
The effect of teaching idioms through visual media on idiom comprehension among high school students

Nurqulova Oydinabonu Sirojiddin qizi
oydinanurkulova@gmail.com
Student, English Faculty №3,
Uzbekistan State World Languages University

Scientific advisor: **Gaybullayeva Dildora Fayzulla qizi**
dildoragaybullayeva@gmail.com
PhD, Senior Teacher of English Faculty №3,
Uzbekistan State World Languages University

Annotation *One way to help teens grasp idioms better is by showing them pictures and moving images alongside words. Videos, drawings, or animated clips give real-life settings where phrases make sense. Seeing an expression acted out helps memory stick, especially when paired with spoken or written form. Teachers need fresh ideas, such as drawing scenes or acting out metaphors, to bring lessons alive. Training also plays an important role; educators must learn how to pick strong visuals wisely. When done right, learners pay closer attention and recall meanings longer. Communication skills grow because students start using phrases naturally, not just repeating them again and again. Meaning sticks best when eyes and ears work together. Learning feels less like memorizing and more like discovering. Picture clues stick in your mind, so phrases stay out and come out when speaking feels natural. Because of this, students join in more, question choices, and work together – the class becomes something that moves and breathes.*

Keywords *Idioms, visual media, language learning, high school education, communicative competence, cultural competence, multimedia learning*

O'рта maktab o'quvchilarini idiomalarni tushunishida vizual vositalar orqali o'qitishning ta'siri

Nurqulova Oydinabonu Sirojiddin qizi
oydinanurkulova@gmail.com
Ingliz tili 3-fakulteti talabasi,
O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti

Ilmiy rahbar: **Gaybullayeva Dildora Fayzulla qizi**
dildoragaybullayeva@gmail.com
Ingliz tili 3-fakulteti katta o'qituvchisi, PhD,
O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti

Annotatsiya *O'smirlarga iboralarni yaxshiroq tushunishga yordam berishning bir usuli – so'zlar bilan birga rasmlar va harakatli tasvirlardan foydalanishdir. Videolar, chizmalar yoki animatsion lavhalar iboralar ma'nosi tushunarli bo'ladigan real hayotiy vaziyatlarni ko'rsatadi. Ifodaning qanday ishlatilishini ko'rish xotirada yaxshi saqlanadi, ayniqsa u og'zaki yoki yozma shakl bilan birga berilsa. O'qituvchilarga yangi g'oyalar kerak, masalan, sahnalarni chizish yoki metaforalarni jonlantirib ko'rsatish orqali darslarni qiziqarli qilish mumkin. Shuningdek, tayyorgarlik ham muhim rol o'ynaydi;*

o'qituvchilar kuchli vizual vositalarni to'g'ri tanlashni o'rganishlari kerak. Agar bu usul to'g'ri qo'llansa, o'quvchilar diqqat bilan tinglaydi va ma'nolarni uzoqroq eslab qoladi. Muloqot ko'nikmalari rivojlanadi, chunki talabalar iboralarni shunchaki takrorlash o'rniga, tabiiy ravishda qo'llay boshlaydi. Ma'no eng yaxshi ko'z va quloq birgalikda ishlaganda yodda qoladi. O'rganish jarayoni yodlashdan ko'ra kashf qilishga o'xshaydi. Tasviriy ishoralar xotirada qoladi, shuning uchun iboralar nutqda tabiiy ravishda paydo bo'ladi. Shu sababli, o'quvchilar ko'proq ishtirok etadi, savollar beradi va hamkorlikda ishlaydi – sinf esa jonli va harakatdagi muhitga aylanadi.

Kalit so'zlar *Idioms, vizual vositalar, til o'rganish, yuqori sinf ta'limi, kommunikativ kompetensiya, madaniy kompetensiya, multimedia orqali o'rganish*

Влияние обучения идиомам с применением визуальных средств на их понимание учащимися средних школ

Нуркулова Ойдинабону Сирождиддин кизи

oydinanurkulova@gmail.com

Студент факультета английского языка
№3,

Узбекский государственный университет
мировых языков

Научный руководитель: **Гайбуллаева**

Дилдора Файзулла кизи

dildoragaybullayeva@gmail.com

Старший преподаватель факультета
английского языка №3, PhD,

Узбекский государственный университет
мировых языков

Аннотация *Один из способов помочь подросткам лучше понимать идиомы – использовать изображения и движущиеся визуальные материалы вместе со словами. Видео, рисунки или анимационные клипы создают реальные ситуации, в которых выражения становятся понятными. Когда учащиеся видят, как выражение используется на практике, это лучше запоминается, особенно в сочетании с устной или письменной формой. Учителям необходимы свежие идеи, например, рисование сцен или разыгрывание метафор, чтобы оживить уроки. Также важную роль играет подготовка: педагогам нужно учиться правильно подбирать качественные визуальные материалы. При правильном использовании ученики становятся более внимательными и дольше запоминают значения. Навыки общения развиваются, потому что учащиеся начинают использовать выражения естественно, а не просто механически повторять их. Значение лучше всего усваивается, когда зрение и слух работают вместе. Обучение становится не заучиванием, а процессом открытия. Визуальные подсказки остаются в памяти, поэтому выражения легче приходят в речь. Благодаря этому ученики активнее участвуют, задают вопросы и работают вместе – класс становится живым и динамичным.*

Ключевые слова *Идиомы, визуальные медиа, изучение языка, среднее образование, коммуникативная компетенция, культурная компетенция, мультимедийное обучение*

Introduction

Idioms are an important part of any language because they show cultural ideas, figurative thinking, and subtle meanings in communication. These days, the issue of language and culture is one of the foremost vital issues involving the minds of language specialists, anthropologists, psychologists, philosophers, and teachers (Gaybullayeva, 2021). However, they are often difficult for students who learn English as a foreign language, especially high school students, as they tend to get bored easily when they are given confusing topic as idioms. Many traditional teaching methods focus only on memorizing idioms or translating them word by word. As a result, students may remember the phrases, but they do not always understand how to use them correctly in real communications. In this study we have explored how teaching idioms with visual aids can help students understand and use idiomatic expressions more effectively. The research was conducted with high school students through surveys and classroom activities. These activities helped us to understand their activeness and learning results. Different types of visual media, such as videos, pictures, and animations, were used during the lessons. Obviously, visual materials help students see the meaning of idioms in a clear and engaging way. When students both see and hear information, it becomes easier for them to understand and remember the meaning of idioms. It's the same with other adults as well; when they were given a picture of that idiom, they imagined it in a real context and tried to compare it with alternative idioms in their native languages. Visual media also show the cultural context behind expressions,

which helps learners understand why certain idioms are used in particular situations. The research results were positive, showing that the use of visual media can make a significant change in students' learning of idioms. When lessons included videos, pictures or animations, students generally showed more interest in the learning process and participated actively. These materials help them better understand the meanings of idioms, and they become more ready to use idioms in their speech and writing. Furthermore, another important aspect is that students often feel more confident when they learn idioms not just by memorization but through visual examples. Seeing how an idiom is used in a real or realistic situation helps them remember it better and deepens their understanding of its usage. The research also shows that teachers need to prepare in certain ways to use visual materials effectively in the classroom. Choosing suitable and culturally appropriate examples is also important so that students can fully understand the meaning and context. When visual media are combined with traditional teaching methods, such as explanation and practice, idiom learning can become even more engaging and effective for students. Overall, the research shows that visual media is a useful and practical tool in learning idioms and developing better communicative skills in English.

Idiomatic expressions are among the most culturally rich and linguistically complex parts of a language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). They carry metaphorical meanings, cultural values, and subtle nuances that cannot be understood through literal translation alone (Gibbs, 1994). For learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), particularly high school students, idioms often pose significant

challenges (Nation, 2001). Because their meanings are figurative and context-dependent, students frequently struggle to interpret idioms correctly and use them confidently in real-life conversation (Schmitt, 2000). For example, as Saraswati (2024) points out, idioms such as “kick the bucket” (meaning to die) or “let the cat out of the bag” (meaning to reveal a secret), whose meanings cannot be inferred from the literal definitions of the words within them, play a crucial role in mastering any language and also add color and cultural depth to communication. Traditional methods such as memorization, dictionary definitions, and translation exercises may help students recognize these expressions, but they often forget them in a short time, making it difficult for long-term retention (Zarei & Rahimi, 2012). As a result, many learners develop only passive knowledge of idioms and rarely use them actively in speech or writing. In recent years, advances in digital technology have opened up new possibilities for language teaching. Visual media, including videos, illustrations, animations, and multimedia presentations, have become increasingly popular and powerful tools in classrooms (Mayer, 2009). Today’s students are surrounded by visual content through social media, so incorporating visual tools into language classes can make learning more interesting and effective (Vasiljevic, 2014). This study explores how teaching idioms through visual media affects high school students’ understanding and use of these expressions. Visual support focuses on whether it helps students understand idioms more easily and whether they actively use idioms in communication.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-method approach, combining a survey with classroom-based activities to explore how teaching idioms through visual media affects high school students’ comprehension and use of idiomatic expressions. The goal was not only to measure learning outcomes but also to better understand students’ experiences and attitudes

when visual tools were introduced into the learning process. Additionally, existing literature, journal articles, books, and other academic resources were also used to explore the use of visuals in teaching idiomatic expressions in ELT (English Language Teaching). The participants in this study were 60 high school students learning English as a foreign language. They were from grades 10 and 11 and had an intermediate level of English proficiency. Although the students had encountered idioms in their textbooks before, many of them admitted that idiomatic expressions often felt confusing and difficult to remember. This common struggle among learners made them the best group for exploring more engaging ways of teaching idioms. To gather meaningful data, a student questionnaire was used as the main research instrument. The survey included 10 questions designed to explore students’ perceptions of idiom learning and their attitudes toward the use of visual media in the classroom. The questions focused on several key elements of the learning experience, such as: how difficult students find idioms when learning them through traditional methods; whether videos, illustrations, and animations help them understand idioms more easily; how visual materials influence their motivation and interest during lessons; whether students feel more confident using idioms after learning them visually. In addition to the questionnaire, classroom observations were conducted during the teaching process. These observations helped capture students’ reactions, participation, and engagement, allowing the researcher to see how visual media influenced the learning atmosphere. The study was conducted over three weeks during regular English lessons. In the first phase, students were introduced to selected idioms using traditional methods, such as definitions, translations, and memorization exercises. During this time, students felt bored and yawned at times; they did not want to participate in the lessons because it was found

that they were tired of regular methods. This allowed the teacher to assess the basic understanding of the class and their needs. In the second phase, the same idioms were taught using visual media. Students watched videos of famous characters in films or the most renowned people in the world using idioms in their speech; each time when the video showed another figure, the teacher gave an explanation, and together they examined the illustration. Then they did some classroom tasks, such as role-plays and short video dialogues, in three regular weeks. Also, they were given these tasks, but they were not so active, and in the production part of the lesson, they could not answer some questions related to the topic, which created difficulty for the teacher to assess knowing their potential. But in the second phase, students' reaction was different; they did these activities with great fun and were encouraged to apply idioms in daily context. After completing the visual media lessons, students filled out the survey questionnaire, reflecting on their understanding, engagement, and confidence in using idioms. Classroom observations were also recorded to provide qualitative insights into student participation and interaction. Survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages and average scores, to evaluate students' learning outcomes. Classroom observations were used to support and interpret the quantitative data, highlighting patterns of engagement and practical use of idioms.

Results

The results of the study revealed several interesting patterns in how students understand and respond to idioms when visual media are used in the learning process. The survey statistics and classroom observations both indicated that visual tools significantly improved students' engagement and comprehension in the learning process. First, the survey results showed that many students initially found idioms difficult to understand. Approximately 70% of the participants stated

that idioms were confusing and boring when they were taught only through definitions and translation. Students explained that the figurative meaning of idioms often felt unclear when they tried to translate the expressions word by word in real-life contexts. However, the situation changed noticeably after we introduced the visual media. When idioms were presented through videos and photos, students reported a much clearer understanding of their meanings. Around 85% of the respondents reported that visual materials were helpful for them to understand idioms more easily because they could see the expressions used in real-life situations by their favorite actors and figures. The survey also showed that videos were the most effective visual tool for learning idioms. Nearly half of the students indicated that through watching short video clips, in which idioms were used in real-life conversations, they could understand the context of idioms and remember them more easily. When they watched videos of their favorite actors or figures, they were so happy, which made it easier and more interesting to learn those idioms. Another important result of the study was related to student motivation. Many participants noted that lessons became more interesting and engaging when visual materials were used. Instead of simply memorizing definitions, students were able to watch situations, discuss meanings, and participate in interesting activities. This made the learning process feel more interactive and less stressful. Classroom observations supported these findings. During the visual-based lessons, students participated more actively in discussions and role-playing activities. They were also more willing to use idiomatic expressions in their own sentences. Some students who were previously hesitant and shy to interact in physical activities began using idioms during group tasks and short dialogues. Overall, the results suggest that visual media can play an important role in helping students move from passive

recognition of idioms to more confident active use in communication.

Discussion

The study's conclusions demonstrate how crucial visual media can be in assisting students in comprehending and utilizing idiomatic expressions. According to the results, many students initially struggled with idioms when they were taught through regular, traditional methods (Schmitt, 2000). This difficulty is not surprising, since idioms often have complex meanings that cannot be translated directly (Gibbs, 1994). However, once visual materials were introduced, students began to show a clearer understanding and greater confidence in using these expressions, which also made assessment easier for teachers. One possible explanation for the improvement in learning can be found in the dual coding theory proposed by Paivio (1986). According to this theory, information is processed more effectively when it is presented through both verbal and visual channels (Paivio, 1991). In the context of idiom learning, visual materials allow students to associate figurative expressions with concrete images or real-life situations, which improve memory retention. Similarly, the results align with the multimedia learning theory developed by Mayer (2009). This theory suggests that combining words and visuals enhances students' comprehension because learners process information more actively. When students see idioms being used in realistic scenarios, they are not only reading definitions but also experiencing meaning through context, facial expressions, and actions (Gibbs, 2008). Another important aspect revealed by the study is the influence of visual media on student motivation. Classroom observations depicted that students became more active when visual tools were incorporated into lessons. Videos and visual storytelling created a more dynamic learning environment, encouraging students to participate in discussions and collaborative tasks. Increased motivation often leads to greater willingness to

try language expressions on their own, which is essential for developing communicative skills. Despite these positive outcomes, it is important to acknowledge some limitations of the study. The research was conducted with a relatively small group of students and within a limited time frame. Therefore, the results may not fully cover all learning contexts or student populations. Future research could involve larger groups of participants and longer periods to examine the long-term effects of visual media on idiom learning. In addition, further studies could explore different types of visual resources, such as interactive teacher digital platforms or student-generated multimedia content, to better understand how difficult language segments are analyzed and used in communication.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of teaching idioms through visual media on high school students' comprehension and use of idiomatic expressions. The findings demonstrate that visual materials such as videos, illustrations, and animations can significantly improve students' understanding of language expressions. By presenting idioms in contextual situations, visual media help students connect abstract expressions with real-life scenarios, making them easier to remember. The results also show that visual media play an important role in increasing student motivation and classroom engagement. When idioms were presented through visual contexts, students became more interested in the learning process and more willing to participate in discussions and communicative activities. This increased their motivation encouraging students to use idiomatic expressions more confidently in their speaking and writing. Although the study revealed several positive outcomes, it also has certain limitations. The research was conducted with a limited number of participants and within a relatively short period of time. Future studies could include larger groups of learners (not only high-school students) and examine

the impact of visual media on idiom learning. Overall, the findings suggest that integrating visual media into idiom instruction can be a valuable pedagogical strategy in foreign language classrooms. Teachers are encouraged

to incorporate visual resources such as short videos and multimedia tasks to create more engaging and effective learning environments that support both linguistic, communicative development.

References:

1. Gaybullayeva, D. F. K. (2021). *Universal and national peculiarities of phraseological description of image in the English and Uzbek languages. Academic research in educational sciences*, 2(3), 990-998.
2. Gibbs, R. W. Jr. (1994). *The poetics of mind: Figurative thought, language, and understanding*. Cambridge University Press.
3. Gibbs, R. W. Jr. (2008). *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought*. Cambridge University Press.
4. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
5. Mayer, R. E. (2009). *Multimedia learning* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
6. Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press.
7. Paivio, A. (1986). *Mental representations: A dual coding approach*. Oxford University Press.
8. Paivio, A. (1991). Dual coding theory: Retrospect and current status. *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 45(3), 255–287.
9. Saraswati, N. (2024). English idiomatic expressions in EFL classroom through movies: Challenges and opportunities. *Global Expert: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 12(1), 19–24.
10. Schmitt, N. (2000). *Vocabulary in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
11. Vasiljevic, Z. (2014). The effect of multimedia glosses on vocabulary learning. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*, 23(1), 89–111.
12. Zarei, A. A., & Rahimi, M. (2012). The effect of mnemonic devices on idiom learning. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 2(3), 84–91.