

## **Idiom Teaching Exercise System for Foreigners at the Intermediate Level**

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**Abstract:** The ultimate goal of language teaching in general and teaching Vietnamese as a foreign language in particular is to help learners fluently use Vietnamese in communication. Therefore, building a system of exercises on idioms - a fixed language that carries national cultural values - is important and meets the urgent needs of today. Idiom exercises are designed based on the Vietnamese Competency Framework for foreigners and divided according to the learners' thinking levels.

In each type of exercise, we also clearly identify the issues: purpose, implementation process, and organizational form. These will be specific directions to help teachers easily apply these types of exercises in teaching activities.

**Keywords:** Exercises, idioms, foreigners, learning Vietnamese, intermediate level

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### **1. Introduction**

Language teaching in general or Vietnamese teaching for foreigners in particular is increasingly popular and is constantly being innovated in connection with the actual needs of learners. In addition to teaching knowledge about Vietnamese, teaching Vietnamese to foreigners today also integrates knowledge about culture, society, etc. Therefore, teachers need to have appropriate methods to help students learn. Staff can both communicate in Vietnamese and have a cultural understanding of Vietnamese people.

Vietnamese idioms are an important part of the vocabulary that clearly shows the characteristics of thinking, thinking, and behavior of Vietnamese people in the national cultural language. Therefore, it can be seen that idioms are an important linguistic part of teaching Vietnamese. For foreign students to fluently use idioms in communication, teachers need to design exercises on idioms. With that meaning, the article aims to propose types of idiom teaching exercises for foreigners learning Vietnamese at the intermediate level, thereby helping Vietnamese teachers have the necessary orientation in their activities. Teaching idioms in particular and vocabulary for foreigners in general.

### **2. Content**

#### **2.1. Principles for building a system of idiom exercises for foreigners at the intermediate level**

##### **2.1.1. Principles ensure scientificity**

This is a basic principle, requiring that the concepts and principles included in the teaching process and building exercises must ensure accuracy in knowledge content and consistency in viewpoints and principles. Consistency also requires that knowledge units be arranged and presented in exercises that are reasonable and consistent. Exercises must have the goal of forming Vietnamese communication skills for students, taking communication activities as the goal, that is, aiming at forming the skills to understand meaning and use idioms. Thus, teaching idioms needs to focus on teaching the meaning of idioms rather than teaching their structure and form so that students can understand the meaning and better understand culture, society, and behavior. in Vietnamese communication. In addition, teaching idioms must also be linked to context by seeing how they are placed in sentences, paragraphs, and lessons.

##### **2.1.2. Principles to ensure feasibility**

Feasibility is the ability to be implemented in practice, specifically the ability to be applied in actual teaching and learning, and at the same time must bring about the expected effect. This principle needs to be applied and concretized flexibly and creatively in teaching Vietnamese in general and teaching idioms in particular for foreign students. Teaching idioms to foreigners also depends on the cognitive level of each student's age and the level of understanding of the meaning of Vietnamese vocabulary. Therefore, to ensure effectiveness and attractiveness to learners, it is required to ensure lesson content (including goals to be achieved or lesson objectives) and a system of methods for units. Knowledge must be built, established, and applied based on principles that are suitable for the learner's application so that it is neither under-strength nor too much, and must be both collaborative and capable of creating strength. To ensure attractiveness, the proposed measures should not be too easy or too difficult, and attention should be paid to converting

Vietnamese content into appropriate teaching content. To attract attention and create positivity for students, it is necessary to build a system of questions and exercises to guide learners in performing activities to better understand idioms as well as form and develop skills. Use idioms. The effectiveness of the lesson content is demonstrated by maximizing the uniqueness of the Vietnamese language through the selection and use of appropriate materials. The given exercise system must be appropriate to the learner's level. This is specifically specified in the requirements for each level.

### **2.1.3. Principles to ensure integration**

Integration is understood as the synthesis of many elements, or in other words, the connection between related knowledge areas in a unit of lesson. For the Vietnamese idiom exercise system, vocabulary knowledge is not separated into an independent unit or element, but it will be associated with grammar knowledge as a mutual complement, which means not only aiming at word reception but also having to create that word using certain grammatical structures. These are inseparable elements when teaching language.

### **2.1.4. Principle of ensuring inheritance**

Inheritance is the absorption and inheritance of values from what has existed before, those values become the premise, conditions, or decisive values for the birth of new values. Inheritance in building a system of Vietnamese idiom exercises for foreign students is shown in two aspects. Firstly, the exercises that are built must have an increase in level and development of thinking ability; the basic knowledge set out in the previous requirements must become a stepping stone for the new requirements. Higher levels of thinking follow. Second, building a system of Vietnamese vocabulary exercises for foreign students is a process that inherits the achievements of previous related works, while ensuring to contribute new points to the next exercise systems.

### **2.1.5. Principles to ensure systematicity**

A system is a collection of related elements, closely related to each other to create a whole. Any teaching program must be systematic. It is expressed in the program content and the exercise system included in the program needs to be arranged and arranged in a reasonable sequence. At lower levels, the program is always an inheritance and continuation with expansion and improvement of the knowledge taught. At lower levels is the process of adding foundation knowledge to the program at higher levels. At the same time, in the accompanying lessons, the exercises must also be divided into specific levels, and within each level, the exercises must be arranged according to levels. On the other hand, there also needs to be a close relationship between the exercises.

### **2.1.6. Principles focus on communication activities**

The ultimate goal in language teaching is still the ability to communicate, or in other words, the ability to apply in real life the system of knowledge learned. That's why in building an exercise system, this principle is indispensable. In the exercise system, this principle is expressed in the fact that the exercises will pose familiar situations, often encountered in real life, and require learners to solve those situations, this will first of all somewhat reduce learners' surprise when faced with similar situations in life. On the other hand, it also helps learners have an environment to apply the knowledge they have been taught.

### **2.1.7. Principles of chemical differentiation of learners**

For building an exercise system, differentiation is the ability to divide learners into specific subjects, distinguishing each other, such as learners at the basic level with learners at the intermediate level. advanced level, learners at the beginner level with learners at the intermediate and advanced levels, etc. This differentiation will make the exercise system a tool for assessment. Learners, through performing exercises, will determine their current abilities, and teachers, by letting students solve exercises, will be able to quantify the students' abilities. We demonstrate this differentiation in the exercise system through the combination of building a Vietnamese idiom exercise system in several specific idioms according to the Vietnamese Competency Framework for foreigners (level 1). elementary, intermediate, advanced) and Boleslaw Niemierko's 4-level scale (recognition, understanding, application, high application). More specifically, for each level and level, the exercises will be designed differently, from easy to difficult, from simple to complex.

## **2.2. Construction process and types of idiom exercises for foreigners at the intermediate level**

### **2.2.1. Construction process**

Based on the principles set out, we propose to develop idiom exercises for foreigners at intermediate level learning Vietnamese including the following 3 steps:

Step 1: Choose the exercises to build

Based on the level of training (beginner, intermediate, advanced) as well as the cognitive level of each student's age and the level of understanding of the meaning of Vietnamese vocabulary, we need to choose the format. Exercises to build:

For intermediate level (B1, B2): students already understand and know a lot of vocabulary, so the exercises will be at a higher level - understanding level because at that time students are proficient in both structure and grammar. and can be used well in communication. Corresponding to it, there are exercises such as: filling in the blanks to complete the idiom, arranging the following words to create an idiom, and making sentences with idioms.

Step 2: Determine the goal of the exercise

Determining the objectives of the exercise is important to help teachers orient and plan clear, specific, and accurate teaching activities suitable for learners. This step is the basis for teachers to build questions and activities, requiring students to solve problems by recreating known knowledge, thereby opening up new knowledge.

Step 3: Develop implementation content and implementation form

The requirements that the teacher sets for students to perform are presented in the form of questions or activity requirements that force learners to reproduce knowledge and solve problems based on what they already know. To ensure effectiveness and attractiveness to learners, it is necessary to ensure that the lesson content and methodological system of knowledge units must be built, established, and applied based on the principles appropriate to the learner's application so that it is neither under-strength nor over-strength, and must be both cooperative and capable of creating strength.

## **2.2.2. Types of exercises**

### **2.2.2.1. Fill in the blank**

- a) Purpose: This type of exercise helps students use correct words, grammar, and spelling. Next, it helps students remember idioms to create the habit of enriching their vocabulary.
- b) Implementation process:
  - The teacher chooses several idioms appropriate to the student's cognitive level.
  - The teacher leaves some important words in the idiom blank and asks students to fill in the blanks.
- c) Form of organization: This type of exercise is performed in many different forms: individual, group, game,...

When introducing this type of exercise into a lesson, teachers need to be careful to ensure that all students understand the meaning of the exercise they give.

Example: Fill in the blanks to complete the idiom

1. Tre ... măng mọc
2. Nước đổ ... vịt
3. Kén cá chọn ...nh
4. Giận ... chém thớt
5. Đầu voi đuôi ...ột
6. Gấp lừa bỏ ... người
7. Chó ... phải nhặng
8. Đồng ... cộng khổ
9. Ăn cháo ... bát
10. Cháy ... ra mặt chuột

Answer:

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Tre già măng mọc   | 6. Gấp lừa bỏ tay người   |
| 2. Nước đổ đầu vịt    | 7. Chó ngáp phải nhặng    |
| 3. Kén cá chọn canh   | 8. Chọc gậy bánh xe       |
| 4. Giận cá chém thớt  | 9. Ăn cháo đá bát         |
| 5. Đầu voi đuôi chuột | 10. Cháy nhà ra mặt chuột |

### **2.2.2.2. Fill in the idioms in the contexts**

a) Purpose: This type of exercise helps students use words correctly, understand the meaning of words, and understand the context given by the teacher. At the same time, it helps students use idioms well in practical

social life.

**b) Implementation process:**

- The teacher chooses several idioms with contexts appropriate to the student's cognitive level.
- The teacher gives the context and leaves the idiom blank, then asks students to read and understand the contextual meaning to fill in the appropriate idiom in that blank.

**c) Form of organization:** This type of exercise is performed in many different forms: individual, group, game,...

Example 1: Given a new word, choose the word to fill in the blank

*tuyết (snow)*      *than (coal)*      *voi (elephants)*      *tranh (picture)*      *đũa (leech)*  
*sếu (crane)*      *Rùa (turtle)*      *Sông (river)*      *kiến (ants)*      *Hoa (flower)*

- a. He is as healthy as...
- b. After returning from swimming, she was as black as...
- c. I wonder what she ate to get so tall...
- d. Snow White's skin is as white as...
- e. She does everything slowly like...
- f. She was praised for having long hair like...
- g. She looks so beautiful out there...so
- h. People go to the festival in large numbers like...
- i. She clung to me like...
- j. He always smiles brightly like...

Answer

- a. He is as strong as an elephant
- b. After returning from swimming, she was black as coal
- c. I wonder what she eats to become as tall as a crane
- d. Snow White has skin as white as snow
- e. She does everything slowly like a turtle
- f. She is praised for having hair as long as a river
- g. Looking at her outside, she's as beautiful as a picture
- h. People go to the festival in large numbers like ants
- i. She clung to me like a leech
- j. It always smiles brightly like a flower

Example 2: Choose the correct idiom (choose a, b, c, d)

1. There is a job that he can't finish, it's true.....
  - A. Slow as a snail
  - B. Lightning fast
  - C. Tough as a leech
  - D. A double job

Answer A

2. The teacher has taught and instructed this type of lesson so many times, but he still forgets it. True that.....
  - A. If there is a will, there is a way
  - B. Learn one and know ten
  - C. Water falls over a duck's head
  - D. Hide your head and tail

Answer C

3. I have said many times not to buy that item, but she still.....calls and bothers me
  - A. Lightning fast
  - B. Tough as a leech
  - C. Picturesque
  - D. Slow as a turtle

Answer B

4. Her face.....made me scared, I didn't dare to come close
- Cold as ice
  - Picturesque
  - Fresh like flowers
  - White as snow

Answer A

5. Her .....face, captivated me so much that I couldn't eat or sleep
- Picturesque
  - Long like a river
  - Black as coal
  - Cold as ice

Answer A

Example 3. For sentences with omissions, choose the idiom below to complete the sentence

East as ants

strong as elephants

Low as a duck

beautiful as a picture

Fresh like a flower

slow like a turtle

- Looking at your cousin so tall, looking at you.....
- Tet is coming, so many people go shopping, so markets and centers are always.....
- This boy always smiles.....so everyone likes him.
- Because of her....., many people pursue her
- I mean .....when you can carry a whole bike like that by yourself
- It's just exercise but she always...

Answer

- Looking at your cousin so tall, you look as short as a duck
- Tet is coming, so many people go shopping, so markets and centers are always crowded
- This boy always has a smile as bright as a flower, so everyone likes him.
- Because she is so picturesque, many people pursue her
- He is as strong as an elephant when he can carry a bicycle like that by himself
- With just practice, she's always slow as a turtle

### 2.2.2.3. Arrange words to create idioms

a) **Purpose:** This type of exercise is to train students' ability to create idioms and creative thinking ability.

b) **Implementation process:**

- The teacher chooses some idioms appropriate to the student's cognitive level.
- The teacher provides data to build this exercise which are "separate" words with content appropriate to the topic being studied and asks students to arrange them to form appropriate idioms.

c) **Form of organization:** This type of exercise is performed in many different forms: individual, group, game,...

For example: Arrange the following words to form idioms

- (kêu, cuốc, rả ra).....
- (ma, cắn, cắn, cắn).....
- (hùng hục, húc, trâu, mã).....
- (vịt, bầu, lạch bạch, như).....
- (cò, bắt, tép, như, lò dò).....
- (cuốc, lủi, như).....
- (giục, như, giục, tà).....
- (ma, như, xấu).....
- (bản, lem, ma, như).....
- (chiều, vong, như, chiều).....

Answers

1. Ra rả như cuốc kêu (Cumming like a hoe)
2. Cầm cắn như chó cắn ma (Stop biting like a
6. Lủi như cuốc (Sneak like a hoe)
7. Giục như giục tà (Urging is like urging evil

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| dog biting a ghost  | 8. Xấu như ma (ugly as a ghost)                       |
| 3. Hùng húc như trâu húc mã (fiercely like a buffalo ramming a grave) | 9. Bẩn như ma lem (dirty as hell)                     |
| 4. Lạch bạch như vịt bầu (waddle like a duck)                         | 10. Chiều như chiều vong (indulgent her like a ghost) |
| 5. Lò dò như cò bắt tép (probe like a stork catching shrimps)         |   |

### 2.2.3. Make sentences/write paragraphs using idioms

a) **Purpose:** Helps students develop communication skills and use idioms in life

b) **Implementation process:**

- The teacher chooses several idioms appropriate to the student's cognitive level.
- The teacher provides given idioms and requires students to make sentences/write paragraphs using the given idioms. Students must firmly grasp the meaning of the given words and must grasp the ability to combine words to form sentence content. Teachers can use the question-and-answer method or practice in groups for students to create questions and then the teacher will comment, and give model sentences clearly showing the context of use for students to follow. The material in this exercise format contains simple, familiar, and easy-to-understand idioms for students to practice because the format is a difficult exercise.

c) **Form of organization:** This type of exercise is performed in many different forms: individual, group, game,...

**For example:** Please make a sentence/write a paragraph with the following idioms: ugly as a ghost, waddling like a duck, dirty as a ghost,

Sample:

- Her steps waddle like a duck
- Her makeup is as bad as a ghost.
- She painted all over the wall, making it as dirty as a ghost
- He pampers his wife and indulgent her like a ghost.

### 3. Conclusion

Based on the principles of choosing idioms, the article has initially built a system of exercises for teaching idioms to foreign students at the intermediate level from a communicative perspective. Idiom exercises increase in difficulty: from learners detecting and correcting errors in idioms, learners will use the correct idioms in the correct word order in the sentence according to the correct grammar. Meaning. The design of the above exercises is partly aimed at overcoming common errors of students in the process of getting acquainted with idioms.

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