

# Foreign Literature at the Lessons of Individual Reading: Contemporary Methods of Phraseological Units Teaching

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Relevance of the problem stated in the article is determined by a poor development of the effective PU teaching methods allowing their quick and profound mastering. Besides, a small attention is given to a place of individual reading lessons as the tools of PU teaching. The article aims to present a general review of the use of foreign literature in teaching PU, as well as to identify and substantiate the efficiency of its use within the lessons of individual reading. The leading methods are analyses of scientific works and practice, empirical and experimental data, experimental method. This article observes some current questions of use of foreign literature in a process of phraseological units teaching in schools. It reveals and establishes different advantages of literary read at the lessons of individual reading and gives some core points of arrangements and organizational work. The article touches upon some essential keys concerning successful phraseological units mastering and alights some strategies focused on improvement of students' knowledge in a sphere of phraseology. The article also contains some valuable information about successful exercise compilation and successful phraseological units practicing on the basis of foreign literature.

**Keywords:** foreign language teaching, literary read, individual reading, phraseological unit, complex of exercises

## INTRODUCTION

### The relevance of the study

The search for more effective methods, techniques and ways of learning a foreign language becomes more and more essential in the context of modern education. In our opinion, one of the most effective methods of phraseology teaching at schools

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can rightly be considered the use of foreign literature.

From our point of view, not enough attention is given to the issue of the use of foreign literature in the process of phraseology teaching. The effectiveness of the authentic literary text use that can serve as a support in the training of phraseological units is not fully described and verified. Thus, the lack of theoretical status of the given problem and practical necessity of using of this technique have determined the relevance of this article.

The problem of the study is to answer the question: how to effectively teach students phraseological units of the English language with the help of foreign literature in the frames of individual reading lessons.

The rationale for the whole study among students is dictated, firstly, by the fact that phraseological units clearly reflect the national identity, culture and a way of life, that is, they have a high cross-cultural value (by this is dictated the socio-cultural aspect of the process of phraseological units mastering)..

The study of phraseology evokes an emotional response, greatly enhances the interest and increases motivation to language activity and to the subject in general (by this is dictated the process of phraseological units mastering).

The use of non-phraseological synonym is not able to compensate for the lack of phraseological unit (by this is dictated the communicative aspect of the process of phraseological units mastering).

Secondly, we consider that the proses of phraseological units teaching is the best organized being based on foreign literature. Literary read is a reflection of the history, traditions, mentality and identity of one or another nation.

Reading foreign literature enriches students' vocabulary, expands knowledge of phraseological units and set expressions. The language of fiction has a special figurativeness, expressiveness. It perfectly reflects the peculiarities of people's world perception and the realia of the time and certain social strata. In addition, the fable of the written works helps to enhance the interest of students and greatly increases their emotional response.

Practical significance of the study of this problem lies in the justification of the appropriateness of the use of foreign fiction in the learning process with the help of the pedagogical experiment and in the creation of such conditions under which the organization of lessons would increase the effectiveness of teaching phraseological units.

Traditional PU (phraseological units) teaching is the process very similar to non-phraseological vocabulary teaching. However, taking into consideration the characteristics of PU, their form, structure and meaning a much more specific training should be conducted when teaching PU. So, offering students the study of PU as a part of the work with foreign literary read, we mean not separated but contextual study of phraseological units, when they are harmoniously woven into the literary text.

- Firstly, it greatly facilitates the students' understanding of phrases and expressions themselves.

- Secondly, it removes the difficulties associated with the creation of a natural context for their introduction and practice. Phraseological units are given in a context, where the correspondence between idioms and situations of their usage is specified by a writer at a very high level. That eliminates the main difficulty in mastering such units - contextuality.

We may say that familiarization and further work with the phraseological units on the basis of foreign fiction literature gives students a picture about the functioning of the idioms and set phrases of the living language, about the appropriateness of their use and stylistic colouring, since literary read gives a huge variety of images, situations and circumstances.

Giving students literary texts in a foreign language within the framework of individual reading and individual reading lessons may be considered as the most appropriate way. By individual reading we mean compulsory for all students, supplementary to the textbook, constant and abundant reading of literature with the purpose of extracting information, increasing vocabulary and development of spoken language skills.

Such lessons, *first of all*, enable the teacher to diversify and brighten the program, to depart from the normal course of lessons. *Secondly*, they contribute to the development of skills and needs in reading literature in a foreign language, giving students the psychophysiological mechanisms of reading as an activity.

### **Theoretical framework and literature review**

The problems of phraseological units teaching and the role of reading foreign literature at the English language classes are reflected in the works of such methodists and researchers as: N. A. Selivanova (1991), E. N. Solovova (2010), Kubiato and Arik (2014), and others.

For example, according to N.A. Selivanova (1991) In the process of foreign language teaching, an authentic literary text help students to develop and practice many language skills, contribute to the development of linguistic competence, introduces the student to the specific aspects of foreign language culture, and enriches his cultural background. Much reading gives "...the opportunity to let a considerable number of language patterns - grammatical structures and lexical combinations) pass through the perception of students", in order to form speech-motor models of language and speech material. So reading foreign literature feasible for students should be an integral, equal component of the pedagogical process of teaching foreign languages.

Besides, there are 4 types of the use naturalness of phraseological units that are typical for literary read:

1. Phraseological units sound natural in the author's narration, where they correspond with the style and the content.
2. Phraseological units sound natural in speech of the characters.
3. Phraseological units sound natural as they correspond with the described society, time and circumstances.
4. Naturalness related to the number of use.

M. Balakireva (1998) admits that within the framework of individual reading, students have the opportunity to express their opinion and to evaluate the artwork, the characters and situations. Lessons on individual reading form students' independent attitude to the surrounding world and develop creative thinking and humanistic value orientations.

In addition, O. V. Procurorova (2006) states the in the process of PU teaching individual reading also has the following advantages:

1. Natural communication.
2. The expression of emotional and evaluative attitude to the read makes naturally motivated use of PU possible.
3. Discussed in the classroom individual reading topics are of a problematic nature, promote the spontaneous use of PU during the conversation (Procurorova, 2006).

Important that a lesson's communication will be effective only if it has a rational organization that includes considering students' age, personal orientation and the peculiarity of a subject.

V. M. Fadeev (1979) says that one of the teacher's tasks is to search for an adequate and reasonable literature. Texts must be feasible and suit pupils' age and

mental abilities. In addition, the chosen literature must meet students' interests and be relevant to a particular situation. Moreover, literary texts should also offer:

- 1) the vivid and entertaining plot;
- 2) the emotional presentation of the material;
- 4) the thematic closeness of the subject to students' life experiences and interests;
- 5) the possibility to organize exciting conversations and debates based on controversial students' judgments;
- 6) the possibility to conduct various situational transformations of the substance of the text or passage (Fadeev, 1979);
- 7) the educational value.

In addition, there are several special requirements:

- text should be rich in phraseological units, and they should be evenly distributed throughout the text,
- the use of phraseological units in characters speech should be appropriate and natural.

Another significant point of view on the productivity and success of the lessons of individual reading was offered by Z. I. Klichnikova (1973). She claims that the teacher is required to compile the most effective exercises for developing the skills and abilities of pupils. Moreover, before working with selected literature the teacher should take into account the willingness of the students to read the text.

E. N. Solovova (2010) emphasizes that the work on a literary text should be carried out systematically. Usually there are 3 distinguished stages in working on the text for reading: pre-text stage, motivation among students, to reduce potential language and speech difficulties. The next stage is actually the stage of reading as a process of obtaining the text stage, post-text stage. There are several targets to be set on a pre-text stage, e.g. to determine a speaking task for the first text reading, to create necessary information from the text. At this stage the aim of the teacher is to control the level of language and speech skills formation and to encourage their further development. Post-text stage is used as a support for the development of oral and written speech skills. Conversations and discussions of a text are inevitable components at this stage of reading process. It is important to remember that such conversations should also include discussions on why this or that idiom was used by an author, what function it performs, what its emotional component and meaning is, how it transforms the meaning of the statement, etc.

Teacher should remember that the success of foreign literature use is largely determined by the correct selection of vocabulary and phraseology. The most important selection criteria are the authenticity of phraseological units and their frequency of use in a natural English speech.

Teacher's goal is to remove students' difficulties which arise in the process of reading, what means that teacher should be ready to give all the necessary explanations of vocabulary and phraseology, when students experience bafflements.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **The experimental base of the study and its stages**

In the present research we conducted the experimental work at one of the middle schools in Kazan. Approbation of the research was carried out on the basis of school №12 of Kazan city, 10 class. The main goal throughout the experiment – identify the level of learning of idioms after the lessons of independent reading and work on phraseological material in the text.

Methodological experiment includes three stages:

-diagnostic

-forming  
-control

The experimental group included 18 people, as the control group 17 people. The subject of research is the level of knowledge of the phraseological units of the target language at this stage of learning.

On the diagnostic stage of the experiment in both groups a written test was carried out to show the initial knowledge of PU of the students. The test results revealed that the overall level of knowledge in both groups is about the same.

The purpose of the second stage was to enrich the vocabulary of pupils in the experimental group with idioms and fixed phrases with the help of individual reading lessons and a set of developed exercises. Besides, to teach the same PU the second, control group but separately, not in a contextual study.

The control step was aimed to determine the level of students' knowledge of PU, learned at a forming stage in both groups.

### **Methods of study**

The data was obtained by the use of the following method: theoretical (analysis of psychological and pedagogical, linguistic and methodological literature on methods of teaching lexical units and, in particular, idioms, analysis of works on methods of teaching individual reading and comparison of pedagogical experience, analysis of terminology); empirical (pedagogical observation, testing, interview, pedagogical experiment); experimental (summative assessments, organizing and conducting the forming experiment); statistical (mathematical processing and evaluation of results obtained during the experiment).

### **Methodology of teaching phraseology**

The methodology of teaching phraseology at schools emphasizes the mastering of the phraseological part of a standard language in the discourse culture, which is called phraseo-didactics. By creating a methodologically organized teaching process we consider the formation of so called phraseological fund for discourse culture in the personal development of a pupil, taking into account two aspects: the objective one, i.e. a cultivated description and learning and the subjective one, i.e. emotional, engaged and operative evaluation. Some teachers still discuss whether to teach phraseology at school or not but the main point is how to teach it, discussing the methodology of teaching phraseology. We fully agree with Miko's statement that by reinforcement of teaching the phraseological part in teaching standard language we improve the discourse culture of our pupils.

### **The work on the phraseological units of a chosen book and a set of exercises within the experiment**

To confirm the effectiveness of the use of foreign literary read in the process of phraseological units teaching, we carried out the experiment on the basis of one of Russian schools. The main goal of the experiment is to identify the level of phraseological units mastering after a course of individual reading lessons. Methodological experiment includes three stages: diagnostic, formative, control.

To enhance the level of successful phraseological units practice and consolidation the teacher must use a range of effective exercises and activities. From our point of view, the division of language exercises on language exercises, relative-speech exercises and speech exercises is optimal. To conduct a formative stage, we

developed a set of exercises based on the novel of Susan Collins "TheHunger games". They included:

- language exercises:
  - on distinguishing the meaning of PU, for example, to connect the idiom and meaning (to be all ears – to listen attentively; to turn a blind eye on – not to notice smth. on purpose);
  - on detecting errors in the meaning or form of PU (in the middle of the elsewhere, at death's threshold);
  - on connecting parts of the idiom (to hold, to roll, to be scared, to turn, to keep an, to take one's, to get one's thumb is out of one's wits, eye on somebody, breath away, one's tongue, in the duke, up one's nose at, one's eyes);
  - on finding synonyms (to hold one's tongue, keep one's mouth shut; to scare to death – to frighten smb. out of existence), antonyms (to find it in one's heart to do smth. - to turn yellow (afraid); to keep a level head - get into a flap (alarmed; to panic)) and others);
- relative-speech exercises:
  - on making up sentences from words and phrases (she desperately, work one's way, her, career);
  - on writing dialogues on a given situation;
  - on a better translation of the sentence, passage or paragraph, etc.;
- speech exercises:
  - on writing essays and mini-essays on a given topic.

Proceed from the characteristics of students' foreign language vocabulary mastering (mastering of PU), we also have introduced a sequential system of forming of relevant skills and abilities:

- Stage 1 – initial presentation and semantization of PUs;
- Stage 2 – formation of skills of PUs performance and automatization of skill employment;
- Stage 3 – improvement of skills;
- Stage 4 – the development of speech skills of the usage of the phraseological units in the process of building speech utterances, searching for PU which is appropriate for certain situations.

At the first stage we used different techniques aimed at interpreting the meaning of PU, relying on language and speech clarity, different interpretations in Russian and English languages, study of the use of PU in context and in different speech situations.

At the second stage of the experiment the automation of the skills was supported by the semantic analysis of the phraseological meaning and communicative roles of a given PU in certain situations and also by the use of synonyms/antonyms.

At the stage of skills training we used different exercises, such as filling in the blanks, finding mistakes in the meaning or construction of a given PU, matching the parts of a PU, making up short dialogues, replacing the words with an appropriate PU, filling the missing parts of a PU, etc.

The techniques used at the fourth stage are mainly of a communicative nature. The accomplishment of such tasks may serve as an indication of the well-formedness of the skills. They include the description of given situations, unprepared dialogues, compelling the characterizations of events, people and writing mini-essays using given idioms.

Teaching on the forming stage also included contextual tasks. These tasks suppose the usage of PU in the course of the conversation about literary work (content transfer tasks, the tasks connected with an interpretation of feelings and interpersonal relationships of the characters, the tasks on compilation of characters' images, etc.). Various role-playing and associative games are also of a great importance within the work with PU.

Generally speaking, the combination of the types of tasks given lower we find the most effective and phraseological units practice should include the following components:

1. Vocabulary tasks;
2. Contextual tasks;
3. Creative tasks;
4. Translation skills acquisition tasks.

During the forming stage we also compiled the dictionary of studied phraseological units, and developed PU's classification. Phraseological units were divided in accordance with the following points:

1. character's portrayal (not fit to hold a candle to smb.);
2. character's behavior (to keep oneself to oneself);
3. the actions of a character relative to other characters (to keep an eye on somebody);
4. feelings, conditions, reactions (to be scared out of one's wits);
5. individual actions of a character, or his activities in general (to turn a blind eye on);
6. the characteristic of the place, location (in the middle of nowhere);
7. assessment of the situation, actuality (the lesser of two evils);

## **RESULTS**

After data processing at the control stage of the experiment we revealed that the level of phraseological units and expressions mastering in the experimental group was much higher than in the control one.

In the experimental group almost the half of the group received an excellent mark (44%), while in the control group only 12% of the learners reached this level.

In addition, 39% of students in the experimental group received a good mark, while the same result in the control group reached 41% of students.

More than a third (41 %) in the control group received a satisfactory mark, when another group only 17% got this result.

Thus, we can conclude that the level of PU mastering in the experimental group significantly increased due to a number of lessons of individual reading and the implementation of a number of language and speech exercises.

During the observation of the experimental group throughout the whole experiment and subsequent to the results of the control phase, we found out that by the end of the forming stage, the majority of students started to use PU more actively and more initiatively in oral speech during the discussion of the read material, which is one of the main indicators of the effectiveness of teaching idioms.

In addition, we can say that from the point of view of formation of linguistic competence students:

1. increased awareness of PU' value;
2. developed the ability to distinguish PU from a free combination of words or phrases.

From the point of view of development of speech competence students:

1. increased the usage of PU in speech;
2. gained a better understanding of PU in the other texts.

From the point of view of formation of sociocultural competence students increased ability to identify the emotive component of PU in the text.

## **DISCUSSION**

It is experimentally proved that the use of foreign literature and PU teaching promotes a better PU mastering among students. Systematic work with the foreign

literature material helps to ensure a higher ability of the students to remember and understand phraseological units, and to appropriately use them in their speech. The use of phraseological units in modern society has an important communicative function. Phraseological material serves as a reliable tool of thinking, encourages speaking, listening and reading in a foreign language.

Teachers should remember that the main problem faced by students in schools is their lack of vocabulary. It is this lack of vocabulary that makes it difficult for them to express themselves in English, and it is also this lack of vocabulary that makes it difficult for them to guess the meanings of phraseological units as it cannot be deduced from the meanings of its constituents.

Therefore, the supportive environment and profound individual reading lessons with interesting and captivating content and exercises would make students participate and enhance their PU mastering, as the results of this study have shown.

It can be stated that the purpose of the study, in its attempt to provide a general review of the use of foreign literature in teaching PU, as well as the aim of justification of its efficiency has been reached, and the objectives of the research were performed.

## CONCLUSION

This work shows that the use of foreign literature at the lessons of foreign language while teaching PU shows a high result of pupils' knowledge. Modern teachers tend to choose from the variety of methods and techniques of teaching foreign languages. The use of foreign literature would increase the efficiency of work, make lessons unusual and memorable. In other words, the use of foreign fiction within the framework of home reading can become one of such methods.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Research materials and results may be used by the teacher of English language as an additional material to the individual reading lessons at schools and universities and for independent work for those who study English and would like to enhance the knowledge of English phraseological units.

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