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TEACHING IDIOMS IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract: *This study aims to investigate the perspective of ESL teachers on idioms in language teaching and learning. Teaching idioms might seem intimidating, especially if your students have never heard any of them before. Idioms are a common part of speech, though. Getting your students familiar with them early on can help them communicate more naturally and give them a deeper understanding of the English language. It doesn't have to be complicated or difficult to teach idioms. With these tips and resources, teaching idioms to your students will be a piece of cake.*

Key words: idiomatic expressions, teaching, EFL learners, figurative language, metaphoricality

Ключевые слова: идиоматические выражения, обучение, изучающий английский язык как иностранный, образный язык, метафоричность

Açar sözlər: idiomatik ifadələr, tədris, ingilis dilini öyrənənlər, obrazlı dil, metaforalıq

An idiom is a form of figurative language that can be especially difficult for English as second language (ESL) students. In this lesson, teachers will learn about teaching idioms to non-native English speakers. A great deal of attention has been paid to the role of idiomatic language in learning a second language. It has been recently recognized by some second language researchers that second language speakers may sound unnatural if their speech is devoid of idiomatic language. This article is an attempt to see how the acquisition of idioms can be achieved on the part of EFL students through focus of form techniques.

Idioms are said to mirror the culture of the language. As it happens with most culturally-determined language aspects, idioms pose great difficulties for learners, to the point where some teachers avoid dealing with idioms in the classroom altogether. There is no scholarly consensus on what idioms are. In contemporary research, the term “idioms” (or ‘phraseological units’) seems to encompass quite a wide range of multi-word units, from lexical collocations such as prepositional verbs (e.g. to look at smth) to instances of metaphoric language use (e.g. apple of my eye). As idioms are complex phenomena, definitions abound as to what can be considered an idiom. Some definitions rely on form, others highlight the meaning. The scholarly definitions of idioms that revolve around the meaning regard idioms as multi-word expressions that are “not the sum of their parts”, or “a group of words that occur in a more or less fixed phrase whose overall meaning cannot be predicted by analyzing the meaning of its constituent parts”.

Idiomatology, idiomaticity, idiomtics, phraseology and perhaps a number of other terms have been used to refer to the same concept. This multitude of terms and terminologies may be taken as evidence that the area to be dealt with is a questionable one. The fact is that scholars are expected to state precisely and unambiguously what they mean by the terms they choose. Kavka & Zybert argue that the term phraseology does not signify the vast domain of our interest since in common understanding it refers to lexis. Idiomatic expressions, on the other hand, are based on semantic rather than lexical grounds. Kavka and Zybert go on to argue that as for the terms idiomaticity and idiomatology, it may be justifiable to regard idiomatology as a truly linguistic discipline. The reason is that linguists have traditionally

spoken of 'phonology', 'morphology', and 'philology' as fields of science. They can, by the same token, come to speak of idiomaticity as a full-fledged science in its own right. Idiomaticity refers to a quality derived from an attribution of, say, constituting or containing idioms. Reichstein somewhat complements Kavka and Zybert's definition of idiomaticity stating that "the term idiomaticity is used for semantic and structural irregularity of phrasal idioms". Understanding the term in its broader sense, it can be stated that an expression is idiomatic (or has 'proper idiomaticity') if it is judged intuitively by native speakers as usual, natural, and commonly acceptable.

Idioms have traditionally been defined as expressions whose meanings are non-compositional, that is, their meanings are not the functions of the meanings of their individual parts. The figurative interpretation of shoot the breeze (to have an informal chat), for instance, cannot be determined through the analysis of its individual word meanings. Some writers are of the opinion that idioms are dead metaphors –expressions that have lost their metaphoricity over time and now exist as frozen semantic units, perhaps in a special phrasal lexicon. On the other hand are other scholars like Nunberg et al., who are against the non-compositional view of idioms and have taken the position that idioms enjoy a kind of internal semantic structure which demonstrate that idiomatic meanings have much to do with the constituents of which the idioms have been made up.

Proverbs have been defined by Gibbs as short and snappy sayings that express social norms or moral concerns. He goes on to argue that proverbs, like idiomatic expressions, give significant insights into the poetics of mind because they reflect how our metaphorical conceptualization of experience bears on particular social situations. Most proverbs are overtly metaphorical in that everyday objects and events are used to characterize abstract situations in terms of more immediate physical images. Each proverb, in fact, presupposes a discrepancy between something in the world such as "two birds" in kill two birds with one stone and one's intentions, purposes, etc.

Slang is often associated with idiomatic expressions. Although slang is usually seen as having a shorter life span within a language than idioms do and is used only by certain groups of individuals or communities, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate slangs from idioms. Slang metaphors often convey certain attitudes or feelings of the speakers that idiomatic expressions do not. For instance, the expression He is on a trip (meaning he is taking drugs) can suggest that a speaker is aware of certain social norms and attitudes about drugs and the drug culture.

The Role of Context in Learning Language

The role of context is central in language learning. It's common that EFL students don't really understand the various meanings of new words in different contexts. That's why EFL students don't know how to apply the words they have learned practically in various contexts. It's fundamental for teachers to provide a rich context for students' language learning and practice. For instance, linguistic contextual information enhances adolescents' interpretation of idioms. The contextual cues surrounding a particular word can help readers get that's meaning. In contrast, context-reduced language will be hard for readers to tolerate. Consequently, it's more effective for EFL students to learn language in meaningful contexts than learn isolated words through memorization and drilling.

Introducing English Idioms in Story Contexts

Stories have been popularly used to teach and entertain students in language learning. Interesting stories usually draw students' attention and easily make students absorbed in them. Since contextual information is significantly effective for aiding students' understanding

English idioms, it is essential for EFL teachers to provide students with rich context. Thus, introducing English idioms within interesting stories can possibly help EFL students to understand and remember them better.

Teaching English Idioms with Rich Illustrations

The Role of Illustrations in Reading

Although there is lingering debate regarding the effect of visuals on reading comprehension, some researchers claim that reading materials accompanied by visuals will be more comprehensible. For example, Scarcella and Oxford stressed that teachers need to illustrate key vocabulary effectively by showing pictures and diagrams so as to improve the ESL students' reading comprehension. Mayer found that words and pictures presented together helped students recall better than alone. It is efficient to provide interesting pictures to foster and reinforce vocabulary development. Consequently, visuals must be stimulating, interesting and motivating to students' comprehension and retention of reading.

Presenting English Idioms with Rich Illustrations

According to the effect of illustrations on reading, I collected English idioms in one sentence context. English idioms were presented with pictures to one class of 30 students while without pictures to the other class of 30 students. They were told that those phrases were English idioms first and then they were asked to translate them into Chinese. I found that English idioms with illustrations could increase college students' idiom understanding better. Thus, it is effective to present English idioms accompanied by visual stimuli that clearly illustrates the idioms being taught.

Teaching English Idioms with Group Discussion

Group Discussion in Reading Comprehension

Students' discussing what they read is a helpful strategy to increase their comprehension. Group talk can provide learners with rich opportunities to acquire social and linguistic knowledge necessary for understanding new texts they encounter. Klingner & Vaughn stressed that ESL students engaging in collaborative talk during content reading, they assisted one another in understanding the meaning of challenging words, getting the main ideas, and answering questions about what they read. As a result, group discussion appears to be an effective technique to enhance students' reading comprehension.

Applying Group Discussion in Understanding English Idioms

Students are likely to be passive learners when they receive lectures only in classrooms. On the contrary, small group discussion could stimulate students to be involved in the active process of constructing knowledge. Furthermore, during group discussions, students will learn from each other, whether consciously or unconsciously. Accordingly, I applied group discussion in students' active learning of English idioms before explaining the meaning of idioms to them. Students in group discussion could understand English idioms better than when they were introduced to English idioms within a story only. This demonstrated the significant effect of group talk on students' understanding of English idioms.

Teaching English Idioms with Readers Theater

Readers Theater in Reading

Readers Theater has been viewed as an interesting and motivating strategy that can provide readers with a legitimate reason to reread text and further improve their word recognition, reading fluency and reading comprehension. Researchers claim that Readers Theater offers a way to improve fluency and enhance comprehension as well as to create interest in and enthusiasm for learning. Even slow learners can benefit from Readers Theater because there is no memorization required and there is no risk for them at all. Apparently,

Readers Theater provides enough opportunity for practice-repeated reading in language learning. This activity also enhances interaction opportunities with peers and makes the reading task more appealing than learning alone.

Applying Readers Theater to Practice English Idioms

I used Readers Theater to help students practice English idioms in order to enhance students' retaining them. Class observation and students' interviews further revealed their positive attitudes, such as excitement toward the implementation of Readers Theater in reading classes. Moreover, students retained English idioms better by applying Readers Theater because it provided students with opportunities for idiom oral practice because of rereading scripts. Consequently, it is obvious to see that Readers Theater has a significant effect on students' learning and retaining English idioms.

Teach English Idioms with Retelling and Rewriting

Retelling in Reading

Retelling has been a good strategy to know how much students have learned and to increase their comprehension. Retelling activities can facilitate students' reading retrieval because the activities can encourage students to try to recall. Their recalling help teachers understand how much information their students have obtained. Older students can benefit from retelling stories because it allows students to learn to organize and describe events, which enhances reading comprehension. In Brandi-Muller's classroom, she found that her ELL students not only became more enthusiastic and willing to take a chance and read aloud but also remembered the vocabulary better with this method. As a result, retelling activities can reinforce integration of recently learned reading.

Applying Retelling and Rewriting to Practice English Idioms

Since retelling activities are good techniques to facilitate students' reading retrieval, this motivates me to apply the activities in teaching English idioms. After I introduced the meanings of English idioms to my students, I asked my students in pairs to retell the content in their own words instead of the English idioms and to rewrite sentences provided in class by using English idioms. The retelling and rewriting activities provided students with more chances to be aware of the meanings of English idioms and be familiar with the English idioms they have just learned.

Teach English Idioms with Dialogue Writing and Role-Play

Dialogue Writing and Role-play in Reading

Dialogues can provide situations for students to practice ordinary conversation and offer students ample practice with basic speaking skills in context. Firstly, dialogues can be viewed as short plays and used for students to act out rather than simply read aloud. Moreover, the dialogues the students write function as basic communication at all levels. In addition, putting pupils into pairs for the role-play in the daily dialogues is an effective way of oral practice for various ages and levels stressed that role-plays are also excellent activities for learners' speaking in the relatively safe environment of the classroom before they must do so in a real environment. Therefore, dialogues offer students opportunities to act out and practice oral skill before encountering the real world.

Applying English Idioms through Dialogue Writing and Role-play

Dialogues and role-play are useful written and oral activities so that I assigned my students in pairs to write one dialogue by using the English idioms introduced in class and then act out the dialogue out in the following class. Dialogue writing could motivate students to write without burden because of pair collaboration and role-play activity could help them remember the dialogue they wrote through repetitive practices. It was easier and more fun for

them to remember English idioms because they shared and enjoyed learning English idioms with friends. Thus, dialogue writing and role-play are useful and interesting activities for students' meaningful and efficient drills.

Conclusion

Since it is vital for EFL learners to learn English idioms in order to master English, it is important for EFL teachers to design various activities for students to use with English idioms and subsequently acquire them efficiently. Moreover, students learn better when they are provided with collaborative activities because they can interact with peers and share fun in learning. Finally, when teachers integrate listening, speaking, reading and writing activities together in teaching English idioms, students can be involved in the application of English idioms in four skills. Thus, it is effective to teach EFL learners English idiom when they are provided with various activities to practice and utilize English idioms in different contexts.

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İNGİLİS DİLİNDƏ İDİOMLARIN İKİNCİ DİL KİMİ ÖYRƏNİLMƏSİ

Kərimli Aytən Tahir qızı, Bəşirova Aynur Hilal qızı

Xülasə

Bu məqalədə gündəlik işlənən idiomlardan və onların Azərbaycan dilindəki ekvivalentlərindən bəhs edilmişdir. Məqalədə idiomatik ifadələri öyrədərkən müxtəlif növ innovativ tədris yanaşma və metodların istifadəsi yolu araşdırılır.

Innovativ üsullar idiomların və idiomatik ifadələrin öyrənilməsinin lazım olduğunu göstərir, beləliklə öyrənilənlərin unikal sözlər və ifadələr barədə məlumatlılığını artırır.

ОБУЧЕНИЕ ИДИОМАМ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ КАК ВТОРОМ

Каримли Айтен Тахир кызы, Баширова Айнур Гилал кызы

Резюме

В данной статье исследуется, какие типы инновационных подходов и методов обучения идиоматическим выражениям изучающих английский язык. Он предполагает, что необходимо выучить идиомы, чтобы повышение осведомленности учащихся об этих уникальных словах и фразах могло помочь им научиться определять и интерпретировать их с большим успехом.

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