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# ENHANCING STUDENTS' SPEECH CULTURE THROUGH THE USE OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

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**Abstract**: This article examines the role of idiomatic expressions in enhancing students' speech culture and communicative competence in the process of foreign language learning. The study highlights the linguistic and stylistic importance of idioms as essential components of natural and expressive speech. Special attention is paid to the pedagogical value of idiomatic expressions in developing learners' speaking skills, enriching vocabulary, improving intercultural communication, and increasing motivation in classroom interaction. The article also analyzes effective methods and strategies for teaching idioms, including contextual learning, communicative activities, and comparative analysis. The findings demonstrate that the systematic use of idiomatic expressions contributes significantly to the development of students' fluent, accurate, and culturally appropriate speech.

**Keywords:** idiomatic expressions, speech culture, communicative competence, intercultural communication, language learning, pedagogical methods.

**Introduction:** Over the last twenty years, Uzbekistan has undergone significant educational reforms aimed at improving the quality of foreign language teaching and developing students' communicative competence in accordance with international standards. Since gaining greater integration into the global educational and cultural space, the country has placed special emphasis on strengthening English language instruction at all levels of education. In particular, recent reforms in secondary schools, academic lyceums, and higher educational institutions have highlighted the importance of developing students' speech culture through modern and communicative teaching approaches.

In this context, idiomatic expressions have become an important element of language learning because they enrich speech, improve fluency, and make communication more natural and expressive. Idioms are closely connected with the cultural and historical background of a language; therefore, mastering them helps learners understand not only linguistic meanings but also cultural values and national mentality. For Uzbek students learning English as a foreign language, the use of idiomatic expressions contributes to the development of communicative competence, vocabulary enrichment, and intercultural communication skills.

During the last two decades, English language teaching methodology in Uzbekistan has gradually shifted from traditional grammar-based instruction to communicative and learner-centered approaches. As a result, teachers have started paying more attention to authentic language materials, speaking practice, and phraseological units, including idioms. Nevertheless, many students still face difficulties in understanding and using idiomatic expressions because their figurative meanings often differ from literal interpretations. This challenge demonstrates the necessity of applying effective pedagogical strategies for teaching idioms in classroom practice.

Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek idiomatic expressions also plays an important role in language education. Similarities and differences between the two languages help learners better understand semantic structures, cultural contexts, and stylistic features of speech. In Uzbekistan, the integration of idioms into classroom discussions, role plays, interactive exercises, and authentic texts has shown positive results in enhancing students' motivation and speech culture.

This article examines the role of idiomatic expressions in enhancing students' speech culture in the educational context of Uzbekistan over the last twenty years and analyzes modern methods of teaching idioms in English language classes.

**Material and methods:** This study is based on qualitative, comparative, and descriptive research methods aimed at investigating the role of idiomatic expressions in enhancing students' speech culture in the process of foreign language learning in Uzbekistan. The research materials include English and Uzbek idiomatic and phraseological expressions selected from scientific literature, educational textbooks, phraseological dictionaries, and authentic communicative sources used in language teaching practice over the last twenty years.

The theoretical foundation of the research relies on the views of both foreign and Uzbek linguists who studied phraseology and communicative competence. According to Charles Bally, phraseological units are stable combinations that reflect the emotional and stylistic richness of language. His ideas contributed significantly to the development of modern phraseology. Viktor Vinogradov emphasized that phraseological units function as indivisible semantic structures and play an important role in expressive speech. Similarly, A. V. Kunin considered idioms as culturally marked lexical units that enrich communication and reflect national mentality.

The study also considers the views of communicative language teaching scholars. Dell Hymes introduced the concept of communicative competence, emphasizing that effective communication requires not only grammatical knowledge but also sociocultural and contextual understanding. In addition, Michael Halliday highlighted the functional role of language in social interaction, which supports the importance of teaching idiomatic expressions in real communicative contexts.

The research employed comparative-linguistic and contextual analysis methods to identify similarities and differences between English and Uzbek idiomatic expressions in terms of semantics, structure, and communicative functions. The descriptive method was used to classify phraseological units according to the number of components in their structure. Statistical analysis was conducted to determine the frequency of two-component, three-component, four-component, five-component, and multi-component idiomatic expressions in both languages.

Furthermore, pedagogical observation and analysis of classroom practices were applied to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching idioms through communicative activities, role plays, contextual exercises, and comparative analysis. These methods helped determine how idiomatic expressions contribute to vocabulary enrichment, speech fluency, intercultural communication, and the overall development of students' speech culture.

The collected data were analyzed systematically and interpreted on the basis of linguistic and pedagogical approaches in order to reveal the practical significance of idiomatic expressions in modern foreign language education in Uzbekistan.

**Results and discussion:** The results of the research confirm that idiomatic expressions constitute one of the most important linguistic and stylistic tools in the development of students' speech culture and communicative competence. The conducted comparative and statistical analysis of English and Uzbek phraseological units demonstrated significant structural, semantic, and functional peculiarities, which directly influence the process of foreign language acquisition and intercultural communication.

The quantitative analysis revealed that English phraseological units are characterized by greater structural variability and compactness compared to Uzbek phraseological units. Among the analyzed English idiomatic expressions, two-component phraseological units accounted for 54 cases, while three-component idioms represented the largest group with 66 units. Four-component phraseological units constituted 42 cases, five-component structures accounted for 14 units, and the remaining 20 units consisted of six or more components. In contrast, Uzbek phraseological units displayed a different structural tendency. The analysis showed that among 40 Uzbek phraseological units, no examples of two-component or three-component idioms were identified. Four-component phraseological units constituted 10 cases, five-component units represented 14 cases, and 16 units belonged to the category of phraseological structures containing six or more lexical components.

The obtained results indicate that English idiomatic expressions tend to demonstrate structural economy and semantic concentration, while Uzbek phraseological units are generally more descriptive and syntactically extended. This phenomenon can be explained by the typological and grammatical differences between the two languages. English, as an analytical language, frequently employs concise lexical combinations with metaphorical meanings, whereas Uzbek, being an agglutinative language, often preserves broader descriptive constructions and culturally marked semantic details within phraseological units.

The findings of the study support the theoretical assumptions proposed by Viktor Vinogradov, who emphasized that phraseological units function as semantically indivisible lexical structures possessing expressive and emotional coloring. The research also confirms the views of Charles Bally regarding the stylistic and emotional richness of phraseological units in spoken and written communication. Idiomatic expressions not only enrich speech stylistically but also increase communicative effectiveness by allowing speakers to express complex ideas in a figurative and culturally meaningful form.

The comparative analysis further demonstrated that phraseological units in both English and Uzbek languages reflect the cultural identity, worldview, traditions, and value systems of their respective societies. English idioms frequently originate from historical events, professional activities, literature, sports, and everyday social interaction. For instance, many English idiomatic expressions are associated with practical life experience and individualistic cultural concepts. In contrast, Uzbek phraseological units often embody collective values, hospitality, family relations, respect for elders, patience, and moral behavior. Such observations confirm the idea proposed by A. V. Kunin that phraseology serves as a linguistic representation of national culture and mentality.

From a pedagogical perspective, the results revealed that the integration of idiomatic expressions into language teaching significantly contributes to the improvement of students' speech fluency, communicative confidence, and intercultural awareness. Students who regularly practiced idiomatic expressions through communicative tasks, contextual exercises, dialogues, role-playing activities, and authentic materials demonstrated higher levels of oral proficiency compared to learners who focused primarily on grammatical structures and isolated vocabulary memorization. The use of idioms enabled students to produce more natural, expressive, and stylistically appropriate speech in various communicative situations.

The study also confirmed the theoretical principles of communicative competence developed by Dell Hymes, who argued that successful language learning requires sociocultural and pragmatic competence in addition to grammatical knowledge. In this regard, idiomatic expressions function as essential elements of authentic communication because they help learners understand implicit meanings, emotional nuances, humor, and culturally specific references in speech. Similarly, the

functional linguistic theory of Michael Halliday supports the idea that language should be taught within meaningful communicative contexts rather than through isolated lexical units.

The pedagogical observations conducted during the research demonstrated that contextual learning is one of the most effective methods for teaching idiomatic expressions. Students showed greater comprehension and retention of idioms when they were introduced through authentic communicative situations, literary texts, films, discussions, and interactive classroom activities. Comparative analysis between English and Uzbek idioms also proved highly effective in facilitating comprehension because learners were able to associate unfamiliar expressions with culturally equivalent phraseological units in their native language.

At the same time, the research identified several challenges related to the teaching and acquisition of idiomatic expressions in Uzbekistan. One of the major difficulties is that students frequently attempt to interpret idioms literally, which often leads to misunderstanding and incorrect usage. In many cases, the absence of direct semantic or structural equivalents between English and Uzbek phraseological units complicates the learning process. Furthermore, traditional language teaching approaches in some educational institutions still prioritize grammatical accuracy over communicative and phraseological competence, resulting in insufficient exposure to authentic idiomatic language.

Another important issue revealed by the study concerns the limited use of idiomatic expressions in existing educational materials and classroom practice. Although recent educational reforms in Uzbekistan have encouraged communicative language teaching approaches, many textbooks still provide inadequate contextual explanation and practical exercises related to idioms. Consequently, students may possess theoretical knowledge of vocabulary and grammar but experience difficulties in achieving natural and culturally appropriate communication.

The results of the study suggest that effective idiom instruction requires the implementation of innovative pedagogical strategies, including communicative language teaching, intercultural comparison, multimedia resources, project-based learning, and authentic discourse analysis. Teachers should encourage students to use idiomatic expressions actively in speaking and writing activities in order to develop their speech culture systematically. Additionally, integrating phraseological units into classroom communication can increase students' motivation, linguistic creativity, and confidence in using the target language.

In general, the findings of the research demonstrate that idiomatic expressions occupy a central position in the formation of students' speech culture and communicative competence. Their systematic inclusion in foreign language education contributes not only to vocabulary enrichment and grammatical development but also to the formation of culturally appropriate, fluent, and expressive communication skills. Therefore, the teaching of idiomatic expressions should be regarded as an essential component of modern foreign language methodology in Uzbekistan.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, the present study has demonstrated that idiomatic expressions play a crucial role in enhancing students' speech culture, communicative competence, and intercultural awareness in the process of foreign language learning. The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseological units revealed important structural, semantic, and cultural differences between the two languages, while also confirming the universal communicative significance of idioms as expressive linguistic units.

The statistical findings showed that English phraseological units are structurally more compact and diverse, whereas Uzbek idiomatic expressions tend to consist of longer and more descriptive constructions. These differences are closely connected with the grammatical and cultural characteristics of the two languages. At the same time, both English and Uzbek idioms reflect

national mentality, historical experience, cultural values, and social traditions, which proves that phraseological units function not only as linguistic phenomena but also as carriers of cultural identity.

The research further confirmed that the systematic use of idiomatic expressions in classroom practice positively influences students' speaking fluency, vocabulary enrichment, and communicative confidence. Learners who practiced idioms through contextual learning, communicative activities, role plays, authentic materials, and comparative analysis demonstrated greater ability to produce natural, expressive, and culturally appropriate speech. In this regard, idiomatic expressions contribute significantly to the formation of effective communication skills required in modern foreign language education.

The study also identified several challenges in teaching idioms, including students' tendency to interpret expressions literally, the absence of direct equivalents between languages, and the insufficient integration of phraseological materials into some educational resources. These problems indicate the necessity of applying innovative and communicative teaching approaches that focus on contextual understanding, intercultural comparison, and practical language use.

Overall, the findings of the research emphasize that idiomatic expressions should occupy an important place in English language teaching methodology in Uzbekistan. Their effective integration into the educational process can improve students' speech culture, strengthen intercultural competence, and increase motivation for language learning. Therefore, further research and methodological development in the field of phraseology and idiom instruction remain highly important for the modernization of foreign language education.

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