

HANDLING IDIOMS IN JOB INTERVIEWS

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ABSTRACT

In Romania, soon-to-be-graduates who aim at joining the corporate world are expected to master English for professional communication in order to make an impact on the hiring committee when they enter the increasingly competitive international labour market. Indisputably, communication skills are in high demand nowadays, in addition to some other essential soft skills such as critical thinking, motivation, mindful listening, empathy or flexibility, among others, which can improve job prospects.

ESP students, in general can sometimes face difficulties when dealing with idioms as they are sometimes challenging since they have figurative meaning, which is different from the literal meaning of the individual words making them up. However, they play an essential role in language acquisition and their efficient use in communication can be a gateway to success both in face-to-face or online interviews.

The present paper aims at providing an overview of idioms in job interviews used as an important communication tool by ESP students in an attempt to improve their ability to communicate effectively. The proper use of idioms may have a great impact on communication as they add humor and convey nuance whether we speak about applicants who *cast their net wide* in pursuit of their dream job or recruiters who *separate the sheep from the goats* in an attempt to find talented employees.

Keywords: ESP students, job interviews, communication skills, idioms

INTRODUCTION

Research indicates that poor communication skills have a negative impact on any professional environment. Consequently, successful companies place a great emphasis on fostering communication in order to overcome challenges, to create a positive work environment and to increase job satisfaction as well as productivity. Forbes [1] ranked communication 1st in the top of the *11 Essential Soft Skills in 2024* and for this reason the labour market is in constant pursuit of employees who are able to communicate effectively.

Without question, any ESP course is designed by means of a learner-centred approach, which aims at meeting students' needs. Previous research [2] demonstrates that real life situations such as job interview simulations prove to be highly useful in developing communication skills since they are relevant for a successful entry to the labour market. They learn how to overcome public speaking anxiety, to manage stress and build resilience at the same time. In addition, they learn to engage the audience, to formulate constructive feedback, to negotiate and to express their concerns and needs without the fear of being judged. The role of the ESP teacher in such situations is that of a moderator and counsellor, encouraging originality and boosting students' confidence.