ENGLISH IDIOMS RELATED TO KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

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Abstract: This paper is aimed at identifying how to accurately understand and interpret knowledge related idioms, expressions, and proverbs, which are an essential part of the English language. Learning idioms is no piece of cake and they can represent a difficulty in foreign language learning contexts. Although it is common knowledge that language is in constant evolution and some idiomatic expressions have fallen out of use, there are still many that stood the test of time. First, we should consider the definition of the elusive term "idiom" given by The Webster Dictionary, which defines idioms as:"an expression whose meaning cannot be predicted from the usual meanings of its constituent elements."

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As language and culture are interconnected and idiomatic expressions are closely related to the culture of the speakers, they can represent a difficulty in foreign language learning contexts. More often than not, when people from different cultures interact, one of the most difficult obstacles they face is the linguistic barrier. The relationship between language and culture is mainly reflected in the lexicon. Therefore, learning idiomatic expressions is essential when it comes to enriching our vocabulary and facilitating intercultural understanding.

In addition to idiomaticity, these expressions stand out for being within the linguistic competence of each speaker, exclusive to each language, thus making their learning and translation into another language extremely difficult. This paper is aimed at identifying how to accurately understand and interpret idiomatic expressions related to knowledge, as follows:

Ace a test

To do exceptionally well in something, especially an exam or other high-pressure situation.

A lightbulb moment

An occasion when someone suddenly realizes or understands something they did not realize or understand before.

A little bird told me

Used to say that you have heard a piece of information about someone from someone else.

A little learning is a dangerous thing

Gaining some knowledge can make a person believe that they have now become experts in that field

Pass with flying colours

If you do something such as pass an exam with flying colours, you do it very successfully.

A pearl of wisdom

People describe what someone says as *pearls of wisdom* to suggest that it is wise or helpful, often when they are joking.

A penny for your thoughts

Said when you want to know what another person is thinking, usually because they have been quiet for a while.

A Penny Saved Is a Penny Earned

omething you say that means it is wise to save money

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A picture is worth a thousand words

The idiom *a picture is worth a thousand words* suggests that complex ideas can often be conveyed with just a single image, capturing emotions and narratives more effectively than lengthy descriptions. It speaks to the power of visual storytelling to transcend language barriers and evoke a universal understanding.

Ahead of the curve

To be one of the first to change to a new idea or way of doing something that later becomes generally popular.

An old head on young shoulders

A child or young person who thinks and talks like an older person who has more experience of life.

As far as anyone knows

Based on what someone knows

Be on the same page/Read from the same page

If a group of people are on the same page, they are working well together and have the same aims.

Better late than never

Said when you think that it is better for someone or something to be late than never to arrive or to happen.

Bite Off More Than You Can Chew

To try to do something that is too difficult for you.

Book-smart

Having a good understanding of academic and theoretical matters

Bookworm

If you describe someone as a bookworm, you mean they are very fond of reading.

To burn the candle at both ends

To work or do other things from early in the morning until late at night and so get very little rest.

Burning the midnight oil, pull an all-nighter

To work late into the night

Brainstorm

(of a group of people) to suggest a lot of ideas for a future activity very quickly, before considering some of them more carefully.

Brush up on

to improve your knowledge of something already learned but partly forgotten

Common knowledge

A fact that everyone knows.

Cover A Lot Of Ground

1. to move or traverse a certain distance;
2. to make a certain amount of progress.

Crack a book

To open a book in order to read or study.

Cry Over Spilt Milk

To feel sorry or sad about something that has already happened; used to emphasize that this is not helpful.

Cutting class

To skip a school class or a day of school without an excuse; also called skipping school or playing hooky.

In the dark

If you are *in the dark* about something, you do not know anything about it.

Drop a hint

To tell someone something in a way that is not direct.

A Drop in the Ocean

If you say that something is *a drop in the ocean*, you mean that it is a very small amount which is unimportant compared to the cost of other things or is so small that it has very little effect on something.

Eat Humble Pie

To admit that one was wrong or accept that one has been defeated.

An Elephant Never Forgets

This idiom is commonly used when referring to someone who has an excellent memory.

Figure something out

If you figure out a solution to a problem or the reason for something, you succeed in solving it or understanding it.

Fishing for Compliments

To try to make someone say something nice about you, usually by first criticizing yourself – used to show disapproval.

Food for thought

If you give someone food for thought, you make them think carefully about something.

Get one's feet wet

To try or experience something different or risky (especially for the first time).

Get the hang of something

2. to understand the technique of doing something

b. to perceive the meaning or significance of

Get the picture

If you get the picture, you understand the situation, especially one which someone is describing to you.

Get Your Ducks in a Row

To get everything properly organized and under control.

Cannot get your head around something

If you say that you can't get your head around something, you mean that you cannot understand it.

Get your head around something = To succeed in understanding or accepting something such as a new idea.

Grey area

If you refer to something as a grey area, you mean that it is unclear, for example because nobody is sure how to deal with it or who is responsible for it, or it falls between two separate categories of things.

Get wise to something

This idiom refers to understanding a dishonest situation or way of doing something.

Give the benefit of the doubt

To believe something good about someone, rather than something bad, when you have the possibility of doing either.

Great minds think alike

Said to someone just after you have discovered that they have had the same idea as you.

Go in one ear and out the other

If you say that something you hear goes in one ear and out the other, you mean you quickly forget it.

Have a finger in every pie

To be involved in something, often when your involvement is not wanted.

Hit the books

To study hard.

A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand

If a group's members are in perpetual disagreement, the group will eventually cease to exist.

Ignorance is bliss

Said to emphasize that sometimes it is better for you if you do not know all the facts about a situation.

In the know

To have inside information or know more about something than other people; to be well-informed about something.

Jump to conclusions

If you say that someone jumps to a conclusion, you are critical of them because they decide too quickly that something is true, when they do not know all the facts.

Know a trick or two

Used to say that someone knows more than someone else or can do something better than them.

Know better than to do something

If someone knows better than to do something, they are old enough or experienced enough to know it is the wrong thing to do.

Know someone inside out

To know something/someone completely—everything about that person/ about it.

Know something by heart

If you know something such as a poem by heart, you have learned it so well that you can remember it without having to read it.

Know something like the back of your hand/ like a book

To thoroughly and completely understand someone's emotions, motivations, etc., or how something works.

Know the ropes,learn the ropes

To learn/know how to do a job or activity.

Know the score

If you *know the score*, you know what the real facts of a situation are and how they affect you, even though you may not like them.

Know something backwards and forwards

In British English, if you say that someone knows something backwards, you are emphasizing that they know it very well. In American English, you say that someone knows something backward and forward.

Know your own mind

To be confident and have firm ideas about what you want and like.

Know your onions

This idiom refers to a person’s depth of knowledge on a particular subject.

Know which side your bread is buttered

To know who to be nice to and what to do in order to get an advantage for yourself

Know which way the wind is blowing

If a person tries to discover which way the wind blows/is blowing, they try to discover information about a situation, especially other people's opinions, before they take action.

Knowledge is power

Having more knowledge, especially through formal education, will give one more control over one's future.

Learn the hard way

Understand a situation or develop a skill by learning from your mistakes and bad experiences.

Live And Learn

An exhortation to gain knowledge from living experiences. Commonly used after an accident or misfortune to indicate a moral lesson.

To be lost in thought

If you are *lost in thought*, you give all your attention to what you are thinking about and do not notice what is going on around you.

A Leopard Cannot Change Its Spots

If you say *that a leopard cannot change its spots*, you mean that people or things are not able to change their basic characteristics, especially when you are critical of those characteristics.

A Little Bird Told Me

used to say that you have heard a piece of information about someone from someone else.

Mind-blowing

If you describe something as mind-blowing, you mean that it is extremely impressive or surprising.

No brainer

The meaning of *no brainer* is something that requires a minimum of thought.

Not know the half of it

It is used to say that a situation is even worse than one would think it is or than it seems to be.

None the wiser

To still be confused about something even after it has been explained to you.

Not have a clue

To not know anything about something or to have no idea what to do about something.

Off the top of my head

If you say something off the top of your head, you say it without thinking about it much before you speak, especially because you do not have enough time.

On the ball

Paying close attention usually for the purpose of anticipating approaching danger or opportunity.

In/Out of the loop

To have or not have the special knowledge or power that belongs to a particular group of people.

Pick his brain

To ask someone who knows a lot about a subject for information or their opinion.

Piece of cake

If you think something is very easy to do, you can say it is *a piece of cake*. People often say this to stop someone feeling worried about doing something they have to do.

Pool of knowledge

It refers to the vibrant amalgamation of information, insights, and wisdom held collectively by a group or a community.

Put two and two together

If you put two and two together, you work out the truth about something for yourself, by using the information that is available to you.

Rack one's brain

To strain in mental effort, especially to remember something or to find the solution to a problem.

Read between the lines

To try to understand someone's real feelings or intentions from what they say or write.

Ring a bell

If something rings a bell, it reminds you of something, but you cannot remember exactly what it is.

A rolling stone gathers no moss

Said to mean that a person who is always travelling and changing jobs has the advantage of having no responsibilities, but also has disadvantages such as having no permanent place to live.

School of hard knocks

If you learn something in the school of hard knocks, you learn it as a result of difficult or unpleasant experiences.

Sing from the same hymn sheet

If you say that people, especially people in the same organization, are *singing from the same hymn sheet* or are *singing from the same song sheet*, you mean that they are saying the same things in public about something and appear to agree about it.

Shed light on

To provide information about something or to make something easier to understand.

Slip your mind

If something slips your mind, you forget it.

Smart cookie

A smart cookie is an idiom used to describe someone who is clever and quick-witted.

A Snake in the Grass

Someone that you strongly dislike and disapprove of because, although they pretend to be your friend, they are actually your enemy and betray you.

A Stitch in Time Saves Nine

Said to mean that it is better to act or deal with problems immediately, because if you wait and deal with them later, things will get worse and the problems will take longer to deal with.

Straight from the horse's mouth

If you hear something (straight) from the horse's mouth, you hear it from the person who has direct personal knowledge of it.

Street smart/street wise

Someone who is street smart knows how to deal with difficult or dangerous situations, especially in big cities.

Take with a grain of salt

To not completely believe something that you are told, because you think it is unlikely to be true.

A Taste of Your Own Medicine

To treat someone as badly as they have treated you.

Teach someone a lesson

A person or experience that teaches you a lesson improves your future behaviour by making you experience the bad effects of your actions.

Teacher's pet

A student in a class who is liked best by the teacher and therefore treated better than the other students.

Tech savvy

Having a good knowledge and understanding of modern technology, especially computers.

Tell tales out of school

To share secrets, often knowing that doing so will cause problems for someone else.

The ball is in your court

It is time for someone to deal with a problem or make a decision, because other people have already done as much as they can.

The devil is in the details

It means that when you do not concentrate on the details of something you may run into unexpected problems.

The early bird catches the worm

A saying that means someone will have an advantage if they do something immediately, or before other people do it.

The elephant in the room

If you say there is an elephant in the room, you mean that there is an obvious problem or difficult situation that people do not want to talk about.

The whole nine yards

Everything you can possibly want, have, or do in a particular situation .

Two heads are better than one

Used to say that two people are more likely to solve a problem or think of an idea than on person working alone.

Thirst for knowledge/education/information

A strong desire for knowledge etc

Turn a blind eye

To ignore something that you know is wrong.

Under one's belt

To have learned or succeeded in something that might be an advantage in the future.

Up to speed

If you are up to speed, you have all the most recent information that you need about something.

Use your noodle

To use one's own intelligence.

When in Rome

When you are visiting another place, you should follow the customs of the people in that place.

Without batting an eye/Not bat an eye/eyelash

To show no sign of surprise or worry when something unexpected happens.

(A)Walking encyclopaedia/disaster

Someone who seems to be a human form of disaster, encyclopedia.

Wise for their years/ wise beyond their years

To have a sagacity, maturity, or intellect that is or seems preternatural for one's age.

Working knowledge of something

Enough knowledge of a system, subject, language etc to be able to use it or to do a particular job.

Wrap your head around something

To succeed in understanding something difficult or strange.

You can't teach an old dog new tricks

Said to mean that it is very difficult to teach someone new skills or to change someone's habits or character.

Your guess is as good as mine

Something you say when you do not know the answer to a question.

Zip it

A rude and angry way of telling someone to stop talking.

You are a sight for sore eyes

A way of saying that you are very pleased to see someone or something, or that you think someone or something is very attractive.

You are on the right track

To be doing something in a way that will bring good results.

As we have seen in the examples presented in this paper, the meaning of idiomatic expressions cannot always be understood by studying the words in their composition. Subsequently, idiom studies can be such meaningful attempts to research language and cognition. but idioms are still constantly used in both spoken and written English. Using these idioms related to academic knowledge appropriately will help you communicate more effectively.

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