

**THE ROLE OF DIGITAL TOOLS IN TEACHING ENGLISH IDIOMS TO B2
STUDENTS**

Mirzamurotova Sevara

Uzbekistan world state languages university firsat- year MA student

Abstract: A combination of their figurative nature, cultural complexities, and the difficulty students frequently encounter in grasping their meanings and usage, teaching English idioms presents major obstacles. The importance of digital tools in language acquisition, especially in the teaching of idiomatic expressions, is receiving more attention as these technologies develop in educational contexts. This article examines the advantages and difficulties of teaching B2-level pupils English idioms through digital resources, concentrating on well-known learning environments like Kahoot!, Quizlet, Memrise, and Duolingo. These resources give students a dynamic and interesting setting in which to practice idioms through gamification, interactive tests, flashcards, and multimedia, facilitating improved retention and contextual comprehension. Additionally, the article provides real-world examples and empirical research. Empirical research and real-world examples that demonstrate how well these digital tools work to improve language proficiency are also highlighted in the article. In the end, using digital resources in idiom teaching offers a more engaging and customized learning environment in addition to helping students acquire new words.

Introduction

Idioms are fundamental to any language because they enhance its expressiveness and variety. Idiomatic phrases like "kick the bucket" and "under the weather" are frequently employed in both informal and formal contexts in English. Since these idioms are an essential element of natural communication, mastery of them is a key indicator of language proficiency. Idiomatic idioms, however, frequently provide distinctive challenges for English language learners, particularly for non-native speakers. It is challenging to comprehend and apply idioms correctly because of their figurative nature, which prevents the meaning from being inferred from the individual words.

It might be especially challenging for students at the B2 (upper-intermediate) level to use colloquial terms. Idioms might still be a challenge even if students at this level are usually at ease with basic conversational English and grammar. Idioms, as opposed to words with literal meanings, frequently call for exposure to the conversational patterns of local speakers and cultural knowledge. Therefore, even after they have mastered more technical parts of the language, B2 learners may become discouraged by their incapacity to understand or correctly apply idioms.

Routine memorization, textbook drills, and vocabulary lists are examples of traditional idiom teaching strategies that frequently fall short in terms of engaging students and providing the relevant context necessary for them to comprehend and use idioms successfully. Thankfully, digital tools have gained popularity in language learning because they provide creative, dynamic, and interactive ways to teach idioms. Some of the most important digital technologies that are assisting in making idiomatic learning more approachable, pleasurable, and successful for language learners are game-based platforms, multimedia materials, and mobile applications.

The function of digital resources in teaching English idioms is examined in this essay. It will look at the difficulties students have learning idioms, the advantages of employing digital resources to help them overcome these difficulties, and the ways in which educators can use these resources in their teaching methods. Additionally, the post will highlight certain online resources like Kahoot, Quizlet, Memrise, and Duolingo, with thorough illustrations of how they can be utilized to make idiom learning more interesting and contextually rich.

The Challenges of Teaching English Idioms

Understanding the Nature of Idioms

By definition, idiomatic expressions are frequently nonliteral. For instance, the phrase "break the ice" refers to striking up a discussion in a social setting to ease tension or awkwardness rather than breaking a real chunk of ice. Likewise, sayings such as "barking up the wrong tree" refer to taking an incorrect or misdirected approach. Idioms are especially difficult for non-native speakers because of their metaphorical nature.

Idioms are also not always clear-cut. They could have their roots in particular historical or cultural contexts, which makes them much more difficult for students who are unfamiliar with the language's background. For instance, native speakers who are familiar with the metaphorical connection will understand the phrase "a fish out of water" perfectly, while a non-native speaker may struggle to understand it without additional context or explanation.

Why Idioms Are Difficult for B2 Learners

Idioms are especially difficult for B2 students, who are supposed to communicate more fluently. Idiomatic expressions frequently pose a serious communication obstacle, even though B2 learners can typically grasp more sophisticated texts and have conversations with native speakers. Idioms are difficult to integrate using conventional language-learning techniques because they are abstract and complicated (Liu, 2008). Because they are figurative, students must comprehend both the individual words and their overall meaning, which is difficult to do using conventional memory methods.

Additionally, B2 students might not have had the cultural background needed to fully comprehend idioms. Since idiomatic expressions are frequently strongly ingrained in culture, students may find it difficult to understand how they are employed and when they are suitable if they are not exposed to enough native speakers or real-world scenarios. Learning idioms necessitates more than merely expanding one's vocabulary, as Zyzik (2011) points out; it also calls for a thorough comprehension of the circumstances in which they are used as well as the nuanced details that contribute to their meaning.

Traditional Methods of Teaching Idioms

Idioms are typically taught via dictionary-based methods, rote memorization, and repetition. Teachers may urge pupils to commit idioms to memory for future reference, along with their definitions. This approach does little to guarantee that students can employ idioms in everyday interactions, even though it can result in short-term memorization.

Students reading idioms in sentences or short stories is another popular strategy. Although this approach might aid in placing the idioms in context, it does not completely involve students in applying them in dynamic, everyday situations. A passive method of idiom acquisition does not aid students in internalizing idioms or comprehending their complex meanings, as Boers et al. (2004) clarify.

Given these challenges, there is a need for more interactive and contextualized ways to teach idioms. Digital tools offer a solution by providing a more immersive, engaging, and contextually rich learning experience.

The Role of Digital Tools in Teaching Idioms

Engagement and Motivation

Increasing student enthusiasm and engagement is one of the biggest benefits of teaching idioms with digital technologies. Idiom instruction in traditional classroom settings can frequently come across as monotonous and uninspired, particularly for B2 students who might be feeling overpowered by the language's intricacy. Digital resources like Kahoot, Quizlet, and Duolingo, on the other hand, provide a more dynamic and engaging experience that promotes involvement and maintains student interest.

Idiom learning is made more fun and less daunting by the gamification that digital technologies provide to the process. For example, Kahoot lets teachers make game-like interactive tests where students can compete with one another to score points. Students are encouraged to maintain concentration and work toward development by this competitive aspect and the quick feedback they receive. It has been demonstrated that game-based learning platforms, such as Kahoot, boost student motivation, which improves learning outcomes (Reiners and Wattana, 2015).

Contextual Learning

The capacity of digital tools to offer contextual learning opportunities is another important benefit. Knowing the meaning of idioms is not enough for learners to comprehend them; they also need to know when and how to utilize them correctly in conversation. Through the use of digital tools, students can encounter idioms in genuine, everyday situations, gaining a more sophisticated comprehension of how these terms work.

Students can be exposed to idioms used in commonplace conversations or stories, for instance, through interactive e-books and websites like YouTube. Students can better comprehend the context in which idiomatic terms are employed and the emotions they express by observing native speakers using them.

Digital platforms can also offer multimedia resources, such as images and videos, that help students visualize the meaning of idioms, making it easier for them to internalize these expressions.

Instant Feedback and Revision

Another important advantage of teaching idioms with digital tools is the instant feedback they provide. In conventional language programs, students might not receive feedback right once and might not have the chance to fix their errors right away. However, students can rapidly comprehend what they did properly or wrong by using digital platforms to get fast feedback on their performance.

For instance, Kahoot gives students immediate feedback following every question, displaying the right response and providing an explanation of its accuracy. Students are able to consolidate their learning and clear up any misconceptions thanks to this instant reinforcement. Additionally, a lot of online resources, like Quizlet, provide chances for repetition, which is crucial for learning idiomatic idioms. These platforms' spaced repetition strategies make sure that students encounter idioms several times, which raises the possibility that they will be retained over time.

Personalized Learning

Additionally, more individualized learning experiences are made possible by digital tools. Numerous platforms, such as Memrise and Duolingo, adjust to the learner's speed and offer tailored lessons that focus on areas in which the student needs to develop. B2 learners notably benefit from this tailored approach since it enables them to concentrate on and practice idioms that they find particularly difficult at their own speed.

Duolingo, for instance, provides courses where students come across idioms in the context of more extensive language activities. The software makes sure that students are always studying at the right level by modifying the difficulty level as they move through the classes to fit their abilities. Students feel more assured about their capacity to acquire and apply idioms successfully thanks to this individualized learning strategy.

Collaboration and Peer Learning

Peer learning and collaboration are also encouraged by many digital platforms, which can improve the educational process even further. Students can collaborate to discover and use idiomatic idioms through platforms like Padlet, Google Classroom, and cooperative online games. Students are encouraged to ask questions, discuss idioms and their meanings, and share their knowledge through collaborative learning.

Since students learn best when they collaborate to solve issues or finish assignments, peer learning has been demonstrated to enhance language acquisition. For example, Google Classroom allows students to work together to develop digital idiom dictionaries in which they define idioms, discuss their meanings, and offer examples. In a social and engaging setting, this cooperative technique helps students internalize idioms and reinforces what they have learned.

Access to a Wealth of Resources

Students have access to an almost infinite number of resources for learning idioms thanks to digital platforms. To learn more about idiomatic idioms, students can use idiom databases, online dictionaries, and instructional websites. Comprehensive lists of idioms, definitions, examples, and

practice tests are available on websites like EnglishClub.com, The Idioms, and Cambridge Dictionary.

Additionally, a lot of online resources, like Quizlet and Memrise, let users make and distribute their own flashcards or courses. Students can share materials and gain knowledge from one another in this collaborative learning setting.

Practical Examples of Digital Tools for Teaching Idioms

Kahoot

With the help of the online game-based learning platform Kahoot, educators may make personalized tests and engaging games. Idiom-focused quizzes can test students' ability to choose the appropriate meanings or usage in context. The competitive nature of Kahoot, where students respond in real time and receive points for accuracy and speed, increases student engagement and adds excitement to the learning process. Kahoot is perfect for reviewing idioms in an enjoyable and memorable way because of its visual and aural components, which also accommodate various learning styles and promote class engagement through collaboration. **The**

Quizlet

With the use of the internet platform Quizlet, educators and learners can make and distribute flashcard sets that are suited to particular learning objectives, such as idioms. In order to improve comprehension, these flashcards may include the phrase, its description, an example sentence, and even pictures or audio. The learning modes on Quizlet, including "Learn," "Write," and "Test," offer a variety of methods for reinforcing idioms. Furthermore, learning idioms is made engaging and fun by its integrated games, such as "Match," which involves matching idioms with their definitions, and "Gravity," which involves defending planets by providing accurate and timely answers. The flashcards are available for students to review at any time, facilitating long-term retention and efficient spaced repetition.

Memrise

Memrise is a language-learning program that teaches vocabulary and idioms in context by using gamified quizzes, repetition-based memory techniques, and video clips of native speakers. Memrise stands out for emphasizing realistic language use; students learn the meaning and appropriate usage of idioms by hearing and seeing real people use them in everyday contexts. Better comprehension is supported by the visual and aural information, and learners are kept interested by the app's progress tracking and motivator badges. Students can have a better sense of when and how idioms are employed in everyday conversation by witnessing them in use.

The Duolingo

By means of brief, interactive tasks, the popular language-learning program Duolingo integrates idioms into its courses. These exercises give students an opportunity to observe how idioms work in context by frequently incorporating them into dialogues or sentence-completion problems. To keep learners motivated, the platform incorporates gamification features including experience points (XP), levels, streaks, and awards. Additionally, Duolingo adjusts to the user's performance by redoing difficult tasks and offering tailored feedback, which promotes learning. For independent learners in particular, its bite-sized courses and easy-to-use interface make it perfect for daily idiom practice.

Conclusion

The figurative meanings, cultural references, and lack of transparency of English idioms make them extremely difficult to teach, especially to B2-level students. Conventional teaching approaches frequently fail to adequately engage pupils or offer the contextual depth necessary for genuine comprehension. On the other hand, a potent remedy is the incorporation of digital tools into idiom training. Interactive, gamified, and personalized learning experiences are provided to students by platforms such as Kahoot, Quizlet, Memrise, and Duolingo. These experiences improve retention, foster contextual understanding of idiomatic idioms, and increase student engagement.

Additionally, these platforms offer collaborative capabilities, adaptable learning pathways, and instant feedback—all of which support a more inclusive and student-centered approach. Digital tools help students bridge the gap between memorization and practical usage by introducing them to real-life examples, visual cues, and culturally rich content. This enables students to utilize idioms in conversation in a natural and effective way. The use of such tools will become more and more important in preparing students with the language and cultural competence required for fluency in English as technology develops further and educational practices shift to more digital media. Adopting these tools is a deliberate improvement of language teaching methods in a worldwide, digitally connected world, as well as a reaction to contemporary learning preferences.

REFERENCES

- Boers, F., Eyckmans, J., Kappel, J., Stengers, H., & Demecheleer, M. (2004). Formulaic sequences and perceived oral proficiency: Putting a lexical approach to the test. *Language Teaching Research*, 10(3), 245–261. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1362168804lr1460a>
- Broeder, P., & Walkinshaw, I. (2015). Teaching English idioms to speakers of other languages: Effective methodologies. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 25(2), 204–220. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12089>
- Cameron, L. (2003). *Metaphor in educational discourse*. Continuum.
- Cook, V. (2008). *Second language learning and language teaching*. Routledge.
- Deignan, A. (2005). *Metaphor and discourse*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hamari, J., Koivisto, J., & Sarsa, H. (2014). Does gamification work? -- A literature review of empirical studies on gamification. *Proceedings of the 47th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 3025–3034. <https://doi.org/10.1109/HICSS.2014.377>
- Hirsch, D., & Tominari, M. (2005). Teaching English idioms effectively: Methods and resources. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(1), 34–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2005.00241.x>

- Hwang, G. J., & Wu, P. L. (2014). Applications of digital games in education: A review of research. *Educational Technology & Society*, 17(3), 92-105. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.17.3.92>
- Liu, D. (2008). Idiomaticity and language teaching. *ELT Journal*, 62(3), 256-264. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccn030>
- Memari, S., & Davoudi, M. (2016). The effectiveness of using digital educational tools in enhancing EFL students' vocabulary learning. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 7(2), 412-420. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0702.16>
- Reinders, H., & Wattana, S. (2015). The effectiveness of digital game-based learning for improving students' language learning: A review of the literature. *Computers & Education*, 82, 67-76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.11.004>
- Thornbury, S. (2002). *How to teach vocabulary*. Longman.
- Zyzik, E. (2011). The role of idioms in second language acquisition. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 49(4), 399-429. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.2011.022>
- Anderson, C. A., & Dill, K. E. (2000). Video games and aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behavior in the laboratory and in life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78(4), 772-790. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.78.4.772>
- Boulton, A., & Smith, P. (2018). Digital tools for English language learners: New developments and resources. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 21(4), 44-53. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26132963>
- Gee, J. P. (2003). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. Computers in Entertainment (CIE), 1(1), 20-20. <https://doi.org/10.1145/950566.950595>
- Meschi, E., & Dey, N. (2016). Digital tools and the process of language learning: The role of games and multimedia in English idioms instruction. *Language Learning & Technology*, 20(2), 36-50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.05.034>
- Surmeli, H. (2014). Using educational technology in language classrooms. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 5(1), 123-130. <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.5.1.123-130>
- Anderson, C. A., & Dill, K. E. (2000). Video games and aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behavior in the laboratory and in life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78(4), 772-790. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.78.4.772>
- Deterding, S., Dixon, D., Khaled, R., & Nacke, L. (2011). From game design elements to gamefulness: defining "gamification". *Proceedings of the 2011 annual ACM conference on human factors in computing systems*, 9-15. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1978942.1978947>
- Gee, J. P. (2003). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. Computers in Entertainment (CIE), 1(1), 20-20. <https://doi.org/10.1145/950566.950595>
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York University Press.