

TEACHING IDIOMS THE STUDENTS OF HOTEL AND RESTAURANT BUSINESS SPECIALTY, ECONOMIC FACULTY (CASE STUDY OF ANECDOTES AND IDIOMS ABOUT FOOD)

Yu. L. HLAVATSKA, Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,
Kherson State Agrarian and Economic University
E-mail: yuliia_glavatskaya17@ukr.net
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1162-0251>

Abstract. *The paper is aimed at highlighting the problem of teaching idioms the students of non-philological specialties of higher education institutions, namely the specialty “Hotel and restaurant business”. Interest in this topic is due to the motivation of students to study authentic texts of various genres in foreign language classes and within the scientific circle, during which they get acquainted with the theoretical material of this matter.*

The aim of the paper is to illustrate and implement in the educational process a set of developed exercises aimed at studying idioms in the texts of English anecdotes and idioms about food, which are an effective means of expanding non-philological students’ vocabulary.

The paper exhibits information about the etymology of the anecdote, its definition, language features and ways to create a comic effect. Idioms are presented as special stylistic devices that have a positive effect on the expressiveness, brightness and originality of speech. It is shown that while teaching English idioms students use a multifaceted range of their competencies, comparing the idioms of two languages, delving into the history, customs and traditions of the country whose language is being studied. It is proved that this opportunity contributes to the work of the scientific group “English in intercultural communication”, as anecdotes and idioms about food are powerful sources of enriching the students’ vocabulary.

Results of the research. *The article outlines a set of exercises: translation of the text, creating your own anecdote using idioms, finding matches between idioms and their meanings, processing the text using idioms. Such exercises can be useful for the development of speech competences of higher education students, expanding their cultural and linguistic horizons. It is noted that English anecdotes and idioms about food reflect the national colour of the language and the cultural mentality of the nation.*

Key words: *anecdote; communication skills; genre of speech communication; idiom; language competences; scientific circle; vocabulary.*

Introduction. The main problem is that the usage of idioms, their functional loading and practical application are not included in academic programmes “Foreign language (English)” at non-philological Universities. A challenging problem which arises in this domain is the lack of studying texts of various genres that can enable students to improve their English level significantly. For this reason, the theoretical features of two concepts, “an anecdote” and “an idiom” are described in the paper with the reference to scholar writings. The communicative and expressive functions of idioms about food and their role in enhancing students’ communicative skills are analyzed. In order to have it both ways the students of Hotel and Restaurant Business Specialty are offered some passages of theoretical information about an anecdote and idioms. It is done during at classes of English club “English in intercultural communication” in the form of presentation to widen students’ philological outlook. The complex of training exercises is proposed at practical lessons according to academic programme “Foreign language (English)” to develop students’ communicative competence.

Analysis of recent researches. The issue

of an anecdote has been largely studied and many viable solutions have been found within various vectors of anecdotes investigation: genre studies (S. Bassay, V. Karasik, V. Samochina, A. Shmelev), pragmalinguistics (L. Bezugla), linguo-culturology (P. Hubych, O. Khadzhiohlova, O. Palcgevskaya), cognitive linguistics (S. Attardo, L. Borodina, M. Evstafyeva, A. Ptushka, V. Raskin, and others), the theory of semantic universals (A. Vezhbitska), post-folklore theory (A. Arhipova, A. Belousov), translation studies (I. Markoidze, L. Ponomarova, G. Solovei). Idioms have been identified as being special stylistic means making speech more expressive, vivid and peculiar [9]. A distinctive feature of idioms is their special stylistic character, the presence of an element of play, jokes, departing from the usual neutral style of speech, and in this regard, the presence of another parallel way of transmitting the same thought in a neutral style. Idioms are closely related not only to linguistic questions, but also the study of linguistic synonymy, in terms of researching the ways in which a speaker or a writer achieves special effects in speech, enhancing the statement, making it more expressive and colourful [14]. Thus, there is a

need to pay attention to teaching idioms at non-philological Universities as they can enrich the students' lexicon and, moreover, develop their soft skills.

The aim of the paper is to illustrate and implement in the educational process a set of developed exercises aimed at studying idioms in the texts of English anecdotes and idioms about food, which are an effective means of expanding non-philological students' vocabulary.

Methods of investigation. As we are interested in anecdotes about food chiefly and idioms used in them on the one hand and idioms about food on the other hand, we consider descriptive method as the basis for further application of other methods; contextual method allows to reveal idioms within the anecdotes; semantic method is used to analyze language units in terms of their semantic meaning; method of pragmatic analysis helps to describe the functional purpose of idiomatic units; method of developing and training exercises is oriented to practical activation of idioms at classes.

Results and discussion. An anecdote: etymology, definitions, linguistic peculiarities, and the ways of creating a comic effect.

To begin with, the word "*anecdote*" originates from two Greek words: "*A*" meaning "*not*" and "*kdotos*" – "*published*", thus, respectively, anecdote is something "*unpublished*". In that meaning it appeared in the titles of the first printed editions of ancient manuscripts. For the first time this term was found in Byzantium. Antique historian, Procopius of Caesarea, together with the official history of the reign of Justinian, led his own secret history of the court, containing scandalous stories about various court secrets. He called it "*Anecdota*" [11], and, as a result, this word began to denote unknown facts from interesting periods of history as well as intimate details from the life of famous personalities.

The analysis of English dictionaries entries has let us sum up that the term "*anecdote*" is generally understood to mean: "a short, often funny story, especially about something someone has done" [2]; "a usually short narrative of an interesting, amusing, or biographical incident"[8]; "short account of an incident (especially a biographical one)" [16].

An anecdote can be defined as "a short story or tale which can talk about any subject the speaker or author wishes to deliver" [17]. One of the peculiarities of an anecdote is that any truthful event or person can underlie it. The functional loading of an anecdote is entertainment. A certain subject is the core of an anecdote and, thus, the reader / the listener must think over the subject mentioned [17].

It is reported in literature that an anecdote, like any text belonging to a certain genre, has a

specific compositional arrangement, content and form. It reflects the national picture of the world, the precedent situation is played up and there are precedent characters, so an anecdote can be ranked among the precedent texts. Its compositional structure is two-phased: the asymmetry of introduction and denouement. The presence of the obligatory structural and semantic *pointe* before the final part is also considered to be dominant [5, p. 980].

V. Samochina claims that folklore semantics is also typical for an anecdote: stereotyping of the situation, image and character; pragmatism (pre-decision of the text – purely humorous); the traditional arrangement of personages with a clear binary opposition ("*Sh. Holmes – Dr. Watson*" [13, p. 269]; specific linguistic means; functional application of images or situations [13, p. 73]. The main ways of comic effect creation in the text of an anecdote are a pun, a parody, an alogism and a hyperbolization.

Idioms as special stylistic means of making speech more expressive, vivid and peculiar. English anecdotes about food, eating and restaurants, fat people, diets and dieting are full of idioms. Idioms are an integral part of any language. It is widely used not only in oral speech, newspaper articles, but also in literature, making the language of presentation brighter and simpler. Idioms are often found in the names of songs and movies. "Idiom is a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word on its own" [2]. Without knowing the meaning of idioms, humour cannot be understood, since it is in jokes and anecdotes the ambiguity of idiomatic expressions is often played up.

The lexical variety of idioms allows the teacher to use them in many tasks to develop students' speaking skills, to expand their vocabulary, to develop their creativity, translation skills and the ability to work with the dictionary at English lessons. Modern methods of teaching foreign languages dictate the application of approaches that shape not only linguistic professional competence of students, but also broaden their general horizons and cultural level. While learning English idioms, students use the multifaceted spectrum of their competencies, comparing English idioms with Ukrainian ones, delving into their history, customs and traditions of the country of the target language. Along with this, students are enriched with universal moral values and form their views on the world around them with all its diversity.

Anecdotes as well as idioms about food are valid sources of enriching the students' vocabulary. Idioms play an important role in learning English. They are often used by native speakers, since they are familiar to them and for

learning this language as foreign they are often incomprehensible by students.

Going deeper into the meaning of the idiom, it should be said that with the help of idioms in speech and writing one can: formulate or summarize the results of many life events; describe the human nature, tradition or habits of certain countries and communities; solve life problems.

Many idioms are based on real experience and accumulated knowledge of human nature. These sayings originate from the observation of the repeated human actions. Therefore, in many cases, the idioms can serve as a kind of reference material. This causes the importance of learning idioms.

In order to address the statements outlined above, we report here to some English anecdotes about food, eating and restaurants, fat people, diets and dieting [12].

The anecdote titled "Popeye" is the illustration of the event which is resulted in minds of Americans as the most noticeable pop-culture idols in the world: "In 1870, German chemist Erich von Wolf analyzed the iron content of green vegetables and accidentally misplaced a decimal point when transcribing data from his notebook. As a result, spinach was reported to contain a tremendous amount of iron - 35 milligrams per serving, not 3.5 milligrams (the true measured value). While the error was eventually corrected in 1937, the legend of spinach's nutritional power had already **taken hold**, one reason that studio executives chose it as the source of Popeye's vaunted strength" [12]. The idiom "take hold" fully correlates with the deeply rooted idea of Americans as for "spinach's nutritional power" as its meaning is "to become effective, established, or popular" [8].

In "Chefs and Restaurants" the habits and traditions of Americans are humorously described: "The Fat Duck was a great surprise. It's not where I would take my kids or go every week, but once in a while, it's a place to totally **immerse yourself in the food**. Chef Heston Blumenthal presents each meal in a special way: for one course, he gave us a little iPod to listen to the sound of the sea while we ate sashimi. It was served on a beautiful glass plate, and below it was a little sandbox. It's a really different experience" [12]. The idiom "immerse yourself in" has the meaning "to involve someone completely in something" [15]. This idiom matches up American mentality of being faithful to the traditions of the country.

Just to solve the problems in Chinese menus and "to adapt" them to English restaurant-goers Chinese restaurateurs invented funny, on the one hand, and strange (because of inadequate translation) names of dishes in the anecdote "Chinese Menus": "Collections of

comically poor translations are legion, but the Beijing Municipal government, **in sympathy with English-speaking restaurant-goers**, published a helpful guidebook recently of what the restaurateurs were trying, though unartfully, to say. In an April interview with the authors, NBC News learned the contents of "Hand Shredded A\$\$ Meat" [sic] (merely donkey meat) and other baffling English descriptions (all taken from actual menus), such as "Cowboy Leg", "Red-Burned Lion Head", "Blow-up Flatfish with No Result", and the very unhelpful "Tofu Made By Woman With Freckles" and "Strange Flavor Noodles" [12]. The Free Dictionary gives such a definition of the idiom "in sympathy with" as "in tandem with something; at the same time as and because of something; happening because something else has happened" [15]. This anecdote solves the life problem of Chinese restaurateurs that is to do business in full harmony with their clientele.

The origin of some idioms about food is associated with well-known events or incidents. The etymology of the idiom "That takes the cake", for example, dates back to the 19th century at the time when plantation slaves in southern states of America would regularly gather, put on their finest clothes and dance to banjo music. The best couple usually would win a cake [1]. "The cakewalk, in which ten couple participated, came off on Friday night, and the judges awarded the cake, which was a very beautiful and costly one, to Mrs Sarah and John Jackson" [1]. Today we deal with such a meaning of this idiom as "to win the prize, to rank first" [8]. One more idiom "In a nutshell" meaning "in a very brief statement" [8] is grounded on one ancient history about Roman philosopher, Pliny the Elder, famous for one of the first encyclopedias, who considered "Homer's epic saga, Iliad, as being written in such tiny handwriting that it could fit in a nutshell" [1].

Idioms are not a separate part of the language, which can either be used or not. Idioms are an essential part of the common dictionary of the English language, which is now undergoing great changes. To understand the target language better, you need to figure out the specific meaning of the idioms in a particular language. If you take the meaning of the idiom literally, it can be misinterpreted. One needs to know the hidden meaning inherent in a certain expression. Learning a language with deepening idioms can be complicated, but if you look at it from the other side, then it becomes obvious that through the study of idioms, we enrich our vocabulary, we develop the ability to listen, speak and write correctly. In addition, learning idioms can be very fun, which feels more like relaxation than challenging work. The main thing is to present this kind of work to students correctly.

Complex technique of teaching the idioms. We have concluded that productive idiom learning is possible if you adhere to a comprehensive methodology that systematically includes working with idioms while learning English: separation of idioms by topics, which will greatly facilitate memorization; study through the search for analogs in Ukrainian; mastering idioms in context in order to understand in what situation will be appropriate to use this or that expression; a more detailed study of the history of idioms; working off the acquired knowledge in exercises and in oral speech; use of new technologies in the form of useful applications, which also make it easier to learn English idioms.

As part of this approach, we have developed a number of exercises, allowing the students quickly and effectively to learn English idioms with subsequent application in writing and speaking. Analysis of various types of exercises leads us to the conclusion that it is necessary to carry out the selection of idioms, strictly dosing their quantity, since it is easy to synchronize idioms in memory for a long time in an associative way, that is, one need to perform different types of tasks on using the same idioms. The students may be proposed to look through the idioms from "English Club, Idioms/Food" [6] and to examine vocabulary entries [15].

While performing Exercise 1, students are asked to translate the text correctly interpreting the meaning of the idioms included in it, by searching for analogues in Ukrainian. In the activity below, students for the first time get acquainted with the new list of idiomatic expressions, respectively, it is important to make sure that the idioms are translated correctly. After the task is completed and verified, it would be rational to give some oral examples using new idioms for fixing the material.

Exercise 1. Translate the text "Never Trust A Man (With Egg On His Face)" [10] and find Ukrainian equivalents.

Exercise 2 orients students to be ready with writing a short essay. The task is to work out idioms in the context of your own composition.

Exercise 2. Make up a short story (an anecdote) trying to use as much idioms from the list below as you can: (your) bread and butter, not your cup of tea, in sympathy with, to feel bloated, a flash in the pan, take with a pinch of salt, a knuckle sandwich.

Exercise 3 is designed for matching the idioms about food with their meanings.

Exercise 3. Match the idioms about food with their meanings. Make up sentences of your own: a lemon, a piece of cake, bring home the bacon, cheap as chips, cry over spilt milk, finger in every pie, take with a pinch of salt [7]. The link to the source [15] will help to cope with the task:

something that is worthless or much less valuable than one was led to believe; to consider or evaluate something, such as a statement, while keeping in mind that it may not be completely true or accurate, typically due to the unreliability of the source; a very easy task or accomplishment; involvement in several different activities or enterprises at once, especially when maintaining some level of influence over those activities; to earn money, as from steady employment; to be upset over something that cannot be fixed, often something minor; very inexpensive.

To activate the meanings of idioms about food students can be proposed to use funny stories to illustrate the meanings of the idioms as it is shown in Exercise 4: "John's dad came home one afternoon and said he could no longer bring home the bacon. His Dad said, "I lost the job that I never liked, and now I just went from the frying pan into the fire." John told his father he must make his bread and butter doing something he really loved to do. That way work doesn't quite feel so much like work. His dad took his advice, buttered up Steve Jobs and got a job creating iPhone apps. His dad told John it wasn't easy working at a new job, but he had no problem remaining as cool as a cucumber under the pressure" [4].

This exercise is a fruitful task as it presupposes the students' comprehension of the idioms meaning, on the one hand, and appropriate ways of using them, on the other hand.

Situational examples are necessary too when students are to introduce and define any idioms. In this case food idioms can be remarkably entertaining [4]. Some anecdotal examples should be given to demonstrate them. To concentrate on food idioms exactly, we can point out that students' illustrations must be connected with the kitchen, cooking or dining out (restaurants, cafes, pubs, etc.). This makes them invent their examples more stimulating and unforgettable. The following example may be offered: "Our waiter was very charming, and even gave us a free dessert. He was definitely the cream of the crop" [4].

The purpose of the next task is also activation of English idioms. In this exercise, students are encouraged to rewrite the text using idioms. The difficulty is it is not always easy to see and understand where the idiom is hidden in a certain context.

Exercise 5. Rewrite the text with the list of idioms below: meat and potatoes, you are what you eat, to break some eggs to make an omelet, a good egg, cry over spilt milk, to walk on eggshells, one man's meat is another man's poison [18]:

"My mother always told us there is no use expressing regret about something that has

already happened or cannot be changed. That means you should not get angry when something bad happens and cannot be changed. People said my mother was a generous woman. She always helped everyone in difficult situations. We never had to tiptoe around her. We did not have to weigh our words because she was always good-tempered with us. She also told we need to reach a certain goal to move forward.

My mother believed that we must eat only healthy food as it is very important. As a result, she always gave us only wholesome food. She served us meat and potatoes for dinner. It can also mean the primary, core and nucleus of something. Here is another expression my mother used to say. It is connected with meat. It illustrates the situation when one person likes something very much whereas another person may dislike the same thing”.

Conclusions and prospects of further research. Overall, our results demonstrate a strong effect of English idioms in the texts of anecdotes reflecting the national colouring of the language as well as the cultural mentality of the nation. The present findings confirm that one of the leading characteristics of the idioms about

food is expressive function. The broad implication of the present paper is the further proof that knowledge and correct use of English idioms about food brighten a conversation, broaden up the students’ cultural and linguistic horizons. Moreover, all idioms about food are pragmatically loaded. These findings provide a potential mechanism for development the students’ communicative competence.

The set of exercises except the above may include making up dialogues, anecdotes, commenting statements with idioms about food. Such exercises show high results of the development of idiomatic expressions by students when they regular use them as well as periodic return and revision already learned idioms. This approach is especially effective if idioms in all aspects will be studied systematically if a minimum of them is selected with the subsequent compulsory assimilation within the course “Foreign language (English)”.

Future research on idiomatic expressions explanations of their studying necessity at English lessons or during extracurricular activities, English club, for instance.

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НАВЧАННЯ ІДІОМ ЗДОБУВАЧІВ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТІ «ГОТЕЛЬНО-РЕСТОРАННА СПРАВА» ЕКОНОМІЧНОГО ФАКУЛЬТЕТУ (НА МАТЕРІАЛІ АНЕКДОТІВ ТА ІДІОМ ПРО ЇЖУ)

Ю. Л. Главацька

Анотація. Стаття зорієнтована на висвітлення проблеми навчання ідіом здобувачів нефілологічних спеціальностей закладів вищої освіти, а саме спеціальності «Готельно-ресторанна справа». Інтерес до цієї теми викликаний мотивацією здобувачів щодо вивчення автентичних текстів різних жанрів на заняттях з іноземної мови та у межах наукового гуртка, під час роботи якого здобувачі знайомляться з теоретичним матеріалом зазначеної проблеми.

Мета статті полягає в тому, щоб проілюструвати та впровадити в освітній процес комплекс розроблених вправ, спрямованих на вивчення ідіом у текстах англійськомовних анекдотів та безпосередньо самих ідіом про їжу, які постають ефективним засобом розширення словникового запасу здобувачів нефілологічних спеціальностей.

У статті подано інформацію про етимологію анекдоту, його визначення, мовні особливості та способи створення комічного ефекту. Ідіоми презентовано як особливі стилістичні засоби, що позитивно впливають на виразність, яскравість та своєрідність мовлення. Продемонстровано, що під час навчання англійських ідіом здобувачі використовують багатогранний спектр своїх компетентностей, порівнюючи ідіоми двох мов, заглиблюючись в історію, звичаї та традиції країни, мова якої вивчається. Доведено, що така можливість сприяє роботі наукового гуртка «Англійська мова в міжкультурній комунікації», адже анекдоти та ідіоми про їжу є потужними джерелами збагачення словникового запасу здобувачів.

Результати дослідження. У статті окреслено комплекс вправ: переклад тексту, створення власного анекдоту з використанням ідіом, пошук відповідностей між ідіомами та їхніми значеннями, переробка тексту з вживанням ідіом. Такі вправи можуть стати у пригоді розвитку мовленнєвих компетентностей здобувачів вищої освіти, розширення їхнього культурного та мовного кругозору. Зазначено, що англійськомовні анекдоти та ідіоми про їжу відображають національний колорит мови та культурний менталітет нації.

Ключові слова: анекдот; комунікативні навички; жанр мовленнєвого спілкування; ідіома; мовні компетентності; науковий гурток; словниковий запас.