
Idioms are the difficult part of the vocabulary to teach

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Learning new English vocabulary in context is very important because if you **come to think of it**, the smallest language unit is a phrase **as opposed** to a word. If you really want to be fluent you need to feel instinctively how things are said in English naturally and in what context certain words are used.

If you [translate directly from your native language when speaking in English](#), most of the **unique characteristics** of the English language **will be lost on you** — starting with English idioms and ending with specific terms — and that's why contextual English learning is so important. Idioms are an interesting phenomenon in languages. A meaning of an idiom is not a sum of its literal parts and often it does not have equivalents in other languages. Thus, idioms can be very difficult for foreign language learners. There is clearly a need to study idioms from the point of view of second language learning since most of the studies on English idioms have concentrated on how native speakers understand them.

Idiomatic language and expressions place an important part in English phraseology, as a reflection of the mentality and spirituality of the nation vision of the world. Translating idioms needs good competence of the target language, which makes the issue a difficult and challenging task for the teachers and translators, too. There are few studies on idioms in foreign language learning. Idioms are phrases that have a meaning that is very different from its individual parts. Unlike most sentences that have a *literal* meaning, idioms have *figurative* meaning. A literal meaning is when each word in a sentence stays true to its actual meaning. Figurative meaning is when a combination of words mean something different than the individual words do.

English idioms, proverbs, and expressions are an important part of everyday English. They come up all the time in both written and spoken English. Because idioms don't always make sense literally, you'll need to familiarize yourself with the meaning and usage of each idiom. That may seem like a lot of work, but learning idioms is fun, especially when you compare English idioms to the idioms in your own language.

Make up one's mind — Making a decision

Play it by ear — Decide about something when it happens instead of making a decision in advance

Give someone the cold shoulder — ignore someone

Costs an arm and a leg — very expensive

Idiom a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words. Idioms cause problems to second language learners since most of them do not have simple equivalents in another language which makes their teaching also problematic. How to teach expressions that mean something different than the sum of their constituents? However, it is impossible to speak naturally and fluently without the use of idiomatic expressions.

It is very important to integrate students in the four skills because they integrate idiom knowledge in the four skills. Teachers should design various activities for students to use with English idioms so that students can collaborate with peers and utilize idioms in different contexts.

Idioms should not be taught directly at all. During my teaching practice, I came across to difficulties with my students in teaching idioms, as they are foreign language learners. In solving this problem I try to teach them with dialogs or contexts where used idioms.

For example in this conversation there used some body idioms. In completing these idioms, students try to catch the meaning of them with the help of situation.

T: So how is it going?

E: Oh, I'm fine. I a bit worried about my daughter though

T: Why? What's wrong?

E: Well she started university this year and everything seemed to be going fine until the last week or so. We usually chat regularly on the phone, I've hardly heard from her lately and when I do, she hasn't been herself

T: Have you asked her what's wrong?

E: No, not really I don't want her to think I'm **poking my nose in**. She's very independent.

T: Mmm, I see what you mean. What do you think it might be?

E: Well she has lots of deadlines coming up, so she's up **to her eyes** in reading and essays but she's usually quite good at coping under pressure. I wonder if it's her boyfriend. She hasn't mentioned him lately and I think they may have split up.

T: Maybe you should just ask her directly. Perhaps she's looking for a **shoulder to cry on**.

E: Yes but what if I'm wrong. I don't want to **put my foot in it**. I might make things worse and just get her **back up**. I can't **make up my mind** about the best thing to do.

T: It is a tricky situation I suppose you're just going to have **to play it by ear**. Don't mention anything specific but make it clear that you're there to listen, if there's anything she needs to **get off her chest**.

E: Yes you're right but it is so difficult holding when you're worried about your little girl. I know she's grown up now and I should let her learn for herself but it is hard.

T: I know.

E: It really is.

The teacher explains to students that it may be more useful for them to be able to understand the expressions when they hear them than to be able to produce them. The correct use of idioms in appropriate situations in correct forms is extremely challenging for second language learners. The formality of idioms differs and many idioms have grammatical constraints. They can be used only in certain forms and they do not tolerate much variation. Furthermore, learners often try to resort to their native language when using idioms and it often leads to incorrect and comical expressions.

Learning to use common idioms and expressions will make your English sound more native.

USED LITERATURE

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