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English Idioms and Proverbs: Linguistic Aspect

English idioms and proverbs play a key role in any language. They have existed in both written and spoken English since the time the language originated. Idioms and proverbs make speech sound more native. The world of phraseology of the modern English language is large and diverse, and every aspect of its research requires a lot of attention. English phraseology is characterized by a wealth of functional-style and emotional-expressive synonyms.

We would like to analyze English idioms and proverbs in detail. Idioms and proverbs help to supply information aspect of language with the sensual and intuitive description of our world and life.

The term "idiom" was first introduced by the English linguist L. Smith. He wrote that the word "idiom" is used in the English language to refer to the French term "idiotisme" and to the grammatical structure of combination characteristics of the English language, although very often the meaning of these combinations cannot be explained from a grammatical and logical point of view as idiomatic expressions also have a cultural value. Analyzing set-phrases, it is possible to trace the history of the country, get acquainted with its customs and traditions, and understand the mentality of native speakers.

A proverb is a short sentence that people often use giving advice on people's proper behaviour in different situations. It is also defined as a short, simple and popular saying or a phrase which effectively embodies a commonplace truth based on practical experience or common sense. The language means of a proverb imply an allegorical message. They are popular in speech due to their usage in spoken language as well as in folk literature.

There are some differences between idioms and proverbs. Proverbs are used like expressions which illustrate a specific point. They are different from idioms because idioms can't always be understood literally, i.e. a meaning of the whole saying is not always a combination of those of its constituent parts. For example, "to be fed up with" means "to be tired and annoyed with something that has been happening for too long"; "to rub someone the wrong way" – "to irritate or annoy someone"; "to do something by the skin of your teeth" – "to complete something, but not well". Proverbs are short sayings that give advice about how people should behave or express a belief that is commonly thought to be true. For example, «Don't cry over spilled milk" (Don't get upset about something that has already happened and cannot be undone); "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones" (Don't criticize other people for their faults if you have faults too – and everyone does); "A stitch in time saves nine" (Fixing a problem right away will take less time than fixing it later on).

In conclusion, idioms – as well as proverbs – often have a special meaning that is different from the meaning of the individual words put together, but expressed in a different way than in idioms. The literal meaning of an idiom often doesn't make sense, and idioms can be impossible to understand unless you learn about their meaning. The literal meaning of a proverb is clear, but the suspected meanings of these expressions are not the same as their literal meanings.

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