

***IQRA NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PESHAWAR***

***Subject : Functional English***

***ID No : 16968***

***Assignment Submitted By : Aqsa Azmat***

***Assignment Submitted To : Ma'am Rizwana***

***Topic : Idioms and its role in English language***

# ***Idioms and its role in English language***

## ***INTRODUCTION***

*Idiomatic expressions are part of every language. According to Boers (2008) in MED Magazine, all languages have idioms and are full of them. Native speakers tend to use idiomatic expressions spontaneously without thinking of the figurative meaning. It is natural that non-native speakers find idioms difficult to understand because they do not know what the image of the idiomatic expression is based on. For example, if non-native speakers of English Language come across the expression that exams are part of a "carrot and stick" method, they will find it difficult to process. Non-native speakers will find it uneasy because they are unable to realize that it is based on the image of a donkey that is encouraged to move forward by dangling a carrot in front of it or by hitting it with a stick. Thus, it is almost impossible for a non-native speaker who is unfamiliar with this idiom to imagine that such an idiom is used to describe any event which involves rewards ( a carrot) and*

*threats (the stick). If a non-native speaker is unfamiliar with the idiom "show you the ropes" and comes across such an expression, he or she will find it difficult to immediately understand. As such, they will find it difficult to realize that this expression proposes to teach one how a certain job is done. If these non-native speakers were told that such an idiomatic expression is used in a sailing context in which experienced sailors.*

## **Idioms**

*An idiom is a phrase, saying or a group of words that has a metaphorical (not literal) meaning, which has become accepted in common usage.*

*An idiom's symbolic sense is quite different from the literal meaning or definition of the words of which it is made. There are a large number of Idioms and they are used very commonly in all languages. There are estimated to be at least 25,000 idiomatic expressions in the English language.*

*Idioms in fact, evolve the language; they are the building blocks of a language and civilization. They also have great intensity to make a language interesting and dynamic. Idioms bring a spectacular illustration to*

*everyday speech. They provide interesting insights into the use of words, languages and the thought processes of their speakers. They have a sense of mystery and fun about them.*

## ***The Most Common Idioms***

### ***“Piece of cake”***

*“Ha, that assignment was really a piece of cake!”*

*No, the professor didn't give them a slice of cake to eat! When something is a piece of cake, it's so simple that it's as easy as eating one.*

### ***“Stabbed in the back”***

*“I don't want to be Hayley's friend anymore, she stabbed me in the back!”*

*Literally stabbing someone in the back could bring someone to jail! That's definitely not what this idiom means.*

*Being stabbed in the back means that you've been betrayed by someone who you thought you could trust.*

## ***“Blow off steam”***

*“Hey, I’m feeling pretty angry right now. I’m going to go blow off some steam.”*

*To blow off some steam isn’t to stand above a tea kettle and huff and puff! When you’re feeling angry or upset, and want to do something to relieve those emotions, then you’re blowing off steam--doing something or taking a break to help get rid of the stress.*

## **THE ROLE OF IDIOMS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

*The most widely used English idioms are considered in the present paper, their role in English language learning is analyzed as well. The significance of idioms in the modern English language is impossible to underestimate since they make a colloquial speech lively and rich. And, without doubt, idioms are actually used by native speakers in their everyday language. Consequently, it is necessary to pay a particular attention to these lexical units studying a foreign language. Furthermore, some ways of learning idioms individually as well as by means of various communicative types of activity under the guidance of a teacher are also considered in the research.*

**Keywords:** idioms, lexical units, learning process, educational activity. English is considered to be not only the most popular and demandable language in the world but also one of the most beautiful languages. Moreover, the English language is particularly rich in lexis. Without doubt, idioms play a great role in the enrichment of the English language. Idioms represent unique cultural and historical information as well as broaden people's understanding and manipulation of English. Native speakers use idioms to make their speech more colorful and alive. That is why it is definitely important for non-native speakers to learn not only grammar and new lexical units as well as acquire reading, listening and writing skills but also pay attention to idioms in the process of English language learning. This work is focused on considering the most popular English idioms and their role for non-native speakers as a part of mastering the English language. Let us consider a definition of the term «idiom». According to Oxford dictionary, an idiom refers to a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words. In other words, an idiom is an expression, whose meaning cannot be deduced from the literal definitions, but refers to a figurative meaning that is known only

*through common use. Idioms are often used in all types of languages, colloquial and formal, spoken and written; they are a part of business English education and the media .It is necessary to consider the origin of the most widely used idioms. There is a great variety of idioms which come from the vocabulary concerning different topics such as work and jobs: to put in for (to make an official request for smith. a blue collar worker (a working class person who performs manual labor), a white collar worker (a person belonging to the ranks of office and professional workers whose jobs generally do not involve manual labor), a slave driver (a cruel employer who demands excessive work from the employees)to burn oneself out (to work too hard)to work for peanuts (to work for practically no money at all), to carry the can (to take the blame or responsibility for something that is wrong or has not succeeded) a golden handshake (a large sum of money which is given to someone when they leave a company especially if they are forced to leave) and etc. animals the black sheep of the family (a disreputable or disgraced member of a family), to take the bull by the horns (to confront a problem head-on and deal with it openly) as awkward as a cow on roller-skates (very clumsy) as crooked as a dog's hind leg (very dishonest)to*

*have ants in one's pants (to be unable to sit still or remain calm out of nervousness or excitement) eager beaver (a person who is excited about doing certain work), to let the cat out of the bag (to reveal a secret) rural life and transport: to strike while the iron is hot (to take advantage of favorable conditions) to put the cart before the horse (to do things in the wrong order)to miss the boat (to fail to take advantage of an opportunity) to paddle one's own canoe (to do what smith. without help or interference from anyone)to drive up the wall (to do something that greatly annoys or irritates all the people around), to hit the road (to begin a journey) etc. the world of entertainment: to make a clown of yourself (to make yourself appear foolish or stupid) to be in the limelight (to be the center of attention) a museum piece (something that is very old-fashioned and should no longer be used), a show stopper (an event that provokes such a strong reaction that it stops whatever's happening) etc. feelings and emotions to bare one's heart (or soul) to someone (to reveal one's innermost thoughts and feelings to someone) to bent out of shape (to become annoyed or upset about something that is usually not important) to come apart at the seams (to be extremely upset or under severe mental stress), to get hot under the*



*collar (to feel annoyed, indignant or embarrassed) to lick one's wounds (to try to recover one's confidence or spirits after a defeat, failure or disappointment) etc. Idiomatic expressions pervade English with a peculiar flavor and give it astounding variety, bright character and color . They help language learners understand English culture, penetrate into customs and lifestyle of the English people, and gain a deeper insight into the English history*

*However, learning idioms presents a host of difficulties to English learners, primarily because they don't know the culture and history behind English idioms. That is why they often use idioms incongruous with the situation. Indeed, English learners utilize idiomatic expressions very carefully, being afraid of using them incorrectly and being misunderstood. According to Cooper (1999), idiom study presents a special language problem for all language learners because the figurative meaning is unpredictable. To conclude we may state that the sheer number of idioms and their high frequency in discourse make them an important aspect of vocabulary acquisition and language learning in general. One of the approaches to defining this linguistic phenomenon stresses that an idiom is a manner of speaking that is natural to native speakers of the language. It proves that only people who*

*are very good at speaking English can adequately and to the point use idiomatic expressions in their speech. English is a language with a vast idiomatic basis, which makes its learning very exciting and intriguing. So grasping the use of idioms is an essential part of learning English.*

## **REFERENCES**

1. Cooper Th. *Teaching idioms. Foreign language annals*, 31(2), 1998.
2. Cooper Th. *Processing of Idioms by L2 Learners of English. TESOL Quarterly*, 33(2), 1999.
3. Isodoma A. *English Idiomatic Phraseology. M*, 1988.
4. Lennon P. *Approaches to the Teaching of Idiomatic Language. International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 1998.
5. Moon R. *Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English. A Corpus-based Approach. Oxford*, 1998.
6. *New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language. Connecticut: Lexicon Publishers, Inc., 1993.*