

ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS AS EFFECTIVE MEANS OF ENHANCING VOCABULARY

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The English language is abundant in phraseological units (PUs), which encompass idioms, collocations, and fixed expressions. These units are vital for natural and fluent language use, thereby playing a critical role in effective communication [12; 9]. Despite their significance, language learners frequently struggle with PUs due to their idiomatic nature and context-specific usage [4; 12]. Hence, there is an increasing interest in leveraging PUs as effective means to enhance vocabulary acquisition. This article examines the importance of PUs in vocabulary development, their cognitive and communicative benefits, and practical strategies for implementing them in language education.

Phraseological units can be defined as combinations of words that exhibit a certain degree of semantic unity and are often context-specific [9; 4]. Their cognitive significance lies in their ability to encapsulate complex meanings and cultural nuances within concise expressions. For instance, the idiom "kick the bucket" conveys the idea of dying without explicitly stating it, while the collocation "make a decision" emphasizes a common action relevant in many contexts. Cognitive theories suggest that humans store language in prefabricated chunks, facilitating quicker access and retrieval during communication [8; 43]. This associative network of PUs allows learners to bypass the need for word-for-word translation, leading to improved fluency. Additionally, PUs can serve as mnemonic devices, aiding memory retention by grouping words together into meaningful phrases [10; 56].

Enhancing vocabulary through phraseological units

PUs also play a vital role in effective communication. They add color and expressiveness to language, enabling speakers to convey attitudes and emotions succinctly [3; 78]. Furthermore, the use of PUs can signal a speaker's fluency and cultural competence, as native speakers often rely on them in daily conversations [11; 37]. To harness the benefits of PUs for vocabulary acquisition, language educators can employ various pedagogical strategies. Integrating PUs into teaching practices can significantly enhance learners' linguistic competence and confidence in utilizing the language.

Contextual learning involves exposing students to PUs within authentic and meaningful contexts. Instruction can utilize real-world materials, including dialogues from films, articles, and songs that prominently feature PUs. This approach enables learners to comprehend how these phrases function naturally, leading to practical understanding of their usage [10; 104]. It is emphasized that the importance of contextual learning in language acquisition, noting that cultural context enhances comprehension [6; 22].

Collaborative Learning Activities. Peer interaction is critical for vocabulary development. Activities such as role-plays, group discussions, and peer teaching can help students explore and actively use PUs. For instance, students could create dialogues that incorporate specific PUs or engage in role-plays that require the application of these units in simulated real-life situations. Such collaborative tasks encourage negotiation of meaning and promote deeper engagement with the language [5; 125]. According to Akhmedova, collaborative learning significantly enhances vocabulary retention among Central Asian learners, as it fosters interactive environments [2; 45].

Multimedia Tools. Technology can be harnessed to enhance the teaching of vocabulary. Digital platforms that offer quizzes, games, and interactive exercises focusing on PUs can promote engagement and active learning. For instance, using apps like Quizlet or Kahoot to create interactive activities surrounding PUs can foster an enjoyable learning environment [10; 178]. It is suggested that multimedia tools effectively increase student motivation and comprehension [7; 12].

Integrating PUs into Writing and Speaking Tasks. Incorporating phraseological units into writing tasks can help students apply their learning in creative ways. For example, students could be tasked

with writing short stories or essays that include a certain number of PUs. This not only encourages a deeper understanding of the phrases but also promotes creativity in using language. Similarly, speaking tasks that require students to present on topics while using PUs can help solidify their conceptual understanding in real-time communication.

Assessing Understanding of PUs. Assessment strategies should focus on gauging student understanding of PUs. Quizzes that test students on identifying and using PUs in context can provide insight into their grasp of the material. Furthermore, portfolio assessments that compile students' work with PUs, including reflective journals and creative projects, can facilitate evaluation of their growth over time [11; 145].

Conclusion

English phraseological units are powerful instruments for enhancing vocabulary and fostering effective communication among language learners. By integrating these units into vocabulary instruction through contextual learning, collaborative activities, and technology, educators can facilitate a deeper understanding of language nuances and cultural contexts. As learners become more adept at using PUs, they enrich their vocabulary and improve their overall fluency and communicative competence. Future research should continue to explore the long-term impact of learning PUs on vocabulary retention and the efficacy of various instructional strategies, including experimental designs that measure learners' progress in these areas.

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