

Idioms and Expressions in Translation

Session Three

1. Back to square one: back to the starting point; to start sth again from the beginning.
All our plans went wrong. We were forced to go back to square one!

2. Bad blood: enmity; bad relationship; hostility
There has been a lot of bad blood bet. Iran and the U.S. during the past 40 years.

3. Bad mouth: to say bad things about sb; to say evil of sb.
Some students were bad-mouthing their professor after the class.

4. Bananas: to be crazy; stupid
The boy who was just talking here is really bananas.

5. Like a bat out of hell: very fast or hastily
He left like a bat out of hell. I didn't realize why he was in such a hurry.

6. Be Greek to someone: not understandable; totally strange
I didn't understand a word of his speech. It was all Greek to me.

7. Bean brain: idiot, silly
John is such a bean brain who is cheated by others easily.

8. Beat a dead horse: to do sth completely useless
Don't ask him for help. You are beating a dead horse.

9. Beat around the bush: to be indirect; not to go to the heart of sth
Just tell me what happened! Don't beat around the bush.

10. Beat the air: do sth useless, try in vain
Trying to fix that old radio is like beating the air.

11. Beats me: I don't know
A: What personality type does Allan have? **B:** 'Beats me!'

12. Behind bars: to be in jail
The thief was arrested and now is resting behind bars!

13. Believe one's eyes: believe what one directly sees
I don't listen to the rumors. I just believe my eyes.

14. Bend someone's ear: to talk to sb continuously and boringly
My father bent my ear advising me for an hour.

15. Big cheese: a boss; an important person

Having worked for 25 years, Smith is now a big cheese in the company.

16. Big fish in a small pond: to be important not because sb is big, because the place is small
In that college, the dean is a big fish in a small pond.

17. Have a big head: to be arrogant; self-conceited

He has got a big head after being promoted to the vice-president position.

18. Big mouth: who speaks all the time; who cannot keep secrets.

Don't tell him/her your private affairs. S/he has got a big mouth.

19. Bite the dust: to fall down onto the ground; to fail; to die

I was riding my bike when suddenly lost my balance and bit the dust.

20. Bite the hand that feeds one: to hurt sb who helps you; to be disloyal

Some children don't respect their parents. They bite the hands that feed them.

21. To black out: to darken a place by turning the lamps off

Would you please black it out? I'm going to sleep.

22. Black sheep: sb who is a disgrace to his/her family or group. To be different from others.

He is the black sheep of his family because he's the only member without university education.

23. Blind leading the blind: when an unexperienced or incapable person wants to help sb else.

Jim is teaching Tom how to play tennis? He is the worst player I've ever seen. Blind leading the blind

24. Blood runs cold: to feel frightened suddenly

My blood ran cold when I saw the harsh accident.

25. Blow hot and cold: not to be stable; to be moody in behavior

You cannot trust the boss and his promises. He blows hot and cold.

26. Blue in the face: very angry or upset

When he came out of the exam site, he was all blue in face.

27. Bottom dollar: one's last dollar; the last remaining money one has.

Right on the last day of my trip, I spent my bottom dollar on buying a pair of sneakers.

28. Bottomless pit: sb who eats too much; sb with endless appetite

I cannot believe how much George can eat. He is really a bottomless pit

29. Brain drain: the movement of talented and educated people to a more developed country

There has long been a brain drain from many other countries to the U.S.

30. Bread and butter: basic needs of life

In my country, people are struggling with their bread and butter issues like food, shelter, etc.

31. Break out (V); Outbreak (N): the sudden and rapid expansion of a disease

The Corona virus first broke out in China; but now the outbreak has reached all around the world

32. Break the ice: to start talking

The boy and girl in love were sitting quietly when finally the boy broke the ice and said sth.

33. Break the news: to give some emotional or bad news to sb

The doctor said the news of her husband's death should be broken to her gradually.

34. Breathe one's last: to die

The old man finally breathed his last after a long illness.

35. Bull-headed: stubborn; sb who does not accept what is reasonable; self-opinionated

Don't try to change his ideas; he is such a bull-headed person who resists the reality.

36. Bull shit: nonsense talk; trivial and purposeless talk

What you say about my field of study is a bunch of bull shit.

37. Burn the midnight oil: stay awake until midnight or more to study or work

I will have to burn the midnight oil tonight. I have an important test tomorrow.

38. Bury one's head in the sand: deliberately refuse to see or hear some fact

You have buried your head in the sand and don't wanna solve your problems.

39. Bury the hatchet: end disagreement or hostility with sb

You two had better bury the hatchet before things get worse between you.

40. Butterflies in one's stomach: to be stressful or anxious/nervous

I always get butterflies in my stomach whenever I am about to give a lecture.

41. Buy off: to give sb some money or gift to change his opinion in favor of you

The accused person tried to buy off the judge by proposing some huge amount of money.

42. Call in sick: to telephone and inform that you are sick and won't go to work

As a teacher, it's very difficult to call in sick because a group of students would have to cancel their class.