

The problems of teaching phraseological units in English language

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Abstract. This article deals with the principal difficulties of teaching the phraseological units to ESL students in English. Firstly, problems in the learning process will be stated and explained in a detailed way. Then, proper solutions and practical teaching methods will be provided to teach phraseological phrases to language learners in English classroom. All given information will be supported with clear reasons and accurate examples.

Key words: phraseological phrases, difficulties, functions, classification, differences, translation, teaching methods, phraseology, lexicology, meaning, speech, grammar, proverbs, idioms, collocations.

Проблемы обучения фразеологизмам английского языка

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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются основные трудности преподавания фразеологизмов студентам ESL на английском языке. Во-первых, будут подробно изложены и объяснены проблемы в процессе обучения. Затем будут предоставлены правильные решения и практические методы обучения для обучения фразеологическим фразам изучающих язык в классе английского языка. Вся предоставленная информация будет подкреплена четкими обоснованиями и точными примерами.

Ключевые слова: фразеологизмы, трудности, функции, классификация, различия, перевод, методы обучения, фразеология, лексикология, значение, речь, грамматика, пословицы, идиомы, словосочетания.

Introduction

Many ESL learners are encountering with problems when learning phraseological units and applying them in their language. The role of the phraseological units is absolutely essential in forming a speech, as they can express traditional and cultural connotations with specialized meanings. Phraseological units can be depicted as a group of words which are considered as the ready-made combinations for use. Meaning of these units can not be analyzed by separating them into parts. Therefore, they are inseparable and stable in language use. Therefore, this article mainly focuses on the major difficulties of teaching these units and suggests beneficial solutions to address them in the long run.

Main Body

It is certainly true that English lexicology is consisted of many important branches which carry different specific meanings, namely lexicography, etymology, semasiology and phraseology. Acquiring knowledge in each of them can be challenging and confusing, as they involve teaching different characteristics of the language. One of the most difficult branches is called phraseology that is related to various types of set expressions, stable combination of words and teaching phraseological units. The phraseological units are very common in the English language, especially in speech which express the meaning more widely and they are considered as stronger than simple words. The term “Phraseological units” was initially introduced by V. V. Vinogradov who contributed significantly to the lexicology and mainly phraseology. Learning phraseological units is of importance, since students become closer language and become more fluent in their speeches. Having said that, language acquiring process is not easy and learners find many problems in the process of knowledge possession. When it comes to phraseological units, some core difficulties in teaching should be mentioned.

The main principal difficulty is associated with the misconception of phraseological units and their functions in the language. To be more specific, language learners have confusions with finding the answers to the questions of:

“What is a phraseological unit?”, “What kind of functions does it have?”, “Is it used a lot in speech or in writing?”, “Are they important to the language?”

In some cases, without even noticing these units’ importance and meaning, students are employing them in their speech or writing which causes grammatical and functional mistakes. Hence, in order to be fluent in speech and make grammatically correct sentences, students must find answers to these mentioned problems.

The next core problem related to teaching phraseological units is that students find it difficult to classify phraseological units and differentiate these features. It is true that, classification of these units is quite challenging, unless they are taught in a detailed way with practical examples, one will be unable to learn about them thoroughly. In other words, phraseological units are classified into many different groups according

to various characteristics. In some cases, language learners encounter with problems when employing them due to their lack of knowledge about classification.

The additional principal difficulty for ESL students is connected with translation of phraseological units. It is clear that, translation plays a vital role in every field of language. Without translating properly and correctly, one cannot express meaning in an accurate way. However, some second language learners have problems with translating phraseological units into their own native languages, because they may have a poor vocabulary resource, a lack of translating skills or difficulties with finding proper alternatives from their own language.

When it comes to its practical ways to teach, there are plenty of them. In the first place, the main importance of phraseological units and their function in the language must be explained to the learners. It can be done by giving answers to the mentioned questions above:

“What is a phraseological unit?” - Phraseological units are set expressions that are distinguished from free phrases and compound words with their stability. They are also heterogeneous. The meaning from these units may be perceived through a metaphorical or a metonymical way. Examples may include idioms, proverbs or collocations and etc. Take proverb as an example: “Dog does not eat dog”. It is an example for phraseological unit, as its meaning can be expressed, if this sentence is divided into parts. Also, it is not only about animal, but also human beings. It is about harmony between one group or society of people who do not harm the human beings of the same type. There is also Uzbek version of this proverb is: “Qarg’a qarg’aning ko’zini cho’qimaydi”. Therefore, I believe that if the teaching process include these kinds of interesting explanations and examples, students will be able to grasp the knowledge more easily.

“What kind of functions does it have?” - As for functions of the phraseological units, there are various types that it has such as communicative, nominative, cognitive or pragmatic. The initial one, communicative function of the phraseological units includes giving or receiving information in a concise way accurately. The nominative one is related to relationship of the things or objects in a real that involve numerous situations, events, activities and also replacement of them in speech by their phraseological denominations. The cognitive function is related to the cognition and realization of the meaning. Overall, phraseological units have many vital functions in language, since they can express meaning in a depth and illustrate it in a clear way.

“Is it used a lot in speech or in writing?”- When it come to responding the third question, phraseological units are employed in both speaking and writing, but to varying degrees. In informal speaking, it is prominent, as people use them to convey meaning more fluently and naturally. On the other hand, they can be used in writing to support ideas effectively, but not a lot.

“Are they important to the language?” - The phraseological units are very vital in language, since they help to express meaning and support ideas efficiently and expressively. They are highly connected with a way of people’s daily life, culture,

customs, attitudes and aspirations. Additionally, they are also crucial in enriching the vocabulary resources of English language.

These are four answers related to four questions. If teachers firstly start teaching with these concepts, language learners will be more interested in learning about phraseological units with a great passion.

The next teaching method that can be considered as a solution is about classification. Being aware of the classification of phraseological units makes the learning this feature easier and more enjoyable. It should be done by division into groups. Overall, the classification of phraseological units is consisted of two primary groups: semantic classification and structural classification.

Semantic classification is divided into 3:

Firstly, phraseological fusions that meaning may not be deduced from the meanings of individual parts. Examples: a mare's nest (a discovery which turns out to be worthless/false), to jump the gun (do something before a right time)

Secondly, phraseological unities that convey the meaning which might be deduced from the meanings of their parts or individual components. Examples: burn the midnight oil (work late until the night), spill the beans (reveal a secret).

Thridly, phraseological collocations involve one individual component with its direct meaning, on the other hand the other part of the collocation is employed metaphorically. Examples: save the day (prevent something from occurring bad), give a hand (assist someone).

Structural classification involves also 3:

1. Idioms - the meaning cannot be understood by analyzing words. Examples: as right as rain (perfect), fat chance (unlikely to happen).
2. Traditional phrases – they are very commonly used linguistic expressions to convey fixed meanings in culture and community which are passed down through generations. Examples: curiosity killed the cat (being curious can cause the trouble), haste makes waste (rushing may bring mistakes or faults).
3. Phraseological combinations – they can be in the form of verb-adverb (put off- to postpone), attributive-nominal (golden opportunity), verb-nominal (take place- occur), phraseological repetitions (safe and sound, fast and furious).

Phraseological units were classified by A.V. Koonin according to their way of formation. All in all, students ought to be taught about the groups and classifications of these phraseological units by explaining them clearly with using examples and illustrating their meanings in a clear and an interesting way. Therefore, ESL learners will be successful in acquiring the information about this classification efficiently.

The last viable solution is associated with a proper and correct translation of phraseological units, as many students make mistakes in the process of translating them into their own language due to these units' richness in emotions and expressiveness. Firstly, translation process can be made easier, if the meaning of a phraseological unit is analyzed without dividing it into individual components. For instance: "Do not judge a book by its cover" - it is about not making conclusions about

someone or something according to only appearance, since it may be deceiving. From this phrase, it is clear that meaning translation focuses on the whole phrase, not the individual parts. In Uzbek it can be equal to: “Muqovaga qarab kitobga baho berma”. Secondly, the translator may encounter with differences in terms of national and cultural aspects. Example: “It is raining cats and dogs” – means a heavy rain, but in some other languages this idiom may not express the similar meaning. Another example can be: “A good dog deserves a good bone” – people with well performance or manner should be rewarded. In English language this meaning is expressed with the metaphor of “dog”, while in Uzbek language “horse” metaphor is used to express the meaning with a little difference “Yaxshi otga - bir qamchi, yomon otga - ming qamchi”. Overall, if students take into considerations these important features when translating, they will succeed in the process of translations with a high effectiveness.

Conclusion

To conclude, I firmly believe that phraseology and phraseological units play very essential role in English language teaching, especially in speech production. The main reason is that they can make the language more efficient and natural with additional expressive meanings. Although teaching phraseological units has many principal difficulties in terms of misconceptions about their functions, roles in language, problems with their classification and differentiating them as well as translating these units into other languages, I can truly say that understanding them and using them will become easier with the mentioned viable solutions. Importantly, if students follow mentioned solutions and practical teaching methods, they become familiar with all strict rules, classification and translation styles of phraseological units. This, consequently, will be a significant tool for their language, as their proficiency in language can be enhanced

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