

Using Idioms to Enhance Proficiency and Communicative Competence

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WHAT IS IDIOM?

- Idioms are fixed combinations of words whose meaning is often difficult to guess from the meaning of each individual word.

(e.g.) kick the bucket
 took a shine to
 see eye to eye



WHAT IS IDIOM?

- Idiomatic phrases correlate with various grammatical parts of speech; they can be verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.

(e.g.) - Time took a shine to his teacher (verb + object + preposition)

- We arrived safe and sound (binomial)



WHAT IS IDIOM?

- Many idioms have a set form: their verb tense and/or word order may not be changed in any way or the meaning of the phrase is destroyed.

(e.g.) - Action speak louder than words
- Caught between two stools



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WHY DO WE NEED TO TEACH IDIOMS?

1. **Benefits of enhancing communicative competence:** Idioms are richly embedded with cultural references. Many idioms are embedded in various genres: fictions, newspapers, magazines, TV shows, films, songs, daily conversations, etc. (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010)



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WHY DO WE NEED TO TEACH IDIOMS?

- 2. Benefits of enhancing contextual comprehension in higher level:** Idioms have syntactical constraints and at times need a greater context to be interpreted than do vocabulary. Therefore context plays a key role in the processing of idioms. (Ortony, Shallert, Reynolds, & Antos 1978)



EXPERIMENT

- Group 1: The extended-context group who receive idiom instruction through context
- Group 2: The limited-context group who receive idiom instruction through sentence
- Group 3: The control group who who receive no idiom instruction



EXPERIMENT

- GROUP 1: Read the passage and guess the meaning of an idiom in bold.

“우리들이 필요에 의해서 물건을 갖게 되지만, 때로는 그 물건 때문에 적잖이 마음이 쓰이게 된다. 그러니까 무엇인가를 갖는다는 것도 다른 한편 무엇인가에 얽매인다는 것이다.”

(무소유)



EXPERIMENT

- GROUP 2: guess the meaning of the idioms in bold.

“상관없다고 했지만 나는 시험 점수에 자꾸
마음이 쓰였다.”



EXPERIMENT

- Group 3: Read a passage and underline idioms you identified.

“우리들이 필요에 의해서 물건을 갖게 되지만, 때로는 그 물건 때문에 적잖이 마음이 쓰이게 된다. 그러니까 무엇인가를 갖는다는 것은 다른 한편 무엇인가에 얽매인다는 것이다. 필요에 따라 가졌던 것이 도리어 우리를 부자유하게 얽어 맨다고 할 때 주객이 전도되어 우리는 가짐을 당하게 된다는 말이다. 그러므로 많이 가지고 있다는 것은 흔히 자랑거리로 되어 있지만, 그마만큼 많이 얽히어 있다는 측면도 동시에 지니고 있는 것이다.” (무소유)



EXPERIMENT

- Hypothesis
 - Students who received idiom instructions through context will show higher comprehension of idiom and context better than students who received instruction in sentence.
 - Students who received no idiom instruction will show higher comprehension than students who received instruction in sentence.



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