Перед педагогическими работниками стоит задача по формированию соответствующего общественного сознания, причем сознания как базы для демократического наследия.

1. Трудовой кодекс Российской Федерации от 30.12.2001 N 197-ФЗ (ред. от 03.07.2016) (с изм. и доп., вступ. в силу с 03.10.2016) // Российская газета. № 256. 31.12.2001.
2. Конституция Российской Федерации (принята всенародным голосованием 12.12.1993) (с учетом поправок, внесенных Законами РФ о поправках к Конституции РФ от 30.12.2008 N 6-ФКЗ, от 30.12.2008 N 7-ФКЗ, от 05.02.2014 N 2-ФКЗ, от 21.07.2014 N 11-ФКЗ) // Собрании законодательства РФ, 04.08.2014, N 31, ст. 4398.

Abliakimova F.G.

Helpful strategies for learning idioms and proverbs

*Crimean Engineering and Pedagogical University
(Russia, Simferopol)*

doi 10.18411/spc-04-12-2018-06

idspspub-04-12-2018-06

Abstract

When studying a foreign language, it is necessary to study such components of a language as its proverbs and idioms that make the student's speech more natural and close to the speech of the native speakers. The article provides illustrative examples of independent work, contributing to the effective assimilation of this bright, rich in content language material.

Key words: idiom, figurative meaning, thematic category, context, visualization, proverb, tip.

Аннотация

При изучении иностранного языка необходимо знать такие его составляющие, как пословицы и идиомы, которые делают речь студента более естественной и приближенной к речи носителей языка. В статье приводятся наглядные примеры самостоятельной работы, способствующей эффективному усвоению этого яркого, богатого по содержанию языкового материала.

Ключевые слова: идиома, образное значение, тематическая категория, контекст, визуализация, пословица, совет.

Idioms and proverbs are a colorful and fascinating aspect of English. They are commonly used in all types of language, informal and formal, spoken and written. Learners' language skills will improve rapidly if they can understand idioms and proverbs and use them confidently and correctly. Incorporating certain learning strategies and being consistent in making every effort to enhance vocabulary with these bright and sometimes intricate linguistic units, learners can achieve the goal of coloring their speech with more natural tints.

To be at ease with idioms and proverbs a learner should first delve into the notion of these linguistic items and only afterwards proceed to the study of learning tips.

Idioms

An idiom is an expression that has a special meaning which is different from the literal meaning, or usual meaning [3.–с. 749]. English idioms are fun and useful. Idioms take existing words, combine them in a certain sense, and thereby form specific expressions.

For example, the idiomatic meaning of '*He's a couch potato*' cannot be derived from the meanings of *couch* and *potato*. Native speakers of English know immediately that '*He's a couch potato*' means 'he watches a great deal of TV'.

Idioms use language metaphorically rather than literally. If you say '*She's the apple of his eye*', it means '*she is his favorite*' (the metaphorical meaning) not that she is a certain part of his eye (the literal meaning).

Another feature of idioms is that they are fixed groups of words, so you cannot change the wording of an idiom. For example, you can say '*I'm at the end of my tether*' to make it clear that 'you have reached the limits of your tolerance' but you cannot say 'I'm at the end of my rope'.

Idioms have a variety of origins; they are derived from texts of the Bible, from ancient fables, from famous authors and storytellers such as Homer, Aesop, Geoffrey Chaucer, or William Shakespeare. The authors were popular, so the expressions they created became popular, too. Often, however, we do not know the name of the first author or speaker who used a particular expression.

Some idioms originate from Native-American customs ('*to bury the hatchet*') and others from African-American speech ('*chill out*'). Some idioms rhyme ('*snug as a bug in a rug*'), others are based on alliteration (repetition of initial consonant sounds, e.g.: '*spick and span*'). Some idioms originated as colloquialisms (informal speech or slang (casual, playful, non-standard language). Many idioms were well known proverbs. Some came from other countries. Some idioms were coined centuries ago, others are more recent.

Tips for learning idioms.

Learn idioms as you do vocabulary; i.e. select and actively learn idioms which will be useful to you. Write the idiom in a relevant and practical sentence so that you will be able to remember its meaning easily. Have fun with idioms: practice speaking idioms in a loud voice, and even shout a sentence in a crazy, exciting and high-pitched voice, alone or together with others.

1. Learn idioms in context

Example:

A set of idioms related to the topic "Man and Money" can be better remembered if you follow these steps:

A. Study the meaning of these idioms.

IDIOM	DEFINITION
sharp	smart, witty, quick-thinking
featherone's nest	obtain extra money, often dishonestly, through one's job or position
hustler	person who gets money aggressively or unethically
fastbuck	money obtained easily or unethically
handoverfist	rapidly
put the bite on someone	ask for a loan of money
cockandbullstory	an exaggerated or false story
a snowball's chance in hell	no chance at all
softtouch	one who gives money easily when asked

B. Read the dialogue:

Bob: Do you know that Dick is also invited to the party?

Pete: Yeah, but I haven't got the faintest idea what kind of person he is.

Bob: He's pretty **sharp** when it comes to **feathering his own nest**. And he's a **hustler** who is out to make **fast buck**. He made it **hand over fist**, by the way.

Pete: Then he might try to **put the bite on** me by telling me **cock and bull story**.

Bob: Give me a break! With all your wit he has a **snowball's chance in hell**. You are not a **soft touch**.

C. Complete the sentences with the correct idioms given below.

Sharp; soft touch; a snowball's chance in hell; cock and bull story; put the bite on someone; hand over fist; fast buck; hustler; feather one's nest

1. People were whispering behind Charlie's back that he had 1) _____ by ruining his cousin; besides he had made 2) _____ during the oil crisis. No wonder he made his fortune 3) _____ - he was a real 4) _____!
2. Dick was so much involved in the 5) _____ which he was telling people to make them sympathize with him, that he began to believe in it himself.
3. It was a 6) _____ for Pat to get that position but she worked hard and was promoted eventually.
4. People in the village knew that the old lady was a 7) _____, and some of them never hesitated to 8) _____.
5. Our professor in Applied Linguistics is quite old but he's still very 9) _____.

(Answers: 1) feather one's nest; 2) fast buck; 3) hand over fist; 4) hustler; 5) cock and bull story; 6) a snowball's chance in hell; 7) soft touch; 8) put the bite on someone; 9) sharp)

D. Rewrite the phrases in italics, using the proper idiomatic expression

1. Susan grew fat, her voice became hoarse and consequently she had *no chance at all* to get the role of Ophelia in the play.
2. Trying to find an excuse for being late for the meeting, Paul told me *a false story* about his close relatives' unexpected arrival.
3. Head of the company should not be a *person who gives money easily when asked*, as it can threaten the company's capital and it may be ruined.
4. Nobody denies he's *witty and quick-thinking*.
5. Charles usually spent his salary *rapidly*, and was cunningly searching for a victim *to ask for a loan of money*.
6. The Prime-Minister had to resign as he was accused of *obtaining extra money through his position*. [1.- c.461]

2. Use pictures or visuals to familiarize with idioms.

Example:

Look at the picture, read the idiom, read the definition, study the illustrative sentence, paraphrase the idiom.

Let the Cat Out of the Bag

(inform beforehand)

Bob was going to retire from teaching in June, and the foreign language department was planning on presenting him with some luggage at his retirement dinner. He wasn't supposed to know about it, but someone **let the cat out of the bag**. At the dinner Bob acted surprised, even though someone **had told him what he was getting before the official presentation**.

3. Put idioms into categories which will make it easier to memorize them.

Examples of categories:

- Body parts (the eye, the finger.)
- Animals
- Idioms expressing emotions (anger, happiness)
- Food idioms
- Color idioms
- Water idioms
- Sports idioms
- Mind idioms

4. Pay special attention to the contrast between the figurative meaning of a lexical component making up an idiom and the literal usage of this same word in speech or writing.

Let's take an idiom *to be at the end of one's tether* to illustrate this contrast. According to the dictionary definition, the literal meaning of the word *tether* is *rope*.

E. g.: You tie a farm animal - a goat, a horse - to a post with a *tether*.

However, when the word *tether* is used figuratively, it attaches to the idiom the following meaning: *a state of a person who is so tired or annoyed that he can't stand it anymore*.

E. g.: *The baby son has been crying all day. The father has had a terrible headache since he got up. He cannot take it anymore. He is at the end of his tether.*

5. Draw Idioms

If you draw idioms, you will clearly see that this activity is really helpful in idiom comprehension and memorization. Sometimes you will observe the match between the literal and figurative meaning of lexical components of the idioms, as in the following example:

my hands are tied

(not able to change something because of rules, restrictions)

It goes without saying, that such idioms are easy to remember.

However, in other cases it may be the contrast between the literal and figurative meaning that will strike you and increase your power of idiom retention.

Study the illustrative example:

- a. the literal meaning of the idiom *to have somebody in stitches* is presented in this picture
- b. the figurative meaning of this idiom is: *to make someone laugh a lot*.

E. g.: *She told a couple of jokes that had us all in stitches.*

Using this creative approach you are bound to remember a lot of idioms.

6. Listen to idioms in songs and identify their meaning.

Task: Listen to the song “I Heard it Through the Grapevine” performed by Marvin Gaye and figure out the meaning of the idiom “To hear through the grapevine”.

II. Proverbs

A proverb is a short well-known statement that contains advice about life in general [3.–c.1194]. For example, “*A penny saved is a penny earned*” is a proverb.

Proverbs can be found in all languages. They usually contain words of wisdom, truth or morals that are based on common sense or practical experience. One might say that a body of proverbs reveals interesting stratifications of both language development and the historical experience of the people, just as archeological layers show stages of civilization to the trained specialist [2.–c.87]. They represent a description of a basic rule of conduct that all people generally follow or should follow.

As a rule, proverbs are not long and complicated constructions. They are declarative sentences, that use verbs in the Present Indefinite, nouns in their generic sense, the adverbs *always, ever, never*, and some others.

Very often a proverb contains parallel or contrasting parts, which may be expressed by various contextual antonyms, e.g. “A bird in the *hand* is worth *two* in the *bush*”; “*Actions speak louder than words*”.

Tips for learning proverbs

When you learn proverbs try to put them into thematic categories, such as *money, work, weather, knowledge, human emotions, truth* etc. Use visuals and pictures to stimulate better memorization of proverbs. But there’s one tip that might surprise you - don’t be an eager beaver using too many proverbs in communication with speakers of English since you may use proverbs that are not familiar to them or that came out of use. As a result, you will be misunderstood and ridiculed.

By way of conclusion it is worth highlighting that if a learner is acquainted with the effective strategies of replenishing his/her vocabulary, his desire to learn the target language will be reinforced. Learners find it thrilling to discover something about the new language by themselves. If they are directed to the point where they make a discovery about English rather

than having it all explained to them, the benefit is more lasting. Not only are they apt to remember the point better, but they are stimulated to make further discoveries.

1. Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms. - Cambridge University Press, 1999. - 587с.
2. Dobson Julia M. Effective Techniques for English Conversation Groups. – Washington, D.C., 1996. – 137с.
3. Macmillan Dictionary for Advanced Learners. – Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2011. - 1749