



## UZBEK TEENAGERS’ ATTITUDES IN LEARNING PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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**Abstract** The present study investigates Uzeek teenagers’ attitudes towards phraseological units in learning English. A quantitative research design was employed, and data was collected through descriptive survey. The survey aimed to identify students’ understanding of phraseological units, their frequency of use and their perceptions of the importance phraseological units in English language learning.

The study involved Uzbek teenagers studying English at Grand Edu Learning Center. The findings indicate that many students consider phraseological units interesting but difficult to understand and use correctly. While most participants believe that phraseologiccal units help improve speaking skills and make language more natural they also report limited exposure and insufficient practice in the classroom.

Furthermore the results reveal that phraseological units are not taught systematically which affects students’ confidence in using them in real communication. Based on the findings, the study emphasizes the need for greater attention to teach phraseological units through contextualized example and communicative activities. These approaches might help improve learners’ lexical competence and overall language proficiency.

**Keywords** Phraseological units, Uzbek teenagers, descriptive survey, learners’ attitudes, English language learning

### **Introduction**

Phraseological units are a significant part of everyday Uzbek communication. They often carry cultural meanings that cannot be understood from individual words alone. In spite of their frequent use in conversations, media, and school texts, many teenagers may find it difficult to use idioms naturally. Teachers have noticed that young learners often prefer simple expressions. This sometimes makes them avoid using idioms in speaking or writing. This situation raises questions about teenagers’ attitudes toward idioms, fixed expressions and their perceived usefulness in real-life communication.

Most existing Uzbek linguistic studies focus on the structure, meaning, or cultural background of idioms. However, limited attention has been given to teenagers’ experiences with

idioms in practice. While some research suggests that idioms are becoming less common among youth because of digital communication habits. There is still a lack of empirical evidence on teenagers' attitudes, difficulties, and motivations when learning idioms in both state and private sectors.

### **Research Gap:**

Phraseological units have a crucial role and we can find many studies, research related to them. Despite their cultural importance, little is known about how Uzbek teenagers understand, value or use phrases. Current studies are largely theoretical, leaving a gap in knowledge about learners' real experiences and attitudes toward them.

### **Research Questions:**

To respond this gap the present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are Uzbek teenagers' attitudes toward learning phraseological units?
2. Which types of phraseological units (metaphorical, cultural, structural) do teenagers find most difficult to understand?
3. How frequently do teenagers use phraseological units in their everyday communication?
4. How confident do teenagers feel when using fixed expressions in speaking or writing?

This study attempts to explore teenagers' attitudes toward learning and using Uzbek phrases. Additionally, it focuses on their preferences, perceived difficulties and the practical usefulness of phrases. Understanding their views can help educators design more effective materials for teaching them in school.

### **Literature Review**

Phraseological units include idioms, phrasal verbs and fixed expressions, which play a crucial role in achieving fluency and communicative competence in second language acquisition. They reflect cultural idiomatic usage, making them essential yet challenging for EFL learners.

Studies in EFL contexts show that learners generally hold positive attitudes towards learning English idioms, recognizing their importance for natural-sounding speech and cultural understanding. For instance, Afghan undergraduate EFL students demonstrated very strong positive attitude towards idioms, view them as vital for effective communication inspite of facing difficulties, such as cultural gaps and lack of exposure (Orfan, 2020).

Similar positive attitudes have been observed among other Asian and Arab EFL learners who appreciate idioms for enhancing expressiveness, but often avoid using them due to comprehension challenges (Alhaysony, 2017).

In contrastive linguistics, numerous studies highlight cultural and structural differences between English and Uzbek phraseological units. These differences arise from distinct historical, social and cultural influences with English idioms often drawing from Western traditions and Uzbek ones reflecting Eastern folklore, mythology and national values (Yo‘ldosheva, 2025; Seytimbetova, 2025). For example, zoonymic (animal-related) and somatic

(body part) idioms in Uzbek frequently embody moral or emotional concepts unique to Central Asian culture, while English equivalents may emphasize pragmatic or individualistic ideas. Additionally, research emphasizes the role of phraseological units in developing communicative competence among Uzbek EFL learners, advocating for their systematic inclusion in teaching to bridge cultural gap and improve fluency (Seytimbetova, 2025).

However, there is a notable research gap concerning learners' attitudes towards phraseological units particularly among teenagers in the Uzbek EFL context. Most existing studies focus on university-level students or comparative semantics with limited attention to adolescents' perceptions, motivation and challenges in engaging with these units.

This underscores the need for targeted investigation into Uzbek teenagers' attitudes to inform age-appropriate pedagogical approach.

### **Methodology**

In this study a quantitative research approach was used to determine the level of use of phraseological units and their mastery. This approach made it possible to analyze the level of understanding of phraseological units frequency of use and their place in academic and everyday speech based on statistical data. Research data was collected through a closed-ended questionnaire. The survey was focused on the level of knowledge of phraseological units confidence in their use and difficulties in the learning process. The obtained results were analyzed by percentage and general indicators, and the general attitude of students to phraseological units was clarified. As a result, the quantitative research showed the general trends in the study of phraseological units and served to statistically substantiate the importance of these language units in the educational process.

### **Participants**

A total of 40 participants (27 girls and 13 boys) took part in this study. All the participants were 10-11th graders and their age ranged from 17-18 years. It was determined that the English language level of the students is at the B1 level based on the placement results of the educational institution. The number of participants was considered sufficient for quantitative analysis aimed at identifying general trends in the use and understanding of phraseological units. The participants were selected through convenience sampling and were voluntarily involved in the study from existing classes. All participants had a similar educational background and language level which minimized differences related to language proficiency. It is worth noting that the participants were previously familiar with phraseological units they had already learnt, some commonly used phrases in English classes. However, they did not study these units in a systematic and deep way, and the research was focused on determining their existing level of knowledge and the situation of real use. In order to comply with the ethical standards of the study, informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. They explained the purpose of the study, the process of conducting it and the voluntary nature of participation. Also, the confidentiality and anonymity of all personal information is fully ensured.

## Data Collection

Before conducting the survey, the purpose of the research was explained to the participants. Brief information was given about the research aimed at determining the level of use of phraseological units and their understanding. Participants were not randomly selected; the questionnaire was distributed to all 10-11th grade students at Grant Edu LC. Their decision to participate or not in the study was voluntary and consent was automatically recorded via Google Forms. The questionnaire was administered through the Google Forms platform, and participants took about 15 minutes to answer it. The questionnaire consisted of 40 questions, which consisted of multiple-choice and short answer questions. The questions were aimed at directly measuring the level of understanding and use of phraseological units of the participants. All answers were collected completely, there were no technical problems due to good internet connection. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants was fully ensured during the study. Through this approach, reliable and accurate information was collected about the participants' knowledge and experience of phraseological units. The data was collected on December 3, 2025 and prepared for statistical analysis at the next stage.

## Data analysis

Answers to closed-type questions were studied and clear picture of the attitude of Uzbek teenagers to phraseological units was formed. The results of the study showed that most teenagers have heard phraseological units but do not use them constantly in speech and writing. The level of familiarity and usefulness of phraseological units was determined by counting how many teenagers chose each answer option. Frequencies percentages, and mean values were used to analyze the results.

The opinions of adolescents were studied on open-ended questions and the results were interpreted by grouping them according to common themes. In this way, complete picture of teenagers' attitude to phraseological units and difficulties in their use was created.

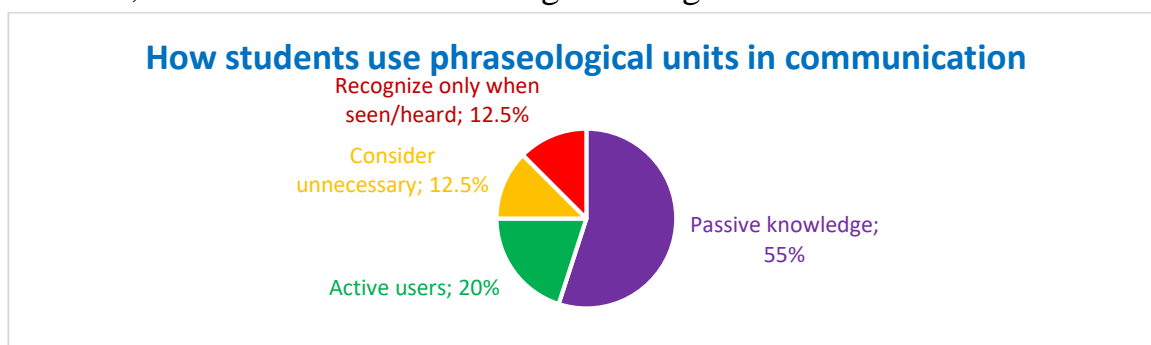
### *The results of the analysis showed that:*

*Most teenagers understand phraseological units but rarely use them;*

*Some teenagers find it difficult to use phraseological units in practice;*

*Most teenagers recognize the importance of phraseological units in enriching speech and writing.*

Thus, the study gave a clear and broader picture of the attitude of Uzbek teenagers to phraseological units, their level of understanding and usage habits.



Students were given 40 questions in the survey and (RQ3) is about how often students use phraseological units in their communication. Results show that the majority of students are aware of phraseological units to some extent. 22 out of 40 participants (55%) stated that they know phraseological units well, have heard and read them a lot. However, representatives of this group admitted that these units are rarely used in practice. They stated that they have more passive knowledge, although there is a level of understanding, productive skills are not enough. 8 students (20%) noted that they actively use phraseological units. Representatives of this group said that they regularly use these units in exam essays written assignments, and speaking. In their opinion phraseological units make the speech more impressive and worthy of a high rating. At the same time 5 participants (12.5%) stated that they consider phraseological units unnecessary. They noted that these units are not important in everyday communication and that ideas can be expressed through simple words. It showed that the representatives of this group hardly use phraseological units. Another 5 students (12.5%) stated that they remember phraseological units only when they see or hear them, but they do not use them independently. According to them, such units are not stored in memory for a long time and are recognized only when they are appeared in context.

Attitude	Boys (Frequency)	Boys (Percentage)	Girls (Frequency)	Girls (Percentage)
Very positive	3	23.1	7	25.9
Positive	5	38.5	10	37.0
Neutral	3	23.1	5	18.5
Negative	1	7.7	4	14.8
Very negative	1	7.7	1	3.7
Total	13	100.0	27	100.0

#### **Interpretation of results (Results - by gender):**

Students showed their feelings for (RQ7). 13 boys and 27 girls participated in the survey. Positive attitude (positive + very positive) is 61.6% (8) for boys, 63.0% (17) for girls. In both sexes, the main attitude is positive. The highest indicator is positive in boys (38.5%), and also positive in girls (37.0%). Neutral attitude is slightly higher among boys (23.1% vs. 18.5%). Negative attitude (negative + very negative) in girls 18.5%, in boys 15.4% - that is, negative attitude is slightly more among girls. In general, the difference between the sexes is not big; In both groups, the attitude towards phraseological units is mainly positive.

#### **Results and Discussion**

The obtained results show that there is a significant difference between students' knowledge of phraseological units and their use in real speech. Although more than half of the participants in the study admitted that they know phraseological units, only a small part actively use them. This situation clearly show the difference between passive and active knowledge in

language learning. The small number of active users shows that phraseological units are not reinforced with enough practical exercises during the teaching process. Students often learn these units through a dictionary or text but do not have the opportunity to apply them in real-world situations. As a result, although the knowledge is available, the level of use remains low. The fact that some students consider phraseological units unnecessary and it indicates a problem of motivation. If the student does not understand the benefits of these units he or she will not feel the need to learn and use them. This situation requires teachers to explain the practical importance of phraseological units through specific example. In short, this quantitative study showed that the students' knowledge of phraseological units is relatively high but their practical application is limited. The results of the research mean that in the teaching of phraseological units only theoretical knowledge is not enough, but it is necessary to strengthen it through regular practical exercises written and oral activities. In the future it is recommended to teach phraseological units using integrated methods, connect them with exam requirements and expand the possibilities of using them in real communication situations. This will significantly improve not only students' knowledge, but also their speaking competence.

### **Limitations**

Each research has some limitations and our research is no exception. Firstly, because of the relatively small number of respondents in the study, the generalization of the results to all Uzbek adolescent may be limited. Secondly, the study used self-report questionnaire, which reveal the possibility that participants may over- or under-report the level of understanding and use of phraseological units.

Thirdly, the study focused only on students' attitudes and opinions, the impact of phraseological units on students' real language skills were not analyzed in depth. Finally, since the study was conducted in only one educational center, studies conducted in other educational institutions will provide more general results. Therefore, it is recommended to increase the number of respondents and cover different educational institutions in future studies.

### **Implications for future research**

Future research should examine the long-term effects of teaching phraseological units of English language learning. In particular, how phraseological units affect students' general language skills, fluency and vocabulary can be analyzed in depth. It is also important to determine the effectiveness of the methods used in teaching phraseological units. Since, this study focused only on students' attitudes and opinions, it is recommended that future studies of students' real language outcomes includes written and oral achievement should be conducted. In addition to, the observation of lesson processes, use of students' work sample and assessment result increase the reliability of research results. Future research could include different educational institutions, increase the number of respondents and provides more comprehensive information on the teaching of phraseological units. This helps understand the role better and importance of phraseological units in learning English.

### **Conclusions**

This study focused on studying the attitude of Uzbek teenagers to phraseological units in the English language and the study was conducted based on a quantitative research design. The results of the research showed that phraseological units are important in increase students' vocabulary and making speech more natural and fluently. At the same time, many teenagers stated that they have difficulties of understanding phraseological units and using them correctly. The results showed that phraseological units are not sufficiently and systematically taught in the course of the lesson that reduce students' confidence in them. Therefore, in English classes more attention should be paid to teach phraseological units based on context through practical exercises and communicative activities. This will help students develop their language skills and improve their English language skill.

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