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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH ENGLISH IDIOMS IN DIGITAL MEDIA

The present research investigates the role of English idioms in intercultural communication within digital media discourse. The study focuses on how idiomatic expressions influence communication between speakers of different cultural backgrounds in online environments such as social media, blogs, and international communication platforms. In contemporary global communication, English functions as a lingua franca, while idioms remain culturally marked linguistic units that may create barriers in intercultural interaction. The aim of this study is to analyze how English idioms are interpreted in intercultural contexts, identify possible communicative difficulties and examine strategies that facilitate successful understanding of idiomatic language in digital communication.

The relevance of the study is determined by the increasing importance of intercultural competence in globalized communication. Modern communication often occurs between speakers who possess different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and idiomatic expressions may become a source of misunderstanding due to their figurative and culturally specific nature. According to Hall [2, p. 56], intercultural communication requires not only linguistic competence but also awareness of cultural codes embedded in language. Kramsch [3, p. 67] emphasizes that language reflects cultural identity and social values, while figurative expressions preserve collective cultural experience. Crystal [1, p. 112] notes that English as an international language develops new communicative forms in digital discourse, yet traditional idiomatic expressions continue to influence interaction. Baker [4, p. 74] highlights that translation and interpretation of idioms often require adaptation rather than literal equivalence. Sharifian [5, p. 39] further argues that intercultural communication depends on understanding culturally constructed conceptualizations encoded in language.

The study applies a qualitative intercultural and discourse-oriented methodology. The material includes English idioms collected from digital media platforms, intercultural online discussions, and public social media posts where communication occurs between users from different linguistic communities. The research combines semantic analysis, discourse analysis, and contextual interpretation. Special attention is paid to communicative situations in which idioms either facilitate informal interaction or create misunderstanding among participants. The theoretical framework is based on intercultural communication theory, cognitive linguistics, and linguocultural approaches to figurative language.

The practical outline of the research includes several stages. First, the study aims to identify the most frequently used English idioms in intercultural online communication. Second, the material will be classified according to thematic groups such as emotions, work, relationships, and everyday interaction. Third, the analysis will examine how non-native speakers interpret idiomatic expressions and what communicative strategies are used to clarify meaning. Finally, the research intends to determine which idioms function successfully in intercultural contexts and which tend to create misunderstanding.

Preliminary analysis already demonstrates several important tendencies. For example, the idiom “break the ice” is frequently used in international online communication to establish informal interaction. However, some non-native speakers initially interpret it literally before recognizing its figurative meaning. This example illustrates how culturally conventionalized expressions require contextual and cultural competence for accurate interpretation. Another example is the idiom “spill the beans,” which in online discussions is often misunderstood by learners unfamiliar with metaphorical associations between revealing information and physical action. In intercultural contexts, users frequently request clarification or replace the idiom with more neutral language. A third example is the expression “hit the road,” which commonly appears in travel blogs and informal communication. While native speakers recognize its figurative meaning as “to leave” or “start a journey,” some intercultural participants interpret the phrase literally, which may disrupt communication. These examples demonstrate that idioms preserve cultural imagery that may not be transparent in international communication settings.

The expected findings suggest that successful intercultural communication depends not only on grammatical competence but also on the ability to interpret culturally marked figurative language. Preliminary observations indicate that transparent and contextually supported idioms are more easily understood by international speakers, while culture-specific expressions may create communicative barriers. Digital communication also encourages simplification, paraphrasing, and explanation strategies that help users overcome idiomatic misunderstanding.

The study is limited by the relatively small scope of analyzed material and the subjective nature of contextual interpretation. Another limitation concerns the variability of digital discourse, where meanings may rapidly change depending on social trends and communicative context. Nevertheless, the research contributes to the practical understanding of intercultural communication processes and demonstrates the importance of cultural awareness in interpreting idiomatic language.

The research confirms that English idioms remain significant elements of intercultural digital communication despite the global spread of simplified English. Idiomatic expressions continue to reflect cultural models and collective experience, influencing communication between speakers from different linguistic communities. The study emphasizes the necessity of integrating intercultural competence and cultural explanation into foreign language teaching, translation practice, and international communication studies. Further research may involve empirical surveys and comparative analysis of idiom comprehension among speakers of different cultural backgrounds.

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