



## Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching Idiomatic Expressions: The Case of Iranian EFL Learners

**Sahar Najarzadegan**

Faculty Member, Islamic Azad University, Khorasgan (Isfahan) Branch, Isfahan, Iran

**Saeed Ketabi**

Associate Professor, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

### Abstract

The pervading use of idiomatic expressions in authentic input, their frequency in the English language and the increasing difficulties that learners experience with this type of language are compelling reasons that made idioms an integral part of vocabulary learning. To solve learners' problems regarding idiomatic expressions, first a need analysis is required. In order to reach this purpose a questionnaire was given to sixty EFL teachers in the universities of Iran to see what the problems of learning idiomatic expressions and their causes are. This study analyzed teaching and learning of idioms in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In the current study the problematic parts of the educational system, teachers' methodology, materials and the students' approaches toward learning idiomatic expressions were detected.

**Key words:** idiomatic expressions (IEX), EFL learner

### INTRODUCTION

According to the relevant entry in Macmillan English dictionary for advanced learners (Rundell & Fox, 2007), an idiom is "an expression whose meaning is different from the meaning of the individual words" (p. 710). On the other hand McGavigan (2009) suggests that we need a minimum level of vocabulary of about 3,000 words before idiom knowledge is able to develop. This might suggest that learners in L2 acquisition might behave like children in L1 acquisition (Clark, 2003). For these reasons and since idiomatic expressions are frequently utilized in spoken and written English, language learners must make an effort to master idioms, though complete mastery may be nearly impossible (Cooper, 1999; Irujo, 1986b; McCarthy, O'Keeffe, & Walsh, 2010).

The memorization of figurative expressions which at first sight present a clear mismatch between form and meaning creates a heavy learning burden on the students,

which usually leads to a lack of motivation and failure in comprehension, retention and production of idioms (Kovecses & Szabo, 1996; Boers, 2000). In this regard, the role of the teacher in reducing the learning burden of the students is essential. They can be informative sources to help solve this problem.

This paper tends to make use of these valuable sources through asking the teachers some questions regarding teaching and learning idiomatic expressions which hasn't been done before in the context of Iran. In this way, knowing the problems of learning and teaching of IEX can be of influential help in solving them, and giving insights in learning them better.

Since the early 1900s, idiomatologists have tried to define, categorize and understand idioms, to propose models for their representation, accessing, and processing, and to teach them using various approaches. While considerable progress has been made in each of these areas of inquiry, few studies to date have attempted to uncover what the teachers' opinions and attitudes toward idiom teaching and learning are.

Maisa and Karunakarans (2013) made an exploratory research with five teachers answering a Questionnaire with approximately twenty five closed and open ended questions. Likert scale was used to find some responses from teachers to know teachers' beliefs about teaching idiomatic expressions. He came to the conclusion that teaching idioms with specific strategies can help the learner to understand and produce idioms and as a result can produce fluency. Majority of teachers in his research agreed that idiomatic expressions (IEX) are important in everyday English use and the best way to teach IEX is to treat them as new items and try to encourage the learners to guess their meaning from the situation and context.

Eltahir (2003) gave a questionnaire with 18 questions to 50 teachers. In addition to the overt purpose of finding out what difficulties faced learning and teaching of idiomatic expressions and multi-word verbs, it also served to awaken the existing knowledge and to focus attention on the topic. The main objectives behind administering the questionnaire to the teachers of English in Sudan universities were to have teachers' opinions about the position of vocabulary components and to find out how they perceive the problems of their students in dealing with idiomatic expressions and multi-word verbs. He found that the students in their context need to concern more on idiomatic expressions since the students are not familiar enough with idioms and not even aware of their importance.

The following general and interrelated questions could be formulated in this study:

- What are the problems facing the teaching of idiomatic expressions for adults EFL learners in Iran?
- What are the possible causes of these problems/difficulties?

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

60 Iranian EFL teachers teaching English to the students in English faculties of Iranian Azad universities were given a questionnaire. Among them 50 who were all Persian native speakers answered the questionnaire. Their students both male and female were majoring in either English translation or English teaching.

### **Instrumentation**

According to Fetterman (1989), questionnaires (synonymous with surveys) are “perhaps the most formal and rigid form of exchange in the interviewing spectrum” (p. 64). Unlike interviews, questionnaires do not require interactivity between the researchers and respondent and they provide insight into how widespread certain attitudes are. In Johnson’s (1992) words, Survey “can be particularly useful for capturing the essence of trends that are useful for planning” (p. 128). In an attempt to achieve these goals, a questionnaire was administered to the EFL teachers to determine their attitudes towards learning and teaching idioms in EFL classes. 9 items of this questionnaire ranked on a Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree), 2(disagree), 3(not sure/don’t know), 4(agree), 5(strongly agree), and the other 10 items consisted of the options Yes, No, To some extent.

Prior to administering the questionnaire to the participants, assistance was sought from some of the English language lecturers. A total of 10 volunteers answered and critiqued the questionnaire for clarity, relevance, length, and format (a kind of pilot testing). Following the rewording of certain items for the sake of clarity, the questionnaire was administered to fifty university teachers.

### **Procedure**

An attitude questionnaire was administered to 50 teachers. They completed it in order to reflect attitudes toward teaching and learning idiomatic expressions. The main objective of this questionnaire is to identify the problems and difficulties of the students while learning idiomatic expressions as well as the position and weightage given to idioms for Iranian EFL learners. Once the problems are known, helpful suggestions and insights about the necessary teaching techniques can be made to improve the students’ knowledge of idiomatic expressions.

## **RESULTS**

Q1-The teachers are asked in the first question to express their views on the emphasis/weightage given to the vocabulary courses, if any, in the English syllabus they are dealing with, indicating whether they are satisfied or not by selecting from three options: Yes, No, To some extent.

**Table 1.** The teachers' opinions on the weightage given to the vocabulary course in the syllabus in Iran English universities

OPTIONS	TOTAL RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	10/50	20%
No	30/50	60%
To some extent	10/50	20%

Table 1 reveals that the majority of the respondents (60%) are not satisfied with the emphasis given to the vocabulary courses in the English syllabuses they are dealing with. Only 20% of the teachers are happy with the status of vocabulary. The remaining (20%) are content to some extent with the place of vocabulary in these syllabuses. On the causes of the teachers' discontent of the vocabulary courses status in English syllabus, the second part of question, which is an open-ended question, required the teachers who opted for the answer 'No' to account for their discontent.

**Table 2.** The causes of the discontent with the vocabulary status in the syllabus

CAUSES GIVEN	NUMER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
It is not given the importance and concern it deserves.	10/*30	33.3%
Vocabulary is introduced in boring texts.	10/30	33.3%
It is not related to the skills like reading.	5/30	16.6%
Vocabulary is considered and taught in isolation.	3/30	10%
Others	2/30	6.6%

(\* In the previous question 30 teachers say "No").

Table 2 accounts for the unhappiness of the 30 respondents (60%) who expressed their dissatisfaction in the previous question. It lists some of the causes given by the teachers who answered by choosing the option 'No'.

Q-2 On the position of Idiomatic Expressions among the other contents of vocabulary courses.

Here, the informants were asked to express their views (satisfaction/dissatisfaction or others) on the status of idiomatic expressions in vocabulary course. Three options are provided: Yes, No, and to some extent.

**Table 3.** Teachers views on the status of idiomatic expressions in vocabulary courses

RESPONSES	TOTAL RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes (satisfaction)	10/ 50	20%
No (dissatisfaction)	35/50	70%
To some extent	5/50	10%

Table 3 exhibits the teachers' views on the status of idiomatic expressions and in the vocabulary courses they are dealing with. 70% of the informants expressed their

dissatisfaction with the position of idiomatic expressions in these courses. 20% of the teachers are satisfied with the status of these larger lexical units in the vocabulary courses. The remaining (10%) are content to some extent with the place of these multi-word lexical items among the other components of vocabulary courses.

Q-3 On the familiarity/non-familiarity of the teachers with the relevant literature of teaching of Idiomatic Expressions.

The respondents were asked to mention the recent literature on the teaching of idiomatic expressions they have come across.

**Table 4.** The familiarity or non-familiarity of the teachers with the relevant literature of teaching idiomatic expressions

BOOKS/REFERENCES/TEXTBOOKS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
-	0/50	0%
-	0/50	0%
-	0/50	0%

Table 4 shows the familiarity/non-familiarity of the teachers with the relevant literature of teaching / learning of idiomatic expressions. No teacher was able to mention a single book, reference, etc. This is a clear indication that the teachers themselves are ignorant of the up-to-date treatment of these vocabulary components.

Q-4 on the students' familiarity/non-familiarity with the 'term' Idiomatic Expressions.

It is a direct question focusing on the familiarity or non-familiarity of the students with the term 'idiomatic expressions'. Only two options 'Yes/No' are given.

**Table 5.** The students' familiarity or non-familiarity with the term idiomatic expression

RESPONSES	TOTAL RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	20/50	40%
No	30/50	60%

Table 5 points out whether students at the university level are familiar with the 'term' idiomatic expressions or not. The teachers' answer to this question reveals that 20 out of the 50 teachers (40%) believed that their students are familiar with these terms while most of them (30 teachers) that is 60% claimed that their learners are not familiar with it.

Q-5 On what portion of the students can define 'Idiomatic Expressions'

This question is to reconfirm the answers obtained in question 4; the teachers were asked to indicate the ability of the students to define these two components on a 5-scale grading measure. This ranges from all to none.

**Table 6.** On what portion of the students can define idiomatic expressions

OPTIONS GIVEN / SCALE	TOTAL RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
- All of them can	1/*20	5%
- Some of them can	3/20	15 %
- Only a few can	14/ 20	70%
- None can	2/20	10 %
- Not sure	0/20	0%
Total	20	100%

\* 20 who answered 'Yes' in Q 4.

Table 6 specifies the proportion of the students who can define idiomatic expressions. It is important to recall that in the previous question (Q.4), 20 teachers (40%) responded by saying that their students are familiar with the terms idiomatic expressions. A breakdown of the answers of the teachers who claimed that their students are conversant with these terms is as follows:

1 out of 20 respondents (5%) stated that all of their learners can define idiomatic expressions that is only 5% of the teachers. 15% of them said that some of them can. 14 respondents which is almost 3/4<sup>th</sup> of them (70%) mentioned that only a few can. 2 out of 20 teachers declared that none of their students can. And, finally none of the informants mentioned that they are not certain about what proportion of their students can define these multi-word lexical units.

#### Q-6 On the Students' attitude towards Idiomatic Expressions: (Use/avoidance).

This question targets detecting the attitude of the learners towards idiomatic expressions in terms of use /avoidance. Two specific alternatives are given and the informants have to decide whether the learners are inclined to use idiomatic expressions in their production (writing and speech) or they avoid using them.

**Table 7.** The students' attitudes' towards idiomatic expressions

OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES	TOTAL RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
- Use idiomatic expressions in their writing and speech.	15/50	30%
- Use some avoidance strategy	35/50	70%

Table 7 tells us about the students' attitude towards idiomatic expressions. It shows that 70% of the subjects steer clear away from these idiomatic expressions and try to express the meaning in a different way (avoidance strategy) while 30 % of them claimed that they preferred to use them in their writing and speech. This is a clear indication that the majority of the students preferred using alternatives to these idiomatic expressions.

#### Q-7 On some difficulties in learning Idiomatic Expressions

In this part of question 8, the teachers are given a list of some possible problems and difficulties that are most likely to be faced by their students while learning idiomatic expressions.

**Table 8.** Some problems facing the students in learning idiomatic expressions

PROBLEMS / DIFFICULTIES GIVEN	TOTAL RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
- The use of the wrong particle and/or preposition with the verb.	46/50	92%
- Not being able to understand the multi-word verbs which are also idioms.	40/50	80%
- Generally, problems arising from the special nature of the idioms: their difficult structural patterns, their special stress patters and so on.	41/50	82%

Table 8 focuses on three specific problems facing the students in learning idiomatic expressions.

The teachers' opinions regarding these obstacles are as follows:

Majority(92%) of teachers opted for 'The use of the wrong particle and /or preposition with the verb: a collocation problem'. 40 out of 50 of them that is 80% checked the 2nd alternative in the list: 'Not being able to understand the multi-word verbs which are also idioms'. 82% voted for the option: 'Generally, problems arising from the special nature of idioms: their difficult structural patterns (e.g. with pronouns), their special stress patterns and so on.

Note: Since the respondents could check more than one option in this question, the percentage exceeds 100.

Q-8 On other problems and difficulties, listed by the teachers, from their experience, that students encounter while learning Idiomatic Expressions.

This question leaves room for teachers to list some of the problems and difficulties, other than those provided in the first portion of the same question, met by their students while learning idiomatic expressions. The sources of these problems/difficulties are the teachers' observation and their own experience.

**Table 9.** Other problems the students encounter while learning idiomatic expressions

PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES	TOTAL RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
a. The scarcity of IEX in the L1 of the students.	20	40%
b. Lack of students' awareness of the IEX importance in EFL learning: A problem of awareness and attention.	32	64%
c. Necessary skills, strategies etc., for guessing the meanings of new lexical items.	26	52%
d. The limited exposure to the target language and, hence, practice.	39	78%

Table 9 lists some of the problems/difficulties provided by the teachers on the basis of their teaching experience while learning IEX:

- The majority of the teachers were of the opinion that the problems of the Iranian universities is the limited exposure to the target language in Iran.
- Lack of the learners' awareness of the IEX importance in EFL learning is what 64% of the teachers believe is the problem.
- More than half of the teachers believe that the necessary strategies/ skills for guessing the meanings of unknown lexical Items is problematic for learning IEX.
- Finally 40% of them looked at the scarcity of IEX in the L1 of the students as a problem.

Q-9 On the Importance of Idiomatic Expressions in everyday English language use.

**Table 10.** The importance of idiomatic expressions in every day English use

OPTIONS	TOTAL RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	47 / 50	94%
No	3 / 50	6%

Table 10 clarifies the respondents evaluation of IEX i.e. Are they important in everyday English use? In their responses to this question, majority of the teachers agreed that IEX are important in everyday English use. Only 6% said that they are not important.

Q-10 On the claim that Idiomatic Expressions are one of the most difficult areas of English for the foreign learners.

In this question, the informants are asked to answer to the statement that 'idiomatic expressions are one of the most difficult areas of English for the foreign learners'. In other words, this question considers the difficulty or ease of idiomatic expressions for the foreign learners.

**Table 11.** The difficulty of idiomatic expressions for foreign learners

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	45 / 50	90%
No	5 / 50	10%

Table 11 provides the teachers' views on the claim that IEX are 'one of the most difficult areas of English for the foreign learner'. 90% of the respondents are for this belief while the rest (10%) are against.

Q-11 on the Students' Perception, Definition, etc of Idiomatic Expressions: confusing Idiomatic Expressions with Proverbs and Colloquial language.

The present question tried to tackle a general problem/difficulty (regarding the concepts and definitions of idiomatic expressions) that faced the students when dealing with these expressions. In short, the teachers are asked to indicate whether their students associate/confuse idiomatic expressions with proverbs and colloquial languages since



there is a misconception that idiomatic expressions are proverbs and only are in colloquial language.

**Table 12.** Students' perception, definition, etc. of idiomatic expressions

OPTIONS	TOTAL RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	35/ 50	70%
No	0/ 50	0%
More or less	15/ 50	30%

Table 12 presents the teachers' views on the students' definition and perception of IEX, i.e. it explains whether the learners confuse IEX, for example, with proverbs and colloquial language or not. 70% of the teachers believed that their learners confuse IEX with proverbs and colloquial language. Surprisingly none of them claimed that their students do not mix up these multi-word lexical items with proverbs and colloquial language. 30% of the informants responded by saying that their students relatively associate IEX with sayings and special varieties of language.

Q-12 On the best Way to teach/learn Idiomatic Expressions: Classroom Methodology and Procedures / Techniques etc.

This question aimed at getting the teachers opinions on the direct classroom methodology, learning styles/strategies and teaching techniques required in teaching and learning of idiomatic expressions.

The informants are asked whether they agree or not that the best way to teach / learn idiomatic expressions "is to treat them as new items and try to encourage the learners to guess their meaning from situation and context". They have to indicate their opinions by selecting one of the following alternatives: Yes, No and To some extent.

**Table 13.** The best way to teach and learn idiomatic expressions

OPTIONS	TOTAL RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	40/ 50	80%
No	0 / 50	0%
To some extent	10 / 50	20%

Table 13 summarizes the teachers' reactions on the suggestion that the best way to teach/learn IEX is to treat them as new items and try to encourage the learners to guess their meaning from context and situation. 80% of the respondents agreed to the classroom methodology, procedures and techniques proposed in the above statement while none of them disagreed. Only 10% said to some extent.

Q-13. (Statements a, b, c and d) On the Usefulness/Importance of Idiomatic Expressions.

Regarding the first four statements in this question, teachers are asked to comment on the utility and importance of idiomatic expressions. These items are ranked on a Likert

Scale ranging from 1(Strongly disagree), 2(disagree), 3(not sure/don't know), 4(agree) to 5(strongly agree).

**Table 14.** Statements A-D: The usefulness of idiomatic expressions

Statements	SDAG		DAG		NS/DK.		AG		SAG	
a. The possibility of using the same language item with different particles or prepositions or words that have already established meaning to form/express new meanings make the processes of information retrieval, recalling the lexical items at will, etc., much easier.	0	0%	0	0%	10	20%	30	60%	10	20%
b. There is a frequent demand from those possessing the knowledge of EFL that they must have command of IEX in real life situations.	0	0%	3	6%	0	0%	35	70%	12	24%
c. It is important to change the view which is based on the hypothesis that mastering of IEX could be restricted only to the native speakers.	0	0%	2	4%	0	0%	30	60%	18	36%
d. The non-native learners often show a tendency to avoid using vocabulary in an idiomatic way.	0	0%	0	0%	5	10%	35	70%	10	20%
Key: SDAG=Strongly Disagree, DAG=Disagree, NS/DK=Not Sure/Don't Know, AG=Agree, TR=Total Responses SAG=Strongly Agree										

Table 14 (statements a-d) presents the teachers' comments on a set of statements regarding the usefulness or importance of IEX.

The responses to statement 'a' are as follows:

30 teachers (60%) agreed to the utility of making use of items already established in language to express new meanings. The same reaction (agree) was made by all the respondents for statements. The majority (70%) agreed that non-native learners often show a tendency to avoid using vocabulary in an idiomatic way and that they must have command of IEX in real life situations. 20% for 'a' and 10% for 'd' are either ignorant (don't know) of the learners strategy or are uncertain about it (not sure).

**Table 15.** Classroom methodology, teaching/ procedures

Statements	SDAG		DAG		NS/DK.		AG		SAG	
e. If a teacher/lecturer decides to cover the meaning aspect of phrasal verbs systematically the best strategy is probably to concentrate on the particle.	0	0%	5	10%	5	10%	40	80%	0	0%
f. Grouping idioms together, and teaching them together simply because of some words they have in common (e.g. let the cat out of the bag, rain cats and dogs; lead a dog's life etc).	0	0%	20	40%	5	10%	25	50%	0	0%
g. Treating idioms as unusually long words and to teach them as one would teach any new word: that is, as they occur in a meaningful context.	0	0%	10	20%	0	0%	35	70%	5	10%

h. IEX are some of those areas of language where a well-motivated learner can make giant strides on his own if he is given the right kind of material(s) to work on (including vocabulary development exercises).	0	0%	0	0%	5	10%	25	50%	20	40%
i. In learning / teaching of IEX the active involvement in the learning process can be of much greater benefit to the student than simple memorization.	0	0%	5	10%	0	0%	15	30%	30	60%

Q-13 (Statements e, f, g, h, and i) on the Teachability and learnability of Idiomatic Expressions.

Statements e, f, g, h and i of this question addressed some issues related, more or less, to classroom methodology, learning styles/strategies and teaching techniques/procedures. Table 15 (Statements e - i) shows the teachers' reaction towards the statements dealing with classroom methodology, techniques/ strategies, procedures etc.:

Statement 'e': 80% of the teachers agreed with the statement that 'If a teacher/lecturer decides to cover the meaning aspect of phrasal verbs systematically the best strategy is probably to concentrate on the particle'. 10% disagreed and 10% are not sure/don't know. Since particle(s) have meanings to contribute to the whole verbal constructions, the proposed strategy is welcomed by the majority of the teachers.

50% of the teachers are for the grouping of IEX and teaching them together simply because of some words they have in common: 40% of them disagreed while the rest (10%) don't know.

Statement 'g': The majority of the respondents (70%) agreed to treat idioms (IEX) as unusually long words and teach them as one would teach any new word: that is, as they occur in a meaningful context. 10% strongly agreed and only 20%disagreed.

Statement 'h': This statement, which focused on the affective domain (motivation) as well as materials (vocabulary enhancement activities), was strongly recommended by 40% percent of the informants. 50% agreed on it and only 10% are not sure.

Statement 'i':This statement concerned with the role of the learner in the learning process: the active engagement and participation in solving problems, carrying out tasks etc. 60% of the informants strongly agreed and 30% agreed on the positive and active involvement of the learner in contrast with the passive memorization of lists of lexical units, grammatical patterns etc. only 10% disagreed.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To answer the first research question, the survey results reveal that there are different problems regarding teaching and learning of idiomatic expressions. Sometimes the students can't differentiate between idioms and multi-word verbs, and if they do they are

not aware of their usages. To make the matters worse, some of them are not even familiar with the term idiomatic expressions. Another problem is awareness problem which is related to the students' awareness of importance of knowing idiomatic expressions and the usefulness of these lexical elements. Majority of the students use the wrong particle and/or preposition with the verbs. Neither they are able to understand the phrasal verbs which are at the same time IEX. Also the students' knowledge of the skills of guessing the meaning from context is poor. The last point is that the teachers claimed that their learners confused idioms with proverbs and colloquial English. They have definition or perception problems.

The second research question deals with the causes of these problems. Some of the problems arise from the special nature of idioms: their difficult structural patterns and the special stress patterns associated with idioms. Another cause is the little weightage given to idioms and courses related to them in the university. Actually, in the English syllabuses used in Iranian Universities, the position of the idiomatic expressions is marginal. The exposure to the target language and hence practice is limited. Even when they have the opportunity to be exposed to language and use idiomatic expressions, they prefer to cling to avoidance technique in order not to use idiomatic expressions in their speech and writing. As it was seen in the survey results, surprisingly none of the teachers mentioned a single book or reference that shows they are either completely unaware of the related literature or reluctant to answer this open-ended question in the questionnaire. Also the students' knowledge of skills of guessing the meaning from context is poor; the respondents' responses reveal that their students can understand IEX if they are presented in meaningful contexts.

These mentioned above are the problems related to learning and teaching idiomatic expressions in foreign language and the causes of these problems. The information gained provide strong support for any teaching methodology and material that advocates more structured attention to idioms. Also the majority of the teachers agreed with the statements mentioning the usefulness and importance of these multi-word lexical items, they recommended the suggested role of the learner as an active participant in the learning/teaching process.

Now that the Achilles' heels in the educational system are known, helpful insights can be given in order to solve these problems. How specific instructional interventions in the context of meaningful authentic use are to be used in order to facilitate idiomatic competence most successfully in the second and foreign language classroom remains the subject of future investigations

## **IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

There is a general dissatisfaction about the status of vocabulary courses among the other components of the English syllabuses used in the universities in Iran. That is, vocabulary is felt to be neglected area in the syllabuses. There is also a general paucity of books, references, textbooks, workbooks etc. in this regard. Another thing is that the learners

either don't want to use idioms in their writing and speech or don't know how to use them. Thus even after being learned they would easily be forgotten because of not being used; the problem is doubled when there is limited exposure to English. So a survey like this was needed to be carried out to see where the problems are. Once the reason for these problems are known, steps would be taken in the educational system to remove these problems, so the results of this study may specifically be worthy of attention for material developers and FL teachers.

Further research can be carried out to examine the possible role of books, teachers' knowledge and syllabuses. Other surveys can also be done, but this time providing the learners with some questionnaires to see where the problems are in their views. Then using the results of the two researches can lead material developers and foreign language teachers to carry out some changes not only in the educational systems and books but also in their teaching methods and syllabuses.

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