idioms*, 2013). Although they were likewise looked up in the corpora above, their frequencies of occurrence were not strictly considered when choosing each particular idiom since, as stated by Liu (2003: 676), "pure frequency often leaves out some important and useful items".

Besides the frequency of use/usefulness, the other criteria applied in the selection of idiomatic phrases were transparency of figurative meanings, simplicity in vocabulary and syntax, similarity to L1 idioms and appropriateness. The criterion of students' needs was neglected due to a target group of students having not been surveyed about idioms they would like to learn. However, the afore-listed criteria as a whole were not respected when choosing each particular item to include in the idiom activities. Thus, among the L2 idioms selected for instruction are those which are not identical or similar to L1 idiomatic phrases as well as the ones with a low degree of transparency. As to the context of an idiom (e.g., *to bear fruit* − formal) and its register (e.g., *to make ends meet* − news) , collectively referred to as appropriateness, the former was looked up in *Cambridge Dictionaries Online* (2014), *OLDs* (2014), and *The Free Dictionary* (2014), while the latter was identified using the mentioned corpora.

The fourth step was concerned with grouping the selected idioms. Inasmuch as Liu (2008: 115-7) provides a sufficiently complete list of different ways of organising idioms for teaching, it has been used as a source of the following four grouping methods adopted: (1) by topics (e.g., *to be under the weather* comments on the topic "health"); (2) by key words (e.g., *to be rolling in money* is presented under the topic "money"); (3) by semantics (e.g., *to go with the flow* and *to make waves* are presented together as opposites); and (4) by origin or source (e.g., *to hit below the belt* and *to throw in the towel* derive from sports).

One more means of categorising idiomatic expressions also applied in the materials design was etymological elaboration. The worksheet on the idioms derived from sports and games replicated a sequence of idiom activities used in one of the experiments on the effectiveness of etymological elaboration conducted by Boers et al (2007: 48-9), that is, "identify-the-source", identify-the-meaning", and a gap-fill task.

The fifth step aimed at determining the types of idiom activities and the teaching techniques. Since the third of five reasons for developing the study materials was stated as enabling students to comprehend, practise, and produce L2 idiomatic phrases (see p. 44), comprehension-centred, practice-oriented, and production-focused activities were used in the development of the worksheets. However, given that practice and productive mastery are not indispensable for all the English idiomatic phrases, not all of the idioms selected for instruction were meant to be used both for comprehension and production. The techniques for teaching idioms were mostly adopted from Liu (2008) (see Section 1.2.3).

3.2. The materials developed

Based on the decisions reached, 14 idiom worksheets numbered 1-14 were designed (see Table 1 for the overview and Appendices 2-15 for the worksheets themselves). In view of the idiomatic expressions presented under such topics as Home, Feelings & Mood, and Human Relationships being dealt with in a couple of the series of lesson activities, the total number of worksheet topics determined is 11.

№	Topic	Category of idioms	Number of activities	Strategies involved	Teaching techniques
Table 1. Overview of the worksheets					
1	Home	home idioms	2	(1) (2) (3)	a); c); e)
2		home and house idioms	3	(2) (3) (4) (5)	d); f); i); j); t)

3	Money	money idioms	3	(2) (3) (5)	a); b); c); f); j) ; m)
4	Education	idioms in education	2	(3) (4)	d); f); g); j); k); l)
5	Work & Business	work and business idioms	3	(2) (3)	a); b); c); d); e); k)
6	Health	health idioms	3	(2) (4) (5)	g); h); s)
7	Feelings & Mood	idioms describing anger and happiness	2	(2) (5)	d); j); l); m);t)
8		idioms describing feelings and mood	3	(2) (4) (5)	g); h); s); t)
9	People & Personalities	idioms describing people's personalities	2	(2) (3) (5)	a); c); f); t)
10	Human Relationships	idioms about human relationships	2	(1) (2) (3) (5)	b); c); f); n); t)
11		love idioms	2	(2) (3) (5)	d); f); j); m); s)
12	Science & Technology	science and technology idioms	3	(2) (3) (5)	a); c); f); h); o); s)
13	Environment	environment idioms	3	(1) (2) (3) (5)	b); c); d); f); h); j); k); m); t)
14	Sports	idioms derived from sports and games	3	(2) (4)	h); g); k)
	Key: (1) – noticing and identifying idioms; (2) – understanding idioms and developing interpretation strategies; (3) – analysing idioms for context and/or register; (4) – retrieving and using idioms for comprehension; (5) – retrieving, generating and using idioms for production ⠀⠀a) – discussing idioms highlighted in passages; b) – identifying idioms in texts; c) – guessing meanings using contextual information; d) – understanding isolated idioms using pragmatic and conceptual knowledge as well as imagination; e) – determining the context of use and register; f) – determining the context of use; g) – filling in entire missing idioms; h) – matching idioms with their definitions; i) – replacing expressions with idioms; j) – finding similar idioms in L1; k) – identifying the origin; l) – identifying the attitudes; m) – comparing idioms; n) – finding an opposite for an idiom; o) – analysing idioms from the structural and semantic point of view; p) – writing sentences using idioms; q) – writing a dialogue using idioms; r) – writing a story using idioms; s) – writing a letter or a poem using idioms; t) – role-playing a dialogue created by students				

As seen from Table 1, the overall number of activities offered in the worksheets is 36, with a variation in the number of idiom activities to complete in one lesson (2-3), the

strategies employed in learning the idioms a particular worksheet focuses on (1)-(5), and the teaching techniques.

The types of activities likewise vary throughout the study materials designed. Thus, seven worksheets (i.e., the ones numbered 3, 7 and 9-13) contain comprehension and production enabling activities, three (i.e., worksheets 2, 6 and 8) are built around the comprehension-practice-production sequence, two (i.e., worksheets 4 and 14) teach idioms through comprehension and practice activities, and two (i.e., worksheets 1 and 5) are exclusively made up of comprehension-centred learning activities. Unlike the units inviting learners to practise (five in total) and produce (ten in all) the idioms learned, the comprehension activities (23 in total) constantly re-appear from topic to topic.

Owing to the study materials developed being not intended to teach as many English idioms as possible, the items selected for instruction in one lesson are restricted to 4-10 idioms. For more detailed information on the division of the idioms between the worksheet topics, consider Appendix 1.

3.3. Teacher feedback on the materials developed

The developed study materials were evaluated by three Estonian teachers of English teaching the language over 21 years in two municipal schools in Tartu to obtain teacher feedback on the worksheets designed.

3.3.1. Participants

To select the English teachers with prior experience of using *Upstream Intermediate B2* student's book (2008) for extra learning exercises to incorporate in the lesson plans and extensive years of teaching EFL, a convenience sampling was implemented. In particular, the worksheets designed were given for evaluation to three Estonian teachers of English

from two municipal schools in the city of Tartu who have been teaching the language more than 20 years, and thus have considerable theoretical and practical knowledge in the area of TEFL. The schools all teachers involved in the study work in place no special emphasis on teaching and learning English and offer three English classes per week for basic and secondary school students. The complete teachers' profile is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' background information			
Teacher	**Teaching experience as an English teacher (in years)**	**Higher education institution and qualification**	**Experience of teaching English idioms**
T1	> 25	University of Tartu, English teacher	No
T2	21-25	University of Tartu, English teacher	Yes
T3	21-25	University of Tartu, English teacher	Yes
Key: T = teacher > = more than			

As demonstrated in Table 2, in contrast to T2 and T3, T1 has never taught English idioms. She explained that her students have always started reading extensively in English in the seventh grade, and thus have grasped target-language idiomatic phrases when they have encountered them in literary texts. For that reason, T1 has never provided her students with idiom instruction.

3.3.2. Procedure

The expert judgements on the study materials were obtained by means of a teacher questionnaire designed in English (see Appendix 16). It was administered along with the idiom worksheets designed by mail to T1 in January 2014 and T2 and T3 in April, 2014 a week before the piloting process and collected in the week after piloting had been carried out. None of the questionnaires were returned incomplete.

Partially based upon the model provided in the bachelor's thesis authored by Helene Kõiv (Kõiv, 2011), the questionnaire was composed of 20 items: 15 closed questions (Q1-Q3, Q4-14, Q18 and Q19) and five open questions (Q15-16, Q17 and Q20). Questions 1-3 were concerned with the teachers' background information presented in Table 2. Related to the evaluation of the worksheets, questions 4-13 asked the teachers to specify their level of agreement with the statements provided on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Disgree, 5 = Strongly disagree). Questions 14-15 encouraged the respondents to suggest desirable changes to the study materials being evaluated. In question 16, the teacher-participants were asked to highlight the strengths and/or weaknesses either of the set of materials as a whole or of its individual parts. The overall appropriateness of the learning activities for teaching and learning of English idiomatic phrases was revealed by the answers to question 17, while question 18 enabled the collection of the opinions on the age appropriateness of the worksheets. Question 19 aimed to determine the participants' general attitude towards and willingness to use the learning materials in their English classes. For making additional comments, question 20 was included.

3.3.3. Results

The teacher survey revealed the univocal approval of the study materials as being appropriate for teaching English idioms as none of the teacher-participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements on the worksheets designed. A complete overview of the evaluation data on the learning materials received from the teacher questionnaire survey is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Evaluation of the worksheets			
Question/Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**
4. The topics of the idiom worksheets align with the *NCUSS* (2011)		T1	T2, T3
5. The worksheets enhance conceptual understanding and engage higher order thinking skills	T1, T2, T3		
6. The worksheets offer a variety of idiom activities accommodating verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, and interpersonal intelligences	T1,T2	T3	
7. The worksheets work properly without purchase of additional components (e.g., dictionaries, reference books)	T2, T3	T1	
8. The worksheets can be used by all students without extensive supervision or special assistance		T2, T3	T1
9. The instructions supplied for completing the idiom activities are clear and understandable	T1	T2, T3	
10.The devised idiom activities enable students to comprehend, practise, and produce the idioms to be learned	T1,T2,T3		
11.The devised idiom activities enable students to gain insight into the use of the idioms (i.e., context of use and register)	T1	T2, T3	
12.The worksheets can be used as a supplement to the *Upstream Intermediate B2* student's book's figurative vocabulary exercises	T1, T2, T3		
13.Estonian secondary school students would be interested in the learning of the English idioms through the use of the worksheets developed	T1	T2, T3	

Table 3 reveals that all teachers strongly agreed that the idiom worksheets enhance conceptual understanding and engage higher order thinking skills (Q5), the activities enable comprehension, practice, and production of idioms (Q10), and the worksheets can be used as a supplement to the *U/S INT B2* student's book's exercises on idiomatic phrases (Q12). This indicates that, in the teacher respondents' opinion, the study materials are absolutely consistent with two primary aims established for their development and reflected in the statements numbered 10 and 12 as well as signifies the undeniable achievement of one of the secondary aims considered during the design process of them .

Another survey finding demonstrates that T1, whose gymnasium-level students were engaged in the study, strongly agreed that the instructions for idiom activities are clear and understandable (Q9), the activities enable insight into the use of idioms (Q11), and the worksheets are of interest to secondary school students learning idioms (Q13). T2 and T3, teaching English to the 9th grade study participants, ticked, however, the "Agree" box in response to these questionnaire items. The difference between the teachers' answers can be interpreted in terms of the individuals – some people are likely to be more cautious in providing high level responses than others.

The analysis of the data collected through questions 4 and 8 asked in the survey revealed some problematic areas as none of the respondents strongly agreed with them. In particular, the rating of these statements varied between "Agree" and "Neither agree nor disagree". Concerning statement 4, it can be assumed that T2 and T3 rated it as neither true nor false because of lacking certainty whether certain topics of the idiom worksheets are stated in the *NCUSS* (2011) or not. As to statement 8, the position of T1 on the possible necessity for extensive supervision or special assistance with the idiom activities might be explained by the fact that even in relatively homogenous classes some students may range in terms of their experience of learning idioms. Therefore, to assist individual students in the process of learning idiomatic phrases, the need for the aforementioned measures can arise.

Subsequent to the materials evaluation questions, two questionnaire items sought to determine whether the teachers would find it pertinent to make any changes to the learning materials (Q14) and what kind of changes they would introduce (Q15). Either due to not having delved into the innards of every worksheet or because of being mostly contented with the study materials designed, answering question 14, none of the teachers wanted to suggest any modifications. However, in response to question 15, T2 suggested that most

comprehension activities invite students to translate and compare L2 idioms with their L1 equivalents.

Answering question 16, which was to discover the strong and/or weak points of the idiom worksheets, all teachers unanimously pointed out their ability to enliven the language learning process. Furthermore, T1 and T2 liked how the worksheets were organised, while T3 favoured the activities that intended to provoke discussion and raise awareness of the authentic contexts the idioms occur in. Last but not least, T2 and T3 brought attention to the fact that some idiom activities differed from the typical ones in coursebooks; thus, they were like "a breath of fresh air".

With respect to questions 17-19, all teacher-participants expressed interest in using the study materials in regular classes (Q19) pointing out their thoroughness and diversity (T2 and T3), having in complete agreement determined their age suitability both for basic (ninth graders) and secondary school students (Q18) and appropriateness for pedagogical purposes (Q17).

Question 20, meant for the teachers' concluding comments, received no attention possibly because of being optional, and thus not obligatorily requiring an answer.

3.4. Piloting the materials developed

After the study materials were sent out for evaluation, the piloting phase was started. Because of the time constraints, not all the learning materials were used in the piloting. Namely, only four worksheets on the topics Work & Business (see Appendix 6), Education (see Appendix 5), People & Personalities (see Appendix 10), and Feelings & Mood (see Appendix 8) were piloted with two groups of secondary school-goers and two groups of basic school-goers (for experimental purposes) to receive student feedback on the materials developed. The idiomatic expressions introduced by the topics Home, Money, Human

Relationships, Health, Environment, Science & Technology, and Sports were not the focus of the study's attention.

3.4.1. Participants

Despite the worksheets having been primarily designed for secondary-level students, the student sample was drawn both from secondary school students (26 people) instructed by T1 and basic school students (22 people) taught by T2 and T3 as all three teacher-participants considered the materials suitable not only for the use in gymnasium classes but also with younger learners, that is, ninth graders. The secondary school students were selected from one school, while the basic school students came from another school.

3.4.2. Procedure

The piloting process of the study materials occurred in January and April 2014. The work on each of the worksheets done during the English classes in the selected schools took on average 25 minutes, including the questionnaire completion time. Before having distributed the worksheets among the groups of students involved in the piloting of the idiom learning activities, each of them was provided with a learner-friendly explanation of the term 'idiom' (see p. 15). As to the types of class arrangement used, the comprehension activities were done as a whole-class work, while the practice and production activities were completed individually with subsequent verification in class.

Concerning the reasons underlying the choice of the idiom worksheets to be piloted, T1 suggested teaching her 12 twelfth graders the work- and education-related idioms and her 14 tenth graders solely the education-related idiomatic phrases due to topics concerned with jobs and education being the most recently learned ones. As T2 and T3 did not express any preferences in topics, it was decided to pilot the idiom worksheets containing some

productive activities. Thus, two groups of ten and 12 ninth graders were exposed to the learning of the idioms describing people and personalities (T2) and feelings and mood (T3) respectively.

When all the idiom activities selected for the lesson were completed and verified, the students were asked to fill in the student questionnaire compiled in English (see Appendix 17) on the worksheet just piloted in class. It consisted of ten items: seven closed questions (Q1-4, Q7 and Q9-10) and three open questions (Q5-6 and Q8). Questions 1-3 aimed to construct the students' profiles. Questions 4-8 invited the students to express their personal viewpoints on the components of the idiom worksheets (i.e. idiom activities) used during the piloting stage. In order to reveal whether the students paid attention to and were able to understand the context of use and register of the idioms learned, question 9 was formulated. The concluding question, question 10, looked into the students' general attitude towards the learning of English-language idioms. The total number of the questionnaires completed by the students and used in the data analysis process was 60.

3.4.3. Results and discussion

In addition to enabling the students to share their opinions on the piloted activities and worksheets, the study intended to discover whether they find the activities likeable, as their English teachers believed. Hence, this section is mainly concerned with presenting the findings emerged from the student survey data by the topics of the piloted worksheets. However, besides the section's primary purpose, it likewise provides insight into the students' previous experience of learning English idioms as well as discusses the aspect of liking the developed idiom activities found both in the teacher and student surveys.

Based on the student-participants' assumptions made in answer to question 3, one of the background questions, it was determined that nearly 65% of the respondents, that is, 31

subjects, possessed experience of learning English idioms. Most of them thought that they grasped idiomatic phrases through the use of idiom worksheets (38.7% or 12 students) and by completing coursebook exercises on idiomatic expressions (35.5% or 11 students). Four students admitted that they would interpret the meanings of new idioms when they came across them on the internet. Among the activities that were named the least frequently as the ones enabling the learning of idioms turned out to be extensive reading (9.7%), film and TV watching (6.5% and 3.2% respectively), and computer gaming (3.2%).

Question 4, which aimed at revealing the student respondents' general attitude to the piloted idiom learning activities, received 100% positive responses from the students who were exposed to the learning of the idioms in education (Ss-Ed henceforth) and the ones who were taught the work and business idioms (Ss-W&B henceforth). Concerning the groups of students who learned the idiomatic expressions describing people's personalities (Ss-P&P henceforth) and anger and happiness (Ss-A&H henceforth), each of them had one student who did not like any of the activities, with the rest favouring the tasks.

Question 5 invited the surveyed to choose and justify the choice of the idiom activity they liked more than the others. Nearly 77% of the Ss-Ed (20 out of 26) stated that they equally liked both activities on the worksheet. The remaining 23% communicated a preference for Activity 1 as they found it fun and interesting to discuss the idiomatic phrases. 75% of the Ss-W&B, that is, nine respondents, also preferred Activity 1 because it enabled them to make guesses on the figurative meanings of the idioms; two students liked Activity 3 most since it engaged them in the learning of unfamiliar phrases; and one person chose Activity 2 because of it being short and easy. Seven out of ten Ss-P&P preferred Activity 1 to Activity 2 as it invited them to discuss and guess the meanings of unknown idioms; two respondents liked Activity 2 most since it encouraged the use of idioms just learned, and one did not like any of the two activities because none of them stood out for

him. Nearly 42% of the Ss-A&H (five out of 12 students) found Activity 1 more likeable since it enabled them to learn the meanings of some new idiomatic phrases and promoted discussion in groups. The rest of the students could not name the activity they liked most because of liking them all.

Question 6, on the other hand, was to determine the activities the students favoured least as well as the reasons for such an attitude. 26 Ss-Ed (100%) provided no answer to this question. Three out of 12 Ss-W&B found it boring to underline idioms in passages, and thus rated Activity 1 as least likeable. Six out of ten Ss-P&P stated that because of not being good at writing descriptions, they least liked Activity 2 where they were supposed to write a lot. Nearly 42% of the Ss-A&H (five out of 12 students) liked Activity 2 less as it necessitated writing a lot and thinking carefully about the content.

Question 7 aimed to identify the perceived level of difficulty of the piloted activities. 20 responses obtained from the Ss-Ed indicated the easiness of the learning activities (nearly 77%) and six suggested their neither difficultness nor easiness. 11 Ss-W&B found the activities easy and one neither difficult nor easy (NDNE henceforth). Five Ss-P&P (50%) rated the tasks as NDNE, four as easy, and one as very easy. Ten Ss-A&H described the activities as NDNE and two viewed them as difficult.

Question 8 which explored the most problematic aspects of the piloted activities in the learners' opinion discovered that nearly 77% of the Ss-Ed were particularly puzzled by the origin of the idiom *with flying colours*; five students (around 19%) experienced difficulties with finding Estonian equivalents to some L2 idioms; and one stated that there was nothing challenging in the worksheet he completed. 12 Ss-W&B (100%) considered guessing the meaning of *golden handshake* the most complicated task for them. Six Ss-P&P found it relatively hard to explain the idioms *culture vulture* and *tough cookie*; two students called it 'problematic' to write a person description, while the other two claimed

that they did not experience any difficulties when doing the activities. The Ss-A&H rated the complexity of the idiom tasks as follows: guessing the meanings of *to drive somebody nuts* and *to be walking on air* (five answers), providing Estonian counterparts for English idioms (four answers), and writing a story (three answers).

Question 9 looked into the students' opinions on whether the piloted idiom activities enabled them to obtain insight into the use of the idioms learned. A substantial majority of the surveyed thought that they grasped the context and register of the phrases from the learning activities. This was illustrated by the finding that 58 out of 60 questionnaires (26 from the Ss-Ed, 12 from the Ss-W&B, 9 from the Ss-P&P, and 11 from the Ss-A&H) provided a positive answer to this question.

Sought to find out whether the designed study materials succeeded in promoting the students' enthusiasm towards the learning of English idioms, question 10 divulged that 95% of respondents (25 Ss-Ed, 12 Ss-W&B, 8 Ss-P&P, and 12 Ss-A&H) were willing to expand their knowledge of the target-language idiomatic phrases.

Based on the data analysis obtained in this study, it can be concluded that the teachers generally approved of the supplementary study materials developed for learning idioms by Estonian secondary school students and that the students surveyed rather liked the idiom activities piloted in their schools despite the fact that slightly less than a quarter of the questionnaires determined the less likeable worksheet tasks. The students' responses to the questions used for measuring the likeability of the activities designed revealed that the activity the majority of the respondents find the most likeable consists in discussing and learning the meanings of idiomatic expressions. However, among the least likeable idiom activities were found the tasks asking to underline idioms (Ss-W&B) and produce a piece of written text using the idioms learned (Ss-P&P ans Ss-A&H). The latter finding can be

interpreted as an indication of the students' negative perceptions of writing, their lack of motivation to write, and their poor writing skills in EFL caused by the insufficiency of writing practices in the communicative approach adopted by most institutions (Melgarejo Melgarejo, 2010).

The survey data collected from three English teachers delivering language instruction to Estonian basic and secondary school students in the city of Tartu indicated the suitability of the developed study materials for teaching and learning purposes. Moreover, the fact that the materials evaluation confirmed the achievement of the aims established for their design and that most students were fond of and benefited from the piloting process permits to assume that the use of the supplementary idiom learning materials could actively support students' figurative language learning (RQ3). Although the findings of the case study described do not allow doing any generalisations, it can be hypothesised that comparable results might be produced by larger samples involved. With respect to the future research, it might, for instance, be carried out in a different research setting with wider samples of individuals.

CONCLUSION

The prime purpose of the present thesis was to develop a set of idiom worksheets for Estonian secondary school learners of English and, thereby, demonstrate how *Upstream Intermediate B2* student's book's (2008) exercises on idioms and fixed phrases can be supplemented to meet students' demand to comprehend, practise, and produce English-language idioms. In order to achieve it, the materials designer studied the *NCUSS* (2011) and identified the lacunae in the coursebook method of teaching figurative language to state the reasons for designing extra learning materials. Furthermore, one of the sections reported on the pedagogical approaches to teaching idioms, the most discussed ways of grouping them, and the guidelines for their selection and teaching to further implement certain of these ideas in the materials development. Another purpose of the thesis, not less important than the one mentioned above, was to obtain an evaluation of the entire set of worksheets on the part of knowledgeable English teachers and learners' feedback on the units that were piloted with them.

The Introduction primarily focused on discussing the properties (i.e., conventionality, institutionalisation, non-compositionality, semantic transparency flexibility, figurativeness, formality, affect), most of which were further used for grouping idioms, and classifications of idiomatic phrases.

Makkai's classification model categorised idioms into lexemic and sememic, with each subdivided into six and nine types respectively. Alexander (1984) and McCarthy (1998) used Makkai's subcategories in their classifications. Nevertheless, unlike Makkai and Alexander, McCarthy did not group idioms according to the phrase length.

Compared to the classifications just mentioned, syntactic and semantic ones are more systematic. The former suggest division into types in terms of idiom syntactic features

(e.g., parts-of-speech, clause functions), while the latter are based on the criteria of non-compositionality and semantic transparency and non-compositionality and figurativeness.

The chapter also stated that understanding native speakers' discourse, demonstrating language proficiency by sounding like a native speaker, and grasping the target-language culture and identity of the native population are possible reasons for L2 idiom acquisition.

Chapter 1 started with a review of the idiom-dependent and learner-dependent factors affecting the ability of non-native learners to understand L2 figurative language. They were discovered to have effects on idiom processing and comprehension speed and accuracy and idiom learning speed. Learners' first language was even found to influence the production of cognate idioms by Syrian learners of English.

Then, the chapter provided an overview of the *idiom diffusion model*, the *model of dual idiom representation*, and the *literal salience resonant model* developed to explain L2 idiom processing and comprehension. Unlike the first and the last ones which assume the primacy of the literal reading, the remaining one suggests it as inescapable only in the case of decomposable and non-decomposable idioms not represented in learners' lexicons.

Last but not least, the chapter explored some pedagogical issues associated with the teaching of L2 idiomatic phrases. These include proactive and retroactive teaching methods seen as equally effective in helping students grasp the meanings and usage of idioms; conceptual, etymological, thematic and pragmatics-driven approaches to grouping idioms; the criteria for selecting idioms, and the idioms teaching techniques.

Chapter II conducted the analyses of the *NCUSS* (2011) and the idiom exercises in *Upstream Intermediate B2* student's book, a popular coursebook in Estonian gymnasiums, to formulate the reasons for designing supplementary materials for learning idioms. The findings suggested the need for idiom worksheets to address the following objectives: (1) learning idioms relating to a broader range of the coursebook topics; (2) mastering idioms

beyond receptive comprehension; (3) accommodating different learning styles by offering a variety of learning activities; and (4) learning how to use idioms appropriately.

Chapter III described the preparatory phase of the materials development, provided an overview of the worksheets designed, explained the methodology used for their piloting and evaluation, and analysed the findings of the survey data.

One of the inferences drawn from the teachers' responses was that the study materials generally fulfilled their primary aims. Furthermore, all three teachers expressed unanimous will to implement them in class as well as concurred on their pedagogical appropriateness and age suitability.

The students' survey results likewise revealed a positive perception of the piloted idiom activities. The beliefs of the majority of students that they acquired the use of idioms learned coincided with the teachers' ones. The last student questionnaire item revealed a substantial portion of the interviewed students willing to continue the learning of English idiomatic expressions.

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Table 1. Idiom items per topics	
Topic	**Idiom items**
Home	a home from home; keep the home fires burning; make yourself at home; feel more/be at home; bring home the bacon; get on like a house on fire; get/put your own house in order; a house of cards
Money	moneybags; be made of money; be rolling in money; live (from) hand to mouth; make ends meet
Education	teacher's pet; (pass) with flying colours; bookworm; be all ears; think outside of the box
Work & Business	workhorse; work like a dog; burn the candle at both ends; burn the midnight oil; know the ropes; bear fruit; give sb a golden handshake; call in sick
Health	splitting headache; be sick in bed; be on the road to recovery; be the picture of (good) health; catch a cold; clear your throat; run a fever
Feelings & Mood	be over the moon; be on cloud nine; be in seventh heaven; be/feel on the top of the world; be walking on air; lose your head; drive sb nuts/up the wall; make sb's blood boil; frightened to death; not believe your eyes/ears; get on sb's nerves; pull/tear your hair out; make/pull a face
People & Personalities	early bird; the life and soul of the party; couch potato; culture vulture; party animal; dark horse; tough cookie; smart cookie; social butterfly
Human Relationships	not lift a finger; lend sb a (helping) hand; see eye to eye; get/start off on the wrong foot; give sb a hard time; give sb the cold shoulder; head over heels in love with sb; on the rocks; go/fly out (of) the window; puppy love; the light of your life; the love of your life; break sb's heart
Science & Technology	mouse potato; silver surfer; silver texter; not rocket science; bells and whistles; get your wires crossed; reinvent the wheel
Environment	tip of the iceberg; a drop in the ocean; go with the flow; make waves; be/feel under the weather; weather the storm; have your head in the clouds; ray of sunshine; steal sb's thunder; make a mountain out of a molehill
Sports	be skating/walking on thin ice; hit/strike below the belt; be barking up the wrong tree; take/grab the bull by the horns; get/find/have the second wind; under the table; throw in the towel; keep your head above water; the ball is in sb's court; set/start/get the ball rolling

HOME
Home idioms

ACTIVITY 1. *Read the passages paying attention to the boldfaced idioms. Using the contextual information try to guess what they might mean.*

A. 7.45 am. 18 August 1989. Exmouth beach on the English Riviera. At such an early hour, the sands of this typically British resort would usually be deserted. On a good day you might happen to come across a man taking his dog for exercise. Today is different. The locals are already trading gossip about the hundreds of youngsters packing the beach. And Kylie, after two years travelling the world and using England as a base realises for the first time, this really is **a home from home**. (from BNC[1], *Kylie Minogue: the superstar next door*. Stone, Sasha. London: Omnibus Press, 1989.)

B. Fish likewise are connected with the forest spirits, and thought dangerous to women: pregnant wives, for instance, should not eat fish. /.../. Clearly the Lele world-view is built upon a series of structural associations and contrasts. There is a loose connection between men, forest and spirits, and they stand in collective opposition to the world of women which centres on the villages and the clearings. Women **keep the home fires burning** while their menfolk hunt and commune with sacred things. (from BNC, *Social anthropology in perspective*. Lewis, I.M. Cambridge: CUP, 1992.)

C. Clare thought Caro didn't look fit to come out of hospital. She was pale and unsteady, and moved maddeningly slowly. Clare got her back to the house, and introduced her to Bryony, Sue, and the kids. They made her a cup of coffee. 'Sit down, **make yourself at home**.' But Caro stood by the table and didn't move. She seemed terrified. (from BNC, *Her living image*. Rogers, Jane. London: Faber & Faber Ltd, 1990.)

D. 'Jim has to deal with any X-rays, lab reports.' Lindsey frowned. 'Yes, of course. I should have realised.' 'It's like any new job,' Jill added. 'You can't expect to know it all on your first day. You'll **feel more at home** when I've introduced you to the rest of the team, everyone except Niall anyway.' (from BNC, *A dangerous diagnosis*. Evans, Jean. Richmond, Surrey: Mills & Boon, 1993.)

ACTIVITY 2. *Take a closer look at the contexts surrounding the idioms and the sources they (i.e. the contexts) come from and determine how formal each idiom is (formal or informal) as well as its register of use (spoken, academic, fiction, news, magazine or biography).*

A home from home –

To keep home fires burning –

To make yourself at home –

To feel more at home –

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[1] BNC stands for the British National Corpus which is a 100 million word collection of samples of written and spoken language from a wide range of sources, designed to represent a wide cross-section of current British English, both spoken and written; natcorp.ox.ac.uk.

KEY:

A home from home[2] is a British English idiom which is used to refer to a place where you feel as comfortable as you do in your own home. The American English version of this idiom is **a home away from home**.

To keep the home fires burning means to keep your home pleasant and in good order while people who usually live with you are away.

To make yourself at home means to behave in a relaxed way in a place, as if it was your own home.

To feel more/Be at home – if someone is at home or feels more at home in a situation, they feel confident and happy because it is familiar to them and they know how to deal with it.

ACTIVITY 2.

A home from home and *to keep the home fires burning* are used in the formal context; *to make yourself at home* and *to feel more at home* in the informal. The registers of use of the idioms are biography, academic, fiction, and fiction respectively.

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[2] The definitions of the idioms derive from the *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* (CIDOI), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Appendix 3

HOME
Home and house idioms

ACTIVITY 1.
  a) Try to guess the meanings of the idioms below.

    To bring home the bacon

    To get on like a house on fire

    To get/put your own house in order

    A house of cards

  b) Which two of the idioms above should definitely be avoided in the formal discourse?
  c) Which of the idioms, in your opinion, is most frequently encountered in contemporary American English?
  d) Do you have in your native language idioms which have the same meanings as some of those in part a)? What are they?

ACTIVITY 2. *Replace the boldfaced phrases with the idioms from* **ACTIVITY 1.**

  A. When I meet someone like Eric or Brad - two serious and good actors - who are modest men and proper men, we **immediately get on very well with each other/** _____. (from COCA3, *Chicago Sun-Times*, 2004) – news

  B. We all supported Barack Obama - always. We all always resisted the Bush agenda. We were all always against the Iraq war. We all knew the economy was **very unstable/** _____. (from COCA, *Humanist*, 2009) – academic

  C. When the State Department released its recent human rights report criticizing China, China's response was typical: Don't interfere in our internal affairs, and **solve your own problems/**_____. (from COCA, *Washington Post*, 1997) – news

  D. I'm going to marry a wonderful woman. She's getting her doctorate in physical therapy. I guess she'll **bring more money/**_____ in our family. (from COCA, *New York Times*, 2006) – news

ACTIVITY 3. *Invent a context of 3-5 related sentences in which you could use ONE of these phrases:*

    To fall/fall apart/collapse/fold like a house of cards

    To invest in a house of cards

    To be nothing but a house of cards

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[3] COCA stands for the Corpus of Contemporary American English which is the largest freely-available corpus of English, and the only large and balanced corpus of American English; corpus.byu.edu/coca.

KEY:

To bring home the bacon[4] (informal) means to earn money for a family to live on.

To get on like a house on fire (informal) – if two people get on like a house on fire, they like each other very much and become friends very quickly.

To get/put your own house in order means to solve your own problems.

A house of cards (having a frequency of 110 in COCA) refers to an/a (complicated) organisation or plan that is very weak and can easily be destroyed.

ACTIVITY 2.

A. get on like a house on fire
B. be a house of cards
C. get/put your house in order
D. bring home the bacon

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[4] This definition comes from dictionary.cambridge.org; the rest – from the *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* (CIDOI), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

MONEY
Money idioms

ACTIVITY 1.
  a) Read and underline the money idioms in the passages.

   A. This was one of the most beautiful lofts Cooper had ever seen, and she had seen many, many beautiful lofts. Though she didn't know how to express size in terms of square feet, she did know enough to guess that this loft was three times the size of her family's loft and twice the size of her richest friend Cameron's, so that meant this photographer was moneybags. (from COCA[5], Alpha. Greenfeld, Karl Taro. *Commentary*, 2011) – fiction

   B. "You told me the third and second rules, but not the first." He paused, chewed his lip. "The first rule is turn the lights off when you leave a room. Just because I pay the utilities that doesn't mean I'm made of money." (from COCA, *Chasing the room*, Martinez, A. Lee, New York: Orbit, 2011) – fiction

   C. "At one point that field was producing $ 300,000 net profit a month," says Gatlin. "That's not counting other fields. Bill was rolling in money for a while and he was spending it." (from COCA, *Houston Chronicle*, 2001) – news

  b) Which of the idioms identified have very similar meanings? What do they mean? Can they replace one another? Why/Why not?
  c) Which of them are informal, and thus should definitely not be used in the formal discourse?
  d) Do you have in your first language idioms sharing an identical meaning with any of the idioms in part a)? Can you name them?

ACTIVITY 2. *Read the contexts of another two money idioms and answer the questions.*

   A. Although many poor **live hand to mouth**, they've participated in rising living standards. In 2005, 91 percent had microwaves, 79 percent air-conditioning, and 48 percent cell phones. (from COCA, *Newsweek*, 2010) – magazine

   B. The Brotherhood's political party has done well in places like Imbaba because the organization has long offered welfare services to the poor, giving free or low-cost medical care, distributing food, and helping Egyptians who struggle to **make ends meet**. About 40 percent of Egypt's 82 million citizens live on less than $2 a day. (from COCA, *Christian Science Monitor*, 2012) – news

  a) What do the boldfaced idioms mean? Are they synonymous or not?
  b) Which of them, in your opinion, has a higher frequency of use in the contemporary American English?

ACTIVITY 3. *Make a complex sentence or a few short but related sentences using at least TWO money idioms: ONE from* **ACTIVITY 1** *and ONE from* **ACTIVITY 2.**

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[5] COCA stands for the Corpus of Contemporary American English; corpus.byu.edu/coca.

KEY:

Moneybags[6] is an informal and disapproving idiom which is used in reference to a rich person.

To be made of money is very close in meaning to the idiom **(be) moneybags** because it also means to be rich.

To be rolling in money is an informal idiom which means to be extremely rich.

To live (from) hand to mouth means to have just enough money to live on and nothing extra.

To make ends meet means to have just enough money to pay for the things that you need.

ACTIVITY 1.

a) A. moneybags
   B. made of money
   C. was rolling in money

b) *Moneybags* and *to be rolling in money* are synonymous idioms. Nevertheless, inasmuch as *moneybags* is informal and is used to express an unfavorable opinion of somebody's richness, it can't be used to replace *to be made of money*, the idiom with a non-specified level of formality.

ACTIVITY 2.

a) *To live (from) hand to mouth* and *to make ends meet* are synonymous idioms.

b) The corpus search in COCA revealed that the latter one is much more frequent.

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[6] The definitions of the idioms derive from the *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* (CIDOI), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 and from dictionary.cambridge.org.

EDUCATION
Idioms in education

ACTIVITY 1.
   a) Try to guess the meanings of the idioms below.

   Teacher's pet

   (To pass) with flying colours

   Bookworm

   To be all ears

   To think outside of the box

   b) Do you have in your mother tongue idioms that are similar in form (i.e. contain similar words or ideas)? Give examples and explain what they mean.
   c) Try to guess the origin of the idiom 'with flying colours'.
   d) Which are two idioms that should definitely be avoided in the formal discourse due to them being informal?
   e) Which of the idioms expresses the speaker's disapproval of or negative feeling towards the person they are talking about?

ACTIVITY 2. *Fill in the blanks with the most suitable idioms just learned.*

   A. You can also _____ in getting your CV distributed and eye-catching. For instance, you should always have your traditional, 'plain' CV, in a .doc format for cross-compatibility, but there's nothing to stop you putting another CV on your own website or a social network. (from GloWbE[7], blog.emptylemon.co.uk)

   B. When I was a kid I was a total _____ and you'd always find me with my nose in a book: at the supermarket with my mum, in the library at school lunchtime, up late at night under the covers with a torch (yep, I was that kid). (from GloWbE, morethantoast.org)

   C. While Luke passed all of his _____, I consistently failed miserably on almost every maths question and only redeemed myself on the English comprehension sections. (from GloWbE, belfasttelegraph.co.uk)

   D. At school, I was a total _____. I did all the extra reading, I turned my papers in before they were due and I absorbed every last bit of information, like a sponge /.../. (from GloWbE, laughteriscatching.com)

   E. We look forward to hearing more about your plans and hope that our strategy will really resonate with your expectations. We'll certainly _____ to listen to your feedback. (from GloWbE, nlp13.com)

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[7] GloWbE stands for the Corpus of Global Web-Based English which is composed of 1.9 billion words from 1.8 million web pages in 20 different English-speaking countries; corpus2.byu.edu/glowbe.

KEY:

Teacher's pet[8] is a disapproving idiom which is used to refer to a student in a class who is liked best by the teacher and therefore treated better than the other students.

(To pass) with flying colours – if you do something such as pass an exam with flying colours, you do it very successfully.

Bookworm is an informal idiom which is used to refer to a person who reads a lot.

To be all ears is an informal idiom which means to be waiting eagerly to hear about something.

To think outside of the box means to break traditional barriers and think differently.

ACTIVITY 1.

c) In the phrase *(to pass) with flying colours*, 'colours' refer to the colours of the flag flying at the mast of the ship. In a naval battle, the ship that was defeated would pull down its flag as a symbol of surrender, so that only the winner would have its 'colours flying'.

ACTIVITY 2.

A. think outside of the box
B. bookworm
C. with flying colours
D. teacher's pet
E. be all ears

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[8] The idioms were defined with the help of english-idioms.com, dictionary.cambridge.org, and the *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* (CIDOI), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

WORK & BUSINESS
Work and business idioms

ACTIVITY 1.
a) Underline the work-related idioms in the passages.

A. The last thing I ever thought about doing was not completing this run. I've never completed anything in my life. I'm very proud to say that I've been a workhorse my entire life. (from COCA[9], *ABC GMA*, 2009)

B. "Every summer, I work like a dog to hit my weight goal of 160-165 pounds. When I do, I finish top-10 in local races. Yet every winter, I gain 15-20 pounds and lose fitness /…/." (from COCA, *Bicycling*, 2001)

b) Guess the idioms' origin.
c) Guess the meanings of the idioms identified.
d) Determine the context of the idioms (formal or informal) and their register (magazine or news).

ACTIVITY 2. '*To burn the candle at both ends' and 'to burn the midnight oil' are also work-related idioms. Try to work out what they might mean***.**

ACTIVITY 3. *Read the passages paying particular attention to the highlighted idioms. Using the available contextual information try to guess their figurative meanings.*

A. "A lot of these women come from elected positions or appointed positions in the state," Ms. Ferguson said. "That is the farm team. They **know the ropes**. They know what's expected. They know how to run a campaign." (from COCA, *New York Times*, 1998) – news

B. Well, obviously, you know were giving them the tools they need to come up with better diagnostic tests and research and, hopefully, it will **bear fruit**, because so many people suffer from this disease; we want to give them more options to either extend life or cure the cancer. (from COCA, *CBS Early*, 2009) – spoken

C. "I'm very afraid of losing the job, so I thought perhaps if I could get someone to cover for me, it would be all right and I wouldn't get fired for not coming in." "Why not just **call in sick**?". (from COCA, *The librarian*. Beinhart, Larry. Waterville, Me. : Wheeler Pub, 2006) – fiction

D. A golden-handshake is what they give you when you've been working for the same company for thirty-five years and they lay you off with a month's notice and before your pension comes due. "**Golden handshake**!" he said. "Makes me feel like King Midas." My father's handshake was worth twenty-five thousand pounds, and he spent it all on his cottage. (from COCA, The ugliest house in the world. Davies, Peter Ho. *Antioch Review*, 1994) – fiction

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[9] COCA stands for the Corpus of Contemporary American English; corpus.byu.edu/coca.

KEY:

Workhorse[10] is a person who does a lot of work, especially of a type that is necessary but not interesting.

To work like a dog is an American English approving idiom which means to work very hard.

To burn the candle at both ends means to work from early in the morning until late at night and so get very little rest.

To burn the midnight oil means to work late into the night.

To know the ropes means to be familiar with a place or organisation and able to act effectively within it.

To bear fruit is a formal idiom; if something that someone does bears fruit, it produces successful results.

To give somebody a golden handshake is an informal idiom which means to pay someone usually a large amount of money when they leave their job, either when their employer has asked them to leave or when they are leaving at the end of their life, as a reward for very long or good service in their job.

To call in sick means to telephone to say that you are unable to work because of illness.

ACTIVITY 1.

a) workhorse
   work like a dog

b) Workhorse is a large horse used for labor rather than racing and riding. As to dogs, they have not always been companion animals for humans. Most of the time, they have continuously guarded against enemies and predators, herded (gathered and moved) sheep, rousted (forced to move) foxes in hunting, provided transportation (dog sleds) etc.

d) *Workhorse* is encountered in the informal context, in the news. *To work like a dog* also occurs within the informal context, but in the magazine.

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[10] The definitions of the idioms derive from dictionary.cambridge.org.

HEALTH
Health idioms

ACTIVITY 1. *Match the idioms in the left-hand column with their definitions in the right-hand column*.

1. Splitting headache	A. To get a cold
2. To be sick in bed	B. An extremely bad or severe headache
3. To run a fever/temperature	C. To be recovering from an illness
4. To be the picture of good health	D. To give a small cough
5. To clear your throat	E. To have a higher body temperature than normal and be ill
6. To be on the road to recovery *(informal)*	F. To stay in bed while you are ill
7. To catch a cold	G. To be very healthy

ACTIVITY 2. *Complete the passages with the suitable idioms from* **ACTIVITY 1.**

A. Ally was an avid athlete and _____who had just met the man of her dreams. (from COCA[11], *NBC Today*, 2010) – spoken

B. When the chopper touched down the next morning, I was barely moving, but after oxygen therapy and a few days in the hospital, I was _____. (from COCA, *Backpacker*, 2012) – magazine

C. That's what started the six-month, 24-hour a day _____ that never went away. I started getting really sensitive to light. I couldn't concentrate or focus. (from COCA, *NPR ATC*, 2011) – spoken

D. The next morning she woke up and couldn't seem to get out of bed. She was hungry but she couldn't eat; she couldn't think but she couldn't stop thinking. She began to _____. (from COCA, Wintering Over. Brown, Jason. *The Southern Review*, 2012) – fiction

E. You don't dare move your foot from where you've set it down. You don't dare cough. You don't dare_____. You don't dare anything. (from COCA, Demain je meurs. Christian, Prigent. *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 2010) – fiction

F. The first time I remember cooking was when I was 9 years old. My mother was _____ and I remember going back and forth to her bed asking her how to make blackberry pie. (from COCA, In the kitchen with…. Parham, Betty. *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 2002) – news

G. Layla had always been sickly, always had respiratory problems. As an infant, she would _____ or come down with a fever if the wind changed. It had been that way since her birth. (from COCA, *The million dollar deception*. Johnson, R. M. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008) – fiction

ACTIVITY 3. *Write a dialogue using as many idioms you have just learned as possible.*

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[11] COCA stands for the Corpus of Contemporary American English; corpus.byu.edu/coca.

KEY:

Splitting headache[12] is a very severe pain that you feel in your head.

To be sick in bed means to stay in bed while you are ill.

To be on the road to recovery is an informal idiom; if someone is on the road to recovery, they are recovering from an illness.

To be the picture of (good) health means to be very healthy.

To catch a cold means to get a cold.

To clear your throat means to give a small cough.

To run a fever means to have a higher body temperature than normal and to be ill.

ACTIVITY 2.

A. the picture of good health
B. on the road to recovery
C. splitting headache
D. run a fever
E. clear your throat
F. sick in bed
G. catch a cold

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[12] The definitions of the idioms derive from english-idioms.com and dictionary.cambridge.org.

FEELINGS & MOOD
Idioms describing anger and happiness

ACTIVITY 1. *Read the idioms below and answer the following questions:*

a) *Which of the idioms are positive (i.e. describe feeling good) and which are negative (i.e. describe feeling bad)?*
b) *What feelings do the idioms describe?*
c) *Do you have in your native language idioms which contain similar words or ideas? What are they?*
d) *What is the difference between 'to lose your head' and 'to drive somebody nuts/up the wall'?*

To be over the moon *(informal)*

To drive somebody nuts/up the wall *(informal)*

To be/feel on the top of the world

To lose your head   *(informal)*

To be in seventh heaven *(informal and humorous)*

To make somebody's blood boil

To be/walk on cloud nine *(informal)*

To be walking on air

Authentic examples of *be over the moon* which may be useful for doing **ACTIVITY 2**:

1) You were all over the moon **about** this little baby. (from COCA[13]) – spoken
2) Her clients would be over the moon **at** the accommodation in this particular hotel. (from COCA) – prose
3) The whole family is over the moon **with** his improvements. (from COCA) – newspaper

ACTIVITY 2. *Read the story and write your own including as many idioms from ACTIVITY 1 as possible.*

"Billy usually stays quite calm in stressful situations but this time he really lost his head. In the early rainy morning, when he approached his car, he found a flat tyre and a broken stereo. The day before that he discovered that his girlfriend was going out with somebody else. He was really in a bad temper and looked as though he had lost his best friend. So he bought a lottery ticket. How did he feel when he found out that he had won $ 100,000? He was in seventh heaven! Now he could buy a new car, and a new stereo, and get a new girlfriend! He was on cloud nine! Billy was walking on air for months after that." (adapted from Irujo, Suzanne. 1986. A piece of cake: Learning and teaching idioms. *ELT Journal*, 40: 3, 236-242.)

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[13] COCA stands for the Corpus of Contemporary American English; corpus.byu.edu/coca.

KEY:

To be over the moon[14] is an informal idiom which means to be very pleased.

To be on cloud nine is an informal idiom meaning to be extremely happy and excited.

To be in seventh heaven is an informal and humorous idiom which means to be extremely happy.

To be/feel on the top of the world means to be extremely happy.

To be walking on air means to feel extremely excited or happy.

To lose your head is an informal idiom which possesses two meanings: 1) to suddenly become very angry or upset; 2) to not have control of your emotions about someone or something.

To drive somebody nuts/up the wall is an informal idiom which means to make someone angry.

To make somebody's blood boil means to make someone extremely angry.

ACTIVITY 1.

a) *To be over the moon, to be on cloud nine, to be in seventh heaven, to be/feel on the top of the world, to be walking on air* – positive

   To lose your head, to drive sb nuts/up the wall, to make sb's blood boil – negative

d) *To lose [your] head* – this idiom has to do with characterising the individual. In other words, it is the individual who is the focus.

   To drive [somebody] nuts/up the wall – in this idiom, the indefinite pronoun *somebody* is supposed to be replaced by a specific person. To put it differently, there is no focus on the individual any more, but on the interaction of individuals.

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[14] The idioms were defined with the help of the *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* (CIDOI), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 and dictionary.cambridge.org.

FEELINGS & MOOD
Idioms describing feelings and mood

ACTIVITY 1. *Match the idiom in the left-hand column with its definition in the right-hand column.*

1) To be frightened to death	A. To be very anxious about something
2) Not to believe your eyes/ears	B. To make an unpleasant expression to show that you do not like sb or sth
3) To get on somebody's nerves *(informal)*	C. To be extremely frightened
4) To pull/tear your hair out	D. To annoy someone a lot
5) To make/pull a face	E. To be very surprised by what you see/hear

ACTIVITY 2. *Fill in the blanks with the idioms from* **ACTIVITY 1.**

A. What is in a true chili? It depends on where you're from. Texans will _____ if you mention tomatoes or beans. Cincinnati aficionados add cinnamon to theirs and serve it atop spaghetti. Californians... well, Californians add whatever they like: beans, tofu, chocolate. (from COCA[15], *Washington Post*, 1999) – news

B. You can hardly _____ here. Here's what 44-year-old Karen Richardson looked like just a couple of months ago. And here's what she looks like now. (from COCA, *ABC GMA*, 2003) – spoken

C. I really couldn't believe that this could be happening. Everybody was screaming. Was I _____? I was already dead. (from COCA, *NBC Today*, 2007) – spoken

D. The most important thing to remember is not to panic. Don't scream. Don't _____. Instead, stop and think before you do anything to your comatose computer. Otherwise, you might make a bad situation worse. (from COCA, *Troubleshooting your PC*. Leinecker, Richard C. 1994) – magazine

E. "It's just _____ that all I do is work, work, work, and it seems I'm getting nowhere!" (from COCA, *Girl's Life*. Dunn, S.K. 2004) – fiction

ACTIVITY 3. *Create a dialogue using at least 3 idioms expressing feelings you have just learned, then act it out either in pairs or in small groups depending on how many characters you have included.*

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[15] COCA stands for the Corpus of Contemporary American English; corpus.byu.edu/coca.

KEY:

To be frightened to death[16] means to be extremely frightened.

Not to believe your eyes/ears means to be so surprised by what you see or hear that you think you are imagining it.

To get on somebody's nerves is an informal idiom which means to annoy someone a lot.

To pull/tear your hair out means to be very anxious about something (often in continuous tenses).

To make/pull a face means to show that you do not like something or someone by making an unpleasant expression.

ACTIVITY 2.

A. make/pull a face
B. believe your eyes
C. frightened to death
D. pull/tear your hair out
E. getting on my nerves

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[16] The definitions of the idioms come from dictionary.cambridge.org.

PEOPLE & PERSONALITIES
Idioms describing people's personalities

ACTIVITY 1. *Read the passages paying attention to the boldfaced idioms. Using the contextual information try to guess their meanings and determine which of the idioms are informal.*

A. I'm **an early bird**, up at 4 am and start work at 5 am. Need a nice big bowl of porridge first thing, not just to warm me up but to keep me going until break time which is 10 am and porridge does the job! (from GloWbE[17], www.dailymail.co.uk)

B. My dad lost the glint in his eye on January 23rd and I haven't seen it since. This saddens me immensely – those of you who know my dad will know why this upsets me. He's always been **the life and soul of the party**, laughing and joking – definitely not so much recently. (from GloWbE, allaboutniamh.co.uk)

C. My favorite things to do are to go to the beach and watch TV. Yup, I am **a couch potato**, people! I am not ashamed of this. I also drink lots of Coca-Cola and coffee…. pretty much addicted to caffeine. (from GloWbE, sippycupchronicles.com)

D. Whether you're **a culture vulture** hunting for Europe's most ancient archaeological sites, **a party animal** looking for some of the world's best clubs, or simply want to bake on a beach, then Greece should be at the top of your list. (from GloWbE, easyjet.com)

E. Although he has often been in the latter of the leader board, he has only been in the bottom once. I do think that he will have a tough job getting into the finals though, with the others having stronger ice-skating skills, but the public like him and he might be **a dark horse** and win. (from GloWbE, unrealityshout.com)

F. Oh Hun. Big hugs to you. It will be tough for you but you are **a tough cookie** and you will get through this. I knew a girl at school who had diabetes and she was great with the daily injections and food restrictions. (from GloWbE, northernmum.com)

G. **Smart cookie**: Michelle Obama was educated at Princeton and Harvard before going on to become a superstar law associate. Barack says the best is yet to come. For his sake, let's hope he's right. But what's certain is that we definitely haven't seen the best of the First Lady yet. (from GloWbE, dailymail.co.uk)

H. I was not **the social butterfly**, and often enjoyed my time to myself. I did not make friends easily. This pattern would continue through high school and even into college. I had a few close friends, but that too was difficult. (from GloWbE, rebeccakiessling.com)

ACTIVITY 2. *Write 7-10 related sentences about yourself or any person you know well using the idioms just learned. In groups of three or four read the texts you have produced and choose ONE you like most to present in class.*

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[17] GloWbE stands for the Corpus of Global Web-Based English; corpus2.byu.edu/glowbe.

KEY:

Culture vulture[18] is an informal idiom which describes someone who loves culture, i.e. art, theatre, literature, music etc.

Early bird is a humorous idiom which is used to talk about someone who gets up early in the morning.

Couch potato is an informal and disapproving idiom which characterizes someone who watches a lot of television and does not have an active life.

Dark horse is someone a bit of a mystery and we do not know how they will react or perform.

The life and soul of the party is a British, American, and Australian English idiom which describes someone who enjoys social occasions and makes them more enjoyable for other people. In American and Australian English, the truncated version **the life of the party** is also used.

Tough cookie is a person who will do everything necessary to get what they want.

Smart cookie is a clever person good at dealing with difficult situations.

Social butterfly is a very sociable person who has a lot of friends and acquaintances and who flits like a butterfly from one social event to another.

Party animal is an informal idiom describing someone who enjoys parties and party activities very much and goes to as many as possible.

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[18] The definitions of the idioms derive from english-idioms.com, learn-english-today.com, idioms.thefreedictionary.com, usingenglish.com, and dictionary.cambridge.org.

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS
Idioms about human relationships

ACTIVITY 1.
 a) Read and underline the idioms about human relationships in the passages.

   A. "You weren't you anymore." "People change." "Yeah. But you changed into someone I didn't want to be around. /…/. At first, you just talked about feeling useless. Then you became useless. You wouldn't lift a finger around the house. (from COCA[19], A Pound of Flesh. Richard A Lovett, *Analog Science Fiction & Fact*, 2006) – fiction

   B. In 1932, in the depths of the Great Depression, 20-year-old John Scott dropped out of the University of Wisconsin and headed off to the Soviet Union. "Something seemed to be wrong with America" he wrote in his memoirs. "I decided to go to Russia to work, study and to lend a hand in the construction of a society which seemed to be at least one step ahead of the American." (from COCA, The Long Goodbye. Brink, Lindsey. *American Spectator*, 2003) – magazine

   C. At the heart of America's persistent racial divide is a fundamental disagreement over the frequency and severity of discrimination against African-Americans. When asked, vast majorities – 89 percent of blacks and 80 percent of whites – agree that racial stereotyping still occurs in America today. But ask how racial stereotyping actually affects people's lives, and blacks and whites no longer see eye to eye. (from COCA, *NBC Dateline*, 2012) – spoken

   D. What did we talk about that first afternoon? Not much if I remember. We started off on the wrong foot altogether. "Mr. Ferris, aren't you?" she said, extending her hand. "Call me Ferris. Nice to meet you, Mrs. Thomas." "No," she said, like a school teacher this time. "Be fair. Call me Anya." (from COCA, *The Wisest Man in America*. Wetherell, W.D. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1995) – fiction

   E. My coaches gave me a hard time about going to physical therapy and missing practice. It's really hard because going to classes, then going to practice, then to therapy, and then home to study, it was too much to be on my feet. They really gave me a hard time, so I felt like I was missing out, and not doing the right thing by going to physical therapy. (from COCA, *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 2002) – academic

   F. He makes only one trip a year to play in Chicago. But I remember that one time he visited, he was injured and was not going to suit up and play that night. Still, he refused to give me an interview. I reminded him that I was the first NBA writer to interview him before and after he was drafted straight out of high school in 1995, but he still gave me the cold shoulder. (from COCA, *Chicago Sun-Times*, 2004) – news

 b) Guess the meanings of the idioms you have identified.
 c) Which of the idioms should definitely be avoided in the formal discourse?
 d) What would be the opposite for 'to get off/start off on the wrong foot'?

ACTIVITY 2. *Write in 10-12 sentences about your relationships with your (pen-) friends/ parents/neighbours/classmates using the idioms just learned.*

---

[19] COCA stands for the Corpus of Contemporary American English; corpus.byu.edu/coca.

KEY:

To see eye to eye[20] – if two people see eye to eye, they agree with each other.

Not to lift a finger means to not help someone to do something, usually because you are lazy.

To get off/start off on the wrong foot – if you get off on the wrong foot with someone you have just met, your relationship starts badly, often with an argument; opposite – **get off/start off on the right foot**.

To give/lend somebody a (helping) hand means to help someone do something, especially something that involves physical effort.

To give somebody a hard time is an informal idiom which means to make things difficult or unpleasant for someone.

To give someone the cold shoulder means to intentionally ignore someone or treat someone in an unfriendly way.

ACTIVITY 1.

A. wouldn't lift a finger
B. lend a hand
C. see eye to eye
D. started off on the wrong foot
E. gave me a hard time
F. gave me the cold shoulder

---

[20] The idioms were defined with the help of the *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* (CIDOI), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, dictionary.cambridge.org, english-idioms.com, and idioms.thefreedictionary.com.

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS
Love idioms

ACTIVITY 1.
   a) Guess the meanings of the idioms.

> To break somebody's heart
> The light of somebody's life
> The love of somebody's life
> Head over heels in love with somebody
> To be on the rocks (e.g. about marriage)
> To go/fly out (of) the window (e.g. about love)
> Puppy love

   b) 'The light of somebody's life' and 'the love of somebody's life' differ in the key words which are 'light' and 'love' respectively. Does this fact cause a difference in the figurative meanings of the idioms? If yes, explain it (i.e. the difference).
   c) Which of the idioms is informal, and thus should definitely be avoided in the formal discourse?
   d) Do you have in your native language idioms which have the same meanings as those listed above? What are they?

ACTIVITY 2. *Choose ONE of the writing tasks below. Regardless of which task you choose, include in your piece of writing the idioms from* **ACTIVITY 1.** *You can likewise use any other idioms you know.*

   Task I. Imagine that you have to write a love letter to your favorite TV/film/book character. Consider the following tips for writing it:

   - ✓ Choose the character.
   - ✓ Be creative, romantic and charming.
   - ✓ Try to amaze and surprise the addressee.
   - ✓ Keep to the same theme: flow smoothly from one idea to another.
   - ✓ Decide your own length.
   - ✓ Follow the guidelines on writing an informal letter.

   Task II. Imagine that you have to write a Valentine's poem. Consider the following tips for writing it:

   - ✓ Choose your Valentine.
   - ✓ Be creative, original and charming.
   - ✓ Find the rhyme unless you want to write in prose.
   - ✓ Keep to the same theme: flow smoothly from one idea to another.
   - ✓ Decide your own length. Shorter versions are advised if you are in a new relationship or you are a 'secret admirer'.
   - ✓ Be genuine, not poetically perfect.

KEY:

Head over heels in love with somebody[21] means to be completely in love.

To be on the rocks (about marriage) is an informal idiom which is used to talk about something that is likely to fail soon.

To go/fly out (of) the window (about love) – if something goes/flies out of the window, it does not exist anymore.

Puppy love describes the temporary love that exists between two young people, typically teenagers. This kind of love does not last long and disappears when the people become older.

The light of your life is used to describe a person somebody loves more than any other.

The love of your life is used to describe a person that you love most in all your life.

To break somebody's heart means to make someone who loves you very sad, especially by telling them you do not love them any more.

ACTIVITY 1.

b) The idioms' figurative meanings are identical.

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[21] The definitions of the idioms derive from english-idioms.com, dictionary.cambridge.org, and oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com.

Appendix 13

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
Science and technology idioms

ACTIVITY 1.
  a) Circle the definition that matches the idiom.

  Mouse potato is
    A. a person who plays computer games at night time in a dimly lit environment
    B. a person who spends a great deal of time on their computer surfing the net and playing games
    C. a person who surfs the net secretly from people around them, at home or office

  Silver surfer is
    A. an advanced Internet user
    B. an intermediate Internet user
    C. a person aged over 50 who frequently surfs the Web and spends time online

  Silver texter is
    A. an elderly person preferring to communicate by text messaging
    B. a person who sends around 25 electronic messages a day
    C. an intermediate text messaging user

  b) 'Mouse potato' is a blending expression of _____, symbolising _____, and _____.
  c) In the idiom 'silver surfer' the word 'silver' refers to _____.
  d) Are three idioms characteristic of the formal or informal discourse?

ACTIVITY 2. *Guess the meanings of the highlighted idioms from the contexts given and decide which of them sound informal.*

  A. Fortunately, music educators need not **reinvent the wheel**: much of the work on the identification of gifted and talented students in other academic areas has already been adapted for use in the arts. (from COCA, *Music Educators Journal*, 1992) – academic

  B. The problem is that the dog and the child are using totally different body language. And as a result, they often **get their 'wires crossed'**. (from GloWbE[22], thelabradorsite.com)

  C. In today's world of gadgets and electronics students are used to the extra **bells and whistles** that a simple lecture can not provide. (from COCA, *Education*, 2008) – academic

  D. "It wasn't exactly **rocket science** to figure out that you took them [shoes] from my bag when I wasn't looking." (from COCA[23], Following Her Footsteps. Hagemann, Jane. *New Moon Girls*, 2010) – fiction

ACTIVITY 3. *Create a dialogue using the idioms from* **ACTIVITY 1** *and* **ACTIVITY 2.**

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[22] GloWbE stands for the Corpus of Global Web-Based English; corpus2.byu.edu/glowbe.
[23] COCA stands for the Corpus of Contemporary American English; corpus.byu.edu/coca.

KEY:

Mouse potato[24] is an informal idiom describing a person who spends the vast majority of their time on the computer and does not have an active style of life.

Silver surfer is an informal idiom describing a person aged over 50 who uses the Internet.

Silver texter is an informal idiom describing an elder person communicating by text messaging.

Not rocket science is an informal idiom which is used to say that you do not think that something is very difficult to do or to understand.

Bells and whistles are impressive accessories, especially high-technology features which may sometimes be more decorative than necessary and which are added to a product to attract more buyers.

To get your wires crossed is an informal idiom; if people get their wires crossed, they misunderstand each other, especially when making arrangements.

To reinvent the wheel means to waste time and money in developing something that already exists.

ACTIVITY 1.

a) B.
   C.
   A.

Mouse potato is a blending expression of 'mouse', symbolising 'the computer', and 'couch potato'.

In the idiom *silver surfer* 'silver' refers to the colour of hair, commonly associated with midlife adults.

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[24] The idioms were defined with the help of *350 Idioms with Their Origin, or The Idiomatic Cake You Can Eat and Have It Too*. Shitova, L. F., Saint-Petersburg: Anthology, 2011, dictionary.cambridge.org, thefreedictionary.com, and usingenglish.com.

ENVIRONMENT
Environment idioms

ACTIVITY 1.

    a) Guess the meanings of the idioms.

> The tip of the iceberg
>
> A drop in the ocean
>
> Ray of sunshine
>
> To make a mountain out of a molehill
>
> To have your head in the clouds
>
> To weather the storm

    b) What are the idioms in your native language which express the same ideas as the aforelisted ones?

ACTIVITY 2.

    a) Guess the origin of the two environment idioms.

To be/feel under the weather (informal) *originally referred to*	*'Thunder' in 'to steal somebody's thunder' refers to*
A. depression B. influenza (the flu) C. seasickness	A. weather B. negative feelings C. ideas

    b) Guess what they might mean.

    c) Make two sentences with the idioms above to show your understanding of them.

    _____

    _____

ACTIVITY 3.

    a) Underline the idioms in the passages and interpret their meanings.

    A. The lesson model relies on the teacher to know from instinct and experience when it is appropriate to go with the flow or when it is time to move on. The important idea is that the lesson model should provide significant musical experiences for the students and teacher. The motto is "depth rather than breadth." (from COCA[25], *Music Educators Journal*, 2005) – academic

    B. So at the tender age of six, Sean Goldman learned to suppress his feelings. He didn't want to be different. He didn't want to make waves. Still, he always knew something was wrong, especially in 2007 when his mom married a Brazilian lawyer named Joao Paulo Lins e Silva. (from COCA, *NBC Dateline*, 2012) – spoken

    b) Are these idioms appropriate to the formal or informal language?

    c) Is their any relationship between the idioms you have identified?

---

[25] COCA stands for the Corpus of Contemporary American English; corpus.byu.edu/coca.

KEY:

Tip of the iceberg[26] is a small, noticeable part of a problem, the total size of which is really much greater.

A drop in the ocean is a British English idiom which refers to a very small amount compared to the amount needed. The American English version of this idiom is **a drop in the bucket**.

To go with the flow is an informal idiom which means to do what other people are doing or to agree with other people because it is the easiest thing to do.

To make waves is an informal idiom which means to be very active so that other people notice you; to stand out, to demonstrate your individuality and uniqueness, and to make a name for yourself by becoming better known.

To be/feel under the weather is an informal idiom which means to be or feel ill.

To weather the storm – if someone or something weathers the storm, they successfully deal with a very difficult problem.

To have your head in the clouds means to not know the facts of a situation.

Ray of sunshine is a happy person who makes others feel happy, especially in a difficult situation.

To steal somebody's thunder means to do what someone else was going to do before they do it, especially if this takes success or praise away from them.

To make a mountain out of a molehill means to make a slight difficulty seem like a serious problem.

ACTIVITY 2.

   a) C.
      C.

ACTIVITY 3.

   a) A. go with the flow
      B. make waves

   c) *Go with the flow* and *make waves* are the opposites.

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[26] The idioms were defined with the help of dictionary.cambridge.org and englishidiomsblog.blogspot.com.

SPORTS
Idioms derived from sports and games

ACTIVITY 1. *Match the idioms with the most likely game and sport source domains.*

1) To be skating/walking on thin ice	A. Tennis
2) To hit/strike below the belt *(informal)*	B. Hunting
3) To be barking up the wrong tree *(informal)*	C. Sailing
4) To take/grab the bull by the horns	D. Martial arts
5) To get/find/have a second wind *(informal)*	E. Swimming
6) Under the table	F. Skating
7) To throw in the towel *(informal)*	G. Bull fighting
8) To keep your head above water	H. Ball sports
9) The ball is in somebody's court	I. Boxing
10) To set/start/get the ball rolling	J. Gambling

ACTIVITY 2. *Identify the correct definition of the figurative meaning of the idiom.*

1) **The figurative meaning of *to be skating/walking on thin ice* is**
   a) to skate on natural ice such as lakes and ponds
   b) to be in a risky situation or be doing something risky
   c) to do unwise and dumb things

2) **The figurative meaning of *to hit/strike below the belt* is**
   a) to insult someone
   b) to hit someone heavily in a fight
   c) to behave unfairly

3) **The figurative meaning of *to be barking up the wrong tree* is**
   a) to hold other people responsible for your misfortune
   b) to accuse the wrong person of having done something wrong
   c) to look for something in the wrong place or to be mistaken

4) **The figurative meaning of *to take/grab the bull by the horns* is**
   a) to face a difficulty and deal with it
   b) to be decisive and brave
   c) to do something risky and dangerous

5) **The figurative meaning of *to get/find/have a second wind* is**
   a) to get a second burst of energy or strength after feeling tired
   b) to get a second opportunity or chance after having failed
   c) to be rehired after being fired

6) **The figurative meaning of *under the table* is**
   a) to do something illegally
   b) to do something secretly
   c) to do something secretly knowing that you are breaking the rules or the law

7) The figurative meaning of *to throw in the towel* is
   a) to annoy someone and try to make them behave aggressively
   b) to give up because you have lost hope to win or succeed
   c) to put an end to the conflict by asking for forgiveness

8) The figurative meaning of *to keep your head above water* is
   a) to manage to survive, especially financially
   b) to try not to drown
   c) to avoid unpleasant situations

9) The figurative meaning of *the ball is in somebody's court* is
   a) to lose the game
   b) it is someone's turn to do something, often to make a decision
   c) it is someone's turn to start the game

10) The figurative meaning of *to set/start/get the ball rolling* is
   a) to establish a business
   b) to make someone fulfilling their duties
   c) to make something start happening

ACTIVITY 3. *Fill in the blanks with the most suitable idioms from* ACTIVITY 1.

A. "It's not easy playing on the road. We looked weary in the 60th to 75th minute. Our legs weren't under us. But we _____ a bit of _____ after that and ... took the ball into their area a lot. " (from GloWbE[27], cbc.ca)

B. It has long been evident to me that Britain is now a very corrupt country. I do not mean by this that money often and necessarily passes hands in a straightforwardly illicit or illegal way, _____ in brown envelopes, as it does in some countries that I could name. (from GloWbE, socialaffairsunit.org.uk)

C. My initial idea was how to make chutney where the sweetness of the pineapple was countered with sharp and fragrant spices. I knew I _____ but if you don't try these things you never know. (from GloWbE, my-pickles-and-jams.com)

D. The Internet lets you connect with millions of people in many different ways and therefore the opportunities for romance are vast. You could reignite an old flame on Facebook, flirt over a forum or tweet with the man of your dreams. Even better, _____ and sign up to an online dating site. (from GloWbE, yennygirl.com)

E. /.../ if a person is choosing a wedding joke, then they need to find something that can be quite relatable for any couple. As much as we would want people to laugh, we don't want to _____ when it comes to speech jokes. (from GloWbE, weddingspeechestoasts.com)

F. I would say, "I've taught you everything you need to know for this exam, and more. Now it's up to you to review and get ready for the exam. _____!" (from GloWbE, schoolbook.org)

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[27] GloWbE stands for the Corpus of Global Web-Based English; corpus2.byu.edu/glowbe.

G. I have my opinions about how best to combat drug use, what drug policy should be, etc. If a biochemist comes along and tells me I _____, I'm going to sit down, shut up and try to learn something. (from GloWbE, guardian.co.uk)

H. Taking responsibility is one of the hardest things to do for ourselves. Being the one who _____ is tough. (from GloWbE, mabletan.com)

I. Right now, conservatives are bitterly disappointed. Some choose to check out mentally. Some have decided to _____. A few blame the American people. (from GloWbE, redstate.com)

J. As an entrepreneur or business owner, how you see yourself and your business directly affects your level of success. If you perceive yourself as already successful, even if in reality you're struggling just to _____, then others are going to see you as someone with whom they want to do business. (from GloWbE, stevelvernon.com)

KEY:

To be skating/walking on thin ice[28] means to be taking a risk or to be doing something dangerous.

To hit/strike below the belt is an informal idiom which means to do or say something that is very unfair or cruel.

To be barking up the wrong tree is an informal idiom which means to have a wrong idea about how to get or achieve something.

To take/grab the bull by the horns means to face a difficult or dangerous situation directly and with courage.

To get/find/have a second wind is an informal idiom which means to have new energy that makes you able to continue with something that had made you tired.

Under the table – if you do something under the table, you do it secretly.

To throw in the towel is an informal idiom which means to give up or admit that you have been defeated and stop trying.

To keep your head above water means to deal with a difficult situation, especially when you have financial problems.

The ball is in somebody's court – if the ball is in someone's court, it is their responsibility to take action next.

To set/start/get the ball rolling means to make something start happening.

ACTIVITY 1.

1) – F; 2) – D; 3) – B; 4) – G; 5) – C; 6) – J; 7) – I; 8) – E; 9) – A; 10) – H.

ACTIVITY 2.

1) – b; 2) – c; 3) – c; 4) – a; 5) – a; 6) – b; 7) – b; 8) – a; 9) – b: 10) – c.

ACTIVITY 3.

A – got _____ a second wind; B – under the table; C – was skating on thin ice; D – take the bull by the horns; E – hit below the belt; F – the ball is in your court; G – am barking up the wrong tree; H – sets/starts/gets the ball rolling; I – throw in the towel; J – keep your head above water.

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[28] The definitions of the idioms derive from oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com and dictionary.cambridge.org.

Appendix 16

Dear English Teacher,

I am Violetta Beloussova, a second-year master's student of the University of Tartu studying English at the Faculty of Philosophy, in the Department of English Language and Literature. Currently, I am working on my MA thesis whose purpose is to develop a set of idiom teaching and learning materials for Estonian secondary school students. With this in mind, I would appreciate it immensely if you could complete the questionnaire below purporting to inquire your personal opinion of the devised idiom activities piloted with your students. Filling in the questionnaire you will contribute to my work by providing your expert evaluation. The questionnaire is anonymous which ensures confidentiality of all the replies.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Violetta Beloussova

Background questions about the respondent

1. How long have you been teaching English?

☐ 1-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ 11-15 years
☐ 16-20 years
☐ 21-25 years
☐ more than 25 years

2. From what higher education institution(s) did you receive your degree(s) and what qualification(s) did you acquire after graduation from it (them)?
_____
_____
_____

3. Have you taught English idioms before?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Evaluation of the developed study material

4. **The topics of the idiom worksheets align with the *NCUSS* (2011).**

    ☐ Strongly agree

    ☐ Agree

    ☐ Neither agree nor disagree

    ☐ Disagree

    ☐ Strongly disagree

5. **The worksheets enhance conceptual understanding and engage higher order thinking skills.**

    ☐ Strongly agree

    ☐ Agree

    ☐ Neither agree nor disagree

    ☐ Disagree

    ☐ Strongly disagree

6. **The worksheets offer a variety of idiom activities accommodating verbal-linguistic, mathematical-logical, and interpersonal intelligences.**

    ☐ Strongly agree

    ☐ Agree

    ☐ Neither agree nor disagree

    ☐ Disagree

    ☐ Strongly disagree

7. **The worksheets work properly without purchase of additional components such as idiom reference books and idiom dictionaries.**

    ☐ Strongly agree

    ☐ Agree

    ☐ Neither agree nor disagree

    ☐ Disagree

    ☐ Strongly disagree

8. **The worksheets can be used by all students without extensive supervision or special assistance.**

   □ Strongly agree

   □ Agree

   □ Neither agree nor disagree

   □ Disagree

   □ Strongly disagree

9. **The instructions supplied for completing the idiom activities are clear and understandable.**

   □ Strongly agree

   □ Agree

   □ Neither agree nor disagree

   □ Disagree

   □ Strongly disagree

10. **The devised idiom activities enable students to comprehend, practice, and produce the idioms to be learned.**

    □ Strongly agree

    □ Agree

    □ Neither agree nor disagree

    □ Disagree

    □ Strongly disagree

11. **The devised idiom activities enable students to gain insight into the use of the idioms (context of use and register).**

    □ Strongly agree

    □ Agree

    □ Neither agree nor disagree

    □ Disagree

    □ Strongly disagree

12. The worksheets can be used as a supplement to the coursebook figurative vocabulary exercises.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

13. Estonian secondary school students would be interested in the learning of the English idioms through the use of the designed study material.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

Suggested modifications

14. Would you make any appropriate changes to the designed study material?

☐ Yes   ☐ Do not know   ☐ No

15. What would you change about the devised idiom activities and how would you do that?

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. What did you like/did not like about the designed study material?

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. Do you consider the designed study material appropriate for the teaching and learning of English idioms? Please justify your viewpoint.

_____

_____

_____

18. In your opinion, what grade(s) is the designed study material appropriate for? (tick all that apply)

☐ 9th grade

☐ 10th grade

☐ 11th grade

☐ 12th grade

19. Would you like to use the designed study material in your English classes?

☐ Yes (please give (a) reason(s))

_____

☐ Do not know (please give (a) reason(s))

_____

☐ No (please give (a) reason(s))

_____

20. If you have any other comments, please provide them below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your time!

Violetta Beloussova

Appendix 17

Dear Student,

    I am Violetta Beloussova, a second-year master's student of the University of Tartu studying English at the Faculty of Philosophy, in the Department of English Language and Literature. Currently, I am working on my MA thesis whose purpose is to develop a set of idiom teaching and learning materials for Estonian secondary school students. With this in mind, I would appreciate it immensely if you could complete the questionnaire below purporting to inquire your personal opinion of the idiom activities you have completed in your English class. Filling in the questionnaire you will contribute to my work. Therefore, try to give as honest answers as possible. The questionnaire is anonymous which ensures confidentiality of all the replies.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Violetta Beloussova

Background questions about the respondent

1. Grade: □ 9th   □ 10th   □ 11th   □ 12th

2. Have you ever learned English idioms before?   □ Yes   □ No

3. If your answer on question 2 is "Yes", how have you learned English idioms so far?

    □ by completing idiom worksheets
    □ by doing coursebook exercises on idioms
    □ other (please specify)_____

Evaluation of the piloted idiom worksheet

4. Did you like the idiom activities piloted in your English class?

    □ Yes   □ Do not know   □ No

5. Which idiom activity did you like more? Please give reason(s) for your answer.

    _____
    _____
    _____

6. Which idiom activity did you like less? Please give reason(s) for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

7. You found the piloted idiom activities

☐ very difficult   ☐ difficult   ☐ neither difficult nor easy   ☐ easy ☐ very easy

8. In the idiom activities you completed in class the most problematic was _____

_____

_____

9. Do you think you can now use the idioms you have learned appropriately (i.e. considering their context and register of use)?

☐ Yes   ☐ Do not know   ☐ No

10. Would you like to continue learning English idioms?

☐ Yes   ☐ Do not know   ☐ No

Thank you for your time!

Violetta Beloussova

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
INGLISE FILOLOOGIA OSAKOND

Violetta Beloussova
Idiom learning materials for Estonian secondary school students [Õppematerjalid idioomide õpetamiseks Eesti gümnaasiumiastmele]
Magistritöö
2015
Lehekülgede arv: 112

Annotatsioon:
        Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärk on koostada õppematerjalid idioomide õpetamiseks Eesti üldhariduskoolide gümnaasiumiastmes õppivatele õpilastele, mida saaks kasutada nii täiendava materjalina *Upstream Intermediate B2* (2008) õpiku idioomide õppimisel kui ka iseseisva õppevahendina. Wray (2000) on kindel, et idioomide omandamisel on väga tähtis roll edukas keele õppimises. Ülaltoodud väite alust moodustavate põhjuste hulka kuuluvad näiteks võõrkeeleõppijate vajadus mõista emakeelekõnelejate diskursust, rääkida nende moodi, et näidata saavutatud võõrkeeleoskust ning mõista sihtkultuuri ja selle esindajate identiteeti.
        Magistritöö koosneb neljast peatükist. Sissejuhatus annab ülevaate idioomidest kui keelenähtusest eristades idioomi mõiste kitsa ja laia tähenduse ning arutledes idioomidele omistatavate omaduste ja seni loodud klassifikatsioonide üle. Lisaks tuuakse selles tööosas põhjendused, miks idioomid väärivad õppimist kooli inglise keele tundides. Peatüki lõpus tutvustatakse uurimisküsimused, millele magistritöö peab vastused andma.
        Esimene peatükk annab ülevaate töö teoreetilisest taustast, milleks on teise keele või võõrkeele idioomide mõistmine. Nimelt, siin antakse teave uuringute käigus tuvastatud idioomide töötlemist ja mõistmist mõjutavate tegurite kohta ja kirjeldatakse mudeleid, mis seletavad, kuidas toimub võõrkeelena rääkijatel sihtkeele idioomide mõistmine. Peatüki teine osa pakub ideid õppematerjalide koostamiseks andes ülevaadet pedagoogilistest lähenemistest idioomide õpetamise organiseerimisel, idioomide grupeerimise võimalustest, nende väljavalimise kriteeriumidest ja võimalikest õpetamistehnikatest.
        Teine peatükk kajastab *Gümnaasiumi Riikliku Õppekava* ja *Upstream Intermediate B2* õpiku idiomaatilise sõnavara harjutuste analüüside tulemusi, mida hiljem kasutatakse täiendavate õppematerjalide koostamise põhjuste väljatoomiseks. Nende peamisteks järeldusteks on, et (1) idioomid on mainitud riikliku õppekava õpiväljundites ja järelikult peavad olema võõrkeele õppimise osaks; (2) õpikus on hulgaliselt teemasid, mida ei kasutata idioomide õppimiseks; (3) 19st õpiku harjutusest 18 on keskendatud idioomide mõistmisele; (4) ükski õpiku harjutus ei tõmba õpilaste tähelepanu idioomi registrile või kasutuskontekstile, mida Boers et al (2007: 46) ja Liu (2008: 113) peavad kõige tähtsaks informatsiooniks, et õppida võõrkeelsed idioomid asjakohaselt kasutama.
        Magistritöö kolmas peatükk on empiiriline ja on jagatud kaheks osaks. Selle esimeses osas tutvustatakse otsuseid ja toiminguid, mis juhtisid töölehtede koostamisprotsessi, ning antakse ülevaadet koostatud õppematerjalide struktuurist ja sisust. Nimelt, lugejale antakse teada, et kokku on loodud 14 töölehte 11 teemal, mille kindlaksmääramisel võeti arvesse

eespool mainitud riikliku õppekava õppesisu ja õpiku teemad. Töölehtedel on 36 harjutust. Nende sooritamisel omandavad õpilased 95 piltlikku idioomi, mis pärinevad Cambridge rahvusvahelisest idioomide sõnaraamatust (31 tk) (*Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms*), blogidest ja teistest idioome käsitlevatest veebilehtedest (64 tk). Sõnaraamatust pärit idioomide valimisel arvestati nende esinemissagedust korpustes – Briti Rahvuslikus Korpuses (*The British National Corpus*) ja Tänapäeva Ameerika inglise keele Korpuses (*The Corpus of Contemporary American English*) – ja sõnaraamatu autorite poolt väidetud kasutussagedust sihtkeeles. Internetist võetud piltlike idioomide puhul ei hoitud sageduse kriteeriumist kinni, sest nagu kinnitab Liu (2003: 676), „puhas sagedus tihti jätab tähtsad ja kasulikud idioomid välja". Teine osa on pühendatud koostatud õppematerjalide hindamise ja testimise metodoloogia selgitamisele, tulemuste analüüsimisele ja järelduste tegemisele.

Töölehtede hindamisfaasist võtsid osa mugavuse alusel valitud kolm inglise keele õpetajat kahest Tartu linna üldhariduskoolist, kelle õpetamiskogemus ületas 21 aastat ja kes on kasutanud *Upstream Intermediate B2* õpikut oma inglise keele tundide planeerimisel. Õppematerjalide testimisfaasis osalesid 48 eespool kirjeldatud õpetajate põhikooli-ja gümnaasiumiastme õpilased, kellega ajalise piirangu tõttu leidsid katsetamist vaid neli 14st töölehest. Õpetajatele mõeldud küsimustike vastustest selgus, et kõigil kolmel õpetajal meeldivad magistritöö raames loodud töölehed ja neil on huvi kasutada neid oma tavatundides. Õpilaste küsitlus näitas, et vaid kaks õpilast ei kiita tundides katsetatud harjutusi heaks. Õpetajate küsitluse tulemustest ilmnes, et kõik õpetajad on üksmeelsed selles, et koostatud õppematerjalid hästi sobivad õppimise ja õpetamise eesmärkideks ja et neid on võimalik kasutada nii gümnaasiumi klassides kui ka põhikooli lõpuklassides. Selgus ka, et õpetajate arvates on üldjoontes täidetud õppematerjalidele seatud eesmärgid, milleks on arendada õpilaste kontseptuaalset mõistmist; kaasa haarata nende kõrgema taseme mõtlemisoskusi; võimaldada idioomide mõistmist, harjutamist ja kasutamist; võimaldada aru saada, kuidas kasutatakse kindlaid idioome; luua õppematerjalid, mida oleks võimalik kasutada õpikuga paralleelselt ja mis äratäksid õpilastes huvi sihtkeele idioomide õppimise vastu.

Märksõnad: inglise keele didaktika, fraseoloogia, (piltlik) idioom, idioomide õpetamine

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Tartus, **20.05.2015**
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