

DERIVATION OF ENGLISH IDIOMS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ITS KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract

The article aims to discuss the importance of acquiring English idiomatic expressions' origin and gives information about the derivation of some idioms.

Key words: idiom, origin, example, meaning, dictionary.

People use many idioms without knowing their prior denotation. However, the knowledge of idioms' origin can make a big contribution to comprehending the language better and convey the ideas perceptibly. It is necessary that all speakers of the English Language become experienced at using English idiomatic expressions. One of the most significant outlooks in the study of the English language is the study of English idioms. Every language has such expressions as their peculiar words make this expression mislay their original meaning.

According to Linda and Roger Flawell, idioms break the normal rules. One of the interesting things about idioms is that they are anomalies of language.

Frazer defines idioms as which can organize one important part of the language and culture. Knowing a language means knowing idioms of the language.

Idioms are numerous and frequently occur in the English Language. It is calculated that the English language contains more than 25000 idiomatic expressions [Idiomatic expressions.2014]. Recent research has shown that students are to be taught that there is link between an idiom and its meaning. So, learners should learn idioms in a systematic way, instead of teaching to remember by heart. In such a way, they become much easier to understand.

Idioms do not mean precisely. They have hidden meanings. They connect to immutable word order. Word for word translation of idioms into other languages does not demonstrate its exact meaning or it gives really opposite denotation. We cannot change the order of occurrence of an idiom⁴. They are built upon the history, heritage, traditions of a nation; they share cultural and historical information. Many kinds of idioms are derived from particular fields and specific branches of experience. For instance, from entertainment, dancing or sports. So, they are not the results of individuals, but they are the outcomes of collective intellectual in the civilization which are impacted by politics, trade, crafts, art and so on.

English speakers grow up using idiomatic expressions on a daily basis. Idioms are used by Americans and Englishmen easily as they are customary for them. But for the foreign learner, it might be hard to understand. As it can be difficult to work out what an idiom means even when you know all the individual words in the idiom, you often need to look up idioms in a dictionary [English idioms in use]. There are many types of idiom dictionaries for those who want to learn about idioms. Newspapers and magazines, radio programs, television shows, films are also sources of idioms.

Teachers of English Language should be taught to know of the etymology of idioms; so that they can improve their students understanding of idioms and help them to remember. Teaching such information will help learners better understand and use when it is necessary. It greatly broadens the knowledge of the language.

Idioms are best used in spoken rather than written English. They carry non-arbitrary meanings. For instance, we shall see the idiom "to have a chip on one's shoulder", it means to be upset about something that happened a long time ago, to have a grudge, to hold a grudge or have like a bad attitude towards something, some topic, and some

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idea. This idiom has a specific history which is an old North American tradition. When two boys wanted to fight, one would put a chip of wood on his shoulder and other would have to knock it off. It was a way of inviting someone to fight. For example: *"Our neighbor has a chip on his shoulder and always trying to start a fight"*.

Idioms should be regarded seriously, because they do not always mean as accurately as they seem. Therefore, many linguists dedicated themselves to finding the origins of idioms. Now, we shall investigate some of which are featured below.

We often come across the idiom *"feeling under the weather"*. Most of us are aware of its meaning also. That is to feel ill. For example: *"I had to have time off my work yesterday, because I was feeling under the weather"*. The origin of this idiom is thought to be noticed in nature. When a sailor was feeling ill, he would go beneath the bow, which is the front of the boat. This would protect him from bad conditions, as he was under the bad weather that he could further sicken him. Thus, a sailor who was sick could be described as being under the weather.

Take a look at this idiom: *"Break a leg."* Maybe you have come across it many times. There are many different theories as to where the term *"break a leg"* came from. One theory is that it originated in theatre. Wishing somebody good luck was considered to cause more misfortune than fortune, so, by wishing the opposite, by saying *"break a leg"*, would perform well. However, there are other theories which claim that it originates from the ancient Greeks.

"In the same boat". It dates back all the way to the ancient Greeks, the idiom was used to show the risk of passengers travelling in small boats- a very usual use of transportation at the time. Over time, it has become used to describe situations not just on the sea and has been adopted to apply any situation in which individuals are in a similar predicament. For example: *"I am really in the same boat, it is really hard"*.

Many of us have to admit that we use idioms without even thinking about where they come from; but to a student learning English, they can be deeply chaotic. As you see, knowing a bit about the origins of these sayings has already helped to understand the meaning and important competency in English. Therefore, taking a look at some other idioms' origins is not useless.

"Wolf in sheep's clothing". This idiom is defined that someone who looks harmless but may actually be very dangerous. For instance: *"Never trust strangers on the street, they may be wolves in sheep's clothing!"* In a story by Aesop, the famous Greek storyteller, a hungry wolf killed a sheep and wore its skin to get to the flock of sheep thought the wolf was also one of them and this dangerous animal hid under the sheep's skin and managed to fool the flock!

The next idiom *"Turn a blind eye"* means to refuse to acknowledge a known truth. There are many disputable origins of this phrase, but it is accepted that comes from a comment made by British Admiral Horatio Nelson. In 1801 he led the attack alongside Admiral Sir Hyde Parler in Battle of Copenhagen. Nelson was blind in one eye. Parler wanted Nelson via flags that he needed unloose. Nelson then, holding the telescope to his blind eye, pretended not see the signal making a wily comment to fellow officer about reserving the night to use his blind eye.

There are so many people, even native speakers, who use these expressions not being aware of their huge history.

As you can see, in such a way, that is knowing derivations of idiomatic expressions become much easier to understand and remember them. Therefore, trying to guess the origin or the meaning without dictionary is important even it is a bit difficult when they are come across. For instance, *"Breath a fire"*, it is not difficult to catch the meaning that anger is processed through the image of something hot inside. By being angry, one's body temperature is raised that is why many people get red in the face when they are angry. Or *"I am so hungry I could eat a horse"*, is used to show the hunger of the speaker. Because, it is certain that horse is a really big animal and the speaker is able to eat it. The phrase helps to show the listener just how hungry the speaker is. Also, for instance, the expression *"when pigs fly"* is a figure of speech that shows impossibility. The implication of such a phrase is that the circumstances in question will never occur. It is also certain that pigs can never fly.

In the final analysis, if one knows the origin of the idiom, one will be able to comprehend its meaning. It might not be as easy as drinking a glass of water for non-native

speakers to use idioms but they are thought an essential part of the English Language. Thus, non-native speakers of English should learn idioms of English so as to be able to communicate effectually and sound more natural. Indubitably, knowing the origin of the idioms can significantly assist to learn the idioms faster.

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