

Idioms and Phrasal Verbs for Vocabulary Development: A Practical Approach

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate aim of English language teaching is to equip the students with effective communication skills and make them successful in their life. Modern education system strives to make the students employable and make them successful in getting right placement. But the recent surveys show clearly the bitter truth that only less than 19% graduates is employable, remaining students are lagging behind particularly because of their poor communicative skills. Effective communication skills certainly help for the success and everyone desires to acquire effective communication skills and speak eloquent. It is crystal clear that vocabulary plays a vital role in effective communication skills. But most of the students have a phobia that it is difficult to develop vocabulary, it is because they don't know how to master vocabulary. So this article highlights the easiest strategies and practical approaches to develop vocabulary.

Introduction

To communicate effectively it is essential that one should possess the best and ample vocabulary. What is vocabulary? The treasure of words is vocabulary. Words and their meanings; synonyms, antonyms, one word substitutes or idioms and phrasal verbs are regarded as vocabulary. Without mindful of words and their meanings it is not possible to express intended views effectively. If a person doesn't know sufficient words and their meanings, he/she can't speak eloquently and there may be some pauses while he/she speaks. On the other hand, if he/she knows sufficient words and their meanings he/she can speak

fluently and eloquently.

Rote-Learning method is ineffective

All students want to develop their vocabulary but they don't know how to do it, moreover some students think vocabulary can be learned by heart as they did in the case of essays and short answers. But vocabulary can't be improved through rote-learning method and vocabulary development is not possible over night or within a month and the like. Some students try to read or study the dictionary; but it is not right, dictionary should be consulted contextually but not to be read. While reading the dictionary one feels all the words

seem to be familiar but later one realizes that one does not remember even a single word.

Contextual Learning for Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary can be developed gradually with a determined practice. While practicing various language skills one can find many difficult or new words, immediately it is needed to consult a standard dictionary to know the meanings of those words. But while reading something, there may be a lot of words which are difficult or new, so it is not possible to remember all those words at a single instance, so at least some important words to understand the concept to be selected and get the meanings of those words. By doing like this they can understand the concept and the vocabulary can also be developed. It is difficult to learn and remember many words at once so it is better to try to learn at least three or four words a day; those are also according to the context. Contextual learning is very effective in the matter of vocabulary development.

Practical Usage helps for Vocabulary Development

It is very important that each learned word should be used in the day to day life. Practical application of learned words is very essential for vocabulary development. While consulting a dictionary for the meaning of a word it is necessary to learn its different forms, different meanings and their contextual usages. Use of idioms and phrasal verbs and one word substitutes is special asset for vocabulary enrichment.

Appropriate use of idioms and phrasal verbs while communicating gives an excellent impression which attracts the audience. Similarly they can speak effectively and attract audience with apt and effective use of one word substitutes. It is advisable to learn sufficient effective idioms and phrasal verbs for effective communication. Knowing is not enough, doing is very imperative, which means known idioms and phrasal verbs should be used contextually to make the conversation effective and impressive.

Idioms and Phrasal Verbs are Ornaments to Communication

Conversations with idiomatic expressions are always effective and impressive. It is difficult to converse in the modern world without idioms and phrasal verbs. An idiom or phrasal verb is a term or phrase whose meaning is different from the dictionary definitions and the arrangement of its elements; it refers to a figurative meaning that is known only through conventional use. Idioms are manners of communication which are natural to native speakers of particular language. Appropriate use of idioms and phrasal verbs makes conversations effective and impressive. It has become necessary to use them in the modern conversations. Effective use of them mirrors the in-depth command of a person over English language and makes him an excellent orator.

Fun-Learning

While learning idioms and phrasal verbs from the articles in the newspapers learners experience fun as they can have funny

examples with newly learnt idioms and phrasal verbs such as;

- ✓ Shake a leg with [Dance with someone]

Ex: She dreamt to *shake a leg with* Prabhas.

- ✓ Grab the eyeball [Attractive / impressive]

Ex: The charming girl tried to *grab the eyeball* of her fiancé.

Impressive Expressions

Learners can learn certain impressive idioms and phrasal verbs from the articles in the newspapers such as;

- ✓ All in all. [An efficient in all fields]

Rabindranath Tagore is an *all in all* in literature.

- ✓ A turncoat. [A person who always changing his ideas]

Ex: We should not depend upon him because he is *a turncoat*.

- ✓ A red letter day [A holiday]

Ex: We shall go on a picnic on *a red-letter day*.

- ✓ Foot the bill. [Ready to pay the bill]

The two friends compete to *foot the bill*.

An Experiment to learn and use Idioms and Phrasal Verbs

During the spoken English courses as an initial strategy students were advised to cultivate the habit of reading an English newspaper. They were asked to identify the

use of idioms and phrasal verbs in the news articles. Undoubtedly they found them effective in communicating so the learners were encouraged to identify and learn the idioms and phrasal verbs in the news article while reading the newspaper. The students were encouraged to explain the identified and learnt idioms and phrasal verbs to the fellow learners in the class, it created an effective contextual learning environment. The learners enthusiastically came forward to explain with new idioms and phrasal verbs and the peers were also motivated to learn and explain the new idioms and phrasal verbs brought from the articles in the newspapers. After a few days the learners felt overjoyed to see the improvement in their vocabulary. Further to their surprise they conquered their stage fear and hesitation to communicate in English with others.

Conclusion

As the above experiment showed fruitful results in spoken English classes, it was tried with engineering students. During the first year and third year engineering in the English language communication skills laboratory and advanced English communication skills laboratory students were asked to cultivate the habit of reading English newspapers and to spot the idioms and phrasal verbs, learn them and try to explain them to the fellow students with contextual references and appropriate examples. This innovative activity proved successful to attract many students to participate in the activity as explaining ensured effective learning. Gradually, all the

students came forward with lot of new expressions with idioms and phrasal verbs. There was remarkable enrichment in the vocabulary and improvement in their communication skills.

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