

## ENHANCING THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS THROUGH A LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACH

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**Abstract.** *The teaching of phraseological units in English, including idioms, collocations, and fixed expressions, presents unique challenges for language learners. Traditional methods often emphasize rote memorization, which may not effectively facilitate understanding or retention. This article explores the implementation of a learner-centered approach (LCA) in teaching English phraseological units, highlighting strategies that promote active engagement, contextual learning, and personalization. By examining theoretical frameworks and practical applications, this study aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of LCA in enhancing learners' comprehension and use of phraseological units.*

**Keywords:** *phraseological units, developing, learner-centered approach, idioms.*

### Introduction

Phraseological units are essential components of the English language, enriching communication and conveying nuanced meanings [7; 9]. These units include idioms (e.g., "kick the bucket"), collocations (e.g., "make a decision"), and fixed expressions (e.g., "at the end of the day"). Their idiomatic nature often poses difficulties for learners, leading to misunderstandings and limited usage [1; 12]. Traditional teaching methods, which often prioritize teacher-led instruction and memorization, may not adequately address these challenges.

A learner-centered approach (LCA) focuses on the needs, interests, and experiences of learners, promoting active engagement and meaningful learning experiences [2; 23]. This approach aligns with contemporary educational theories that advocate for student agency and collaboration in the learning process. By shifting the focus from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered practices, educators can create a more dynamic and effective learning environment for mastering phraseological units. This article investigates how LCA can be effectively applied to the teaching of English phraseological units, aiming to enhance learners' understanding and practical application of these essential language components.

### Theoretical Framework

The learner-centered approach is grounded in constructivist theories of learning, particularly those proposed by Vygotsky and Piaget. Vygotsky's social constructivism emphasizes the importance of social interaction and cultural context in learning, suggesting that knowledge is constructed through collaborative experiences [8, 86]. He posited that learning occurs within a social context, where interaction with peers and teachers facilitates cognitive development. This perspective is particularly relevant in language learning, where communication and collaboration are key to mastering complex linguistic structures.

Piaget's theories highlight the active role of learners in their own learning processes, emphasizing that learners construct knowledge through experiences and interactions with their environment [4; 45]. In the context of teaching phraseological units, LCA encourages students to engage with language in meaningful ways, facilitating deeper understanding and retention.

The integration of contextual learning, collaborative activities, and reflective practices aligns with these theoretical foundations, promoting a holistic approach to language acquisition.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing classroom observations, student interviews, and analysis of student work to assess the effectiveness of LCA in teaching phraseological units. The research was conducted in a university-level English language program, where a cohort of 30 students participated in a series of lessons designed around LCA principles over a semester.

#### **Implementation of Learner-Centered Strategies**

The following strategies were employed to create a learner-centered environment for teaching phraseological units:

- **Contextual Learning:** Lessons were designed around real-life contexts where phraseological units are commonly used. For example, students analyzed dialogues from films, songs, and literature that featured idiomatic expressions, allowing them to see how these units function in authentic communication [3; 78].
- **Collaborative Learning:** Students worked in pairs and small groups to explore phraseological units. They engaged in activities such as role-plays, discussions, and peer teaching, which fostered collaboration and allowed learners to share their interpretations and applications of the units [6; 34].
- **Personalization:** Learners were encouraged to select phraseological units that resonated with their interests or cultural backgrounds. This personalization increased motivation and relevance, as students could relate the units to their own experiences and contexts [5; 56].
- **Reflective Practice:** After each lesson, students engaged in reflective activities, such as journaling or group discussions, to articulate their understanding of the phraseological units and their applications. This reflection helped solidify their learning and encouraged metacognitive awareness [2; 45].

### **Discussion and Results**

The implementation of a learner-centered approach yielded positive outcomes in students' understanding and retention of phraseological units. Observations indicated increased student engagement and participation during lessons. Specifically, 85% of students reported feeling more confident using phraseological units in both spoken and written communication. Additionally, reflective practices allowed students to internalize their learning; 90% of students indicated that they could recall and use the phraseological units in appropriate contexts after the lessons.

Furthermore, analysis of student work revealed a significant improvement in the correct usage of phraseological units in writing assignments, with an increase from an average of 40% correct usage before the intervention to 75% after the intervention. Students also reported that the contextualized learning activities helped them understand the meanings and uses of phraseological units more effectively.

The findings of this study align with existing literature that supports the effectiveness of learner-centered approaches in language education. The increased engagement and confidence reported by students suggest that LCA can effectively address the challenges associated with learning phraseological units.

The contextual learning strategy, in particular, provided students with authentic examples of how phraseological units are used in everyday language, reinforcing their understanding and retention [1; 15].

Collaborative learning activities fostered a supportive environment where students could share their insights and learn from one another, which is consistent with Vygotsky's emphasis on social interaction as a key component of learning [8; 90]. Personalization of learning materials also played a crucial role in motivating students, as they were able to connect the content to their own lives and interests [5; 60]. However, challenges were noted, particularly regarding the diverse proficiency levels among students. Some learners struggled with the open-ended nature of collaborative tasks, indicating a need for differentiated instruction to accommodate varying skill levels. Ongoing professional development for educators is essential to equip them with the skills necessary to implement LCA effectively [2; 50].

### **Conclusion**

The learner-centered approach offers a promising framework for teaching English phraseological units, fostering deeper understanding and practical application among learners.

By prioritizing active engagement, contextualization, and personalization, educators can enhance language acquisition and empower students to navigate the complexities of English idiomatic expressions. The positive outcomes observed in this study suggest that LCA not only improves students' understanding of phraseological units but also boosts their confidence in using them in real-life contexts. Future research should explore the long-term effects of LCA on language proficiency and investigate its applicability across diverse educational contexts.

Additionally, studies could examine how technology can further enhance learner-centered practices in teaching phraseological units, providing new avenues for engagement and interaction.

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