

IDIOMS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CULTURE

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Abstract: The study delves into the interdependence of language and culture, which is a crucial topic for linguists, anthropologists, psychologists, and philosophers as human communication is paramount. The connection between language and culture plays a vital role in various conventionalized language expressions, including idiomatic expressions that reflect culture in everyday life. Idioms, like other figurative language, are a natural way of decoding customs, cultural beliefs, social conventions, and norms. Learning idioms provides learners with a significant opportunity to comprehend the thoughts, emotions, and perspectives of native speakers of a language. Awareness of figurative language, particularly idioms, helps improve teaching and communication strategies for learners. Without this awareness, learners may transfer their native language conceptual structure, which may not be appropriate for the target language. Therefore, the strong relationship among language, culture, and idioms requires attention in language learning, as it seems to have inadequate research. A systematic understanding of language and culture integration in and out of the classroom can be developed.

Index Terms: communication, culture, idioms, learning foreign language
Vereshagn and Kastamarov (1990) are credited with establishing the connection between language and culture in their book titled "Language and Culture." They argued that even if people speak the same language, they may still face difficulties in understanding each other due to cultural differences. Language is primarily a social tool that facilitates communication between individuals and helps them understand the world around them. Culture also has its own language, which is expressed through various forms of art, literature, and traditions. While students may gain a good understanding of linguistics, they may struggle with real communication due to cultural factors. Language serves as a medium for preserving cultural values, traditions, and beliefs. Therefore, any foreign language course should include practical cross-cultural communication experiences to help students understand foreign cultures and their language. Foreign individuals can easily understand the meaning of



equivalent words, as they provide a simple translation or explanation of the language. For instance, the word "book" has different equivalents in Russian ("книга"), Italian ("libro"), and Farsi ("Ketab"), but they all convey the same idea related to books, such as novels, textbooks, and bookstores. However, these words can create different perceptions in the human mind based on cultural differences. For example, "libro verde" or "green book" may be incomprehensible to Iranians but refers to a collection of political documents distributed at the Council House for Italians. Similarly, the Turkish expression "Tuz biber ekmek" (literally "to add salt and pepper") has the same meaning as "adding insult to injury" but reflects the cultural significance of salt in Turkish language, where it is used to symbolize the taste of life and has numerous figurative expressions in both positive and negative contexts. The relationship between figurative language and culture can also be seen in expressions such as "to hear something straight from the horse's mouth," which means to hear from an authoritative source. In Turkish, the equivalent expression "Emir büyük yerden gelmek" reflects the concept of authority and the historical belief that one should obey the government for stability, security, and a good life. The statement "a book is man's best friend" has equivalents in Persian ("Книга-друг лучший") and Italian ("Un buon libro, è un buon amico"), highlighting the universal value of books as a source of companionship and knowledge. Comparing the words "booklet" and "libretto" in English and Italian respectively, we can see that while the Italian word refers to a small book, it also has a specific meaning in the context of musical opera, ballet, plays, and scenarios. In higher education, it also refers to the booklet or office where scores are recorded. In Persian, there is no equivalent word for "libretto" as there is no such booklet in universities. However, "booklet" in Persian refers to a part of a detailed report and can also be used for irony. This shows that while some words may be conceptually equivalent, they may not have the same schematic knowledge. Words with no equivalent in foreign languages can lead to difficulties in language learning as they may imply that certain concepts do not exist in other cultures. The understanding of abstract equivalents and methods can vary based on cultural backgrounds and ways of thinking. It is rare to find words in different languages that have exactly the same meaning, and some words may have cultural connotations, such as the English word "dog," which represents loyalty, intimacy, and belovedness and is highly regarded in European culture. Language and culture are closely connected to each other. Language embodies and transfers culture. Varieties in language use within culture create different



views. Learning a second culture is often intricately intertwined with learning a second language. Teaching second language should be accompanied with teaching second culture. The results of research findings will have implications for language teachers in general and policy makers in particular. Language teachers should equip themselves with the knowledge of second culture, make students familiar with cultural differences and have high esteem for students' native culture; thus facilitate the process of language learning. Language policy makers should consider different cultures equally well and develop positive attitudes towards target cultures especially in planning and designing materials, hence avoiding any culture shock and cultural misunderstandings. Given a pedagogical perspective, knowing idioms not only makes the speech language learners productive and enriched, but also help them to learn and understand the thinking that the people learn the language. Interpretation in terms of culture means the study of language symbols and cultural concepts in foreign language classes, not only possible but also necessary. Idioms and the role of "language" in culture can integrate form and content, therefore, not only previous knowledge of the language teachers and their personal experience help, but numerous terminology of culture and interpretations are also important.

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