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IMPORTANCE OF IDIOMS IN MODERN ENGLISH

Idioms are characteristic of almost any language in the world and are frequently used on a daily basis. They are an important part of any language and culture, thus learning any language also includes learning idioms used in the target language. In the course of time, a need of classification of English idiomatic expressions has occurred in order to «control» extensive portions of the language and to practically incorporate them into English language teaching. Though idiomatic expressions still take up a rather remote part in any curriculum, and learners perceive them both as elusive lexical items and compulsory ones to pass English language examinations, they are strongly connected with everyday language. To generate a more positive learner attitude towards these complex in nature elements of language and prompt their successful acquisition, the uncovering of grammar, specifically syntactic structure of English idioms, could be a step forward to clarify their perception and usage. Idiomatic expressions are of different origins and can be of sociocultural, political, and historical background. The use and meaning

of idioms and idiomatic expressions is strongly influenced by culture and history of nations using these lexical items [1, p. 45].

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.

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.

Idioms are described variously as in the following [3, p. 143]:

- «An idiom is a combination of two or more words which function as a unit of meaning.... Idiomatic expressions are units of meaning, non-idiomatic expressions, conversely, are made up of distinct meaningful parts».

- «...groups of words with set meanings that cannot be calculated by adding up the separate meanings of the parts».

- «Idiom can be defined as a number of words which when taken together, have different meaning from the individual meaning of each word»

In short, idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be worked out from the meanings of its constituent words.

Generally speaking, an idiom is a kind of lexical unit in which the whole meaning of the expression is not apparent from the meanings of its components. According to Bell, there are certain essential features which help in the recognition of idioms.

Some of these features are:

- Alteration of Grammatical Rules. The idiomatic expression is not always grammatical, but it is established, accepted and used by native

speakers of the language with a fixed structure and meaning. E.g. *It's ages since we met* (singular with a plural noun)

– Conventional Phrases. Idioms are special expressions which are almost known and agreed by all the members of a particular community. E.g. *How are you doing?* (Expression used to ask someone about his health). *Once in a blue moon* (rarely, infrequently).

– Alteration of Word Order. English Idiomatic expressions, usually, do not respect the English word order. E. g. *It may be well ahead of time* (normal word order). It may well be ahead of time (probably): idiomatic expression.

– Figurativeness. The basic characteristic of idiomatic expressions is that the words are used metaphorically. Therefore, the surface structure has a little role to play in understanding the meaning of the whole expression. For example, in «to bury the hatchet», meaning to become friendly again after a disagreement, the meanings of the words «to bury» and «the hatchet» are different from the meaning of the whole expression.

– Phrasal Verbs. Phrasal verbs are the most common type of idioms in English. Many of them carry idiomatic meanings that cannot be inferred from the form, unless the phrase is already known. E. g. *After war began, the two countries broke off diplomatic relations* (discontinue).

– Addition. Adding any word to an idiomatic expression may alter its meaning, or remove its idiomatic sense. For instance, adding the adverb *very* to the adjective *red* «*in red herring*». (*very red herring) affects the figurativeness of its meaning completely. Deletion. Deleting the adjective *sweet* and the article from the expressions *have a sweet tooth* and *spill the beans* would change totally their meanings. Hence, (**have a tooth*) and (**spill beans*) have no idiomatic sense.

– Substitution. Idioms accept no replacement of words even if those words are synonyms. For example, the long and short of it means the basic facts of a situation. The adjective *long* cannot be substituted by another adjective, like «*tall*», despite they have nearly the same meaning.

– Modification. Any change in the grammatical structure of an idiom leads to the destruction of the idiom meaning. For instance, the expression (**stock and barrel lock*) is no more idiomatic because of the altered order of the items in the expression *lock, stock and barrel* completely.

– Comparative. Adding the comparative former to the adjective hot in the expression «to be in hot water» changes the conventional sense of the idiom which has the meaning of be in trouble.

– Passive. The passive form some beans were spilled has a different meaning from its active one. These restrictions affect the degree of idiomacity of lexical items, and they may remove their main feature of figurativeness. These characteristics make the idioms be considered as rigid structures, almost impossible to be decoded. However, through a cautious approach, thorough explanations, continuous interest, idioms may become vital elements in the acquisition of proficiency in a foreign language.

Thus, 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. The usage of idioms makes speech more colorful and alive. 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.

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