



## PLAYFUL AND CREATIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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**Abstract** *The article discusses the role of playful and creative approaches in teaching phraseological units in foreign language classrooms. These methods enhance learners' motivation, comprehension, and retention by engaging both cognitive and emotional aspects of learning. The integration of games, creative tasks, and contextualized practice allows students to understand not only the linguistic but also the cultural significance of idioms and set expressions.*

**Keywords:** *phraseological units, creative methods, gamification, idioms, intercultural competence.*

**Аннотация:** *В статье рассматривается роль игровых и творческих подходов в обучении фразеологическим единицам на занятиях по иностранному языку. Эти методы повышают мотивацию, понимание и запоминание учащихся, вовлекая как когнитивные, так и эмоциональные аспекты обучения. Интеграция игр, творческих заданий и контекстуальной практики позволяет студентам понять не только языковое, но и культурное значение идиом и устойчивых выражений.*

**Ключевые слова:** *фразеологические единицы, творческие методы, геймификация, идиомы, межкультурная компетенция.*

**Annotatsiya:** *Maqolada xorijiy til darslarida frazeologik birliklarni o'qitishda o'yinli va ijodiy yondashuvlarning o'rni yoritilgan. Bunday usullar o'quvchilarning motivatsiyasi, tushunishi va eslab qolish qobiliyatini oshiradi, chunki ular o'rganish jarayonining kognitiv va emotsional jihatlarini birgalikda faollashtiradi. O'yinlar, ijodiy topshiriqlar va kontekstual mashqlarni qo'llash talabalarga iboralar va turg'un birikmalarning nafaqat lingvistik, balki madaniy ahamiyatini ham chuqurroq anglash imkonini beradi.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *frazeologik birliklar, ijodiy usullar, gamifikatsiya, iboralar, madaniyatlararo kompetensiya.*

Phraseological units (PUs), also known as idioms or fixed expressions, are an essential part of any language, reflecting its culture, worldview, and history. However, they are often challenging for language learners because their meanings cannot be deduced from individual components. As V.N. Telia (1996) notes, "phraseology embodies the national mentality and collective experience of a people, making it both linguistically and culturally rich" [3]. Therefore, to effectively teach phraseological



units, educators should use methods that stimulate learners' imagination and emotional engagement namely, playful and creative approaches.

Gamification is the use of game elements in education which has gained attention in language pedagogy as a powerful motivational tool. Games make the learning process dynamic and reduce anxiety, encouraging learners to use idioms spontaneously and contextually. According to Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2006), language games create “an enjoyable atmosphere that encourages students to participate actively and remember better” [4].

Some effective game-based activities for teaching phraseological units can be seen in the following table:

Table 1: Several effective game-based activities

No	Activity	Instruction
1	<b>Idiom Bingo</b>	Students listen for idioms in spoken texts or dialogues and mark them on bingo cards.
2	<b>Matching Games</b>	Learners match idioms to their meanings or to visual representations.
3	<b>Role-Playing Games</b>	Students act out short scenes incorporating assigned idioms, helping them contextualize figurative meanings.
4	<b>Phraseological Quizzes</b>	Digital tools like Kahoot! or Quizizz can be used for idiom competitions, enhancing recall through repetition and play.

Such interactive methods foster not only memorization but also intercultural competence, as idioms often contain cultural allusions.

As we know, creativity is a cornerstone of communicative teaching. When students are encouraged to interpret, visualize, and even invent phraseological units, they develop deeper linguistic and cultural understanding. As Maley and Peachey (2015) emphasize, “creative activities stimulate learners' higher-order thinking and emotional involvement, making language learning more personal and meaningful” [2].

There are some examples of creative activities which can be used during the lesson:

- **Idiom Illustrations:** Students draw or create digital visuals for idioms (e.g., “spill the beans,” “break the ice”).
- **Mini-Stories or Comics:** Learners write short stories using specific idioms in context.
- **Idiomatic Poetry or Rap:** Students compose short poems, rhymes, or raps incorporating idioms.
- **Cultural Comparisons:** Learners compare idioms from their native language and the target language, analyzing similarities and cultural nuances.



“These activities develop learners’ awareness of metaphor, imagery, and symbolism in language, crucial for idiomatic competence” [1]. Playful and creative methods contribute significantly to the development of phraseological competence. They allow learners to move from recognition to production, and from literal understanding to metaphorical interpretation. Furthermore, they foster cooperative learning and emotional engagement, which are key to long-term retention.

Teachers play a crucial role as facilitators: they should select idioms relevant to learners’ proficiency and cultural background, provide contextual support, and create a safe space for experimentation. Integrating digital tools and multimedia resources (e.g., memes, videos, short films) can further enhance learner motivation and exposure.

To summarize, teaching phraseological units through playful and creative approaches transforms the learning experience from mechanical memorization to meaningful cultural exploration. Games and creative tasks encourage learners to think metaphorically, express themselves freely, and appreciate the richness of figurative language. In a globalized world where intercultural communication is essential, such approaches not only improve linguistic skills but also cultivate empathy and cultural awareness.

### References

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