



THE USE AND SOCIO-LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF IDIOMS IN BUSINESS DISCOURSE

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: March 28 th 2021 Accepted: April 6 th 2021 Published: April 26 th 2021	The article discusses the problem of the usage of idioms in business discourse in the English language. It highlights the importance of figurative linguistic elements in the business communication. Several examples are given to display the topic clearly.
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The history of mankind has undergone many linguistic changes. It is no exaggeration to say that the classification of language from different angles and its polishing with different language colors is a miracle of the 21st century. Including the role of phrases is unique.

The use of idioms in everyday discourse is becoming increasingly popular today. The use of idioms in discourse increases its level by eliminating the repetitions in the context. Which further expands and enriches the variety of colors in the language.

As professional English language masters, we are often asked what contrasts there are between general everyday English business idioms. Though there's considerable overlapping going both sides, there are some clear differences. The objective of business English classes is to enable students to feel more comfortable in one's working environment where specialised English is the norm. The common business idioms used in the corporate world are often phrases that confuse a lot of people as direct translation often makes no sense. These common business idioms can cause confusion, causing you to lose track of a conversation or in a meeting can become rather problematic.

The first clear difference between general English and business English is that the vocabulary is hardly used outside of a business setting but is, in fact, commonplace in the corporate world. Without getting too technical we could mention financial vocabulary such as bonds, bankruptcy, broker, commodity, depreciation, dividend, gross domestic product, margin call, to short sell, to wager and so on. All rather habitual terms in the business world, but occasionally used outside it.

Business English and General English have much more in common when it comes to common business idioms, expressions and phrases.

Here are some idioms used mainly in the business discourse:

1. A long shot

This phrase comes from sports, like basketball for example when a player is trying to shoot from a long distance. It means something unlikely to happen.

Example: *Getting a senior position in the corporation one day is a long shot, but if you don't try you'll never find out if it's possible.*

2. Back to the drawing board

This expression means to start something again from the beginning because it's not working as you would have liked or expected.

Example: *This project is not going as planned, let's get back to the drawing board and fix what's going wrong.*

3. To corner the market

To control enough quantity of a product or service that enables one to then change the market price willingly. It can also mean to be the only one making or providing a given product or service.

Example: *Intel has pretty much cornered the market of microprocessors for servers. Their direct competition, AMD, is a distant second.*

4. Hands are tied

When you are unable to carry out any meaningful action because of regulations, rules or other people with authority.

Example: *I wish I could help you cut through all this red tape (another business idiom meaning administrative procedures) but my hands are tied. My boss won't let me.*

5. Up in the air

When things are highly uncertain when a decision has not been made yet.

Example: *We were hoping to sign the contract by the end of the month, but there are still too many things up in the air we need to deal with first.*

6. To learn the ropes

To learn the basics of a profession, a specific task or activity.

Example: *It took her a while to learn the ropes, but now she is confident and we feel that we can count on her to manage her client portfolio effectively.*

7. A learning curve

The process of learning, usually from trial and error. We often say that there can be a steep learning curve, which means that one has to learn things quickly to meet the requirements of a specific job.

Example: *There was a steep learning curve when I started out trading stock options, but I now feel like I'm finally getting the hang of it (another idiom which means to master something).*

8. To go down swinging

An expression that comes from boxing. To swing means to throw an arcing punch. The expression refers to someone who fights to the very end, who never gives up until it is completely over and there is no possibility of victory.

Example: *The future of our company is uncertain due to our massive debt, but I can guarantee that we will go down swinging, whatever happens, we will not give up easily.*

9. By the book

To do things strictly by the rules.

Example: *I don't want to take any chances of getting caught by the financial regulators and having to pay significant fines. We have to do everything by the book.*

10. To cut corners

Almost the opposite of the book. This means to do things most quickly and cheaply to save time and money but often compromising quality and bending the rules (another expression which means not strictly following all the rules).

Example: *The company's decision to cut corners ended up costing them dearly when they got caught red-handed and had to pay a huge fine for committing fraud.*

11. Between a rock and a hard place

When there's no easy way out or a good solution. Whatever you do, whichever option you choose, the outcome will not be ideal.

Example: *Management finds itself between a rock and a hard place after the corruption scandal that has erupted. Either they file for bankruptcy and hope that law enforcement forgets about them, or they stay in business and run the risk of going to jail.*

12. From the ground up

To build or start something from nothing, from zero.

Example: *Building a company from the ground up can bring you great pride if you are successful.*

13. The bottom line

Usually referring to the final profit margin of a business when all expenses have been paid.

Example: *At the end of the day, what shareholders care about is the bottom line which will determine the dividends they take home every year.*

14. To get down to business

To start getting serious about something.

Example: *We've wasted enough time debating on the official launch date. Let's get down to business now, we have work to do.*

15. To get someone up to speed

To update someone on the current situation or to give them all the necessary information to allow them to complete their task or fulfil their mission.

Example: *Why don't you come to the office and I'll take the time to get you up to speed before we go to the meeting.*

16. It's not rocket science

Something not very complicated.

Example: *I don't understand why there are so many mistakes in this report. It's not rocket science!*

17. To think outside the box

To think unconventionally, creatively and explore new non-conformist ideas.

Example: *If you want to succeed in this highly competitive economic environment, you have to think outside of the box to gain an edge on your rivals.*

18. Touch base

To touch base with someone means that you will contact them.

Example: *I will finish the project I am currently working on and then we can touch base later in the week.*

19. In a nutshell

To summarize something into as few words as possible, as small as a nutshell.

Example: *This week's business meeting was, in a nutshell, extremely productive and informative.*

20. Back to square one

To start something from the very beginning, unfortunately, it can also mean that no progress has been made on your current project; therefore you are back to square one.

Example: *We tried our best to find the right sources and materials for the project, but unfortunately we couldn't find anything relevant, so now we are back to square one.*

21. Bring to the table

To provide benefit or negotiation in some way. Whether you bring (an offer or negotiation) to the table or you provide skills or attributes that can benefit the situation or company in some way.

Example: *She brings a selection of strong analytical skills to the table.*

These are just a few examples of the countless colourful expressions you can use to enrich your speech and start mastering the English language like a native.

For businessmen and women on the move needing effective one to one lessons with trained professionals specialised in business English, Skype English Classes with qualified native teachers are quickly becoming a sought-after option thanks to their flexibility, personalisation and affordability when compared to conventional group lessons in physical academies.¹

Communication between speakers of different languages has increased exponentially in the course of the past decades in all walks of life, including in the business world. This is the case not only for internal business communication, as more and more business organisations are characterised by a multicultural, multilingual workforce, but also in external business communication, where the different stakeholders involved in the communication originate from different countries.

SOURCE:

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