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The Cultural Significance of Idioms in the English Language

Student of SamSIFL: **To`xtayeva Jasmina**

Gmail: Tuxtayevajasmeen@gmail.com

Supervisor of SamSIFL: **Rasulov Normurod**

Annotation. This article explores definitions of idioms, connection between language and culture. Idioms are considered as an essential part of the English language and play a significant role in every day communication. Idioms are not only linguistic expression but also reflections of culture and social experience. Idioms are referred as expressions whose meanings cannot be understood easily or translated word for word. Many English idioms originate from daily life, literature, social practices and history. Studying idioms helps learners not only boost their language skills but also gain a deeper understanding of cultural values and perspectives. Culture and language are closely interconnected, as language serves as a tool through which cultural values, beliefs, and traditions are expressed and transmitted.

Keywords: online culture, idioms, english language, figurative expressions, lexical meaning, translation, linguistic change, cultural context.

Introduction. Language is the system that is utilized in order to have communication with others whereas dialect and idioms, mainly, are common among residents in an area to understand. More precisely, from other places people cannot comprehend what the locals are communicating. Besides, idioms are fixed expressions whose meanings cannot be understood from the literal meanings of the individual words. Rather than translating them one word-for-word, having carried a figurative meaning which is recognized by native speakers of a language, is much better and helpful to understand the topic fully. Idioms are a vital part of vocabulary and often reflect the cultural background, community and traditions.

Idioms play a significant role in communication because they make language more expressive, colorful and natural. Native speakers often use idioms in their daily life conversations, literature and media. For language learners, understanding idioms improves comprehension and helps them interact more naturally with native speakers. Without knowledge of idioms, learners may misunderstand the intended meaning of many expressions. Understanding idioms helps learners translate meanings more accurately. Moreover, idioms provide insight into cultural values and social attitudes, allowing speakers to better understand the cultural context behind the language[1].

In English, idioms often originate from historical events, cultural traditions, literature, and everyday experiences. Because of this, idioms are closely connected to the cultural and social background of a speech community.

Language and culture are strongly interconnected. Language reflects the traditions, values, and worldview of the people who speak it. Idioms, in particular, often represent cultural experiences and historical backgrounds.





Many English idioms come from agriculture, sports, literature, or social customs that were common in English-speaking societies. Therefore, studying idioms helps learners understand not only the language but also the cultural context in which the language developed. The purpose of this study is to explore how English idioms reflect cultural values and social experiences. By analyzing selected idioms, the study aims to show how cultural concepts and historical traditions influence the formation and meaning of idiomatic expressions. This research also seeks to demonstrate that understanding idioms can improve both linguistic competence and intercultural awareness among language learners[6].

Methods. Having a qualitative research approach is beneficial to analyze selected English idioms. Qualitative analysis focuses on understanding meanings, interpretations, and cultural implications rather than numerical data. In this research, idioms are examined to identify how they reflect cultural values, social practices, and historical experiences within English-speaking communities. The analysis aims to interpret the figurative meanings of idioms and explore their cultural significance[4].

The idioms analyzed in this study are collected from reliable linguistic sources, including dictionaries, academic books, and language learning materials. These sources provide authentic examples of commonly used English idioms along with their meanings and contexts. Using established references ensures the accuracy and reliability of the idioms selected for analysis[3,22]. After collecting the idioms, they are categorized according to different cultural themes. These themes may include daily life, historical events, traditions, social activities, and work practices. This classification helps to identify how different aspects of culture influence the formation and usage of idiomatic expressions in the English language. The final step of the analysis involves interpreting the idioms from a cultural perspective. The meanings of idioms are examined in relation to cultural practices and historical contexts. In some cases, comparisons may be made with expressions from other languages to highlight cultural similarities or differences. This interpretation helps demonstrate how idioms function as reflections of cultural identity and social values.

Results. Idioms are not merely linguistic expressions; they are deeply embedded in the culture and worldview of the speakers. They reflect historical experiences, social values, beliefs, and traditions. For instance, idioms often use metaphors rooted in everyday life, nature, religion, or historical events unique to a culture.

‘Through idioms, one can gain insights into how a community perceives the world and communicates shared knowledge. For example, English idioms like “the early bird catches the worm” emphasize the value of punctuality and initiative, reflecting cultural attitudes towards work and success’[5].

The analysis of selected English idioms reveals that many of them reflect important cultural concepts and everyday experiences. Idioms often originate from





traditional activities, occupations, and historical events that were significant in English-speaking societies. By examining these expressions, it becomes clear that idioms serve as linguistic representations of cultural knowledge and shared social understanding[2].

Various idioms can depict clear connections to social traditions and common practises. For instance, the idiom “break the ice” originally referred to ships breaking ice to create a path for others, but today it symbolizes starting a conversation or reducing social tension. Another example which is used in daily life is that ‘break a leg’. it doesn’t have translation accurately, but it simply means wishing some one a good luck. In the sentence,

~ Today I am going to take TOPIC (Korean test system).

~break a leg. I hope you will take it with bright colors.

The first idiom is referred as a good luck. The second idiom is translated ‘ taking exam with successfully’.

These idioms show how everyday practices and historical conditions influenced the development of figurative language. The study also shows that idioms often represent the attitudes and values of a society. Many English idioms emphasize practicality, perseverance, and efficiency, which are important values in many English-speaking cultures. Additionally, some idioms reflect historical experiences and social changes that have shaped the language over time. The analysis reveals several common cultural patterns in English idioms. Many idioms are related to themes such as work, nature, sports, and daily life activities. These recurring themes indicate that idioms are closely connected to the social environment in which the language developed. Identifying such patterns helps to better understand the relationship between language, culture, and human experience.

Discussion. The results of the analysis indicate that English idioms are closely connected to cultural experiences and social practices. The study shows that idioms often emerge from historical contexts, daily activities, and shared traditions within a society. By interpreting these expressions, it becomes clear that idioms are not only linguistic elements but also cultural symbols that reflect the collective knowledge and experiences of a community. Idioms reveal cultural perspectives because they are shaped by the values, beliefs, and ways of thinking of the people who use them. Many idioms originate from specific cultural environments such as agriculture, sports, or traditional customs. These expressions reflect how societies interpret everyday situations and communicate ideas. Therefore, idioms serve as a window into the cultural worldview of English-speaking communities. Understanding idioms is essential for language learners because idiomatic expressions are widely used in natural communication. Without knowledge of idioms, learners may struggle to understand conversations, literature, or media in English. Learning idioms helps students develop better comprehension, improve fluency, and communicate more naturally with native speakers. The





findings of this study also have implications for cross-cultural communication and language teaching. Teaching idioms in language classrooms can help learners develop cultural awareness alongside linguistic competence. By understanding the cultural meanings behind idioms, learners can avoid misunderstandings and communicate more effectively in multicultural environments. Therefore, incorporating idioms into language teaching can support both language development and intercultural understanding.

Conclusion. To sum up, idioms are not only linguistic expressions but also reflections of culture and social experience. English idioms reveal important aspects of the history, traditions, and worldview of English-speaking communities. Understanding idioms allows language learners to interpret meanings beyond literal words and gain deeper cultural awareness. Therefore, studying idioms contributes not only to language proficiency but also to intercultural understanding. Further research may explore how idioms in different languages reflect similarities and differences in cultural background.

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