



## TEACHING ENGLISH IDIOMS AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of the present paper is to show some strategy for the teaching of idioms to learners of English foreign language. English idioms do not mean what they literally mean; however, mass media, textbooks and everyday language represent rich sources of idiomatic expressions. To overcome this difficulty, some strategies have been suggested; besides introducing English idioms in story contexts and with visuals, activities, such as group talk and role-play, can act as a key to increasing students' motivation and involvement in learning English idioms. However, emphasis is given to cultural substitution in which the meaning is given priority over the form in favour of preserving the cultural flavor of the target language.*

### DISCUSSION

A language is a living substance, which evolves under the influence of different factors. Being very flexible English language constantly enriches its vocabulary with the words invented by the language speakers, making it more colorful with new idiomatic expressions, and at times refills its stocks with the borrowings and neologisms. English just amazes by its extraordinary linguistic diversity.

English is one of the most idiomatic languages in the world, containing thousands of idiomatic expressions that are rife in everyday speech, the media and literature. English is a language with a vast idiomatic basis, which makes its learning very exciting and intriguing. The main function of idioms is to paraphrase what is going on, and what is being said.

**Idiom** is defined as an expression that does not mean what it literally says. The meaning idioms convey is non-compositional. It implies that you cannot understand the meaning of the whole phrase putting the meanings of each word together. If you look at the individual words, it may not even make sense grammatically. Idiom has the meaning only as a unit.

Professor Koonin defined idiom "as a stable combination of words with a fully or partially figurative meaning." This definition emphasizes two inherent and very important features of the idiomatic expressions. (2.p282)

Idioms have lexical and grammatical stability. It implies that they are fixed in their form, hence any substitutions and rearranging in their

structure can lead to complete loss of their primary meaning. Idiomatic expressions are integral units. It literally means that idioms possess indivisible completeness, so all the components are bound within one idiom.

The idioms have the important role in learning and teaching English language. Knowing idioms you can express your opinion fluently. Your ideas become colorfully with the help of idioms.

Teaching English idioms as a foreign language in Uzbek classes it required a good knowledge of idioms and methodology. You should give more interesting games and activities for involving pupil's attention. We are offering you some more activities for learning idioms.

The first activity is "Who knows idioms better". The goal of this game is to increase pupil's attention to learning idioms. Before beginning the activity the teacher shows the slides or cards with three kinds of sentences. Ex. a) *I often do my homework in the evening. Sometimes I'm sleepy and don't understand what I read*

b) *I decided to paint my room and I bought black, white and brown color paints. But I didn't know painting, and my friend advised me to paint with white color, because it is the symbol of peace*

c) *My friend has been suffering from a bad toothache for a long time, as he is afraid to go to the dentist*

After that, from the group two pupils goes to the blackboard and chooses from the cards on the table one card without preparation should find an idiom. *The devil is not so black as is painted*



Other pupils should find the idiom. Who will find the idiom first will take a score, which of the pupils gain a lot of scores will win. For example:

*Any possession that is useless, unwanted, or costs a lot of money – white elephant*

*Somebody who appears to be harmless but is really dangerous – wolf in sheep's clothing*

*A bleak, harsh, terrible existence without much happiness or freedom – dog's life*

The second activity is as following: group divided into two groups. Teacher writes one sentence on the blackboard and students should find an idiom and translate it, that student which translates the sentence correctly gets the one point. For example:

*I begged and cried to go to the party, but Dad said I was crying crocodile tears*

*Come quick! Your brother has gone bananas*  
*The project has finally been given the green light*

*Pamela suddenly turned white and fainted*

The third activity is intended for fastening idioms already known for the students. The student stands back to the blackboard. The teacher writes an idiom on the blackboard, and the students' tries to explain in English, what does that idiom mean.

For example: there is one idiom on the blackboard «to break the news». The student explains this sentence to their friend in this way: to make something known, to tell someone some important news. The student which stands on the blackboard should guess the meaning of idiom according to the description of the comrades: «to break the news» – янгиликларни айтмоқ. Here are the examples for this game.

(Apple of my eye, in the nutshell, buy a pig in a poke, red tape, as white as a sheet, he shakes like a leaf from cold, fly into a passion, monkey business, top banana).

The fourth activity is the student chooses a card with idiom and without preparation gives its description. Other students try to guess idiom under the description. The one, who will guess by first, receives point.

Here are the examples:

1) Something sudden, unexpected and shocking – bolt from the Blue

2) Right away, at once, without delay, willing any moment – at the Drop of Hat

3) To deal with a problem in a direct and confident way – take the bull by the horns

4) Used for emphasizing that something happens very rarely or hardly ever – once in a blue moon

5) To wear white clothes – be dressed in white

6) The last of a series of events that makes an already difficult situation intolerable – the last straw that broke the camel's back

7) To suspect that something is wrong – smell rat

The fifth activity is as following. The teacher prepares the list of common English proverbs. Put them on the board. Prepare slips of paper/cards bearing one proverb each. The teacher will need to explain at least some of the proverbs, since proverbs are often highly condensed, and sometimes the meaning may not be immediately clear, e.g. *The project has finally been given the green light*.

Students work in pairs. Each pair is given one proverb to work with. Allow 15 minutes for pairs to discuss their proverb and to rehearse a short dramatization to show the meaning of it. Each pair performs its dramatization for the whole class. The class has to work out which of the proverbs listed on the board is being presented.

In the following activity the students divided into three groups and for each group will be given texts. Students must read the texts and fill the blanks with words; the gaps can be completed with the same words. They can use a dictionary to check meanings and translate the texts into Uzbek. When they finish they must exchange the papers with other group. The students of the first group will check up the second group's translation and read them loudly, analyze in the class. If the translation of the text is correct that group gets point. Here we give some examples of the texts:

1. A manager is talking to an employee:

I personally think you've \_\_\_\_\_ the wrong horse and you've got your \_\_\_\_\_ to the wall, but I'll \_\_\_\_\_ you up as long as you don't \_\_\_\_\_ down. Just don't do anything behind my \_\_\_\_\_, or do anything else that is likely to get my \_\_\_\_\_ up, otherwise I'll transfer you to one of our offices in the \_\_\_\_\_ of beyond.

2. A lawyer is talking to a client:

I'll say this to your \_\_\_\_\_: you're \_\_\_\_\_ some serious charges. On the \_\_\_\_\_ of it, however, there isn't any evidence that you committed the crime, and there is no judge on the \_\_\_\_\_ of the earth who would find you guilty. The prosecution will have to \_\_\_\_\_ up to it: there's no way you're going to \_\_\_\_\_ the music over this.

3. A doctor is talking to a patient:

I can't \_\_\_\_\_ down the seriousness of your illness. I don't want to \_\_\_\_\_ on your emotions and pretend to \_\_\_\_\_ God. However, we might be able to \_\_\_\_\_ for time before you need an operation, so I'm going to recommend a course of medication. The medicine I'm going to recommend is actually illegal in this country, but I know how to \_\_\_\_\_ the system



and get you some, as long as you're prepared to \_\_\_\_\_ ball with me on this.(1.p72)

In conclusion teaching and learning idioms is always interesting for pupils, students and even for teachers. Moreover, the students learn better when they are provided with activities because they can interact with fun. It is effective to teach English language when they are provided with various activities to practice and use English idioms in different contexts. Idiomatic expressions pervade English with a peculiar flavor and give it astounding variety, bright character and color. They help pupils to understand English culture, penetrate into customs and lifestyle of English people, and make a deeper insight into English history.

### REFERENCE LIST

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