

A.S. Aushenova* , **M.M. Aimagambetova** 

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Kazakhstan, Almaty

*e-mail: aushenova24@gmail.com

THE EFFECTS OF TRANSFER ON THE ACQUISITION OF RUSSIAN IDIOMS IN A FIRST LANGUAGE BY STUDENTS

This study looked into the use of first-language knowledge by second-language learners to understand and create idioms in their second language. The author used idioms that were identical, similar, and completely different in both Kazakh and Russian languages in order to determine which were understood and produced most correctly, which caused the most detrimental transfer, what techniques students used to produce unknown idioms, and what the best-known idioms were like. In addition to determining the meanings of phraseological units, students were able to understand that they are not subject to changes from the order of their place. The subjects of the study were included 80 advanced Russian language learners. The ability to comprehend 15 identical, 15 similar, and 15 different idioms was assessed using a multiple choice test and a definitions test. The tests were administered in two separate groups of 40 participants. Each group underwent a separate statistical analysis because there was interaction between group and idiom type. Identical idioms were found to be the simplest to comprehend and produce. Similar idioms were almost as well understood but displayed interference.

Key words: idioms, transfer, first language, second language, translation.

А.С. Аушенова*, М.М. Аймағамбетова

Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ Ұлттық университеті, Қазақстан, Алматы қ.

*e-mail: aushenova24@gmail.com

Оқушының ана тілінде орыс фразеологиялық бірліктерін игеруіне аударманың әсері

Бұл мақала екінші тілдегі фразеологиялық бірліктерді түсіну үшін екінші тілді (L2) оқитын студенттердің ана тілі (L1) білімін қолданылуы жағынан қарастырылды. Автор қазақ және орыс тілдерінде бірдей, ұқсас және мүлдем басқа фразеологиялық бірліктерді қолданып, қайсысы түсінгенге қолайлы, қайталануы жиі, бір тілден екінші тілге неғұрлым қиындықпен аударылатынын және оқушылардың белгісіз фразеологиялық бірліктерді көбейту үшін қандай әдістерді қолданғанын, ең танымал идиомалардың қайсысы ұқсас екенін ара қатынасын анықтады. Фразеологиялық бірліктердің мағыналарын анықтаумен қатар, оқушылар олардың орын тәртібі тарапынан өзгерістерге барынша ұшырамайтынын зерттеулер арқылы түсіне алды. Зерттеу нысандары 80 білім алушы, оның ішінде орыс тілі жоғары деңгейде басымдылықты таныта отырып, 15 бірдей, 15 ұқсас және 15 түрлі идиомаларды түсіну қабілеті бірнеше таңдау тесті мен анықтамалық тест арқылы бағаланды. Тесттер 40 қатысушыдан тұратын екі бөлек топта өткізілді. Әр топ жеке статистикалық талдаудан өтті, себебі топ пен фразеологиялық бірліктердің бір түрі арасында өзара әрекеттесу үрдісі болды. Бірдей идиомаларды түсіну және айту оңай екені анықталды. Мұндай идиомаларды оқушылар жоғары деңгейде түсіне алды, әрі интерференция үдерісін белсенді көрсете білді.

Түйін сөздер: Фразеологиялық бірліктер, аударма, ана тілі, екінші тіл, аударма.

А.С. Аушенова*, М.М. Аймағамбетова

Казахский национальный университет им. аль-Фараби, Казахстан, г. Алматы

*e-mail: aushenova24@gmail.com

Влияние перевода на усвоение русских фразеологизмов на родном языке обучающегося

В этой статье изучалось использование знаний родного языка (L1) обучающихся, изучающими второй язык (L2), для понимания фразеологизмов на своем втором языке. Автор использовал идентичные, похожие и совершенно разные фразеологизмы как в казахском, так и в русском языках, чтобы определить, какие из них были поняты и воспроизведены наиболее правильно, что вызывало наиболее тяжелый перенос из одного языка на другой язык, какие приемы исполь-

зовались учащимися для воспроизведения неизвестных фразеологизмов, а какие самые известные идиомы были похожи. Помимо определения значений фразеологизмов, учащиеся смогли понять, что они не подвержены изменениям со стороны порядка своего места. Объектами исследования были 80 обучающихся русский язык на продвинутом уровне. Способность понимать 15 идентичных, 15 похожих и 15 разных идиом оценивалась с помощью теста множественного выбора и теста определений. Тесты проводились в двух отдельных группах по 40 участников. Каждая группа подвергалась отдельному статистическому анализу, поскольку существовало взаимодействие между группой и типом фразеологизмов. Было обнаружено, что идентичные идиомы проще всего понять и воспроизвести. Подобные идиомы почти так же хорошо понимались, но отображали интерференцию.

Ключевые слова: фразеологизмы, трансфер, родной язык, второй язык, перевод.

Introduction

This study looked into the relationship between first-language idiom knowledge and second-language idiom learning. Interest in two key areas of language acquisition research served as the impetus for the study. In other words, the impact of language transfer on language acquisition, the first of these questions examines whether the learner's first language influences the second language as it is being acquired. Idiomatic speech, which includes how idioms are learned in both first and second languages, how they are processed, and when and how they are used, is the second area of interest. In recent years, there has been debate about the function of transfer in learning a second language. Up until the 1960s, interference from the learner's first language was thought to be the primary cause of errors in the second language. It was thought that when a structure in one language was different from its equivalent structure in another, it would be challenging to learn and cause interference. Similar structures would also aid in learning. To identify the similarities and differences between pairs of languages, comparative studies were conducted (Arnon, & Snider, 2010: 67-82; Arnon & Christiansen, 2017: 621-636).

The "LI = L2" and "creative construction" hypotheses, developed by Dulay and Burt in 1972, 1974, and 1975, respectively, suggested that second language acquisition followed the same process as first language acquisition and that learners constructed their own linguistic systems rather than learning through imitation. As a result, in the 1970s, focus shifted to other sources of error. The transfer and comparative analysis position was criticized because not all predicted errors materialized, unpredicted errors did materialize, and learners frequently made mistakes that would not have been made if positive transfer had been in effect. As researchers and theorists examined developmental and other intralingual factors in second language acquisition, transfer was largely disregarded.

Nevertheless, transfer persisted, and in 1980s saw a rise in interest in this area. It was understood that language's contrastive and creative aspects were not mutually exclusive. Researchers once more started to focus on topics like what is transferred, what the language transfer domains are, and whether transfer can be predicted. The literature on idioms is mainly of a theoretical nature with regard to the second area of research interest. Roberts in 1944, Hockett in 1958, Healy in 1969, Makkai in 1972, 1978, and others have focused on describing idioms and their characteristics, while Weinreich in 1960, 1969, Katz and Postal in 1963, Chafe in 1968, Fraser in 1970, and Newmeyer in 1972, 1974 have focused on where they fit in the grammar. The majority of empirical research on idioms looks at how idioms are processed in comparison to non-idiomatic expressions. The understanding of idioms in the first language has been the subject of several studies. Two studies that examined idioms across linguistic boundaries discovered that second language learners frequently treat idioms as non-transferable.

The role of transfer in the acquisition of idioms in a second language is thus seen to be poorly understood by previous research. The two studies that examined language transfer along with idioms were carried out in a foreign language classroom setting and focused solely on grammaticality assessments. Research is required to examine how idioms are understood and used in contexts where learners are exposed to the language more frequently outside of class and are therefore more likely to have picked up some idioms. The current study makes an effort to fill this gap (Shin & Nation, 2008: 339-348; Cieślicka, 2006: 115-144).

The fact that second language learners tend to avoid using idioms – possibly because they frequently misuse them was another motivating factor for this study. This misuse may be the result of first language interference, such as the Kazakh phrase *дауысты көтеру* (*to raise the voice*), which means

to raise the voice rather than to spread the news. It could also be a result of the target language being overgeneralized, as in the case of saying to *go out on a stick* rather than to *go out on a limb*. *You bet your boots* being used in a formal setting is an example of how misuse can result from not knowing the appropriate context for an idiom. It is hoped that this research will shed some light on the idiom-related learning strategies that students employ. The teaching of idioms in second and foreign language classes could then make use of these revelations.

Literature Review

The idea behind the concept of transfer is that prior learning will influence subsequent learning. This describes the process of forcing native language patterns onto a second language when learning a language. Positive transfer occurs when the patterns of the two languages are the same and the learner uses the first language to produce the second. The outcome is a proper second language form. When the patterns are different, speaking in the second language while using the native language's patterns results in interference errors, which are mistakes that are negatively transferred. Since their origin is cross-linguistic, from the first language to the second, interference errors are also known as interlingual errors. They are distinguished from intralingual errors, which are mental in nature and arise within the target language (i.e., they are a result of acquisition). Due to the difficulty in determining when positive transfer has occurred, most studies into transfer in language learning have concentrated on interference.

It is first necessary to consider what an idiom is and to take a quick look at some of its characteristics before considering the contrastive study of idioms to see how transfer may affect their acquisition. The definition of an idiom that states that the meaning of the whole cannot be determined from the meanings of its parts is the one that is most frequently used. The Random House Dictionary defines it as "an expression whose meaning cannot be determined from its constituent parts" (Stein & Su, 1980: 444). When Fraser (1970) defined idiom as the same thing in a different way: "a constituent or group of constituents whose semantic interpretation is independent of the formatives from which it is made" (Stein & Su, 1980: 22).

There would undoubtedly be an idiom for each of these situations. *Come hell or high water* is syntactically irregular, "you can't teach an old dog new

tricks" is probably a cliché, "kick the bucket" cannot be translated literally while maintaining its idiomatic meaning, "face the music" is syntactically so solid that it forbids any translation formations, and "to pull someone's leg" has no relation to pulling or to legs. The meaning of the whole cannot be summed up with the meaning of the parts, which is the essence of an idiom. For instance, understanding the definitions of *spill the beans* and *beans* will not at all provide any insight into the phrase's idiomatic meaning ("to tell a secret"). According to Durrant (2014) and Ur (2014), the meaning of an idiom is similar to the meaning of a single lexical item and must be learned holistically, just like the meaning of any other lexical item.

The fact that non-compositionality is a requirement for an idiom to qualify does not imply that its constituent parts are meaningless. According to Rommers, Dijkstra and Bastiaansen (2013), the components of an idiom do have distinct meanings that, while non-literal ones are derived from the literal meanings; these non-literal meanings come together to create the entire idiom. The internal syntactic structure of idioms is also maintained, though it may be altered and modified to varying degrees. These modifications have the same effects on the idiom's unitary meaning as they would have on its literal paraphrase. The extent to which an idiom can be altered is a matter of some debate. According to Durrant (2014), an element is not a part of an idiom if it can be substituted. But according to Fraser (1970), the degree of fixedness of different idioms is relative. Some idioms can be modified in acceptable ways, while others completely lose their original meaning when a synonym is used in place of one of the components. This difference of opinion might be the result of examining related idioms from two different perspectives. Some substitution is acceptable if to lend a hand and to give a hand are both considered forms of the same idiom (Nation, 2005: 581–595; Nation, 2011: 529–539).

It is possible to maintain the non-substitution of idiomatic components if they are regarded as distinct idioms. It is important to first distinguish idioms from metaphors before taking a quick look at the origins of idioms in order to comprehend why some idioms' meanings are more transparent than others. Despite the fact that idioms and metaphors are frequently lumped together, idioms are not to be categorized as figurative speech. Idioms have agreed-upon, conventional meanings that are typically impossible to decipher without knowledge of them. However, a metaphor's meaning is not set in

stone, so it is necessary to identify new metaphors. Unfamiliar idioms will therefore be difficult to understand, unless one can infer their meaning from the context in which they are used.

Figurative language acquires idiomatic meaning through repeated use. The form becomes fixed or hardened, and the meaning of the form gradually changes as a result. For instance, a metaphorical expression may become well-liked and frequently used to the point where it develops a conventional meaning. The meaning of idioms created in this manner is transparent metaphorically, and they are frequently referred to as "dead metaphors". Idioms range in transparency along a continuum depending on when and where they were first used. Foreign language students have frequently learned to view idioms as strings of words that cannot be translated literally into the target language. Because of this, some individuals think that no idioms can be translated literally. While many idioms cannot be translated word-for-word into other languages, they do retain their idiomatic meanings in many cases.

Idioms that can be translated as congruent or equivalent are categorized by Roos (1978). The lexical structure and meaning of congruent idioms are identical in both languages. For instance, the phrases *растопить лед* (*break the ice*) and *мүз бұзылган* (*to break the ice*) have the exact same lexical form and both refer to overcoming the initial difficulty of starting a conversation. Different lexical elements are used by equivalent idioms to convey the same meaning. For instance, although the expressions *to sleep on it* and *to consult it with the pillow* have different lexical meanings, both refer to delaying a decision until the following day. Equivalent idioms can mean something completely different, as in the case of the aforementioned example, or something very similar, such as the expressions *покраснеть до кончиков ушей* and *құлағының ұшына дейін қызару* (*blushed to the very tips of my ears*), both of which denote to feel embarrassed. In many cases, there is no equivalent idiom in another language.

A single word, a predetermined non-idiomatic formula, or a free paraphrase can all be used to translate the idiom in this situation into the target language. Idioms can vary from one language to another in terms of form, meaning, stylistic value, and/or pragmatic function, according to Roos (1978). Concessions to the grammatical structure of the language, a slight variation in image in the same type of situation, a higher or lower degree of specificity, or a switch from a positive to a negative expression are some of the factors that contribute to formal dif-

ferences between idioms. A *false cognate* idiom is one where the meaning of two idioms differs despite having the same form (Brybaert & New, 2009: 977–990; Peters, 2012: 65–79; Swan, 2006: 5–6).

Even when two idioms have the same form and meaning, they may have different stylistic meanings or pragmatic purposes in various languages. The difficulties in translating idioms, particularly those that use a different idiom, are mentioned by Brybaert and New (2009). It may be challenging to distinguish subtle meaning variations. There are frequently differences in usage even when the sense is the same. For instance, *мүіе айдап кету* (*to ride a camel*) and *отбросить коньки* (*to kick the bucket*) both denote death; however, the expression is never applied to people. The issue of multiple alternative idiom equivalents is addressed by Hinkel (2009, 2011); in many cases, there is no justification for deciding which translation is the best. For instance, the phrases *to be oneself in one's thirteen* and *not to give the arm to bend* have the same meaning as *to stick to your guns* (Kasahara, 2011: 491–499).

Due to their origins in various historical and geographical accidents, closely related languages may have many idioms that are completely different. Additionally, they may share a lot of idioms. According to Ur (2014), there are several explanations for why the same idiom might appear in various languages: Since many idioms are based on everyday, concrete objects, different languages naturally produce similar idioms from the same source. Additionally, similar languages may share a common culture, and idioms are frequently borrowed between languages. Idiom acquisition has received little attention in the literature. In a 1975 study, Lodge and Leach tested individuals in the ages of 6, 9, 12, and adulthood on the literal and idiomatic meanings of 10 idioms. The literal meaning, the idiomatic meaning, a literal variation, and an idiomatic variation were each represented by one of four pictures. The two images that matched the phrase the subjects heard were given to them to choose from. The findings revealed that idiomatic choices increased with age and that more literal than idiomatic decisions were made. They interpret this as evidence in favor of the theory that idiomatic meanings develop later and are acquired after literal meanings. However, their study used five idioms that do not accept the passive transformation and presented the stimulus idioms in both active and passive voice. This might have led to more literal decisions being made. Strand and Fraser (1979) divided the literal and idiomatic meanings of 20 idioms before testing

children aged 5, 7, 9, and 11. Not the children's ability to distinguish between the two types of meaning, but rather comprehension of the idiom was the focus of the test. They also looked into the comprehension techniques the kids were employing. All of the literal meanings were understood, they discovered, and as people aged, more idiomatic meanings were correctly understood. Idioms that are most frequently used and helpful to kids were those that were first learned. Even the youngest children used non-literal methods of comprehension, though their use of them increased with age (Ferris & Roberts, 2001: 161-184).

There are two intriguing studies that were conducted in the Netherlands, despite the fact that very little research has been done on the use of transfer in the acquisition of idioms. Both Jordens in 1977 and Kellerman in 1977 contend that learners won't transfer expressions if they regard them as unique to a particular language. Those expressions, such as idioms, proverbs, and slang, that are altered or simplified in "foreigner talk" (the particular form of language used in addressing second language learners), according to Kellerman, are included in the list of language-specific non-transferable structures. Jordens in 1977 asked Dutch speakers of German to evaluate the grammaticality of German sentences containing language-specific and language-neutral expressions in order to test the hypothesis that language learners do not transfer idioms even when it is possible to do so. There were metaphors, figures of speech, and idiomatic collocations among the language-specific expressions. Correct German with a Dutch equivalent, incorrect German with a Dutch equivalent, and correct German without a Dutch equivalent were the three different types of sentences with language-specific expressions. The findings demonstrated that language-specific expressions were discarded more frequently than language-neutral expressions. No distinction was made between correct and incorrect language-specific expressions until the third and fourth years of language study, and second-year students rejected more expressions with Dutch equivalents than first-, third-, or fourth-year students (Titone & Libben, 2014: 473-496). According to Jordens' interpretation of these findings, first-year students are more tolerant than second-year students, and third- and fourth-year students are applying their newly acquired knowledge.

Jordens and Kellerman discovered that until their subjects had mastered the second language to the point where they could evaluate the grammar appropriateness of idioms based on newly acquired

knowledge, they believed that idioms were language-specific and thus not transferable. However, different outcomes would be anticipated in terms of actual idiom comprehension and production, particularly in a second language context (as opposed to their foreign language context, where students have less exposure to the language outside of class). It makes sense to assume that once students learn that some idioms can be translated, they will use that information to learn more idioms. Due to the positive transfer that knowledge of the idiom in the native language will have, more idioms that are identical to those in the first language would be acquired. In the case of idioms that are similar but not identical, positive transfer could be anticipated for comprehension because minute variations in the idiom's form do not alter its meaning. For production, however, interference would be caused by the propensity to overgeneralize and ignore minute variations. Learners would be less familiar with these idioms, but those that they did know would not be impacted by interference because their forms are completely different between the two languages.

Methodology

The following methodology was used to create the testing materials for this study:

1. From a bilingual idiom dictionary, 25 equivalent Kazakh and Russian idioms for each class of idioms were chosen. Only idioms that the investigator was comfortable with in both languages were selected. However, due to the need to adhere to the identical/similar/different paradigm, it was not always possible to select the most widely used idioms. In comparison to the other two types, there were a lot more idioms that were unique to the two languages. Because there were fewer idioms available, some of the similar and identical idioms selected might not be as widely used as the others.

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, from "never used" to "used very frequently," ten native speakers of Russian language and eight native speakers of Kazakh language were asked to define each idiom.

3. From each group, eighteen idioms were chosen. All of these idioms had definitions that were clear to all of the respondents, had a median frequency of use score of at least 3, and had equivalent definitions in both Kazakh and Russian.

4. One item for each idiom was included in each of the four tests, which each had 54 items.

Tests on individuals or small groups of subjects were conducted. On the multiple choice and dis-

course completion tests, instructions were printed in Russian; on the definitions and translation tests, they were printed in Kazakh. Although the production test has been referred to as a "translation" test, subjects were asked to provide the Russian idiom that they would use in that situation rather than be asked to translate the given Kazakh idiom. If necessary, the instructions were explained, but no additional assistance was given. It was emphasized that every question should, if at all possible, have an answer.

The tests were administered in the following order during the pilot testing: Kazakh multiple choice, translation, discourse completion, and Russian multiple choice. In this way, neither the full idiom nor a portion of it could be seen by the subjects before they had to produce the entire thing. However, due to the complexity of the task, the results of the translation test produced very little data. Therefore, it was decided to alter the testing's chronological order.

The testing format was set up as follows: discourse completion, multiple choice, translation, definition, under the assumption that subjects wouldn't remember an idiom from one test to the next if they hadn't previously encountered it. This assumption, however, was disproved by a preliminary analysis of the subject data from the first sets of subjects. On the translation test, subjects routinely completed idioms correctly that they had failed to do so on the discourse completion test. They reportedly did so because they noticed and remembered the entire idiom from the multiple-choice test, which was sandwiched between the other two. Due to this, after testing half of the subjects, the testing sequence was altered. Discourse completion, translation, definition, and multiple choice were now in that order. To prevent subjects from remembering the correct paraphrase of the idiom from among the four choices and using that as the definition on the following test, the multiple choice test was placed after the definitions test.

An individual one-way analysis of variance with repeated measures was planned for each test to check for variations in the three types of idioms' means. But because the four tests were administered in a different order, it was necessary to include a new factor and run a two-way analysis of variance with repeated measurements. The two different test order levels (discourse completion, multiple choice, translation, definition, and multiple choice for group one versus discourse completion, translation, definition, and multiple choice for group two) made up the two levels of the between-groups factor. The three idiom types (identical, similar, and different) made

up the three levels of the within groups factor. Given that there was a significant interaction between the type of idiom and the order of the tests in two of the four ANOVAs, it was decided to conduct all subsequent analysis on each group of subjects separately. In order to compare the individual means of the same, similar, and different idioms for each group on each test, Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference test was used. This revealed which subset of idioms scored significantly higher or lower than the rest.

Since the mean score for identical idioms was zero in almost every instance, analysis of variance was not the best method for determining whether there were any differences between the means of interference scores. Therefore, interference scores on comparable and dissimilar idioms were compared using paired *t tests* to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences. For each test and each group of subjects, separate *t tests* were conducted (Boers, Lindstromberg & Eyckmans, 2014: 41-62).

Results

To test for differences between subject groupings, differences between idiom types, and interactions between groupings and types, a two-way analysis of variance with repeated measures was performed as the initial analysis. For each test that was administered, four analyses were done:

In every instance, the impact of the various idiom types is very significant; there is no chance that these findings could have been the result of chance. The three classes of idioms are being handled differently by the subjects, but multiple comparison tests will be required to determine precisely which of the three classes differs from the others.

There is a definite difference only for the translation test ($p = .026$) in terms of performance differences between the two groups due to the different orders in which the tests were administered. The reason for the tests' new order was the performance of group one on this test. This outcome was therefore anticipated. The only test that clearly demonstrates an interaction between the tests' order (the effect of grouping) and the type of idiom is the translation test ($p = .044$). On the definitions test, however, interaction was almost statistically significant ($p = .059$).

Due to this interaction, the type of idiom's impact varies based on the subject's membership in the various groups. For this reason, additional analysis was performed separately on each group of subjects

for each of the four tests to guarantee that each test was analyzed uniformly.

The top score for each idiom type is 15 of the means and standard deviations for each group of subjects for each type of idiom on each test. For each test for every group separately, one-way analyses of variance with repeated measures were carried out. The outcomes were highly significant in each case ($p .005$).

Finding which of the three means varied in each situation was the next step. The Tukey's Honest Significant Difference test was used for planned multiple comparisons.

The translation test is the only test where there is a difference between groups. Both groups demonstrated significant ($p .01$) distinctions between different and similar idioms and between different and identical idioms on the two comprehension tests (multiple choice and definitions). This indicates that while subjects performed similarly on the same and similar idioms, they had noticeably more difficulty with the different idioms.

For all three types of idioms, group one subjects demonstrated significant differences on the translation test (for identical-similar and identical-different, $p .01$; for similar-different, $p .05$). Subjects in group two demonstrated differences ($p .01$) between identical and similar objects as well as between identical and different objects only. They found both similar and dissimilar idioms to be challenging. In other words, subjects in group two who experienced less learning effect found both similar and different idioms to be challenging, whereas subjects in group one who experienced more learning effect found similar idioms to be simpler than different idioms.

The discourse completion test revealed differences in all three idiom types for both groups that were statistically significant ($p .01$). Similar idioms were harder, different idioms were more challenging, and identical idioms were the easiest.

Discussion

On the multiple choice test, there was a difference between groups that was almost statistically significant but there was no interaction between groups and idiom types. After the discourse completion test, group one took the multiple-choice test, and group two took it last after all three other tests. For similar idioms, group two performed better than group one, which is where the difference between the two groups is greatest. It seems that exposure to the same idioms repeatedly has more of an impact

on similar idioms than it does on the same or different idioms. Similar idioms are already simple to recognize, and learning and remembering different idioms likely requires more practice than this because of the learner.

For the definitions test, the interaction between group and idiom type was almost statistically significant. Groups one and two received this test last and third, respectively. Although it appears that Group 2 performed marginally better on various idioms, this effect was not statistically significant. The translation test demonstrates the strongest interaction between group and idiom type as well as the greatest group differences.

After seeing the full idiom on the multiple choice test and the partial idiom on the discourse completion test, group one took the translation test last. Group two took the translation test second, so they had only seen a portion of the idiom. All three idiom types have a small learning effect, but this is only true of identical idioms because they are already simple to produce once learners recognize them as being the same. Different idioms have a larger learning effect, though it is still not very strong. Although the majority of these idioms appear to require multiple exposures before being remembered, it's possible that some of them are so unique and vivid that they stick in the subjects' minds (Conklin & Schmitt, 2008: 72–89).

The greatest learning impact happens for idioms that are similar. Due to the idioms' similarity, the subject in this case can link the idiom on the test to its equivalent in their native tongue and pay close attention to the differences between the two. Since the subjects would be aware after two tests that the same idioms were being used on all tests, this probably happened frequently on purpose. They would have made a conscious effort to remember as many idioms as possible in order to perform better on the next test.

The discourse completion test revealed no interactions between the groups and idiom types, nor did it reveal any group differences. Since the order of the test was the same for both groups and was administered first, this is the anticipated outcome.

The existence of a learning effect is of great interest due to the implications for teaching, even though switching the order of the tests undoubtedly complicated the research design and rendered the results a little less obvious.

The results of the one-way analyses of variance and the multiple comparisons tests demonstrate that for the two receptive tests (multiple choice and defi-

nitions), subjects comprehend and recognize more similar idioms than identical ones, but fewer different ones. Subjects are able to generalize from the meaning in their first language to the meaning in their second language if the form is the same or similar; slight variations in form have no impact on this process when the task is to recognize the meaning of an idiom. However, when the form is completely different, this cannot be done.

The group one subjects (those who had more exposure to the idioms before taking the translation test) performed best when translating the same idioms, then similarly, and worst when translating different idioms. Subjects in group two (who had less

exposure to the idioms before taking the translation test) mistranslated just as many idioms that were alike as they did different idioms. Subjects struggle just as much to produce the right form of a similar idiom as they do to produce a different one when there hasn't been enough exposure to them to have a learning effect. Whether the differences in form are significant or negligible has no bearing on production.

On the discourse completion test, both groups correctly identified the same idioms the majority of the time, various idioms the least frequently, and similar idioms in between. It seems to be true that an idiom is harder the more unique it is when only a portion of it is given.

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