

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDIOMS AND PHRASAL VERBS IN ENGLISH COMMUNICATION

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Annotation. *In this article, ideas and reflections are presented on the importance of idioms and phrasal verbs in english communication. Idioms and phrasal verbs are integral components of english communication that significantly contribute to fluency, naturalness, and pragmatic competence. Although often perceived as peripheral elements of language, they are deeply embedded in everyday spoken and written discourse.*

Key words: *idioms, phrasal verbs, english communication, multi-word expressions, fluency, pragmatic competence.*

Introduction. English, as a global lingua franca, is characterized not only by its grammatical structure and extensive vocabulary but also by its rich use of idioms and phrasal verbs. These multi-word expressions are fundamental to effective communication, yet they remain one of the most challenging aspects for learners of English as a second or foreign language. Idioms and phrasal verbs often carry meanings that cannot be inferred directly from the individual words they contain, making them linguistically and cognitively complex¹.

Despite their complexity, native speakers use idioms and phrasal verbs naturally and frequently in daily communication. Their widespread use highlights their importance in achieving communicative competence. Understanding and appropriately using these expressions allows speakers to convey meaning more efficiently, express emotions vividly, and interact socially in a culturally appropriate manner.

An idiom is commonly defined as a fixed expression whose overall meaning is different from the literal meanings of its individual components. Examples such as “break the ice” or “once in a blue moon” illustrate how idioms function metaphorically rather than literally. A phrasal verb, on the other hand, consists of a verb combined with one or more particles, such as “give up”, “look after” or “carry on”. While some phrasal verbs are transparent in meaning, many are idiomatic and must be learned as single lexical units. Both idioms and phrasal verbs are considered types of multi-word expressions, and linguistic research shows that they are stored and processed in the mental lexicon as unified chunks rather than assembled word by word during speech production².

Corpus-based studies of english demonstrate that idioms and phrasal verbs occur with high frequency, especially in spoken discourse. Research using large language corpora such as the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English indicates that phrasal verbs are far more common in spoken english than their single-word latiniate equivalents.

For example, native speakers are more likely to say “find out” instead of “discover” or “put off” instead of “postpone”.

Idioms and phrasal verbs contribute to the natural rhythm and fluency of English.

Speakers who avoid them often sound overly formal, unnatural, or non-native-like.

¹ Ahmedov D.A., Azizov S.M. English grammar. – T.: Uzbekiston Publishing House, 2018. – 320 p.

² G'ulomov T.S. English idioms and phrases. – T.: Academic Press, 2020. – 150 p.

Consequently, mastery of these expressions is a key indicator of advanced language proficiency.

From a cognitive perspective, idioms and phrasal verbs are processed holistically by proficient speakers³. Psycholinguistic studies suggest that frequent idiomatic expressions are accessed directly from memory, resulting in faster comprehension compared to newly formed literal phrases. Context plays a crucial role in activating the figurative meaning of idioms and disambiguating phrasal verbs with multiple meanings.

Linguistically, idioms and phrasal verbs challenge traditional distinctions between vocabulary and grammar. While they follow certain syntactic patterns, their meanings are often fixed and non-compositional. This dual nature makes them a unique area of study within phraseology and cognitive linguistics.

Idioms and phrasal verbs also carry important pragmatic and cultural meanings. They often reflect shared cultural experiences, values, and historical references. For example, idioms related to sports, weather, or everyday activities reveal how culture shapes language use⁴.

In pragmatic terms, these expressions help speakers manage social interactions. Idioms can soften criticism, add humor, or create solidarity between speakers. Phrasal verbs are frequently used in informal contexts, making them essential for casual conversation and interpersonal communication.

Failure to understand or use idioms appropriately may lead to misunderstandings or pragmatic failure, even when grammatical accuracy is high. Therefore, pragmatic competence is closely linked to idiomatic knowledge. For learners of English, idioms and phrasal verbs are among the most difficult aspects to master.

Their figurative meanings, polysemy, and cultural specificity pose significant learning challenges. Learners often rely on literal interpretation, which can result in confusion or miscommunication⁵.

Conclusion. Idioms and phrasal verbs are indispensable elements of English communication. They contribute to fluency, expressiveness, and pragmatic effectiveness while reflecting cultural knowledge and cognitive processing mechanisms. Although they present challenges for learners, their mastery is essential for achieving advanced proficiency and natural communication.

Recognizing the central role of idioms and phrasal verbs allows educators, learners, and researchers to approach English not merely as a system of rules, but as a dynamic and culturally embedded means of human interaction. Future research and pedagogy should continue to integrate phraseological competence as a core component of communicative competence.

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³ To'rakulov A.M. Phrases in Uzbek and English: Teaching Methods and Applications. – T.: Knowledge Publishing, 2019. – 200 p.

⁴ Rakhimov K. English and its styles. – T.: Language & Culture Publishing, 2021. – 180 p.

⁵ Shokhrukh, T. Teaching School Children to Become Fluent and Accurate Speakers. European Multidisciplinary Journal of Modern Science, 8, 2022. 35-45.

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