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Assignment title : Idioms and its role in English language

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Introduction

An idiom is a common word or expression which means something different from its particular meaning but can be understood because of their popular use. Because idioms can mean something different from what the words mean it is difficult for someone not very good at speaking the language to use them properly.

Idioms are not the same thing as slang. Idioms are made of normal words that have a special meaning known to nearly everyone. Slang is often special words, or special meanings of normal words that are known only to a definite group of people.

To learn a language a person needs to learn the words in that language, and how and when to use them. But people also need to learn idioms separately because certain words together or at certain times can have different meanings. In order to understand an idiom, one sometimes needs to know the culture from which the idiom comes.

Some common Idioms

- Break a leg

A way to wish someone good luck.

- To live it up

To enjoy life, to live widely

- To kick the bucket

To die.

- Shape up or ship out

Used to tell someone that they should leave if they don't improve their behavior or performance

- To shed crocodile tears

To cry about something but without actually caring.

- Wild goose chase

A useless journey or pursuit.

- There's no room to swing a cat

There is not a lot of space.

- To pay through the nose

To pay a lot of money, more than is normal.

- To bark up the wrong tree

To choose the wrong sequence of action.

- To spill the beans

To tell a secret.

- It's raining cats and dogs

It's raining heavily.

- To get into hot water

To get into trouble.

- Chicken-hearted

Terrified or gutless

- *To chicken out*

Not doing a thing, because of fear.

- Top dog

Leader.

- To smell a rat

To think that something is wrong.

- To give up

To quit.

- To give up on

To stop believing in something or someone.

- I could eat a horse

I am very hungry.

- To be on top of the world

To be really happy.

- Once in a blue moon

Rarely.

Definition

An idiom is a phrase or expression whose meaning can't be understood from the ordinary meanings of the words in it. For example, "Get off my back!" is an idiom meaning "Stop bothering me!" The idiom "You hit the nail on the head" means "You're exactly right."

An idiom is a word or, more commonly, a phrase in which the abstract meaning is different than the accurate meaning of the group of words. This idiom has a rather dark origin. It came from a reference to someone dangling himself by standing on a bucket and then kicking it away, thus "kicking the bucket."

Role of Idioms in English language

The most broadly used English idioms are considered in the present paper, their role in English language learning is examined as well. The importance of idioms in the modern English language is impossible to underestimate since they make an idiomatic speech lively and rich. And, without doubt, idioms are actually used by inherent speakers in their everyday language. Accordingly, it is necessary to pay a particular attention to these philological units studying a foreign language. Moreover, some ways of learning idioms individually as well as by means of various forthcoming types of activity under the guidance of a teacher are also measured in the research.

English is considered to be not only the most prevalent and demandable language in the world but also one of the most beautiful languages. Besides, the English language is particularly rich in terminology. Without any doubt, idioms play a great role in the upgrading of the English language. Idioms represent unique cultural and historical information as well as widen people's understanding and influence of English. Inborn 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 bearing in mind the most popular English idioms and their role for non-native speakers as a part of understanding the English language. Let us consider a definition of the term idiom. According to Oxford dictionary, an idiom discusses to a group of words established by procedure 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.

Idioms are often used in all types of languages, casual and formal, spoken and written; they are a part of business English, education and the media.

It is necessary to consider the source of the most widely used idioms. There is a great variety of idioms which come from the vocabulary regarding 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 extreme 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).
- Animals: the black sheep of the family (a disgraceful or disgraced member of a family), to take the bull by the horns (to challenge a problem head-on and deal with it openly), as awkward as a cow on roller skates (very gauche), 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 uneasiness or excitement), eager persist (a person who is excited about doing certain work), to let the cat out of the bag (to reveal a secret) etc.
- 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 racket 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 wit 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.

It is nearly impossible to consider all the occurred idioms because the English language retains thousands and thousands idiomatic expressions. Surely, some of them are old-fashioned and not used in live communication any more. But there are more than one hundred idioms which can be referred to the so-called often-used 51 lexical units. Thus, idioms should become an basic part of foreign language acquirement for the non-native speakers who are really eager to apply their language skills and knowledge in practice communicating with native speakers.

Nowadays young people have many opportunities to take part in various students' exchange programs, undertake a traineeship in the English-speaking countries and even make a successful career abroad. So they should retain good communication skills to avoid misunderstandings and a language barrier. But in the reality, most of the people who have already had experience of studying and working abroad, confirm that they have faced some serious problems in communicating with native speakers due to idioms. The truth is that they did not simply understand the meaning of mysterious idioms which were generally used by native speakers in their everyday speech. As a result, most of the non-native speakers make a conclusion that learning idioms is one of the most important issues in the process of English language acquiring. Since the native speakers use idioms all the time in all the situations, foreign students being abroad often feel confused and frustrated because they do not understand their speakers. So, a large number of idioms and their high occurrence in the communication make them a vital aspect of English language learning.

Idioms can be learned through the films, sports and news programs, by means of modern Internet technologies. And the learners can obtain idioms in the English language lessons using different activities such as dialogues and role plays. The suitable dialogues can provide the learners with the situations to practice ordinary routine conversation so the students have good practice with principal communication skills in framework. It is necessary to look through some new idioms, then observe some examples and read the applicable dialogues containing the idioms under contemplation. The students should analyze the correct use of them, to see how the idioms are practiced in speech. The next step is to act out the similar dialogues to strengthen the acquired skills. In general, dialogues and role plays are definitely helpful learning activities for the learners of various ages and levels of expertise as they do not only help the students learn new idioms and enlarge their vocabulary but also dialogues are an efficient way of oral practice in general. As a result dialogues offer learners the opportunities to act out everyday life situations and practice communication skills before they enter the real English language environment.

The learnt knowledge concerning some particular idioms must be associated through the written exercises based on the meaning of the idioms. The learners are supposed to complete the final tasks individually to show their teacher the results of the learning process. There is a great variety of activities which can be used to merge using the learned idioms in practice. Dealing with the matching tasks, learners have to match the idioms with their meanings or even with mother tongue equivalents. Working with the summarizing tasks, students should

rewrite the given sentence by means of the relevant idiom keeping the main idea of the original sentence. And of course students can make up their own sentences or even a whole story using the idioms they have recently learnt. In assumption it should be mentioned that non-native speakers, who learn idioms, can be involved into the real English language environment. Everyone is able to speak natural English but it is idioms in the language that give it a bright, informal and creative feeling. Therefore, if non-native speakers want to speak English confidently, they have to learn idioms to improve their communication skills and feel confident talking to native speakers.