

한국어 교재의 관용표현에 대한 고찰

A STUDY ON IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS IN KOREAN TEXTBOOKS



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ABSTRACT

Idiomatic expressions are expressions that combine two or more words to form a new meaning that is completely different from the original meaning. In order for Korean learners as a foreign language to acquire appropriate communication skills and sentence interpretation skills, it is essential to learn idiomatic expressions that are deeply rooted in the lives of Koreans. Most idiomatic expressions are closely related to traditional customs and historical origins. In addition, when explaining something in words, idiomatic expressions can be used to effectively and concisely convey it to the other person, so they are often used in daily life. Therefore, it is important to know idiomatic expressions in order to use Korean fluently.

This paper will examine the difficulties of learning idiomatic expressions for Korean learners.

Key word: Korean, learners, idioms, definition of idioms, The concept of idioms, Korean texts

I. Introduction

II. Difficulties in Learning Idiomatic Expressions

III. Conclusion

IV. References

I. Introduction

Idiomatic expressions reflect the society, culture, and history of the country where the language is used. Therefore, simply knowing the vocabulary does not guarantee an understanding or ability to use idiomatic expressions. In other words, various elements such as the subject, the conversational partner, and the context must be taken into account. Native speakers may naturally acquire these expressions over time, but foreign language learners must intentionally learn them through study. Thus, learning idiomatic expressions is essential for improving communication skills and sentence comprehension.

Looking at the dictionary definition of idiomatic expressions, they are generally described as words that are commonly and habitually used. Alternatively, they can be defined as "phrases or clauses consisting of two or more combined words" or as "special expressions that carry a third, distinct meaning reflecting the fundamental way of thinking or culture shared by the linguistic community using the same language." In this paper, the term "idiomatic expressions" refers to vocabulary that includes idioms, proverbs, and four-character idiomatic phrases (saja-seong-eo).

II. Idioms in Korean language textbooks

To analyze the current state of education on Korean idiomatic expressions, a review was conducted of the idiomatic expressions found in five of the most commonly used Korean language textbooks in Uzbekistan: *SNU Korean*, *Yonsei Korean*, *Korea University Korean*, *Sejong Korean*, and the textbooks published by the National Institute for International Education (NIIED). These expressions were categorized into idioms, proverbs, and four-character idiomatic expressions (Sajaseongeo).

The analysis revealed that the *SNU Korean* and *Korea University Korean* textbooks are particularly rich in content related to idiomatic expressions. Both textbooks present idiomatic expressions as supplementary vocabulary at the end of each lesson. Moreover, they include not only idioms but also a variety of proverbs and Sajaseongeo, making their coverage of idiomatic expressions comprehensive and well-structured.

In contrast, the *Yonsei Korean* and *Sejong Korean* textbooks do not specifically highlight idiomatic expressions; instead, they present them incidentally within sentences alongside other vocabulary. This approach was deemed insufficient for the effective teaching of idiomatic expressions.

Therefore, the number of idiomatic expressions and vocabulary items in intermediate and advanced levels of Korean language textbooks is shown in the table below.

<Table 1> Number of idioms and expressions by level in Korean language textbooks

	SNU	Yonsei	KU	Sejong	NIIED	Total
Intermediate	86	29	141	88	22	366
Advanced	170	95	189	-	30	484
Total	256	124	330	88	52	850

As shown in the <Table 1> above, the total number of idiomatic expressions presented in Korean language textbooks amounts to 692, with 366 at the intermediate level and 484 at the advanced level. Among the textbooks analyzed, Korea University

Korean contains the largest number of idiomatic expressions, followed by those from Seoul National University, Yonsei University, Sejong Institute, and the National Institute for International Education. Notably, the textbooks from the National Institute for International Education include fewer idiomatic expressions compared to the others. It is evident that the quantity of content increases at the advanced level, with instruction on idiomatic expressions beginning at the intermediate stage.

However, a common issue present in all teaching materials is that idiomatic expression education is often presented alongside supplementary vocabulary without clear differentiation, focusing solely on linguistic functionality and emphasizing the delivery of meaning. Consequently, the contextual application, usage scenarios, and more diverse extended practice for individual idiomatic expressions, especially those involving body-related idioms, are not sufficiently addressed. Furthermore, not only is the presentation of idiomatic expressions as a whole insufficient, but the aspect of cultural education related to these expressions is also rarely covered. Unlike general vocabulary, idiomatic expressions are shaped by reflecting various cultural elements of the society where the language is used. Therefore, idiomatic expression education should involve not only linguistic knowledge but also the cultural content embedded within these expressions.

If we look at the idiomatic expressions that appear in three or more of the five Korean textbooks, they are as follows:

<Table 2> A list of idiomatic expressions that appear in three or more Korean textbooks.

idiomatic	SNU	Yonsei	KU	Sejong	NIIED
그림의 떡	•		•		
누워서 떡 먹기	•	•	•		
눈에 띄다	•	•	•		
눈치(를) 보다(살피다)	•	•	•	•	
마음에 들다		•	•		•
마음을 먹다	•	•	•	•	
마음이 넓다	•	•		•	•
마음이 풀리다	•		•	•	•
발이 넓다	•	•	•		
소 잃고 외양간 고친다		•	•	•	
손(을) 꼽아 기다리다	•	•		•	
손을 잡다	•	•	•		

손이 크다	•		•	•	
신경 쓰다	•	•	•	•	•
애를 쓰다	•	•	•		
어깨가 무겁다		•	•	•	
입에 맞다		•	•	•	
정신이 없다	•	•	•		
쥐꼬리만 하다	•	•	•		

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only idiomatic expression that is commonly presented in five textbooks is ‘신경쓰이다 nervous’. The only idioms that are commonly presented in four textbooks are ‘눈치를 보다 look after the mood (look after),’마음을 정하다 make up your mind’, ‘마음이 넓다 be broad-minded’, and ‘마음이 풀리다 relax your mind’. Each Korean language textbook has a different list of idiomatic expressions, and it cannot be said that organic education is being carried out. Since idiomatic expressions are used naturally in everyday life, it is desirable to first teach frequently used items in idiomatic expression education for foreign learners. Therefore, each Korean language textbook needs to select frequently used vocabulary based on certain criteria and present them consistently.

If we interpret the above idiomatic expression as an example,

1.눈에 띄다 (**to stand out**): To be clearly visible or to stand out significantly.

Example: "She always wears clothes that stand out."

2.입에 맞다 (**to suit one's taste**): To be to one's liking.

Example: "This food suits my taste."

The meaning can vary depending on the context or cultural background of the Korean language. The textbook explains these expressions with examples so that they can be used appropriately in context.

III. Conclusion

Most learners of Korean as a foreign language study idiomatic expressions in Korean textbooks. Many of them graduate or go to study in Korea without reaching advanced textbooks that include a lot of idiomatic expressions. To clarify the exact characteristics of idiomatic expressions, which have been considered part of proverbs, extensive research on idiomatic expressions is necessary. Additionally, it is believed

that a categorized list of idiomatic expressions based on difficulty should be studied to help learners of Korean as a foreign language use idiomatic expressions more comfortably.

IV. Rreferences

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