

## SOME SPECIFICS OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE THROUGH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

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**Abstract:** *Idioms are phrases which cannot be understood simply by looking at the meaning of the individual words in the phrase. We use idiomatic expressions all the time. It is an expression in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in having a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements (such as up in the air for "undecided") or in its grammatically atypical use of words (such as give way).*

**Key words:** *idiom, phrase, pure idiom, binomial idiom, partial idiom, prepositional idiom.*

An idiom is an expression with a figurative meaning that differs from the literal meaning. We hear idioms every day – both in conversation and in the media. Used correctly, idioms can amplify messages in a way that draws readers in and helps to awaken their senses. It is a type of phrase or expression that has a meaning that can't be deciphered by defining the individual words. Appropriately, the word "idiom" is derived from the ancient Greek word "idioma," which means "peculiar phraseology." And that's exactly what it is—a phrase that's normal to fluent speakers (every language has its idioms) but strange to others. People who struggle with idioms often can't see the forest for the trees, which is itself an idiom used to describe someone who's too involved with the details of a situation and can't see the bigger picture at hand. It doesn't involve any forests or trees. To understand idioms is to see the forest for the trees, or to look at the phrase as a whole rather than focusing on the individual words.

Generally speaking, there are four types of idioms: pure idioms, binomial idioms, partial idioms, and prepositional idioms. Some people may consider clichés, proverbs, and euphemisms to be types of idioms as well, but we'll explain why they are different from idioms:

1. Pure idiom. This is your typical idiom, the meaning of which can't be deduced by its individual components. When someone says, "Spill the beans," they're asking someone to reveal a secret, not to pour out a can of beans. But you wouldn't know that by looking at each word of that phrase.

2. Binomial idiom .This idiom is a phrase that contains two words joined by a conjunction or a preposition. Some examples include "by and large" (everything considered), "dos and don'ts" (guidelines on what to do and/or avoid in a certain situation), and "heart-to-heart" (a candid conversation between two people).

3. Partial idiom .This idiom is one that's been shortened into one part, with the second part generally being understood by fluent speakers. People often use the partial idiom "when in Rome," with the understanding that the other person knows the second part: "do as the Romans do."

#### 4. Prepositional idiom

This idiom is a phrase that combines a verb and a preposition to create a verb with a distinct meaning. The phrase "agree on" is a prepositional idiom that combines the verb "agree" with the preposition "on" and is used to express that you share an opinion with someone.

A cliché can be an idiom, but an idiom is not always a cliché.

Clichés are expressions or phrases that are overused to the point where they lose their meaning and indicate a lack of original thought. For example, there are few people who feel better when they hear this after a breakup: "Don't worry, there are plenty of fish in the sea." That phrase has been used so often that it fails to have any impact.

A proverb is similar to an idiom in that its meaning can't be deciphered by looking at the individual words, but it's different because it's used to give advice to someone else. If someone says, "Don't cry over spilled milk," they're telling the other person not to worry about something that has already happened. The phrase doesn't mean someone is crying and has nothing to do with dairy.

So once again, a proverb can be an idiom, but an idiom is not always a proverb.

Idiom vs. Euphemism. A euphemism is a type of idiom that's used to discuss a sensitive or taboo topic in a polite or understated way. Even if you're not personally made uncomfortable by a subject, there is still a chance you're using euphemisms around it, simply because they're common to the point of cliché. Topics like death, sex, and money have an abundance of euphemisms. For example, "he kicked the bucket" is a euphemism for "he died" (as well as an idiom).

It's difficult to define an idiom's structure because it changes from language to language, and it even varies in different regions that speak the same language. Idioms have more to do with syntax—the specific order of words or phrases—than grammar. Remember that the ancient Greek word "idioma" means "peculiar phraseology," so the rules for how to properly structure an idiom are unique to a specific region. Most New Yorkers understand the phrase "it's mad brick" to mean that it's cold, but people elsewhere in the US may not understand what the phrase means because the combination of those words is unique to New York City.

Learning the structure of a particular region's idioms takes time and is often achieved by speaking with people from that area. A speaker or writer often uses idioms to convey a message to someone else in a more creative way. Think of them as a type of spice that prevents your conversation or writing from being too bland. So

instead of saying “you’re correct” several times, you might throw in “you hit the nail on the head” or even “bingo” for a little variety.

As mentioned above, idioms can be used to prevent your writing from appearing too dry or formal, but they can also be used to help the writer connect with the reader. If you were writing for a Texan audience, and you wanted to describe something as large, you wouldn’t just say that. Instead, you would say it’s “bigger’n Dallas,” which means it’s very big. This shows the reader that you have a familiarity with the topic you’re writing about. There is another type of idiomatic usage used by fluent English speakers, and it’s called collocations, or a combination of words that have a specific meaning. In English, it’s common to describe a backup of cars on the highway as “heavy traffic.” It’s not common to describe it as “crowded traffic.” Although the phrases could reasonably be interpreted the same way, the collocation “heavy traffic” simply “sounds right” to English speakers.

Idioms are challenging for language learners because their meanings can’t be deciphered from the meanings of the individual words. It’s like giving someone a jigsaw puzzle containing pieces that look like one thing, only for the finished product to be something else entirely. But as we mentioned before, that’s also true of people from different parts of the same country who speak the same language.

Because there are no steadfast rules for idioms, the only way for language learners to become familiar with them is to speak with native speakers and have them explained. If your friend is “beating around the bush,” they are avoiding speaking with you about something directly.

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