



Semantic Relativism in Terminological Expressions in French and Yoruba Languages: Idiomatic Expressions

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Abstract. Idiomatic expression, which is the object of our focus in this study is a powerful educational tool in any foreign language learning. It serves as an additional instrument for learners in obtaining L2 competence, acquiring conversational fluency skills and understanding the culture of the target language. It is quite obvious that, idiomatic expressions could have similar meaning in different languages but the identification of the equivalence is the problem except one has come across it before. The objective of this paper is therefore, to find out whether the students were aware or not of their French equivalents with similar meanings. It is discovered that, semantically, this type of terminology can be used to describe similar realities in the two languages with different lexical or linguistic variations. The study is both qualitative and quantitative one, where fifty (50) students were asked to pick from the options provided, the French equivalents of their Yoruba counterparts. The idiomatic expressions concerned are fifteen in number, taken from authentic textbooks: *Yoruba Idioms* by M.A. Fabunmi and *Asayan Akanlo Ede Yoruba* by Ademola Olopade. The paper hinges on Conceptual Metaphor Theory be idiomatic expressions are metaphorically motivated. Findings revealed that there are potential problems encountered by students in their bid to get or guess the correct French equivalent of Yoruba idiomatic expressions. And these could be due to their background in the French language, their non-familiarity with the idiomatic expressions, poor knowledge of the French idiomatic expressions, the degree of the idiomacity, etc

1. Introduction

Idioms in any given language belong to a group of word called 'fixed collocation'. According to JIMOH R. (2009:168) a fixed collocation refers to "a group of words which is often used together to form a natural sounding combination". In other words, such

arrangement is fixed because it is not possible for anyone to alter the arrangement, to delete any lexical item from it, or include 'external' lexical item into it. It is therefore, a phrase or an expression which means something different from the meaning of the lexical items that make up the phrase or the expression. Idiomatic expression is a powerful educational tool in any foreign language learning. It serves as an additional instrument for learners in obtaining L2 competence and awareness in acquiring conversational fluency skills and understanding the culture of the target language.

Being one of the most important aspects of all languages, idiomatic expressions are frequently used in a variety of situations, from friendly conversations and business meetings to more formal and written contexts. Our interest in this write up is to present idiomatic expressions used in Yoruba and French languages to describe similar situations or realities. But in the first place, we shall be considering the following: theoretical framework and literature, material and method, results (data presentation and analyses), discussion of findings and conclusion.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to verify if Yoruba speakers learning French in Adeyemi Federal University of Education are aware of the fact that, there are some Yoruba idiomatic expressions that are semantically related to their counterpart in French.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. French Language

According to S. Ade-Ojo (2002, p.1) opines that, the French language, as a distinct language, different from any other language and first used in any official

document in AD 842, is one of the leading languages of the world. French was fully established as the national language of France in the 20th century. The RealFrench.net accessed 26th August 2016, affirms that from around the time of the Louis XIV to the beginning of the 20th century, French was very much viewed as the language of international communities within European and European-influenced countries. This situation probably arose out of a number of factors including the consistent political power that France enjoyed during this time, its geographical position at the heart of Europe, its strong historical relations with all the major Western nations, its immense cultural prestige, both in terms of the arts and in terms of “cultured living” (food, wine, fashion, furniture, etc) aspects that were important to the diplomatic set. It was also established by the RealFrench.net website that French language was adopted as official language of France in 1539 (through the special linguistic decree referred to as Villers-Cotterêts, passed by François I^{er}).

France is of course not the only country in the world where French is spoken. From the RealFrench.net website it was discovered that, there are four other countries in Europe in which French has shared official status: Belgium, Switzerland, Luxemburg and Italy. There is in fact a part of the United Kingdom where French has co-official status-the Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey and Sark), known in French as Iles Anglo-Normandes. These were part of the Duchy of Normandy prior to the 1066 invasion, and were consequently French Speaking.

There is a large number of French Speakers outside of Europe. Based on the information gathered from the RealFrench.net website, the first wave of colonial expansion lasted from the early 1600s to the mid 1700s and involved the colonization of parts of Africa, Middle and Far East. The result of this is that there are now more than 112 million people who count French as their second language, another 60 million people use French as an occasional language, serving to rank French ninth in terms of language use.

The RealFrench.net website also submits that, of the nearly 50 million French Speakers outside of Europe, the greatest proportion is to be found in Central and West Africa where French is in many cases the official language. The highest concentration of French speakers are to be found in Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) although many speakers are also to be found in countries such as Benin, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Senegal, Zaïre, Togo, Congo, Burkina Faso and Mali. In the Indian Ocean there are

significant numbers of French speakers in Madagascar, Mauritius and the Réunion (which is a Département d’Outre Mer or DOM, meaning that it is administered like a metropolitan department).

It must also be mentioned that French belongs to the enviable Club of 12 of the world’s 5440 languages that are spoken by more than 100million International organisations, including the United Nations (UN) and its agencies, in which the knowledge of French is a sine qua non for employment and in which French plays the role of a most indispensable medium of communication for official transactions. It is also a fact that more than a third of the delegates of all the members of United Nations (UN) at the General Assembly are French speaking. Moreover, French is one of the working languages in many international organisations, including: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), African Union (AU), Amnesty International (AI), Médecines Sans Frontiers (doctors without border), World Trade Organisation etc. It is together with English and Arabic, one of the languages of the Islamic Conference as well as the Arab League.

2.2. Yorùbá Language

Yorùbá belongs to the Defoid group of languages, a sub group of Benue Congo languages. (H.B.C. Capo 1989, p.275). It is spoken principally in the South-Western part of Nigeria, especially in Òyó, Ògùn, Òndó and Òsun states. Yorùbá is also spoken in some parts of Kwara, Kogí and Edo states. It is equally spoken by a large number of speakers in the south - western part of the Benin Republic, while in Togo; it is also natively spoken by certain sections of the population (S.O. Oyetade 1998, p.17).

S. O Oyetade (1998, p.17) quoting A. Adetugbo (1967, p. 9) divided Yorùbá dialects into three major dialect areas according to linguistic and ethno-historical bases. These are first, North-Western Yorùbá (NWY) comprising Òyó, Òsun, Ìbàdàn and the northern part of Ègbá. Second, South- Eastern Yorùbá (SEY) with Òndó, Òwò, Ìjèbú and dialects spoken in and around Òkìtìpupa (i.e. Ìkálè, Ìlàje and Ìjó-Àpòì as representatives). The third dialect group is Central Yorùbá (CY) and it is made up of Ifè, Ìjèsà and Èkìtì. Each dialect grouping has particular features which distinguish it from others. In addition, there are features with restricted distribution which delimit what can be termed minor sub-divisions within the major dialect area:

2.2.1 Classification of Yorùbá Dialect According to A. Adetugbo (1967, p.3).

Table1: Three geographical zones of Yoruba

North-Western Yorùbá (NWX)	South-Eastern Yorùbá (SEY)	Yorùbá Central (YC)
Òyó	Òndó	Ifè
Òsun	Òwò	Ijèsá
Ibádán	Ijèbú	Èkitì
Northern part of Egba	Okítipupa (ikálé, Ilàje, Ijò-Àpói	

2.2.2 Classification of Yorùbá Dialect According to Akinkugbe

S. Oyetade (1998, p18) provides additional classification of Yorùbá dialects as seen in the table below. For example, the Yorùbá dialects speaking in Kabba Province of Kwara State (now Kogi State) the North-East of the Yorùbá speaking area have been accordingly labeled North-Eastern Yorùbá (NEY). The dialects can be clearly seen in the table provided below:

Table 2: The North-Eastern Dialect of Yorùbá

North-Eastern Yorùbá
Yàgbà
Gbedè
Ijumú
Ikiri

2.2.3 Classification of Yoruba Dialect spoken in Benin and Togo.

Dialect of Yorùbá spoken outside Nigeria in Benin and Togo have also been classified into a group and labelled South-Western Yorùbá (SWY). The Yorùbá dialects in Benin according to Oyetade (ibid) quoting (Igue and Yai 1973, Yai 1976; 1974) can be seen in the table below:

Table 3: The South-Western Dialect of Yorùbá Language

South-Western Yorùbá
Kétu
Šábe
Iša
Idasa
Sákété
Pòbé
Ifè

This table enables us to see that the dialectes of Yorùbá is equally spoken in Benin and Togo. In spite of those considerable dialectal differences, there is a standard form which is the medium of communication outside

individual dialectal groups. It is the medium for all spoken and written official transactions in Nigeria. This standard form bears some resemblance to Oyo variety spoken in Nigeria, but it is not entirely co-extensive with it. There are features of other dialects of Yorùbá that can be identified in this standard form. In Benin Republic the standard written and spoken Yorùbá is also very similar to the one in Nigeria and it is more or less the Yorùbá dialect spoken in Port-Novo, the administrative headquarters of Benin. In Nigeria, Yorùbá speakers are designated by the name Yorùbá, but, on the contrary, in Benin and Togo regard themselves as one as they lay claim to a common ancestry (S. Oyetade 1998, p.18).

2.3 Idiomatic Expression

Despite numerous linguistic works that have been written on idioms, there is no general agreement on the exact definition of idiomatic expression. But for the sake of this study, we shall just consider the definition given by *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics* (2008, p. 236) as *a term used in grammar and lexicology to refer to a sequence of words which is semantically and often syntactically restricted, so that they function as a single unit. From a semantic viewpoint, the meanings of the individual words cannot be summed to produce the meaning of the idiomatic expression as a whole. From a syntactic viewpoint, the words often do not permit the usual variability they display in other contexts, e.g. it's raining cats and dogs does not permit variability, it's raining a cat and a dog/dogs and cats.* Dictionaries provide rather general and brief descriptions of idiomatic expressions.

2.3.1. Classification of Idiomatic Expressions

Researchers interested in idiomatic expressions have tried to classify them according to different criteria. The main feature that differentiates between the different kinds of idiomatic expressions is the degree of idiomacity that an idiomatic expression carries. Idiomatic expressions are categorized in a continuum from transparent to opaque called “the spectrum of idiomacity” (L. Claudia, 2006, p.5).

Transparent Idioms

These idiomatic expressions have a very close meaning to that of the literal one. Hence, transparent idiomatic expressions are usually not difficult to understand and translate, because their meaning can be easily inferred from the meanings of their constituents, both components have a direct meaning but the combination acquires figurative sense. Fernando

(1996:35) phraseological combinations are commonly included in this category. E.g. to see the light (to understand) and to see red (to be annoyed, angry).

Semi Transparent Idiomatic Expressions

The idiomatic expression usually carries a metaphorical sense that could not be known only through common use. i.e., the meaning of its parts has a little role to play in understanding the entire meaning.

E.g. Break the ice = relieve the tension.

Semi Opaque Idiomatic Expressions

This type refers to those idiomatic expressions in which the figurative meaning is not joined to that of the constituents' words of the expression. Thus, the expression is separated into two parts; a part with a literal meaning, and another part with a figurative sense. Phraseological unities belong to this category.

e.g. To know the ropes = to know how a particular job should be done.

To pass the buck = to pass responsibility

Opaque Idiomatic Expressions

Opaque idiomatic expressions are the most difficult type of idiomatic expressions, because the meaning of the idiomatic expression is never that of the sum of the literal meanings of its parts. So, it would be impossible to infer the actual meaning of the idiomatic expressions from the meaning of its components, because of the presence of items having cultural references. These culture-specific items have a great influence on the comprehensibility of idiomatic expressions.

e.g. To burn one's boat = to make retreat impossible

Kick the bucket = to die

Spill the beans = reveal a secret.

2.3.2 Characteristics of Idiomatic Expressions

L. Claudia (2006, p.5) identifies certain features which are essential in the recognition of idiomatic expressions. Some of these features are:

Alteration of Grammatical Rules

The idiomatic expression is not always grammatical, but it is established, accepted and used by native speakers of the language with a fixed structures and meaning. For example:

It's ages since we met (singular with a plural nouns)

Conventional Phrases

Idiomatic expressions are special expressions which are almost known and agreed by all the members of a particular community.

E.g. How are you doing? (Expression used to ask someone about his health).

Once in a blue moon (rarely, infrequently).

Alteration of Word Order

Idiomatic expressions in English, usually, do not respect the English word order.

E.g. It may be well ahead of time (normal word order)

It may well be ahead of time (probably): idiomatic expression.

Figurativeness

The main feature that characterizes idiomatic expressions is that the words are used metaphorically. Therefore, the surface has a little role to play in understanding the meaning of the whole expression. For example, in 'to bury the hatchet', meaning "to become friendly again after a disagreement", the meanings of the words "to bury" and "the hatchet" are different from the meaning of the whole expression.

Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs are the most common type of idioms in English. Many of them carry idiomatic meanings that cannot be inferred from the form, unless the phrase is already known.

E.g. After war began, the two countries broke off diplomatic relations (discontinue).

Most automobile companies bring out modals each year (to show or introduce).

In addition to all these features that are important in the recognition of idiomatic expression, M. Baker (1992, p. 63 and F. R Palmer 1997, p. 59) identify the grammatical and syntactic restrictions of idioms. For them, a speaker or a writer cannot normally do any of the following with an idiom:

Addition: a large number of idioms contain a verb and a noun, but although the verb may be placed in the past tense, the number of the noun can never be changed. For instance, there can be "kick/kicked the bucket, but not *kick the buckets, put on good face but not *put on good faces. Adding any word to an idiomatic expression would alter its meaning, or remove its idiomatic sense. Thus, adding the adverb 'very' to the

adjective ‘red’ in ‘red herring’ (very red herring) affects the figurativeness of its meaning completely.

Deletion: Deleting the adjective ‘sweet’ and the article ‘the’ from the expressions have a sweet tooth and spill the beans would change totally their meanings. Hence (* have a tooth and *spill beans) have no idiomatic sense.

Substitution: Idiomatic expressions accept no replacement of words even if those words are synonyms. For example, “the long and short of it” means the basic facts of a situation. The adjective ‘long’ cannot be substituted by another adjective, like tall; despite they have nearly the same meaning.

Modification: Any change in the grammatical structure of an idiomatic expression leads to the destruction of the idiom’s meaning. For instance, the expression (*stock and barrel lock) is no more idiomatic because of the altered order of the items in the expression ‘lock, stock and barrel’ completely.

2.3.3. Importance of Idiomatic Expressions

French and Yorùbá languages belong to different language families (Indo-European and Benue-Congo family), despite this, they perform similar functions in the two languages, i.e they add beauty to any conversation that employ them etc. Knowledge of idiomatic expressions will ensure fluency in communication, comprehension of texts and will develop verbal and written communication skills (S. Irujo, 1986, p.287-304). As a part of national cultural inheritance, idioms will contribute to the development of cultural and intercultural knowledge and enhance learners’ awareness of the ways native speakers conceptualize the surrounding world and their experiences (C.A.Yorio 1980, p.433-422; Y. Yano 1998, p. 129-137). Many idiomatic expressions contain metaphors in their structure; familiarity with those expressions will provide an insight into the way and the nature of thinking of native speakers (S. Abdramanova 2012, p.5). As a part of Lexis, “*idiomatic expressions can serve as additional means of learning vocabulary, practicing grammar and improving pronunciation skills*”. Thus, the importance of idioms should be accordingly estimated as far as they serve as an additional instrument for learners in obtaining L2 competence and awareness, in acquiring conversational fluency skills, and understanding the culture of the target languages.

2.4 Yoruba Idiomatic expressions

Yorùbá language is very rich in idiomatic expressions and lends itself easily in the hands of those who understand the language. Idiomatic expressions occupy a unique place in friendly, family and societal conversations, Their importance cannot be over emphasized because they add beauty to the speech that employ them, give them more knowledge and wisdom, make words better and clearer etc. Some examples of idiomatic expressions in Yoruba are:

Fera ku= to be pregnant
Rugi oyin= to be in trouble
Ta teru nipa= to die

2.5. French Idiomatic expressions

French is a highly idiomatic language, relying on many culturally-specific phrases to communicate meaning. French idioms are quirky expressions that can leave non-French speakers baffled. Although, every language makes use of idioms, but the French language is particularly rich and inventive with idioms.

Some examples of French idioms are:

Avoir du sang bleu= somebody from a noble family
Avoir la main haute= to have upper hand
Avoir un poil dans la main= to be lazy
Rire jaune= False laugh
Etre dans le noir = to be ignorant
Donner carte blanche= to give freedom to somebody

2.6. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

Metaphor is common to all languages and cultures. It plays an important role in everyday life and is grounded in culture. Metaphorical expressions have penetrated the various aspects of our lives including thought and action. Metaphorical language is an indispensable part of human life, involving language, thought and action. Writers and speakers use metaphor to express abstract, difficult-to-talk-about concepts in term of concrete entities which are easier to understand (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:99). Metaphorical expressions (MEs, hereafter) are the cream of a language. They reflect the relationship between language and culture. Metaphoricity is the main feature of all human languages. In fact, a language or any form of language, without metaphorical traits is non- existent (Goalty, 1997 in Abass & Ghafel 2011:211). It is not confined to language. It runs through all veins of man’s everyday life, including language, thought and action.

Tacking the Etymology Online Dictionary as our trusted source as regards, the word “metaphor” is

derived from the Greek *metaphora*, which means ‘transfer’, the composite *meta*, which means ‘transfer, carry over’, and *pherin* which is translated in English as to ‘bear’, or to ‘carry’.

As proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980:10), Conceptual Metaphor Theory suggests that human thought processes are largely metaphorical, and human conceptual system is structured and defined in a metaphorical way. In other words, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory takes the basic assumptions of the Lakoffian School on “experiential realism”, which hypothesizes that metaphor is not just an aspect of language, but constitutes a primary part of human cognition (Gibbs, 1994; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Sweetser, 1990) in Njoroge (2015: 59). There is an intermediate level “Cognition” between language and the world (Lakoff, 1987) in (ibid).

In George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s work, *Metaphors we live BY* (1980: 15), we see how everyday language is filled with metaphors we may not always notice. For example: “*argument is war*”. This metaphors is reflected in our everyday language by a wide variety of expressions for instance, we do hear people say:

Your claims are indefensible
He attacked every weak point in my argument
His criticism were right on target
I demolished his argument
I’ve never won an argument with you
If you use that strategy, he’ll wipe you out,
He shot down all on my arguments etc.

It is important to see that we don’t just talk about arguments in terms of war. We can actually win or lose arguments. We see the person we are arguing with as an opponent; we attack his positions and we defend our own. We gain and lose ground. We plan and use strategies. If we find a position indefensible, we can abandon it and take a new line of attack. Many of the things we do in arguing are partially structured by the concept of war. Though there is no physical battle, there is a verbal battle, and the structure of an argument attack, defense, counter back, etc reflects this. It structures the actions we perform in arguing.

The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of things in terms of another. For instance, it is not that “arguments” talked about above, are a subspecies of war. Arguments and wars are different kinds of things – verbal discourse and armed conflicts, and the actions performed are different kinds of actions. But “argument” is partially structured, understood, performed, and talked about in ‘terms of war’. The concept is metaphorically structured, the activity is metaphorically structured,

and, consequently, the language is metaphorically structured.

In other way, we can use metaphorical linguistic expressions to study the nature of metaphorical nature of our activities. To get idea of how metaphorical expression in every – day language can give us insight into the metaphorical nature of the concepts that structure our everyday activities, let us consider this metaphorical concept time is money as it is reflected in contemporary English:

You’re wasting my time.
 I don’t have the time to give you.
 You need to budget your time.
 You don’t use your time profitably.
 I lost a lot of time when I got sick.
 Thank for your time etc.

Time in our culture is a valuable commodity; it is a limited resource that we use to accomplish our goals. Thus, we understand and experience time as the kind of thing that can be spent, wasted, budgeted, invested wisely or poorly, saved or squandered. Time is money, time is a limited resource and time is a valuable commodity is all metaphorical concepts. They are metaphorical since we are using our everyday experiences with money, limited resources and valuable commodities to conceptualize time. They are also structured systematically.

In short, as it has been said earlier, Conceptual Metaphor Theory indicates that human thought processes are largely metaphorical, and human conceptual system is structured and defined in a metaphorical way. Therefore, metaphor is defined as cross-domain mapping between source and target domain. A mapping is the systematic correspondence between constituent elements of the source and target domains. The target domain is an abstract domain while the source domain is a concrete concept of which one can have direct sensory experience. The relationship is in the form of ‘TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN’. They are stored together in the mind (Lan & McGregor 2009: 11-24). However, under different cultures, cultural considerations play a crucial part while conceptual mapping is carried out.

One of the relevances of Conceptual Metaphor Theory is that, it enables people uncover the systematicity in many concepts that were believed to be unstructured (Soriano, 2003: 107 – 122). Then, if the conceptual metaphor pervades the way we think, speak or act, then, it should also have some influence on the way we learn. This is because the Conceptual Metaphor Theory assumes that many motivated idiomatic expressions are based on conceptual metaphors (Li,

2010: 206 - 210). Similarly, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) posit that idiomatic expressions are not arbitrary and accidental strings of words, but are totally rooted in human thought. Metaphoricity is therefore, the main feature of all human languages. It is not confined to language, it runs through all veins of man's everyday life including language thought and action.

3. Material and Method

The study is a descriptive survey type which has to do with collection of descriptive data from Fifty (50) degree three Yorùbá speakers learning French in Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo,

Ondo State, Nigeria. Their ages range from 18 to 28 years and they were both males and females. The females were 35 in number while males were 15 in number and with this, the females dominated the population. The research tool was a questionnaire divided into two parts. The first part consisted of the biographic information of the students while the second part consisted of fifteen Yoruba idiomatic expressions non contextualized. The questionnaire was close ended type and the students were asked to pick from the options provided, the French idiomatic expressions that are similar in meaning to their Yoruba counterparts. The results were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

4. Results

This aspect presents the results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire finding out whether the students were aware and able to get the French equivalence of the 15 Yoruba idiomatic expressions concerned

Table 4: This table shows the performance of 50 students that participated in the exercise.

Yoruba idiomatic expressions	Options provided in French	Correct answers	No / % of correct answers	No / % of wrong answers	Meaning of the idioms in the two languages.
1) Bá ẹ̀sẹ̀ sọ̀rọ̀	a) Parler aux jambes b) Prendre ses jambes à son cou	Prendre ses jambes à son cou	5 (10%)	45 (90%).	To run away
2) Fi ìdí rẹ̀mì	a) Faire chou blanc b) Tomber dans l'eau	Faire chou blanc	8 (16%)	42 (84%)	To fail in one's undertaking
3) Tẹ́rí gbaşọ	a) Tomber dans l'eau b) Casser sa pipe	Casser sa pipe	4 (8%)	46 (92%)	To die
4) Fara ya	a) Casser sa pipe b) Voir rouge	Voir rouge	13 (26%)	37 (74%)	Extremely angry
5) Lawo	a) Avoir le cœur sur la main. b) Casser sa pipe	Avoir le cœur sur la main.	3 (6%)	47 (94%)	To be generous
6) B́akan-náà ni omọ şe orí	a).Bonnet blanc et blanc bonnet b). Avoir le cœur sur la main.	Bonnet blanc et blanc bonnet	1 (2%)	49 (98%)	To be similar
7). Tẹ̀ oká ní irù mólẹ̀	a).Tirer le diable par la queue a). Avoir le cœur sur la main.	Tirer le diable par la queue	0 (0%)	50 (100%)	To be in trouble or difficulty
8) Wú òkú òlẹ̀.	a). Tomber des cadavres b).Tomber des halberdes	Tomber des halberdes	3 (6%)	47 (94%)	A heavy downpour
9). Wo tiká tẹ̀gbin	a). Parler son cœur. b). Faire un oeil noir	Faire un oeil noir	5(10%)	45 (90%)	A disapproval look
10). Tú kẹ̀ké ọ̀rọ̀	a).Parler son cœur b). Faire un oeil noir	Parler son cœur.	5 (10%)	45 (90%)	to speak freely with sincerity
11). Rẹ̀rìn iyàngì	a).Rire jaune b). Rire bien	Rire jaune	0(0%)	50 (100%)	A fake laugh
12). Sojú abẹ̀ ní ikó	a).Appeler un chat un chat b). Tirer le diable par le queue	Appeler un chat un chat	0 (0%)	50 (100%)	Say it like it is,
13). Fi òlù lù	Donner le feu	Donner le feu	0 (0%)	50 (100%)	To autorise, to approve

14). <i>Ídí domi</i>	a). Avoir une peur bleue b). Mettre la fesse dans l'eau	Avoir une peur bleue	5 (10%)	45 (90%)	Scared to death
15). <i>Wàjà</i>	a). Passer de vie à trépas b). Entrer le toit	Passer de vie à trépas	4 (8%)	46(92%)	To die

5. Discussion

From the above table, 5 (10%) of the population chose the right answer for the first idiomatic expression which is (*prendre ses jambes à son cou=ba ese soro*) while 45(90%) chose the wrong answer (*parler aux jambes*). As regards the second idiomatic expression, 8 (16%) picked the correct equivalence in French (*faire chou blanc = fi idi remi*) but 42 (84%) could not pick the right equivalence in French.

Casser sa pipe was the correct answer chose by 4 (8%) for the 3rd idiomatic expression (*teri gbaso*) while 46(92%) chose the wrong answer.

13 (26%) picked the suitable equivalence (*voir rouge = fa ara ya*) while 37 (74%) opted for the wrong answer for the fourth one.

Avoir le cœur sur la main was the correct option selected by 3 (6%) of the population but 47 (94%) selected the wrong option for the fifth idiomatic expression.

As touching the sixth idiomatic expression, 1 (2%) of the populstion subscribed to the right answer (*bonnet blanc et blanc bonnet*), while 49 (98%) opted for wrong answer and there wasn't any indecision.

Tirer le diable par la queue, the correct option for the seventh idiomatic expression was chosen by 0 (0%) student. This means no student got the right answer, .the total population got it wrong.

For the eight idiomatic expression, (6%) selected the right answer *tomber des hallebardes*, while 47 (94%) of the students opted for wrong answer.

As regards the ninth idiomatic expression, 5 (.10%) picked the right answer which was *faire un oeil noir*, while 45 (90%) selected the wrong answer.

As touching the tenth idiomatic expression, 5 (10%) responded positively by choosing *parler son coeur*, and 45 (90%) opted for incorrect answer.

For the eleventh idiomatic expression, nobody picked the right answer which is *rire jaune* 0 (0%), All of them could not subscribe to the right answer

Appeler un chat un chat was the correct idiomatic expression for item twelve. Nobody got it right. There was 100% failure.

Concerning the thirteenth idiomatic expression also, the right answer, *donner le feu vert*, was not picked by anybody. There was absolute failure.

For the fourteenth idiomatic expression, *avoir peur bleue* was opted for by 5 (10%), while the other wrong answer was picked by 45 (90%).

The last idiom, *passer de vie à trépas*, the correct idiomatic expression was picked by 4 (8%). while 46 (92%) picked the wrong option.

From the analysis given above, it was discovered that, out of the 15 idiomatic expressions examined, our students got 26% in just one of them which was no 4 (*voir rouge*), and there was a mass failure in the remaining 14 items. The reason for their average performance in number four could be due to the fact that, they are familiar with it, perhaps they have heard it before. The number of idiomatic expressions failed is more than the number of idiomatic expressions passed and the reasons for this failure are not farfetched. Their background in the French language, their non-familiarity with these idiomatic expressions, poor knowledge of the French idiomatic expressions and the degree of the idiomaticity. We equally discovered that, the students who were able to score some marks were those with francophone background.

The poor performance in the exercise also shows that, majority of the population are not aware of the French equivalence of the Yoruba idiomatic expressions exist.

The fifteen Yoruba idiomatic expressions examined in the study have semantic relativism in the two languages but they have lexical variations as we can see in the table.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper discussed idiomatic expressions as one of the terminological phrases that are very important in all languages due to their functions. It is established that, we could have similar idiomatic expressions that describe similar situations and realities in the two

languages. Apart from this, this phraseology shares the same characteristics across languages. Since the French language is a foreign language in Nigeria, the ability to understand and use groups of words that may be used together in an ungrammatical and semantically irregular manner is very important. Idioms are usually left out of courses of study to second language learners and since idiomatic expressions have been widely accepted as crucial elements in language proficiency, learners of a second language do need to be exposed to idioms so as to acquire them better for their second language comprehension and production in Nigeria. There should be a course on French idioms that will expose learners the more to French culture, and conventional phrases that will improve their vocabularies.

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