

## **SPECIFIC FEATURES IN TEACHING ENGLISH IDIOMS AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

**Azizova Fotimakhon Saidbakhramovna**  
Uzbekistan state university of world languages  
**UZBEKISTAN**

### **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. Personal values are reflected in consciousness in the form of valuable orientations. Valuable orientations are the relations of the personality to social values acting as regulators of its behavior. Set of the typical valuable orientations peculiar to any social group, call social character. The person, as well as at collective, society, has many valuable orientations, some of them less, others are more essential, among them is petty and sublime, etc. We are offering some types of exercised to students for determining their knowledge about idioms.

**Keywords:** Idioms, translation, idiomatic expressions, methodology.

### **INTRODUCTION**

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.

One of the specific features of teaching English idioms their cultural specificity. Any society cannot do without values. They can choose, divide these or other values. Some are committed to collectivism values, and others – to individualism values. For some supreme values there can be money, for others – moral faultlessness, for the third – political career. For the description of by what values people are guided, sociologists thought up the term valuable orientations. They describe the individual relations or the choice of concrete values as standard of the behavior. So, value possesses to group or society, valuable orientations – to the individual. Values represent the belief shared by many people concerning the purposes to which it is necessary to aspire.

Thus, different types of cultural norms penetrate practically all spheres of human activity. Their range is quite wide – from the simple bans to a complex system of social institutes. In development of culture some of them acquired the status of cultural values, and the obligation of their execution in public consciousness of modern society is perceived not only as a simple duty, but also as conscious need, internal belief of the person. All these standard regulators can be both allowing, and prohibitive. However irrespective of their character they help to coordinate actions of certain individuals and human groups, to develop optimum solutions of conflict situations, to find cultural ways of realization and satisfaction of various requirements (Sadoin, 2005: 62-64).

Value expresses human measurement of culture, personifies the relation to forms of human life, human existence. It kind of pulls together all spiritual variety to reason, feelings and will of the person. Thus, value is not only the "conscious", and vitally experienced life. It characterizes human measurement of public consciousness as it is passed through the personality, through her inner world. If the idea is a break to comprehension of the separate parties of life, individual and public life, then value is rather personally painted relation to the world evolving not only knowledge and information, but also own life experience of the person, his subjectivity (Gurevich, 2003: 151).

The value of culture is the special objective positive importance something in spiritual life of the specific person, social group, society embodied in various carriers of the importance and expressed in signs and the sign systems of this culture (Gurevich, 2003: 59).

What values are important for people and have a great influence and what are not taken into account – depends on culture. Their structure and the importance define originality and features of culture (Grushchevskaya, 2003: 28-29).

Phraseological units, being the integral attribute of national folklore, and in turn, attribute of culture of these people, bear in themselves reflection of life of that nation to which they belong, these are views and the nature of the people.

Phraseological units are diverse; they are kind of out of temporary space. Really, in what time we would not live, proverbs, and sayings will always remain relevant, having always to the place. The rich historical experience of the people, representations connected with work, life and the culture of people is reflected them.

**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 (Koonin, 1996: 282).

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.

Specific features in teaching English idioms as a foreign language in Uzbek groups it required a good knowledge of idioms and methodology. For improving the knowledge of our students we suggested them such kind of exercises. We are offering you some for learning idioms.

*The first task* is “Translate the idioms and phraseological units from English into Uzbek which have cultural specific features (geographical names, historical and cultural terms, color, and names of animals, phytonomies and national dresses)”.

1. He who would eat the nut must first crack the shell.
2. It is not the gay coat that makes the gentleman.
3. It is the last straw that breaks the camel’s back.
4. That’s a horse of another colour.
5. Put not your hand between the bark and the tree.
7. Rome was not built in a day.
8. Little strokes fell great oaks.
9. To send owls to Athens.
10. To kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.
11. He is as limp as a rag.
12. Every bird likes its own nest best.
13. A black hen lays a white egg.

*The second task* is to translate the idioms and phraseological units from Uzbek into English which have cultural specific features (names of animals and phytonomies) ”.

1. Пашшадан фил ясамоқ.
2. Қушдек енгил.
3. Анқонинг уруғи.
4. Олмадай қизил.
5. Филдай бақувват.
6. Дўпписини осмонга отмоқ.
7. Туянинг думи ерга текканда.
8. Қўй оғзидан чўп олмаган.

*The third task* is the following choose the appropriate phraseological units to the text.

1. One of our group mates fell ill, and was taken to hospital. In three months he was out, but lagged behind the students with his studying. He asked many pupils to help him, nobody came to his rescue, but me. After that we become friends

- a) Facts are stubborn things
- b) Experience is the mother of wisdom
- c) A friend in need is a friend in deed

2. I lived in a small village. Everybody knew each other for years. I had a good position there. Everybody respected me. But oh, lord how bored I was there. I decided to accept the teaching position in a big city and moved to Tashkent. But alas, it was a big mistake. Now I live in Tashkent, I know nobody here and lead the life of a friendless and lonely man. It was too late I realized that it is better

- a) To keep my cool
- b) To be big fish in a small pond
- c) To let the cat out of the bag

3. One day J.K.J. went to the Haymarket Store. There were a lot of dogs in the lobby waiting for the return of their owners, who were shopping inside. All the dogs were patient and good. Then a young lady entered leading a little fox terrier and chained him there. Without a warning the fox terrier bit his neighbours on the right and on the left, and in the second the whole lobby was a perfect pandemonium of fighting dogs.

- a) To get out of the bed on the wrong side
- b) One scabbed sheep will mare a whole flock
- c) One scabbed wolf will mare a whole flock

4. A fisherman had been fishing for a long time but without luck. At last he tugged at his net and saw a small fish caught in it. "Please let me go", begged the fish, "I will grow bigger in a few days and then you can catch me again". The fisherman said, "Now that I have caught you, I won't let you go. If I leave you, I may never see you again".

- a) Lost time cannot be recalled
- b) Safely is the first importance
- c) A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

*The fourth task* is the following which of these sentences are suitable for this idiom.

1. Top banana

- a) Today my aunt Shirley takes us to the restaurant and it was the worst restaurant
- b) Since the early days of vaudeville, Uncle Henry has been a boss
- c) We went to the mountains with my friends and we decided to rise on the highest hill

2. The devil is not so black as is painted

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 colour paints. But I didn't know painting, and my friend advised me to paint with white colour, 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

3. Put your shoulder to the wheel

- a) Irving didn't give up when the work got hard. He made a great effort and finished
- b) Last year I spent all my time reading books and preparing for exams
- c) Max's mother was firm and demanded him be home by 10 p.m.

4. Monkey business

- a) Peter stop playing with monkey or the watchman will scold you
- b) Peter stop your illegal activities! Settle down
- c) Don't even think of arguing with new friend. She is tough

*The fifth task* is to complete the phraseological unit

1. One ....does not make a summer

- a) Fly    b) Ant    c) Swallow

2. Bark up the wrong ....

- a) Way    b) Tree    c) Bush

3. The .... Have taken Holland

- a) The Englishman    b) the German
- c) The Dutch
- 4. A hard ..... to crack
- a) Peanut    b) Nut    c) Hazel-nut
- 5. When the ..... changes his .....
- a) Englishman / skin
- b) Ethiopian / skin    c) Greeks / habits
- 6. Drop like in hot .....
- a) Tea    b) Dinner    c) Potato
- 7. A bed of a .....
- a) Roses    b) Flowers    c) Tulips

*The sixth task* is the following group the following phraseological units according to their semantic features: phraseological fusions, phraseological units and phraseological collocation.

to carry coals to Newcastle, a bosom friend, when pigs fly, to kick the bucket, Adam's apple, to rain cats and dogs, to keep one's ears open, pay attention to somebody, to keep a dog and oneself, black frost, to be all thumbs, Kilkenny cats, the real McCoy, old bird, grin like a Cheshire cat, to pull ones legs, at the drop of the hat, to pour oil on the flame, to live like a cat and dog, to tear one's hair, to talk through ones hat, the last straw, to keep one's distance, to be born with silver spoon in one's mouth, make a mountain out of a molehill, a skeleton in the cupboard.

*The seventh task* is matching the phraseological units similar in their meaning.

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| 1. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush       | a) never judge a tree by its bark                  |
| 2. Don't count your chickens before they are hatched | b) you cannot make a crab walk straight            |
| 3. All that glitters is not gold                     | c) better an egg today than a hen tomorrow         |
| 4. Can the leopard change his spots?                 | d) first catch your hare, then cook him            |
| 5. After dinner comes the reckoning                  | e) crows didn't pick crows eyes                    |
| 6. Like mother, like daughter                        | f) bear and forbear                                |
| 7. Feather by feather the goose is plucked           | g) no sweet without (some) sweat                   |
| 8. You cannot make a crab to walk straight           | h) he that would eat the fruit must climb the tree |
| 9. Cat in gloves catches no mice                     | I) can the leopard change his spots?               |
| 10. Dog does not eat dog                             | j) as the tree, so the fruit                       |

*The eighth task* is the following. Read and find suitable phraseological units for this sentence.

1. Joe had a very big supper. When he asked for a piece of bread and butter at bedtime, his mother said, "I have never seen anyone eat so much. You are always as hungry as ... ." (a lark, a wolf, a horse, a bee)

2. After the long school holidays, Mrs. Hay went to talk to Betty's teacher, "Betty is glad that school has started", she said. "She is as ... ". (as busy as a bee, as happy as a lark, as clever as an owl, as slow as a tortoise)

3. I often do my homework in the evening. Sometimes I'm sleepy and don't understand what I read. Then my mother tells me to go bed and do the rest of my homework in the morning. She says: ...

(never put off till tomorrow what you can do today, what can be cured must be endured, an hour in the morning is worth two in the evening, health is above wealth)

4. Bob is a clever boy. He reads a lot and knows much. He is a good sportsman too. His hobby is tennis. Bob is active in everything. He never idles and does his best to get as much knowledge as he can while he is young. He follows the phraseology: ....  
(don't trouble trouble till trouble troubles you, lost time is never found again, haste makes waste, grasp all lose-all)

*The ninth task* is as following. Read the sentences and find which ways of translation is used.

1. "You see," he heard James says, "We can't have it all begin over again. There is a limit; we must strike while the iron is hot."

"Тушуняпсизми," – У Жеймснинг овозини эшитди. Биз буларнинг ҳаммасини яна бошқатдан бошланишига йўл қўя олмаймиз. Ҳамма нарсанинг ўз чегараси бор; Биз темирни қизиғида бошисимиз керак.

2. What did he know of her – he had only loved her all her life, looked on her as the apple of his eyes!

У ҳақида нималарни биларди у – у фақатгина бир умр уни яхши кўриб келган ва уни кўзини қорачиғидай асраб келган!

3. "A petty kettle of fish," he muttered. Where it will end. I can't tell.

"Ҳа, ҳаммаси аралашиб кетди," – минғиллаб кўйди у. Мен сизга буни нима билан тугагини айта олмайман.

4. I'd like to know more about her. That girl's got something. Just keep your eye on her.

Менга у ҳақида кўроқ маълумот керак. Бу қизда бир нарса бор. Унга кўз қулоқ бўлиб тур.

5. "I perceived," said Jolyon, "that you are trying to kill two birds with one stone."

"Мен билардим," деди Жолиан, "сен бир ўқ билан икки қуёни ўлдиришга ҳаракат қилисан."

*The eleventh task* is to read the text and choose sayings and phraseological units with names of animals and plants and try to translate the text into Uzbek.

TEXT 3: In spring, when the sun shines brightly, children in the classroom always begin to understand why nightingales do not sing in cage, for they would like to escape to the fresh air as soon as possible. But until all tasks are done walking in the street seems to be a hard nut to crack. It remains only to hope that every dog has his day. 'If only our teacher decided to dismiss us earlier!' - The pupils think, but they know that if the sky falls, they shall catch larks. And at the same time everybody has to study rules and perform tasks, even if he feels like a cat on hot bricks. Watching at such behavior of the class the teacher again reminds them that little strokes fell great oaks. He severely says to those who are especially impatient - 'He that would eat the fruit must climb the tree! And if somebody performs the task carelessly, he will go out of the class only when pigs fly!' And children again start to flip through their books, but can the leopard change his spots?

*The twelfth task* is to read the text fill the blanks with words, the gaps can be completed with the same word. Use a dictionary to check meanings. Translate the following texts into Uzbek.

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.

4. A young man is talking to his best friend:

My girlfriend is always complaining about me. She says I \_\_\_\_ her round the bend. I just don't understand what she's \_\_\_\_ at, and it's \_\_\_\_ me to distraction. Maybe she does it on purpose in the hope that she can \_\_\_\_ me out. Things aren't helped by her parents \_\_\_\_ a wedge between us all the time. It's enough to \_\_\_\_ me to drink!

*The task thirteen* is to read the text and find the phraseological units and try to translate them into Uzbek.

TEXT 1: A year and three months old, he had been bought by Michael out of a Bond Street shop window on Fleur's twentieth birthday, eleven months ago. Two years of married life had not lengthened her short dark chestnut hair.

TEXT 2: Leaving the concert hall on the Friday night, he had walked straight home to his rooms. And lying down full length on a monk's seat of the fifteenth century, restored with down cushions and silk of the twentieth, he crossed his hands behind his head and delivered himself to these thoughts: 'I am not going on like this. She has bewitched me. She is incapable of giving anything up. Hey has she hooked herself into me! By trick of eyes, and hair, by her walk, by the sound of her voice – by trick of warmth, scent, colour. Fling her cap over the windmill – not she! What then? Am I to hang her Chinese fireside and her little Chinese dog; and have this ache and this fever because I can't be kissing her?

TEXT 3: She seemed to be looking at him with more interest than he deserved, to be trying to make something out from his face, and he added: "You are a relation – by blood as well as marriage, aren't you?" "Yes." "Then what's the skeleton?" "Oh! nothing. I'll certainly come. Only – she so many friends." Michael thought: I like this woman! As a matter of fact.

**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.

Value is the ideal model of real objects and the relations which is fixed in this culture and coming to light in activity and communication of people. It is developed and exists only in culture, determining the relations of the person to the world and also human relations. In the course of historical development of each people there is own system of the valuable relations to the nature, to people of personal and others' community, to the ideas, to things, etc. On the basis of these relations the system of values of these people and its culture are formed. In human consciousness there is at the same time a set of values therefore it is quite justified to speak about the system of values as values exist not chaotically, they are definitely ordered on the relation to each other. Mastering values of the world around, the person relies on the traditions which settled in his culture, norms, customs and gradually forms the system of the fundamental and standard values serving to it as the management in life. On this basis in each culture there is the system of values reflecting its specific situation in the world. The system of values ordinary represents hierarchy in which values are located on the increasing importance. Thanks to this system the integrity of this culture, its unique shape, necessary degree of an order and predictability are provided.

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