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THE ROLE OF IDIOMS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SUMMARY

Idioms are an integral part of the English language, enriching communication by adding depth, color, and nuance. They are expressions whose meanings cannot be understood literally but must be interpreted based on common usage and cultural context. While idioms can sometimes present challenges for non-native speakers, they also offer a fascinating glimpse into the culture, history, and evolution of language. Idioms play a significant role in the English language, contributing to its richness, expressiveness, and cultural depth. Their meaning isn't directly derived from the individual meanings of the words. Instead, idioms typically have a figurative meaning that is understood through common usage. This article explores the significance of idioms in English, their role in everyday speech, and their influence on communication.

Key words: idiom, meaning, communication, phrase, native speaker, literal, cultural

An idiom is a phrase or expression whose meaning is different from the literal interpretation of the words it contains. For example, the idiom "kick the bucket" means "to die," but it has nothing to do with kicking or buckets. Idioms can be metaphorical, cultural, or historical in origin, and their meanings often evolve over time. English, like many other languages, is rich in idiomatic expressions, making them a distinctive and intriguing feature of the language.

Idioms and Communication: The primary role of idioms is to make communication more expressive and engaging. They allow speakers to convey complex ideas, emotions, or situations in a concise and often vivid manner. Idioms can inject humor, irony, or sarcasm into conversations, making them more relatable or entertaining.

For instance, instead of saying "I'm very tired," one might say, "I'm running on empty," using a metaphor that evokes the image of a car with no fuel. This idiomatic expression not only conveys the message efficiently but also adds a layer of creativity and vivid imagery. Similarly, phrases like "under the weather" (ill), "burning the midnight oil" (working late), or "a blessing in disguise" (a good thing in an unexpected way) all offer unique ways to express common situations.

Cultural Significance: Idioms often reflect the culture and history of the language from which they originate. In English, many idioms are influenced by the

country's historical events, occupations, and traditions. For example, the idiom “barking up the wrong tree” likely comes from hunting dogs in the past, where a dog might mistakenly bark at the base of a tree while the prey is higher up. Such idioms provide insight into the practices and daily lives of earlier societies.

Idioms also reflect shared cultural experiences. Expressions like “don’t cry over spilled milk” or “the ball is in your court” draw on metaphors that are widely understood within specific communities. These sayings not only enrich communication but also strengthen social bonds by providing a common understanding and shared vocabulary [1].

Idioms in Literature and Media: Throughout literature, idioms have played an important role in shaping the tone and style of writing. Authors use idiomatic expressions to make their characters sound more authentic, relatable, and realistic. They can also be employed for dramatic effect, allowing the author to convey emotions, attitudes, or themes in a concise way.

In modern media, idioms continue to be widely used, especially in advertising, television, and film. Catchphrases or popular idioms often become memorable parts of pop culture. For example, phrases like “break a leg” (to wish someone good luck) or “the bigger picture” (the overall perspective) have become so widely recognized that they are used outside of their original contexts.

Idioms and Language Learning: For non-native speakers, learning idioms can be one of the most difficult aspects of mastering English. Because idioms are not meant to be understood literally, they can be confusing when first encountered. However, understanding idioms is crucial for fluency and cultural integration. They allow learners to speak more naturally and understand the nuances of native speakers. Language learners often struggle with idioms because their meanings do not follow the rules of standard grammar or vocabulary. A direct translation from one language to another often results in confusion or misinterpretation. For instance, the German idiom “Ich verstehe nur Bahnhof” (literally, “I only understand train station”) means “I don't understand anything.” Without knowledge of this idiomatic expression, a German speaker might struggle to understand why an English speaker would say something similar.

To master idioms, language learners need to immerse themselves in everyday English, watch films, listen to native speakers, and read literature that uses idiomatic expressions. Over time, they begin to understand these phrases as part of the living fabric of the language. [2]

The Impact of Technology on Idioms: In the age of digital communication, idioms have also evolved. The internet, texting, and social media have introduced new idiomatic expressions, particularly in the form of acronyms and slang. Terms like “LOL” (laugh out loud), “BRB” (be right back), or “TMI” (too much

information) are modern idioms that convey meaning quickly and efficiently in the fast-paced world of online communication.

Additionally, emoji and GIFs are becoming new forms of visual idioms, offering a shorthand way to express emotions, actions, or situations. These digital forms of idiomatic expressions are reshaping the way we communicate, particularly in casual or informal settings.

Here's a list of popular idioms, their meanings, and examples of how they can be used in different contexts:

1. "Break the ice"

- *Meaning:* To initiate conversation in a social setting or to make people feel more comfortable.
- *Context:*
- *Social:* "I wasn't sure how to start the meeting, but the joke I told helped break the ice."
- *Workplace:* "The new manager tried to break the ice by organizing a casual lunch for the team."

2. "Burning the midnight oil"

- *Meaning:* To work late into the night, usually on something important.
- *Context:*
- *Student:* "I've been burning the midnight oil studying for my final exams."
- *Workplace:* "We've been burning the midnight oil to finish the project before the deadline."

3. "A piece of cake"

- *Meaning:* Something that is very easy to do.
- *Context:*
- *Casual:* "The test was a piece of cake; I finished it in 10 minutes."
- *Workplace:* "The task seemed daunting at first, but once I got started, it was a piece of cake."

4. "Hit the nail on the head"

- *Meaning:* To describe exactly what is causing a situation or problem.
- *Context:*
- *Workplace:* "You hit the nail on the head when you said that our marketing strategy needs more focus."
- *Conversation:* "When Jane mentioned that we needed better communication, she really hit the nail on the head."

5. "Under the weather"

- *Meaning:* To feel ill or unwell.
- *Context:*
- *Casual:* "I'm feeling a bit under the weather today, so I'll be staying home."
- *Workplace:* "I'm sorry I missed the meeting; I was feeling under the weather."

6. “Spill the beans”

- *Meaning:* To reveal a secret or disclose information that was supposed to be kept confidential.
- *Context:*
- *Casual:* “I accidentally spilled the beans about the surprise party!”
- *Workplace:* “You’re not supposed to spill the beans about the new project before the official announcement.”

7. “The ball is in your court”

- *Meaning:* It’s up to you to make the next decision or take action.
- *Context:*
- *Conversation:* “I’ve done all I can do. Now, the ball is in your court.”
- *Workplace:* “We’ve given you all the information you need; now, the ball is in your court to make the decision.”

8. “Bite the bullet”

- *Meaning:* To do something difficult or unpleasant that you’ve been avoiding.
- *Context:*
- *Personal:* “I know I need to go to the dentist, but I keep putting it off. I guess I’ll just have to bite the bullet.”
- *Workplace:* “We’re facing some tough decisions, but we have to bite the bullet and make them.”

9. “Cat’s out of the bag”

- *Meaning:* A secret has been revealed.
- *Context:*
- *Social:* “We were planning a surprise, but the cat’s out of the bag now.”
- *Workplace:* “It looks like the cat’s out of the bag about the company merger. Everyone’s talking about it.”

10. “A dime a dozen”

- *Meaning:* Something that is very common and easy to find.
- *Context:*
- *Casual:* “Those types of movies are a dime a dozen. There’s nothing special about them.”
- *Workplace:* “Jobs like this are a dime a dozen. You could find one anywhere.”

11. “Throw in the towel”

- *Meaning:* To give up or admit defeat.
- *Context:*
- *Sports:* “After losing the first two sets, he decided to throw in the towel.”
- *Personal:* “I was so frustrated with the project, I almost threw in the towel, but then I pushed through.”

12. “A blessing in disguise”

- *Meaning*: A good thing that seemed bad at first.
- *Context*:
- *Personal*: “Losing that job was a blessing in disguise. It led me to a career I’m much happier with.”
- *Workplace*: “The delay in the shipment was a blessing in disguise; it gave us more time to prepare.”

13. “The early bird catches the worm”

• *Meaning*: People who wake up early or start working on something early have an advantage.

- *Context*:
- *Casual*: “I always get up at 5 AM to work out because the early bird catches the worm.”
- *Workplace*: “If you want to get ahead, remember, the early bird catches the worm.”

14. “Cost an arm and a leg”

- *Meaning*: To be very expensive.
- *Context*:
- *Personal*: “The new smartphone costs an arm and a leg, but I really want it.”
- *Workplace*: “We’re going to need a larger budget for this project—it’s going to cost an arm and a leg.”

15. “Add fuel to the fire”

- *Meaning*: To make a bad situation worse.
- *Context*:
- *Personal*: “Don’t argue with him right now; it’ll just add fuel to the fire.”
- *Workplace*: “Bringing up past issues in the meeting just added fuel to the fire during the conflict.”

16. “Jump on the bandwagon”

- *Meaning*: To join others in doing something that’s popular or fashionable.
- *Context*:
- *Social*: “Everyone’s joining that fitness challenge now. I guess I’ll jump on the bandwagon too.”
- *Workplace*: “A lot of companies are starting to adopt eco-friendly policies. We should jump on the bandwagon before it’s too late.”

17. “Let the cat out of the bag”

- *Meaning*: To accidentally reveal a secret.
- *Context*:
- *Personal*: “I was planning a surprise for her birthday, but my brother let the cat out of the bag.”

○ *Workplace*: “We were trying to keep the project under wraps until the launch, but someone let the cat out of the bag.”

18. “Put all your eggs in one basket”

• *Meaning*: To risk everything on a single opportunity or plan.

• *Context*:

○ *Personal*: “It’s risky to invest all your savings in one stock. You don’t want to put all your eggs in one basket.”

○ *Workplace*: “We’re relying too much on this one client—let’s not put all our eggs in one basket.”

19. “When pigs fly”

• *Meaning*: Something that is impossible or will never happen.

• *Context*:

○ *Personal*: “Sure, he’ll finish that report early. When pigs fly!”

○ *Workplace*: “They say they’ll cut down the project costs. Yeah, right—when pigs fly.”

20. “Under your nose”

• *Meaning*: Something that is right in front of you but you haven’t noticed.

• *Context*:

○ *Personal*: “The keys were under my nose the whole time, but I couldn’t find them!”

○ *Workplace*: “The answer to the problem was right under our noses, but we missed it.”

Conclusion: Idioms are much more than just colorful phrases in the English language; they are a reflection of culture, history, and creativity. They enrich conversations, convey complex meanings in a simple way, and provide insight into the collective experience of English-speaking communities. [3] Whether used to add humor, evoke emotion, or share wisdom, idioms are an essential part of everyday speech. As the English language continues to evolve, idiomatic expressions will undoubtedly remain a vital component of how we communicate with one another.

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İNGİLİS DİLİNDƏ İDİOMLARIN ROLU

XÜLASƏ

İdiomlar ingilis dilinin ayrılmaz hissəsidir, dərinlik, rəng və nüans əlavə etməklə ünsiyyəti zənginləşdirir. Onlar mənalı hərfi mənada başa düşülməyən, lakin ümumi istifadə və mədəni kontekst əsasında şərh edilməli olan ifadələrdir. İdiomlar bəzən ikinci dil öyrənənlər üçün çətinliklər yaratsa da, eyni zamanda dilin mədəniyyətinə, tarixinə və təkamülünə heyvətəmiz bir baxış təqdim edir. İdiomlar ingilis dilində mühüm rol oynayır, onun zənginliyini, ifadəliliyini və mədəni dərinliyini təhfi verir. İdiom, mənası birbaşa sözlərin fərdi mənalarından alınmayan sözlər qrupu və ya ifadədir. İdiomlar adətən ümumi istifadə vasitəsilə başa düşülən məcazi mənə daşıyır. Məqalə ingilis dilində idiomların əhəmiyyətini, gündəlik nitqdəki rolunu və ünsiyyətə təsirini araşdırır.

Açar sözlər: idiom, mənə, ünsiyyət, ifadə, ana dili, hərfi, mədəni

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РОЛЬ ИДИОМ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

РЕЗЮМЕ

Идиомы являются неотъемлемой частью английского языка, обогащая общение, добавляя глубину, цвет и нюансы. Это выражения, значения которых не могут быть поняты буквально, а должны интерпретироваться на основе общего использования и культурного контекста. Хотя идиомы иногда могут представлять трудности для носителей языка, они также предлагают увлекательный взгляд на культуру, историю и эволюцию языка. Идиомы играют важную роль в английском языке, способствуя его богатству, выразительности и культурной глубине. Идиома — это группа слов или фраз, значение которых напрямую не выводится из индивидуальных значений слов. Вместо этого идиомы обычно имеют переносное значение, которое понимается через общее использование. В этой статье рассматривается значение идиом в английском языке, их роль в повседневной речи и их влияние на общение.

Ключевые слова: идиома, значение, общение, фраза, носитель языка, буквальный, культурный

Rəyçi: Filologiya üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru, dosent Rəhimə Məmmədova tərəfindən çapa tövsiyə olunmuşdur.