

THE EFFECT OF L1 ON L2 FORMULAIC EXPRESSION PRODUCTION

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**ABSTRACT****THE EFFECT OF L1 ON L2 FORMULAIC EXPRESSION PRODUCTION**

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This study explores whether congruencies in an individual's native language (L1, Turkish) have an effect on the production of formulaic expressions and their respective contexts in that individual's second language (L2, English). The study was carried out with an ENG101 class of 15 students at Bilkent University, Faculty of Academic English. In order to determine the effect of the availability of L1 equivalences on the production of L2 formulaic expressions and their contexts, the participants were given two pre-tests (a Discourse Completion Test and a Writing Prompt) to assess their ability to produce idioms in English and their appropriate contexts. After the pre-tests, the sample participated in two one-hour workshops on the target idioms that related them to their Turkish counterparts in three categories: Category I, word-for-word English translations of the idiom used in Turkish; Category II, conceptually similar English versions of the idiom used in Turkish; and Category III, idioms specific to the English language. After the workshops, the participants were given the same tests as post-tests in

order to observe any improvement they might have made due to the treatment. The participants were also given a questionnaire regarding their opinions on the effectiveness of the workshop.

The results of the study showed that there was a relatively equal rate of improvement in all three categories of idioms. The one-way ANOVA test conducted confirmed that one category was not easier for the participants than the others to improve on. The participants improved at an equal rate in all categories. However, the starting and ending point was highest in Category II, conceptually similar idioms. These findings suggest that explicit instruction of any category of idioms can promote their production, and the production of their contexts, and that the students generally respond positively to a methodology involving comparisons with their L1.

The findings of this study provide insight into the teaching of formulaic language. Teachers and students can benefit from the results of the current study by including target formulaic expressions in their course curricula, and determining the appropriateness or favorability of drawing comparisons to the students' L1 when learning such expressions in L2.

Key words: formulaic language, formulaic language pedagogy, idioms, L1 and L2 comparison, improve

## ÖZET

### ANADİLİN İKİNCİ DİLDE KALIPLAŞMIŞ İFADE ÜRETİMİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

Kyle Pfeiffer

Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Bölümü

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Bu çalışma anadildeki (Türkçe) örtüşmelerin ikinci dildeki (İngilizce) kalıplaşmış ifadeler üretimi ve onların ilgili bağlamları üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktadır. Çalışma Bilkent Üniversitesi Akademik İngilizce Fakültesindeki 15 öğrenciden oluşan bir ENG101 sınıfıyla yürütülmüştür. Anadil eşdeğerliliklerin varlığının ikinci dildeki kalıplaşmış ifadeler üretimi ve bağlamları üzerindeki etkisini belirlemek için, ilgili bağlamlarında İngilizce deyimler üretebilme yeteneklerini test edebilmek amacıyla katılımcılara iki ön test uygulandı. Ön testlerden sonra, örnek grup hedef deyimleri Türkçe karşılıklarıyla üç kategoride ilişkilendiren iki tane bir saatlik seminere katıldı: Kategori 1, Türkçede kullanılan deyimın İngilizce kelime kelime çevirisi; Kategori 2, Türkçede kullanılan deyimlerin kavramsal olarak benzer İngilizce versiyonları; ve Kategori 3, İngilizce diline has deyimler. Seminerlerden sonra uygulamaya bağlı olarak katılımcıların kaydetmiş olabileceği gelişmeyi görmek amacıyla ardıl test uygulanmıştır. Katılımcılara seminerlerin etkililiği hakkındaki görüşleriyle alakalı bir anket de uygulanmıştır.

Çalışmanın sonuçları göstermiştir ki üç deyim kategorisinde de nispeten eşit bir gelişim oranı vardır. Yapılan tek yönlü ANOVA testi bir kategoride gelişim göstermenin diğerlerine göre daha kolay olmadığını teyit etmiştir. Ancak, ön ve ardıl testler neticesinde alınan toplam doğru yanıt sayısına göre, katılımcılar Kategori 2, kavramca benzer deyimlerde en yüksek skoru almışlardır. Bu bulgular herhangi bir tür deyim doğrudan (açıkça) öğretilmesinin deyim üretimini ve bağlamlarını ilerletebileceğini ve öğrencilerin anadilleriyle mukayese içeren bir metodolojiye olumlu tepki verdiğini ifade eder.

Bu çalışmanın bulguları, kalıplaşmış ifadelerin öğretiminin içyüzüne ışık tutar. Hedef kalıplaşmış ifadeler ders müfredatlarında yer verilmesiyle ve böylesi ifadeleri ikinci dillerinde öğrenirken, öğrencilerin anadilleriyle kıyaslama yapmanın uygunluğu ve elverişliliğine karar verilmesi vasıtasıyla öğrenciler ve öğretmenler mevcut çalışmanın sonuçlarından faydalanabilirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kalıplaşmış ifadeler, kalıplaşmış ifadeler pedagojisi, deyimler, anadil ve ikinci dil kıyaslaması, gelişmek

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Why is it correct to say a scholar “sheds light” on a topic and not “shines light”? Why is it said that people “pledge allegiance” but do not “promise allegiance”? The answer to such questions can be found in the standards of formulaic language which can be defined as certain words or phrases that have a particular meaning in a specific order or combination (Wray, 2008). In other words, there are sets of precise forms or phrases that are commonly used without variation to convey a message. The importance of formulaic language in communication is widely recognized given that it is both easier to process by native speakers (e.g., Boers et al., 2006; Myles et al., 1999; Wood, 2006) and its use makes non-native speakers seem more fluent and native-like (Ortactepe, 2013; Yorio, 1989). Whereas learning how to accurately use formulaic language is an automatic process when learning one’s first language (L1) (Bannard & Lieven, 2012), much focus and exposure are required when learning a second language (L2) (Conklin & Schmitt, 2012).

This study aims to determine what the type of focus that is required for speakers to correctly produce formulaic expressions in their L2. More specifically, this study will examine whether focusing on the equivalent formulaic expressions in an individual's native language and second language is an effective way to teach formulaic expressions and encourage their accurate production in L2.

## Background of Study

Formulaic language refers to fixed expressions or strings of words that are used together to convey a situation specific meaning. These common holistic expressions are used as a unit in the appropriate situations. According to Wray (2008), the relationship of certain words have a particularly strong effect on meaning, and that it is only those certain combinations, not synonyms thereof, that can be used to create that meaning. Short utterances that are generated naturally are mostly formulaic language, and such language eases processing, making communication more fluent (e.g., Boers et al., 2006; Myles et al., 1999; Wood, 2006), in turn making the user seem more native like (Ortactepe, 2013; Yorio, 1989).

According to Kecskes's (2007) formulaic language continuum, within the overarching term of formulaic language are different categories including grammatical units, fixed semantic units, and pragmatic expressions. Idioms, which fall in Kecskes's (2007) pragmatic expressions category, are collocations that convey a meaning furthest away from the expression's literal meaning when compared with the other two categories. Wray (2008) defines idioms as "sets of not all that frequent but particularly evocative multiword strings that express an idea metaphorically" (p. 10). "Kick the bucket", "spill the beans", and "raining cats and dogs" are examples. These expressions are differentiated from other collocations like "blow your nose," "running water," "give up," or "take a test" in that these examples are often shorter and function in a referential or ideational manner as do content words (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012). Whereas previous research would claim that idioms are processed holistically, and that the individual words' meanings do not contribute to the overall meaning (e.g., Bobrow & Bell, 1973; Swinney & Cutler, 1979; Weinreich, 1969, in Holsinger, 2013), more recent

research shows that idiomatic processing involves a mixture of grammatical and structural analysis of individual words as well as holistic meaning (e.g., Cacciari & Tabossi, 1988; Cutting & Bock, 1997; Sprenger, Levelt, & Kempen, 2006, in Holsinger, 2013).

Much research has been published in areas such as defining formulaic language and how formulaic expressions are learned and stored in the mental lexicon by L1 and L2 speakers (Wray, 2004, 2008; Bannard & Lieven, 2012; Conklin & Schmitt, 2012), its implications for pedagogy (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012; Wood, 2006; Wray & Fitzpatrick, 2008; Meunier, 2012), conceptual socialization as a means to more appropriately use it (Burdelski & Cook, 2012; Ortactepe, 2013; Bardovi-Harlig, 2012), and the effect of L1 on L2 formulaic language acquisition (Yamashita & Jiang, 2010; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Nesselhauf, 2003). These studies have agreed that formulaic language is composed of groups of words or phrases that are stored and recalled holistically, conveying a particular meaning, and question whether or not L1 and L2 formulaic language similarities and/or differences should be focused on when being learned.

Native speakers are exposed to such formulaic language throughout the process of acquiring their L1 and it is largely this repetition of exposure that internalizes these expressions. They recognize and reuse these sequences of words without analyzing the individual parts, but instead inferring the function of the formulas in communication (Bannard & Lieven, 2012). This phenomenon is not specific to the first stages of language acquisition; formulaic expressions play a large role throughout the entire L1 acquisition process (Bannard & Lieven, 2012). Therefore, correctly understanding and using formulaic language in context is a very difficult process for non-native speakers,

who are not provided with years of continuous exposure. It is even more difficult to acquire idioms because even with extensive exposure, idioms are not as frequent as other formulaic expressions (Ortactepe, 2013).

As an overview, Wray (2004, 2008) delves into multiple questions related to the field: the use of formulaic language, its centrality to natural language learning, its use by beginners or advanced students, idiom processing, and the importance of memorization on formulaic expression acquisition. Bannard and Lieven (2012) studied formulaic language in L1 acquisition and how language reuse and conceptualizations for frequently encountered sequences play a central role in communication for children. Conklin and Schmitt (2012) looked into the processing of formulaic language and how studies across the board have shown that while for native speakers it is easier to process formulaic language as opposed to non-formulaic language, this is not necessarily the case for non-native speakers, who need repeated exposure to such language.

Regarding research on implications for formulaic language pedagogy, Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) explored studies on formulaic sequences in L2, and how successfully pedagogical interventions like drawing learners' attention to FL when encountered, stimulating dictionary look ups for autonomy, and helping students memorize have been implemented in the classroom. Similarly, Wood (2006) and Wray and Fitzpatrick (2008) attest to the effectiveness of identification and memorization of formulaic expressions on their use. Meunier (2012) reviewed the role of formulaic language in L2 teaching and the tangible effects that theoretical developments regarding formulaic language have had on pedagogy and classroom materials.

In addition, formulaic language has been investigated with reference to socialization or conceptual socialization. Burdelski and Cook (2012) claimed formulaic

language is important for the theory of language socialization, playing a role in conditioning areas such as politeness, hierarchy, social roles and statuses, and relationships. Similarly, Ortactepe (2013) contends that formulaic language in combination with the notion of conceptual socialization will make an L2 speaker seem more like a native speaker as perceived by native speakers. Bardovi-Harlig (2012) reviews formulaic language's role in pragmatics and therefore in specific contexts, and how formulaic language contributes a "strong sense of social contract" (p. 206), which determines certain speakers' belongings to various communities based on speech.

Lastly, there is a certain contradiction regarding the effect L1 has on L2 formulaic language acquisition. For example, Yamashita and Jiang (2010) studied the influence of L1 on the acquisition of L2 collocations for Japanese ESL users and EFL learners and found learners to both react faster and more accurately to formulaic language that possess an L1 equivalent when their attention was drawn to it. On the other hand, Bahns and Eldaw (1993) claim that L1 and L2 collocational equivalents should be ignored in the classroom because they are not problematic. Nesselhauf (2003) similarly emphasizes the importance of focusing on L1 and L2 differences rather than equivalents. It appears that studies have not been conclusive on this issue in addition to the fact that none of the above mentioned studies have looked into the extent of the effect of congruent L1 and L2 formulaic expressions on English learners' production of such expressions.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In recent years, considerable research has been conducted in the area of formulaic language, which can be defined as certain words or phrases that have a particular meaning in a specific order or combination (Wray, 2008). Many researchers

claim that in terms of effectively communicating an intended meaning, formulaic language is both easier to use and to understand than other types of dialogue (e.g., Wray, 2008, Bannard & Lieven, 2012, Conklin & Schmitt, 2012) and makes the user seem more fluent and native-like (e.g., Wood, 2006, Boers et al., 2006; Myles et al., 1999, Ortactepe, 2013; Yorio, 1989). While many studies have shown the benefits of comparing L1 and L2 equivalent formulaic expression counterparts (e.g., Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012; Yamashita & Jiang, 2010), others have said the focus should be on the differences between L1 and L2 expressions which may be more problematic for learners because these expressions are conceptually new or unfamiliar (e.g., Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Nesselhauf, 2003). Considering the contradiction between such studies, there is a need to investigate how the availability of L1 formulaic congruencies can encourage the production of the L2 counterparts and their contexts by non-native speakers, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of such a method.

Because more and more scholars are attributing fluency and native-like speech to formulaic language, many educators are attempting to incorporate it into their classrooms (Wood, 2006). Adding to other techniques found to be successful in the classroom such as identification and memorization of formulaic expressions (Wood, 2006; Wray & Fitzpatrick, 2008), there is a need to study how L1 congruencies may benefit the production of L2 formulaic language and its context to promote and encourage it in and out of the classroom.

As the above mentioned studies indicate, it is difficult to acquire idioms yet their accurate usage increases one's perceived fluency in a language. Certain studies (e.g., Hama, 2010; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993) argue that non-congruencies between L1 and L2 formulaic languages should be focused on, while others (e.g., Yamashita & Jiang, 2010;

Nesselhauf, 2003) state that acknowledging the similarities is important and beneficial. To the knowledge of the researcher, no study has explored the effect of comparing L1 and L2 formulaic language equivalences on the production of the target expressions and their contexts, especially in regard to English and Turkish.

### **Research Questions**

The present study aims to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent does the availability of an equivalent idiom in EFL learners' L1 affect the accurate production of that idiom in L2?
2. To what extent does the availability of an equivalent idiom in EFL learners' L1 affect the accurate production of its context in L2?
3. What are EFL learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of focusing on L1 and L2 equivalent expressions when learning idioms?

### **Significance of Study**

Recent literature in the area of formulaic language has confirmed the benefits of using it and the elevated level of proficiency its users are perceived to have (e.g., Wray, 2008, Wood, 2006). Many studies attest to the positive effect memorization can have on the ability to use formulaic language (e.g., Wray & Fitzpatrick, 2008) or the effect L1 has on the ability to understand L2 formulaic language (e.g., Yamashita & Jiang, 2010), but little research has investigated ways to *promote* the memorization and production of L2 formulaic expressions and their contexts. This study may contribute to the existing literature by demonstrating the effect that drawing students' attention to the existence of L1 equivalences has on the memorization and subsequent production of L2 formulaic expressions and their contexts.

At a pedagogical level, by determining the effect of L1 congruencies on the production of L2 formulaic expressions, the results of this study may introduce a new technique that teachers can use when discussing formulaic language. The results are expected to confirm whether or not directing Turkish EFL students' attention to equivalent Turkish expressions helps them produce the English counterparts and their contexts. Therefore, the findings of this study may provide foreign language teachers with an effective strategy for promoting and accelerating students' production of L2 formulaic expressions, in turn making their language more fluent and native-like.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the reasons and rationale behind this study. First, key concepts of the study were identified. Following this, a brief background to the study was given. Next, the problem or gap in the literature in terms of the scarcity of conclusive studies regarding how to promote the accurate production of idioms by students in the EFL classroom were identified. After, the significance of the study for the existing literature as well as on a local level was discussed with the specific research questions for this study following that. The next chapter will explore the existing literature in the field of formulaic language in a more comprehensive manner.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

This chapter will explore the previous and recent research on formulaic language. The first section will introduce formulaic language and its definition with focus on idioms. It will discuss how formulaic language is processed and the effect of formulaic language use on perceived proficiency. The second section will focus on formulaic language pedagogy and factors that should be considered when teaching it. The final section will summarize the differences in L1 and L2 formulaic language and contrasting views on focusing on equivalent expressions between two languages when teaching formulaic language.

### **Formulaic Language**

Formulaic language is composed of phrases that have more meaning in a specific order and with specific words as opposed to their synonyms (Wray, 2008). It has also been defined as multi-word collocations that are stored and produced holistically and not constructed piece by piece (Kecskes, 2007). The term collocation can sometimes be used as an umbrella term for formulaic sequences like idioms or situation bound utterances (e.g., Kecskes, 2007), but has also been used as a separate category on its own among idioms, binomials, and lexical bundles (e.g., Conklin & Schmitt, 2012). Formulaic language has many functions including conveying context-specific meanings in a precise way, realizing actions (e.g., accepting, declining), conveying social bonds (e.g., agreeing, disagreeing), and organizing discourse (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). Formulaic expressions seem to develop over time through repeated contextual situational use and

can be identified in different ways by different people, but generally includes characteristics such as hyphenated words, different pronunciation as a whole than as individual parts, or a meaning that is not readily identified based on the expression's separate parts (Wray, 2008). Kecskes (2007) has designed a continuum within the category of formulaic language that includes grammatical units, semantic units, and pragmatic expressions all of which convey a holistic meaning that can be different from the literal meaning of the individual, but to varying degrees, from lowest distinction to highest respectively (Kecskes, 2007).

Table 1

*Kecskes's (2007) Formulaic Language Continuum*

Gramm. Units	Fixed Sem. Units	Phrasal Verbs	Speech Formulas	Situation-bound Utterances	Idioms
<i>be going to</i>	<i>as a matter of fact</i>	<i>put up with</i>	<i>going shopping</i>	<i>welcome aboard</i>	<i>kick the bucket</i>
<i>have to</i>	<i>suffice it to say</i>	<i>get along with</i>	<i>not bad</i>	<i>help yourself</i>	<i>spill the beans</i>

Collocations, as an umbrella term, can be defined as simply as “two or more words within a short space of each other in a text” (Sinclair, 1991, p. 170). Idioms, in turn, are collocations that fall in the category of highest distinction from the word-for-word meaning on Kecskes's (2007) formulaic language continuum. Examples of idioms include “kick the bucket” and “spill the beans,” both of which have widely recognized meanings vastly different from the literal semantics of the individual parts. Whereas certain collocations allow substitutions of the individual parts with different words or synonyms (e.g., take a picture, take a shower), idioms have been distinguished from other collocations in that there is very little variation allowed, and substitution of the

constituent parts is either completely or almost completely restricted even if the substitution seems syntactically or semantically plausible (Nesselhauf, 2004).

Formulaic language offers a large processing advantage to native speakers but this may not be the case for second language (L2) learners (Conklin & Schmitt, 2012). While storing formulaic language in the mental lexicon is a process that happens automatically for native speakers, replication of that experience for non-native speakers is much more difficult and work-intensive (Conklin & Schmitt, 2012). It is something that non-native speakers cannot do as readily as native speakers can, and therefore a slow process (Kuiper, Columbus, & Schmitt, 2009, in Boers, & Lindstromberg, 2012). Especially for less proficient L2 learners, the processing of L2 idioms can be even more difficult to process than other forms of formulaic language due to their highly metaphorical nature (Conklin & Schmitt, 2012). However, an L2 speaker with a broad range of formulaic language knowledge is able to comprehend speech better and predict how sentences or ideas will continue, or even infer misheard parts of sentences (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012). This ability allows them to focus their attention on less formulaic (and thus less predictable) parts of the conversation, easing the overall language processing (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012).

The ability to understand and properly use formulaic language has many positive effects on the L2 speakers' language. In addition to the processing advantage mentioned above, the appropriate use of formulaic language makes the speaker more fluent (Boers et al., 2006), decreasing the amount of pauses while also increasing the length of speech between such pauses (Wood, 2006). Through the use of formulaic language, the L2 speaker can also be perceived to have both native-like *fluency*, speaking continuously with minimal pauses or hesitations, and native-like *selection* of what to say in particular

situations, using discourse that is commonly used among native speakers themselves (Yorio, 1989). Furthermore, Stengers, Boers, Housen, and Eyckmans (2011) found that the perception of increased proficiency due to formulaic expression use is especially true in the case of English as opposed to other languages, so the effects of the correct use of formulaic language are even more apparent.

### **Formulaic Language Pedagogy**

In order to comprehend and use formulaic expressions accurately and effectively in an L2, the learner must experience conceptual socialization (Kecskes, 2002) through which L2 speakers immersed in the L2 culture and society depend less and less on their L1 conceptual system and begin to conceptualize in the way native speakers do in L2 (Ortactepe, 2013). Through language socialization, L2 learners can become more comfortable with normal, everyday conversation, and weary of social norms with regards to manners, authority, relationships, morals, religion, etc. (Burdelski & Cook, 2012). The accurate use of formulaic language can indicate an L2 speaker's native-likeness, exposure to the target culture, and interactions or connections between that speaker and a specific speech community (Ortactepe, 2013). In a foreign language context where socialization is not an option, formulaic language pedagogy and instruction play an important role. Researchers have approached formulaic language pedagogy from different angles. Meunier (2012) discusses how formulaic language pedagogy in recent years has improved in terms of incorporating native-like input from digital tools and corpora; Lewis (1997) focuses on a lexical approach; some researchers like Wood (2009), and Wray (2008) emphasize the importance of memorization in formulaic language pedagogy; while others (e.g., Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012; Boers

et al, 2006) defend the importance of encouraging awareness in formulaic language pedagogy.

Because of the benefits that using formulaic language has on the fluency and native-likeness of L2 speech, and the difficulty L2 speakers have relying on intuition like native speakers to use formulaic language correctly, the implementation of a formulaic approach to the second language classroom becomes more and more important (Meunier, 2012). As Meunier (2012) discusses, L2 teaching nowadays seems to not ignore the formulaicity of language as much as it did even just a decade ago (e.g., making use of digital tools, corpora, natural language processing techniques, etc.); however, there is still room for improvement in this regard, especially in making textbooks more authentic with native-like input and phrases of frequency in order to minimize the characteristically unauthentic atmosphere of the second language classroom (Meunier, 2012).

According to Lewis's (1997) lexical approach to teaching, lexis should be considered the building blocks to language and not grammar or functions, lexical units are used and processed holistically, and "language consists of grammaticalized lexis—not lexicalized grammar" (pp. 255-270). Whereas the lexical approach advocated using classtime to teach students incidental and autonomous learning strategies for learning formulaic expressions, recent developments claim this incidental learning strategy can be slow and unfruitful and that teachers should increase the students' opportunities to notice targeted useful expressions and reiterate them during the class to promote memorization (Pellicer-Sanchez, 2011). Focusing and elaborating on both the semantics, structure, and phonology of expressions can help students identify and remember them (Pellicer-Sanchez, 2011).

While Lewis's (1997) lexical approach did not focus much on the memorization factor of formulaic language acquisition, more recent research (e.g., Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009) pays close attention to it as an important part of the learning of formulaic expressions (Pellicer-Sanchez, 2011). According to Wray (2008), an extensive repertoire or good exemplars of formulaic language stored in memory form a good support system or complement to competency. Furthermore, not only does verbatim memorization of longer texts promote the retention of the formulaic expressions that are used in those texts, but also that the memorization of formulaic expressions promotes the acquisition of new vocabulary words within them as well (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012). Even though some research has advocated focusing on the structure formulaic expressions to more readily identify and learn them (e.g., Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009), the fact that one does not necessarily need to know why expressions have the form they have in order to use them is an advantage of memorizing expressions, especially for beginner level language learners (Wray, 2008). Memorization and rehearsal in a classroom setting can also promote the retention, expression, and fluency in real-life situations of communication (Wray & Fitzpatrick, 2008, in Wood, 2009).

In addition to memorization, awareness of, or the ability to identify formulaic expressions is an important aspect of formulaic language acquisition. Activities such as underlining possible multi-word strings in authentic texts (text chunking) and comparing with the class promote the awareness of formulaic expressions in students and thus their subsequent ability to learn them independently, which as learners advance, should be more and more common (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012). In fact, raising students' awareness of formulaic language promotes the use of it, and therefore the speaker's perceived fluency (Boers et al., 2006). The responsibility of directing students' attention

to formulaic expressions as they come up in class falls heavily on the teacher (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012); furthermore, drawing students' attention to collocations or formulaic expressions is the teacher's most important duty when teaching such language (Nesselhauf, 2003).

Focused instruction and exposure to many authentic examples of native speakers using formulaic language have improved fluency and the amount and complexity of formulaic language used (Wood, 2009), but while this is generally agreed upon, "there is no agreement on what kind or how much exposure a learner needs" (Carroll, 2001, p. 2, in Meunier, 2012). Researchers have postulated various techniques for the formulaic language classroom and have tested many types of such exposure, such as "flooding the input" (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012, p. 91) or making sure target formulaic expressions recur various times throughout the lesson. In addition to the importance of drawing students' attention to formulaic expressions when encountered in class, Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) also emphasize stimulating dictionary look-ups in order to encourage autonomy in learners to do the same outside of class.

Moreover, while making students aware of formulaic expressions has taken the forefront of formulaic language pedagogy in recent publications, teaching these expressions should involve much more (Nesselhauf, 2003). For example, teachers should teach more than just the lexical constituents of a formulaic expression (including prepositions, articles, etc., is equally important), and point out to students various combinations of the constituents of target formulaic expressions that are *not* possible (e.g., reach a goal versus reach an aim) (Nesselhauf, 2003). The use of online dictionaries or collocation references, and corpora are also becoming more common in the language classroom, and the importance and effectiveness of the latter is becoming

more recognized (Meunier, 2012). Also, having students make typographical distinction of formulaic language they come across (bold, highlight, italic, etc.), and clear metalinguistic commentary on such language is key in raising student awareness and thus promoting the intake and use of formulaic expressions in and out of the classroom (Meunier, 2012).

Other techniques that can have a positive effect on the noticing and memorization of formulaic expressions include “etymological elaboration,” (p. 120) or in other words, explaining where a given phrase originated (e.g., *jump the gun* refers to moving early before the gun shot at the beginning of a race; i.e. doing something early) (Boers, Demecheleer, & Eyckmans, 2004, in Meunier, 2012). Also, acknowledging phonetic characteristics such as alliteration or assonance can assist students remember formulaic language because they would not normally detect such characteristics on their own (Meunier, 2012). Drawing comparisons to a student’s L1 when learning formulaic expressions in L2, is another strategy that has received mixed reviews in recent research, and will be discussed in the next section.

### **Comparing L1 and L2 Formulaic Language in the Classroom**

Recent research has begun to attribute language acquisition to learning and reusing formulas throughout human development, giving social interaction and learning a much more central role than in the past (Bannard & Lieven, 2012). In this sense, it can be said that formulaic speech is the basis for L1 acquisition, and repeated exposure to these structures allows for subsequent grammatical generalizations (Bannard & Lieven, 2012).

However, L2 learners tend to disregard the holistic nature of such expressions like infants learning their first language do, and to their disadvantage, they pay closer

attention to individual words or parts of those expressions (Conklin & Schmitt, 2012). Formulaic language research has focused on the differences in L1 and L2, but there are differing opinions. Conklin and Schmitt (2012) hold that as frequency is a crucial factor in the acquisition of formulaic language, L2 learners naturally have difficulties acquiring them like L1 learners due to lack of exposure; Hama (2010) claims that low frequency of formulaic expression exposure and interference from one's L1 are the most common sources of L2 collocational errors. Some studies (e.g., Hama, 2010; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993) argue that non-congruencies between L1 and L2 formulaic languages should be focused on, while others (e.g., Yamashita & Jiang, 2010; Nesselhauf, 2003) discuss the importance and benefits of acknowledging the congruencies.

In Hama's (2010) study, the question of whether or not L1 and L2 formulaic expressions should be compared in the language classroom to promote acquisition is raised. There seems to be a general consensus that comparing L1 and L2 formulaic language is beneficial (e.g., Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012; Nesselhauf, 2003), but the literature has shown a certain inconclusiveness with regard to how useful comparing L1 and L2 *equivalent* expressions is. To elaborate, Hama (2010) holds that as the least amount of errors the participants of his study made were related to collocations that were equivalent in L1 and L2, there should be a focus on expressions where the L1 and L2 counterparts are non-congruent. According to Hama (2010), because the differences in formulaic expressions in L1 and L2 can be very problematic for L2 learners (Sadeghi, 2009, in Hama, 2010), there should be a special focus on these differences and students' attention should be drawn to them.

Similarly, Bahns and Eldaw (1993) claimed that when teaching formulaic expressions, not only should the teacher focus on those collocations that cannot be

readily paraphrased into L1, but rather L1 and L2 congruent formulaic expressions can be ignored completely in the classroom because such expressions are automatically produced by L2 students. Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) also recommend *contrasting* L1 and L2 formulaic expressions as a pedagogical strategy. These studies give priority to the differences between the two languages in question given that they feel that the similar expressions will be acquired easily and naturally to the L2 learners.

On the other hand, Yamashita and Jiang (2010) found that equivalency among L1 and L2 formulaic expressions in combination with the frequency which one is exposed to the expressions optimizes their acquisition. In the study, the L2 learners made mistakes even on the L1 and L2 congruent expressions which discredits the idea that L2 learners “blindly rely on the L1 when they acquire L2 collocations” (Yamashita & Jiang, 2010, p. 662) or presume equivalence across the two languages. Factors other than equivalence between the forms of two languages affect the willingness of learners to allow L1 transfer including the learner’s perception of how closely the languages are related, or the realization that direct translation is not appropriate in many cases (Yamashita & Jiang, 2010). In this sense, it appears that even the congruent expressions in an L1 and L2 deserve attention in the language classroom because they too can be problematic for language learners.

Nesselhauf (2003) also accounts for the benefits that referencing L1 when teaching L2 collocations provides. Even though learners must be informed about L1 and L2 collocational differences in particular (including the lexical elements, articles and prepositions), L1 and L2 congruencies should *not* be completely ignored in the L2 classroom as opposed to what recent literature seems to recommend, because errors are

made with them, and it cannot be assumed that learners will automatically acquire them (as suggested by Bahns and Eldaw (1993), Hama (2010), etc.) (Nesselhauf, 2003).

### **Conclusion**

The goal of this chapter was to review the current and previous research in the area of formulaic language. It was presented in three sections that included a general overview of formulaic language and its benefits for L1 and L2 speakers, pedagogical issues related to formulaic language, and the inconclusiveness of whether L1 and L2 congruent formulaic expressions should be focused on in the L2 classroom. The purpose of this study is to explore the topic of this inconclusiveness, and shed light on how effective focusing instruction of formulaic expressions (in this case idioms) on equivalent expressions between Turkish and English is on the Turkish English L2 students' ability to produce these expressions and the appropriate contexts they are used in.

## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of focusing on the availability of equivalent formulaic expressions, namely idioms, in an individual's native language (L1) and second language (L2) on that sample's ability to accurately produce them and their contexts in the second language. The data were collected through the use of pre- and post-Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs), Writing Prompts, and a questionnaire. The data were analyzed to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent does the availability of an equivalent idiom in EFL learners' L1 affect the accurate production of that idiom in L2?
2. To what extent does the availability of an equivalent idiom in EFL learners' L1 affect the accurate production of its context in L2?
3. What are EFL learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of focusing on L1 and L2 equivalent expressions when learning idioms?

This chapter presents information about the study's research design, including the sample, setting, instruments, data collection procedures, and analysis process.

### **Sample and Setting**

The current study was conducted in the Faculty of Academic English (FAE) department at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey. The FAE department works to provide the university level students with support courses in academic English so as to help them successfully complete their degrees or programs. The FAE program emphasizes and encourages high standards of written English through courses in various

units that depend on the students' chosen faculty. The instructional setting for the present study was an FAE ENG 101 (English and Composition I) course that included 15 students whose native language was Turkish. The sample was originally 18 students but 3 did not complete the post-testing. The reasoning behind choosing this class as the study's sample is that the students either have sufficient university-level English proficiency, or have successfully completed the university's English preparatory program at the Bilkent University School of English Language (BUSEL). University-level English proficiency was preferred in order to render negligible the idea that the participants' performance on the DCTs and Writing Prompts were due to a simple lack of English knowledge and not the study's teaching method variable. Any teaching that the researcher conducted during the study needed to focus on the L2 (English) expressions and their relationship (or lack thereof) to the L1 (Turkish) counterparts, and not basic L2 language instruction. In addition, idioms are not traditionally part of the FAE's ENG 101 syllabus, which nulls the possibility that any improvement by the participants on the DCTs or Writing Prompts was due to the class content and not the researcher's study. The participants signed a consent form (see Appendix 1) acknowledging the purpose of the study and granting the researcher permission to use the data collected.

### **Instruments**

In order to retrieve the data needed to answer the present study's research questions, three instruments were used. First, the participants completed pre- and post-workshop DCTs. After the DCTs, the researcher conducted two pre- and post-workshop Writing Prompts. Finally, after all testing, the participants filled out a retrospective

questionnaire. The FAE ENG 101 class sessions last 50 minutes each, and the researcher was granted four: one for pre-testing, two for treatment, and one for post-testing.

### **Discourse Completion Test (DCT)**

The DCT aimed to determine the participants' ability to produce the accurate idiom that corresponds to the given situations (see Appendix 2). The DCTs included 34 fill-in-the-blank items of three different categories: the first (category I) included 11 idioms that are word-for-word English equivalences of the counterpart used in the Turkish language; the second (category II) included 11 English idioms that are conceptually similar to the counterpart used in Turkish, but may not be an exact word-for-word translation; and the third (category III) included 12 idioms that are distinct and specific to the English language (see Appendix 3 for the expression list). After reading a brief contextual orientation statement to describe the situation of each item, the participants were asked to fill in the blank with an appropriate idiom that completes a short text. Improvement between the pre- and post-DCTs, especially in categories I and II, was expected to show whether or not the participant's abilities responded positively to the researcher's workshop, which emphasized the commonalities between the L1 and L2 idiomatic expressions.

The DCTs were prepared in a number of ways. Primarily, the researcher needed to choose which idioms would be included in the study. Many of the idioms came from Liu's (2003) article on the most frequently used spoken American English idioms. Other idiom entries came from the researcher's and researcher's advisor's intuition on common and appropriate idioms in the English language, various websites listing frequently used idioms, and television programs. The idioms were screened by the

researcher and his advisor to make sure they were considered idioms in accordance with Kecskes' (2007) formulaic language continuum as shown in Chapter II.

Once the idioms to be used were selected, the researcher was then tasked with finding Turkish equivalences. This was completed through meetings with Turkish native speakers outside of the study in order to check the authenticity of the Turkish equivalences and appropriateness of the categorization (I, II, or III) of the chosen idioms. After the idioms were checked, translated, and sorted, the researcher then used the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) developed by Brigham Young University to determine the frequencies of the idioms and formulate authentic contexts for each item on the DCT. After each given idiom was searched for in the corpus, the authentic results were surveyed and chosen to be used as the dialogue given on the DCT based on their ability to direct the participants towards using the target idiom. Some of the items' contexts were modified to fit the needs of the test in order to simplify vocabulary, remove non-target idioms, or to be more clear, but the themes and contexts that the corpus provided by searching for the idioms were preserved. Some idioms were less frequent than others in the corpus; however, the main purpose of the study was to focus on the effectiveness of the teaching methodology and not the frequency or familiarity of the idioms. Therefore difference in frequency was permitted, but originally proposed idioms with a frequency of less than 10 in the corpus were considered too irrelevant and removed from the study. The items were then ordered based on a random number generator from 1-3 represented each of the three categories of idioms.

The number of items on the DCT pre-test was kept as high as possible because it was expected that there be some idioms that were too easy or too many of the participants were familiar with, in which case there would be no need for instruction.

The DCT was piloted by two native English speakers who averaged a 51.2% on the pre-test, and a 100% on the post-test. Between the pre- and post-pilot tests the test takers were shown a list of the expressions. This represented their treatment or what they would have learned in the study's workshop. Items that were too obscure to identify the correct idiom by native speakers on the pre-test were removed from the study. The DCT score reports consisted of four scores: the overall number correct, and then a number correct for each of the three categories.

### **Writing Prompt**

The second aspect of the research design is the Writing Prompt (see Appendix 4). The Writing Prompts were completed after the pre- and post-DCTs. The participants were provided a list of all of the idioms used on the DCT and instructed to mimic the items from the DCT test by creating a brief contextual orientation statement to describe the situation for each of five items from the list followed by a short text which uses the idiom appropriately. Which category (I, II, or III) the participants chose the idioms from to use in their production task on the Writing Prompt was expected to show which category they were most comfortable or confident working with. The accuracy of the idiomatic contexts that the participants produced in the Writing Prompt were evaluated on a grading scale from zero to two determined by the researcher:

Table 2

*Writing Prompt Scoring Key*

Score	Definition
0	failure to respond, used when a participant wrote less than the total required responses (5) OR the response did not include the chosen idiom in an applicable situation
1	the response had some elements appropriate to the target idiom, but was not completely correct
2	the response was contextually accurate and appropriate to the target idiom

The Writing Prompt was administered after the pre- and post-DCTs. The researcher collected the DCTs prior to the participants completing the Writing Prompt so that they could not receive any help from the list of idioms provided on the Writing Prompt on the DCT. After the pre-tests scores were analyzed, it was found that 10 out of the original 18 participants produced an accurate context for the idiom “give me a break,” and thus it was removed from the study. The next highest frequency of correct responses for one particular item was only three out of 18, (for each of “calm before the storm”, “piece of cake”, and “apples and oranges”) which was deemed not significant enough for removal.

Improvement between the pre- and post-Writing Prompts, especially in categories I and II, was expected to show whether or not the participant's abilities responded positively to the researcher's workshop, which emphasized the commonalities between the L1 and L2 idiomatic expressions.

### **Questionnaire**

After the post DCT test and Writing Prompt were conducted, the researcher distributed a questionnaire with the goal of discovering the perceptions of the participants on the teaching methodology they experienced in the workshop. A Likert-scale style questionnaire was developed by the researcher to fit the purposes of the study. It consisted of five statements and the participants were directed to rate their level of agreement with each statement regarding the teaching methodology (see Appendix 5). The language was kept as neutral and simple as possible to avoid bias, and statements (3-5) were used to check the validity and consistency of the participants' responses to statements (1-2).

### **Treatment**

The second and third hour with the FAE ENG 101 students consisted of a workshop to help the participants both learn the English idioms and draw connections to the Turkish equivalences while doing so. During the workshop, a list of all of the target idioms (with the Turkish equivalents when applicable) was distributed. For category I and II expressions, the researcher split the participants into groups and first asked the participants to read through the Turkish equivalents and see if they could identify the examples of when the English versions of such sayings can be used based on their knowledge of the Turkish expression. The participants presented their examples to the rest of the class. Then, the researcher went over the English versions again and provided

additional examples. For category III idioms, the researcher announced that the idioms are particular to the English language, and explained various situations that they are used in. Then, the participants were split into groups and asked to come up with their own examples and situations in English where the usage of the idioms was appropriate. These idioms were also split among the groups and the scenarios created were presented to the rest of the class. For idioms in all three categories, the group work for creating additional scenarios for the idioms was meant to check the understanding of the participants and to encourage retention. Emphasis and visual aid on the board, separating the expressions into their respective categories, was given to make sure the participants made the connections between the L1 and L2 target expressions and contexts. At the beginning and end of the second hour of the treatment, a brief review of what was previously learned was conducted. Before the post-tests, a brief study period was given for the participants to look over the expressions list (and Turkish equivalents when applicable) and the researcher answered any final questions the participants had. The expressions lists were then collected and not available for the participants to use during the tests.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The present study collected quantitative data in order to address the research questions. The quantitative data consisted of the improvement of number of correctly answered DCT items, the improvement of the Writing Prompt scores, and the level of agreement of the participants with the validity of the statements on the questionnaire. These data were analyzed through repeated measures non parametric testing using the SPSS program and are presented in improvement of number correct overall and within each of the three categories of idioms. Improvement between the pre- and-post DCTs and Writing Prompts shows the practical benefits of the workshop technique of focusing

on the availability of Turkish expressions equivalent to the English target expressions. The responses to the questionnaire shows whether or not the students attribute that improvement to the method of focusing on the equivalent expressions in English and Turkish or whether or not they found it detrimental to the learning of English idioms.

To summarize, the data will be described in terms of descriptive statistics (frequencies) showing a) the extent of improvement on accurate production of formulaic language (idioms) on the DCTs, b) the extent of improvement on accurate production of the context of the formulaic language (idioms) on the Writing Prompt, and c) whether the sample felt the method was effective in helping them recognize and produce English formulaic expressions from Turkish expression comparison on a Likert scale. In turn, point (c) sheds light on the extent to which focusing on the availability of an equivalent idiom in EFL learners' L1 effect the accurate production of that idiom and its context in L2, and EFL learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of focusing on L1 and L2 equivalent expressions when learning idioms.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented information about the study's research design, including the sample, setting, instruments, data collection procedures, and analysis process. The next chapter will present the data analysis process introduced in this chapter.

## CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of focusing on the availability of equivalent formulaic expressions, namely idioms, in an individual's native language (L1) and second language (L2) on that sample's ability to accurately produce them and their contexts in the second language. The research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

1. To what extent does the availability of an equivalent idiom in EFL learners' L1 affect the accurate production of that idiom in L2?
2. To what extent does the availability of an equivalent idiom in EFL learners' L1 affect the accurate production of its context in L2?
3. What are EFL learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of focusing on L1 and L2 equivalent expressions when learning idioms?

The study implemented a pre- and post-test design in order to address these research questions. The participants were 15 students from an FAE ENG101 course at Bilkent University. The participants were given two pre-tests to assess their ability to produce idioms in English and their appropriate contexts. After the pre-tests, the sample participated in two one-hour workshops on the target idioms that related them to their Turkish counterparts in three categories: Category I, word-for-word English translations of the idiom used in Turkish; Category II, conceptually similar English versions of the idiom used in Turkish; and Category III, idioms specific to the English language. After the workshops, the participants were given the same tests as post-tests in order to

observe any improvement they might have made due to the treatment. The participants were also given a questionnaire regarding their opinions on the effectiveness of the workshop.

This chapter will present the findings from the quantitative data analysis of the pre- and post-tests in reference to the research questions in three sections. The first section will discuss the participants' ability to produce the L2 (English) idioms when an L1 (Turkish) equivalent is available according to improvement (gain score) among the categories of idioms between the pre- and post-Discourse Completion Tests (hereafter DCTs). The second section will discuss the participants' ability to produce the L2 idioms' context when an L1 equivalent is available according to the gain score among the categories of idioms between the pre- and post-Writing Prompt. The third section will discuss the participants' perception of the effectiveness of focusing on L1 and L2 equivalent idiomatic expressions when learning idioms by examining the questionnaire results that addressed this issue.

**Research Question 1: To What Extent Does the Availability of an Equivalent Idiom in EFL Learners' L1 Affect the Accurate Production of That Idiom in L2?**

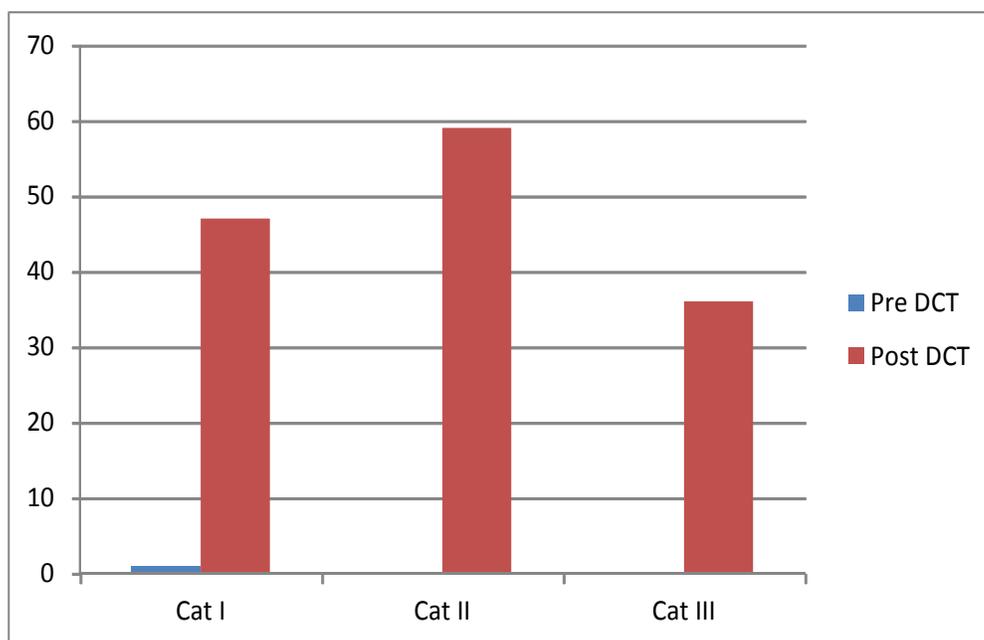
In order to answer the first research question, the results of the pre- and post-DCTs were analyzed to see if there was a statistically significant difference between them. After the pre- and post-DCTs were administered and scored, the results (number of correct answers out of 33 items) were entered into SPSS. To demonstrate what constituted a correct or incorrect response, Table 3 shows example correct and incorrect responses on the post-DCT. There was only one correct response on the pre-DCT by one participant using the idiom "in the long run" from Category I.

Table 3

*Example Correct and Incorrect Post-DCT Responses*

Example Correct Responses	Example Incorrect Responses
<p>Situation: A boss advises his employee that there will soon be a lot more work than there is now.</p> <p>"Enjoy the lull and down-time. It is just the <b><u>calm before the storm</u></b>. It is about to get a lot more hectic."</p>	<p>Situation: A boss advises his employee that there will soon be a lot more work than there is now.</p> <p>"Enjoy the lull and down-time. It is just the <b><u>better late than ever</u></b>. It is about to get a lot more hectic."</p>
<p>Situation: A man is discussing other love opportunities.</p> <p>"It didn't work out with my girlfriend, but I am young and there are <b><u>other fish in the sea</u></b>. I won't be alone forever."</p>	<p>Situation: A man is discussing other love opportunities.</p> <p>"It didn't work out with my girlfriend, but I am young and there are <b><u>fishes in the sea</u></b>. I won't be alone forever."</p>
<p>Situation: A man suggests not giving much importance to a test result.</p> <p>"I think that people ought to take these results <b><u>with a grain of salt</u></b> and not assume that they are necessarily any more authoritative than what they already know."</p>	<p>Situation: A man suggests not giving much importance to a test result.</p> <p>"I think that people ought to take these results <b><u>are salt with the g</u></b> and not assume that they are necessarily any more authoritative than what they already know."</p>

Figure 1 shows the total number of correctly produced idiomatic expressions in the pre- and post-DCTs.



*Figure 1.* Correctly produced idioms on the pre- and post-DCT among the three categories

As shown in Figure 1, after the sample participated in the workshop on comparing English and Turkish idioms, there was a major increase in all three categories of correctly produced English idioms on the post-DCT when compared to the pre-DCT which had only one correct response across the entire sample. It seemed that the most common reasons the participants failed to give an acceptable response were (1) using a different target idiom from the study in place of the appropriate one (ex. "Enjoy the lull and down-time. It is just the **in the long run**. It is about to get a lot more hectic." - target idiom: calm before the storm, category I; "Meanwhile, the suspect was **out of the blue**. He'd created a fake identity and made a new passport for himself." - target idiom: up to something, category II), or (2) misspelling or errors within the target idiom that changed

the meaning (ex. "You're in luck, sir. As it just so happens, James is an expert accountant. He...[phone rings]..., well **call of devil**, he's calling right now!" - target idiom: speak of the devil, category II; "I'm coming back. My laptop is here. Will you please **take an eye** it?" - target idiom: keep an eye on, category II).

SPSS Version 20 was used to present the descriptive statistics of the sample.

Table 4 presents the mean gain scores of the individual participants within each category of idioms between the pre- and post-DCT and the standard deviation for each.

Table 4

*The Mean and Standard Deviations of the Gain Scores Between the Pre- and Post-DCTs by Category*

	Gain	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Category I	3.067	2.282
Category II	3.933	2.086
Category III	2.400	1.595

As shown in Table 4, the sample showed the greatest mean gain score with category II idioms, followed by category I, and finally category III.

Table 5 shows the most commonly produced idiomatic expressions on the post-DCT along with the frequency and category (I, II, or III) of the idiom produced.

Table 5

*Most Commonly Produced Idioms on the DCT With Their Frequencies and Categories*

<b>Idiom</b>	<b>Frequency of correct responses</b>	<b>Category</b>
Draw the line	12	I
Welcome aboard	10	II
Breathing down my neck	9	II
Spill the beans	9	II
Keep an eye on	9	II
Under the weather	9	III

As shown in Table 5, the most commonly produced idiomatic expression on the post-DCT were from Category II, conceptually similar idioms. The descriptive statistics confirms this in that the mean gain scores of each category of idioms between the pre- and post-DCT was also the greatest in Category II.

A Shapiro-Wilk Test of normality confirmed the normality of the DCT gain scores across the three categories. For category I,  $SW = .901$ ,  $df = 15$ ,  $p = .098$  and skewness (.363) and kurtosis (-1.352) statistics suggested that the data could be considered normal. For category II,  $SW = .928$ ,  $df = 15$ ,  $p = .253$  and skewness (-.062) and kurtosis (-1.138) statistics suggested that the data could be considered normal. For category III,  $SW = .886$ ,  $df = 15$ ,  $p = .058$  and skewness (.210) and kurtosis (.903) statistics suggested that the data could be considered normal.

As shown in Table 6, *t*-tests for each category comparing the individual participants' pre- and post-DCT scores confirmed the statistical significance of the increase in score between the pre- and post-DCT among the three categories ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 6

*Paired-Samples t-test for Each Category Between the Pre- and Post-DCT*

Category	Pre-DCT		Post-DCT		<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i> (2-tailed)	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation				
I	.07	.258	3.13	2.295	5.204	14	< .001	2.781
II	.00	.000	3.93	2.086	7.302	14	< .001	3.903
III	.00	.000	2.40	1.595	5.829	14	< .001	3.115

Given the results of the normality test, it was decided to continue with a one-way ANOVA test in order to see whether the differences between the means were statistically significant.

As shown in Table 7, there was no statistically significant difference between the three groups:  $F(2,42) = 2.19$ ,  $p > .005$  ( $p = .12$ ), therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The observed power of .42 indicates the need for a larger sample size in order to show a statistically significant difference between the groups. In educational research, the observed power is expected to be no less than 80% (Huck, 2012).

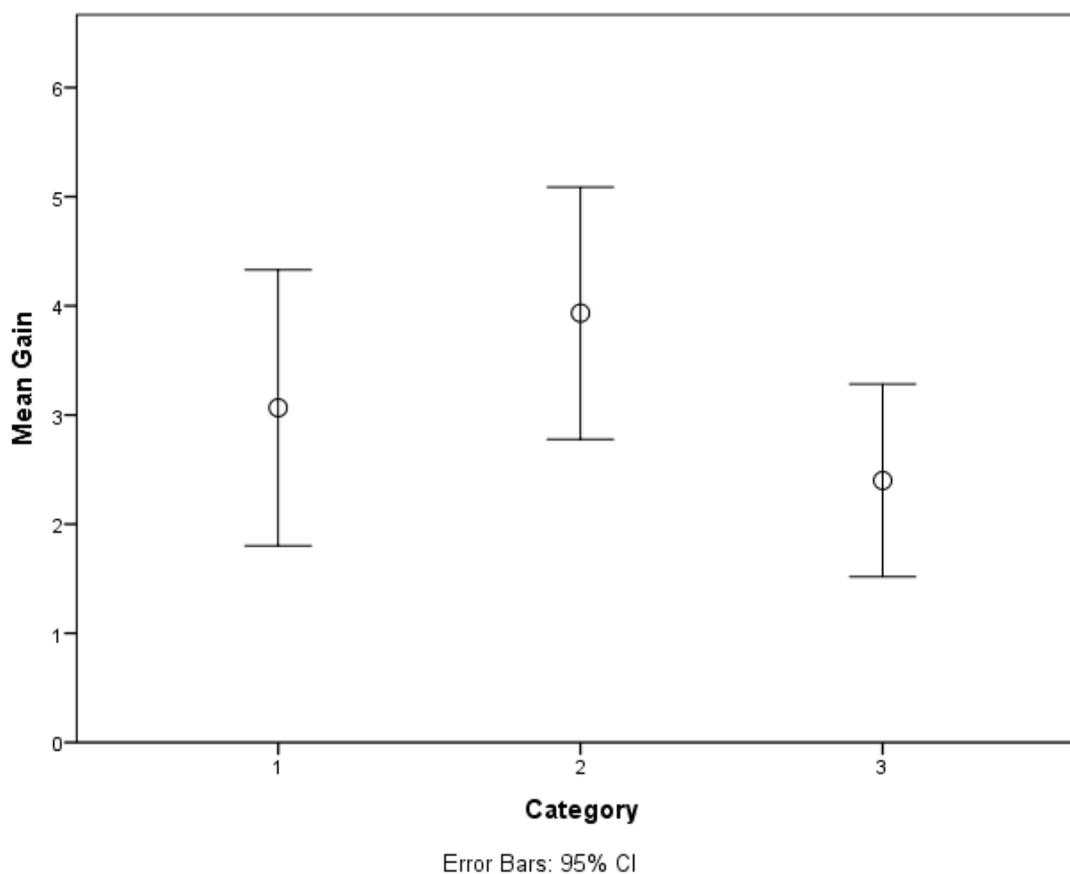
Table 7

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects on the DCT*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Observed Power
Corrected Model	17.733	2	8.867	2.197	.124	.424
(Between Categories)						
Intercept	441.800	1	441.800	109.494	.000	1.000
Category	17.733	2	8.867	2.197	.124	.424
Error (Within Categories)	169.467	42	4.035			
Total	629.000	45				
Corrected Total	187.200	44				

Note: R Squared = .095 (Adjusted R Squared = .052)

As an alternative representation of the ANOVA test results, the graphical version Figure 2 also shows no statistically significant difference in mean gain score between the categories of idioms and shows that the 95% confidence intervals have overlap.



*Figure 2.* The 95% confidence intervals of the mean gain scores on the DCT among the three categories

The effect size (R squared = .095, Adjusted R squared = .052) indicates that 5.2% of the variance is accounted for in the researcher's model. Compared to previous studies in the field (e.g., Yamashita & Jiang, 2010), where the effect size was reported with Cohen's  $d = .57$ , eta-squared = .08; R squared = .08, this finding indicated a small-medium effect.

When the overall results of the DCT and DCT gain scores were taken into account, it can be concluded that the explicit instruction of idioms aspect of the treatment of the study had a positive impact on the participants' ability to correctly produce target idiomatic expressions. This is supported by the fact that the number of

correctly produced idioms saw a great increase between the pre- and post-DCTs. It can also be said that Category II idioms were more commonly correctly produced. However, based on the results of the inferential statistics analysis, it cannot be concluded that one category of idioms was easier to produce on the DCT than another.

**Research Question 2: To What Extent Does the Availability of an Equivalent Idiom in EFL Learners' L1 Affect the Accurate Production of its Context in L2?**

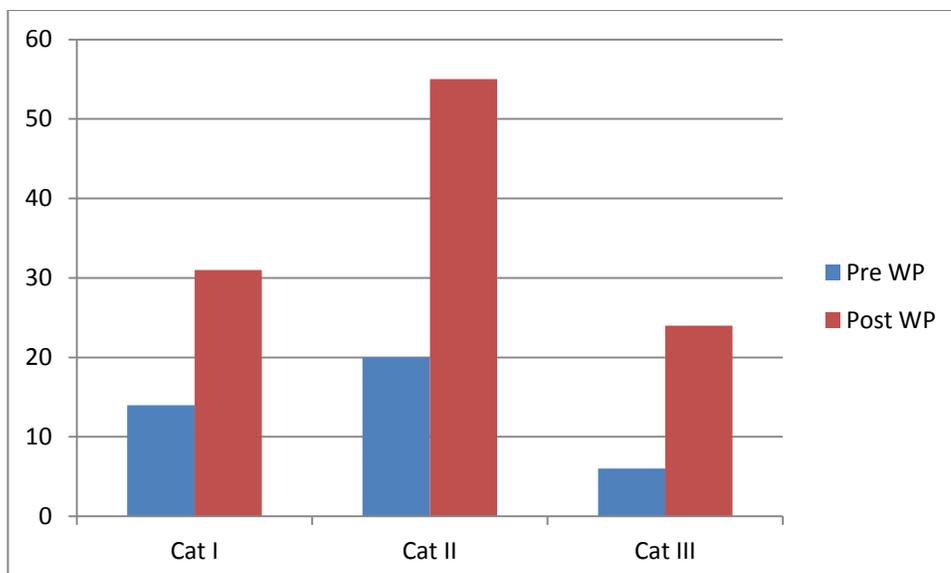
In order to answer the second research question, the results of the pre- and post-Writing Prompt were analyzed to see if there was a statistically significant difference after the workshop. The Writing Prompt was scored on a scale from 0 to 2. Table 8 shows example responses that scored 0, 1, and 2 along with their explanations.

Table 8

*Example Writing Prompt Responses for Each Score*

Score	Explanation	Target Idiom (Category)	Response
0	failure to respond, used when a participant wrote less than the total required responses (5) OR the response did not include the chosen idiom in an applicable situation	Up in the air (I)	<b>He says something, but doesn't tell elaborately, it's up in the air.</b>
1	the response had some elements appropriate to the target idiom, but was not completely correct	Hit the nail on the head (III)	<b>Person waited a long time and do something right time and the right place. He hit the nail on the head.</b>
2	the response was contextually accurate and appropriate to the target idiom	A piece of cake (II)	<b>She is an architect. Drawing a perspective of a building is a piece of cake for her.</b>

Figure 3 shows the total number of correctly produced contexts of idiomatic expressions in the pre- and post-Writing Prompts.



*Figure 3.* The total scores of the participants among the three categories on the pre- and post-Writing Prompt

As shown in Figure 3, there was an increase in all three categories of correctly produced contexts of English idioms on the post-Writing Prompt when compared to the pre-Writing Prompt. It seemed that the most common reasons the participants failed to give an acceptable response were (1) simply giving insufficient context to show they fully understood the idiom (ex. "Person wait a long time and do something right time and the right place. He **hit the nail on the head**" - 1 point, category III, or (2) using the idiom literally (ex, "I am very hungry, oops. hey, is there **a piece of cake** on the refrigerator?" - 0 points, category II; "I broke my **arm and leg** because of car accident" - 0 points, category III)

SPSS Version 20 was used to present the descriptive statistics of the sample. Table 9 presents the mean gain scores of the individual participants within each category of idioms between the pre- and post-Writing Prompt and the standard deviation for each.

Table 9

*The Mean and Standard Deviations of the Gain Scores Between the Pre- and Post-Writing Prompt by Category*

	Gain	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Category I	1.21	1.528
Category II	1.57	1.505
Category III	1.29	1.899

As shown in Table 9, the sample showed the greatest mean gain score with the contexts of Category II idioms, followed by Category III, and finally Category I.

Table 10 compares the idioms whose contexts were most commonly produced accurately on the pre-Writing Prompt versus the post-Writing Prompt along with the frequency and category (I, II, or III) of the idiom the participant chose to work with.

Table 10

*Idioms Whose Contexts Were Most Commonly Produced Accurately on the Writing Prompt*

Pre-Writing Prompt			Post-Writing Prompt		
Idiom	Frequency of correct responses	Category	Idiom	Frequency of correct responses	Category
Apples and oranges	3	II	Keep an eye on	6	II
Calm before the storm	2	I	Spill the beans	4	II
Piece of cake	2	II	Welcome aboard	4	II
			Other fish in the sea	4	I
			Piece of cake	3	II
			In the long run	3	I
			Under the weather	3	III
			On the horizon	3	III

As shown in Table 10, the idioms whose contexts were most commonly produced accurately on the pre-Writing Prompt and the post-Writing Prompt were from Category II, conceptually similar idioms, with greater frequencies on the post-Writing

Prompt. The descriptive statistics confirms this in that the mean gain scores of each category of idioms between the pre- and post-Writing Prompt was also the greatest in Category II.

A Shapiro-Wilk Test of normality confirmed the normality of the Writing Prompt gain scores in categories I and II. For category I,  $SW = .890$ ,  $df = 14$ ,  $p = .082$  and skewness (.637) and kurtosis (-.320) statistics suggested that the data could be considered normal. For category II,  $SW = .873$ ,  $df = 14$ ,  $p = .047$  and skewness (-.294) and kurtosis (-1.338) statistics suggested that the data could be considered normal. For category III, where  $SW = .742$ ,  $df = 14$ ,  $p = .001$  and skewness (1.489) and kurtosis (1.615) statistics suggested that the data could not be considered normal. Yet, because the other two categories could be considered normal, it was decided to continue with a parametric test.

As shown in Table 11, t-tests for each category comparing the individual participants' pre- and post-Writing Prompt scores confirmed the statistical significance of the increase in score between the pre- and post-Writing Prompt among the three categories (Category I and III  $p < .05$ , Category II  $p < .001$ ).

Table 11

*Paired-Samples t-test for Each Category Between the Pre- and Post-Writing Prompt*

Category	Pre-WP		Post-WP		<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i> (2-tailed)	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation				
I	1.00	1.301	2.21	1.578	2.973	13	.011	1.649
II	1.43	1.222	3.93	1.685	6.679	13	< .001	3.704
III	.43	.756	1.71	1.939	2.534	13	.025	1.405

To see whether the differences between the mean gain scores by category were statistically significant, a one-way ANOVA was run on the gain scores between the pre- and post-Writing Prompt among the different categories of idioms. As shown in Table 12, there was no statistically significant difference between the gain scores of the three groups:  $F(2,39) = 2.77, p > .005$  ( $p = .075$ ), therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The observed power of .51 indicates the need for a larger sample size in order to show a statistically significant difference between the groups. In educational research, the observed power is expected to be no less than 80% (Huck, 2012).

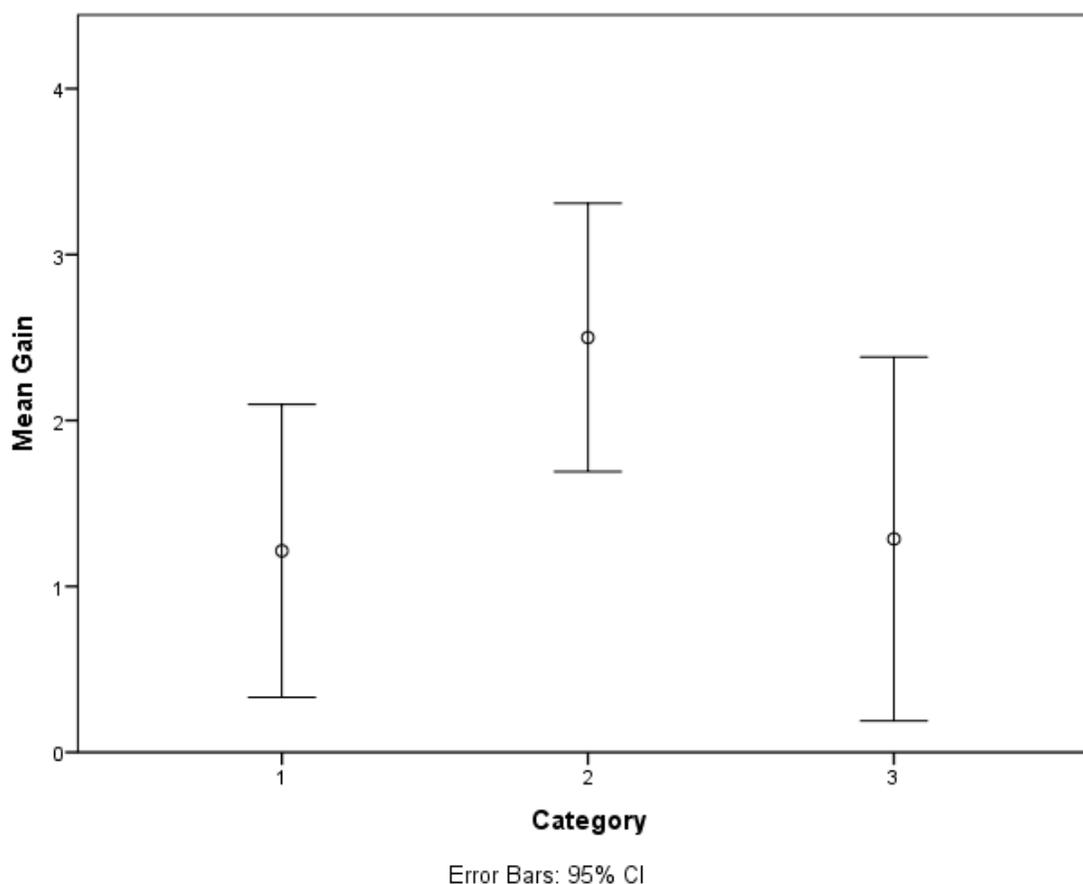
Table 12

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects on the Writing Prompt*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Observed Power
Corrected Model	14.619	2	7.310	2.775	.075	.515
(Between Categories)						
Intercept	116.667	1	116.667	44.298	< .005	1.000
Category	14.619	2	7.310	2.775	.075	.515
Error (Within Categories)	102.714	39	2.634			
Total	234.000	42				
Corrected Total	117.333	41				

Note: R Squared = .125 (Adjusted R Squared = .080)

As an alternative representation of the ANOVA test results, the graphic version Figure 4 also shows no statistically significant difference in mean gain score between the categories of idioms and shows that the 95% confidence intervals have overlap.



*Figure 4.* The 95% confidence intervals of the mean gain scores on the Writing Prompt among the three categories

The effect size (R squared = .125, Adjusted R squared = .08) indicates that 8% of the variance is accounted for in the researcher's model. To compare, the variance accounted for in this study's Writing Prompt results indicated a medium-effect and was both greater than that of the DCT and similar to other relevant studies in the field (e.g., Yamashita & Jiang, 2010).

When the overall results of the Writing Prompt and Writing Prompt gain scores were taken into account, it can be concluded that the explicit instruction of idioms aspect of the treatment of the study had a positive impact on the participants' ability to correctly produce the context of target idiomatic expressions. This is supported by the fact that the

number of correctly produced contexts saw a great increase between the pre- and post-Writing Prompts. It can also be said that Category II idioms' contexts were more commonly correctly produced. However, based on the results of the inferential statistics analysis, it cannot be concluded that the context of one category of idioms was easier to produce on the Writing Prompt than another.

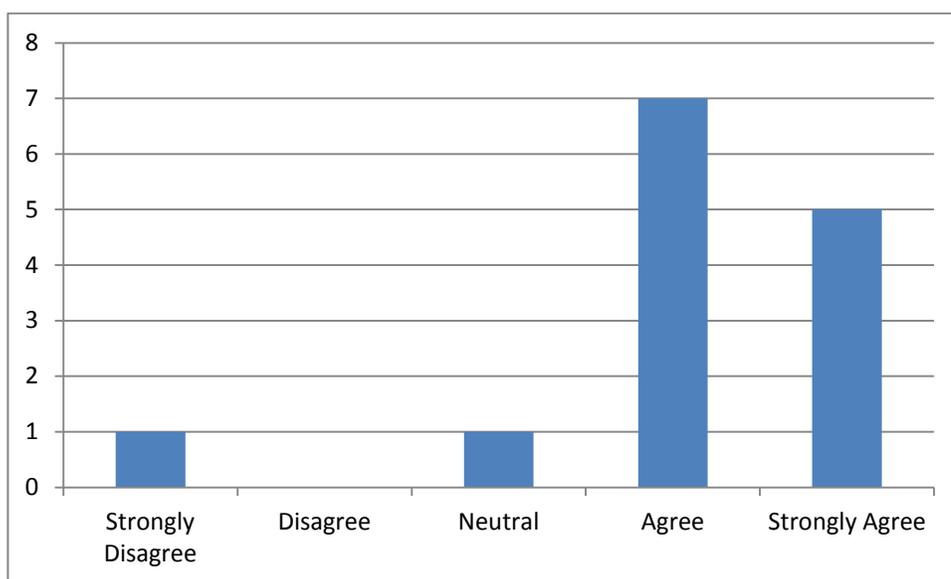
**Research Question 3: What are EFL Learners' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Focusing on L1 and L2 Equivalent Expressions When Learning Idioms?**

In order to answer the third research question, the Likert-scale style questionnaire responses were entered into SPSS and analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics. The questionnaire consisted of five statements and the participants were directed to rate their level of agreement with each statement regarding the teaching methodology (see Appendix 5). Table 13 shows the mode responses where 1 conveys that the participant strongly disagreed with the statement, 2 disagreed, 3 was neutral, 4 agreed, and 5 strongly agreed. The subsequent figures are the graphical representations of the response frequencies for each item of the questionnaire: (Q1) Associating the English idioms with their Turkish counterparts while learning them helped me produce them on the test; (Q2) Associating the English idioms with their Turkish counterparts helped me produce their context in the Writing Prompt; (Q3) I found the idioms without Turkish counterparts easier to produce on the test; (Q4) I found the idioms without Turkish counterparts' context easier to produce in the Writing Prompt; and (Q5) I would have preferred to leave Turkish out of the workshop.

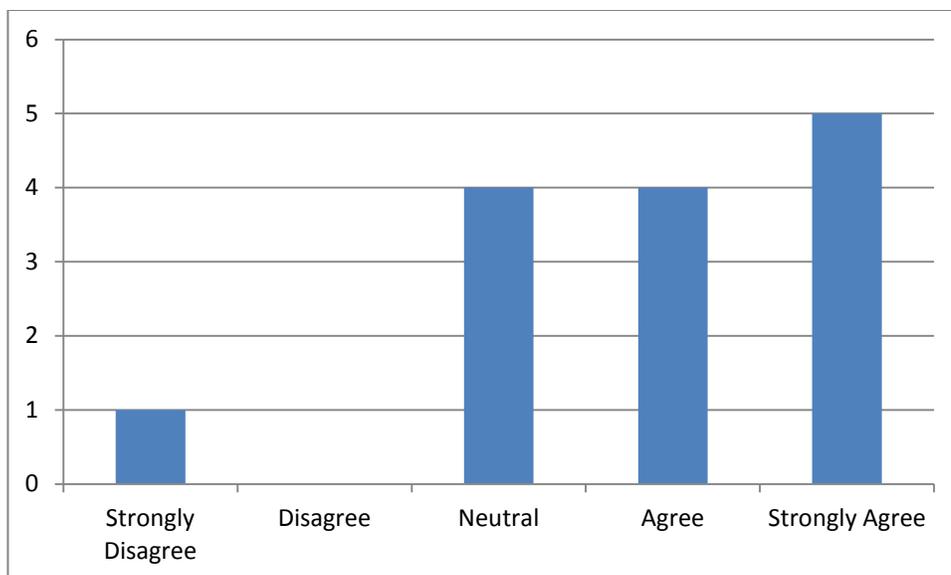
Table 13

*The Mode Responses for the Questionnaire Items*

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Mode	4	5	2	2	3
Response					

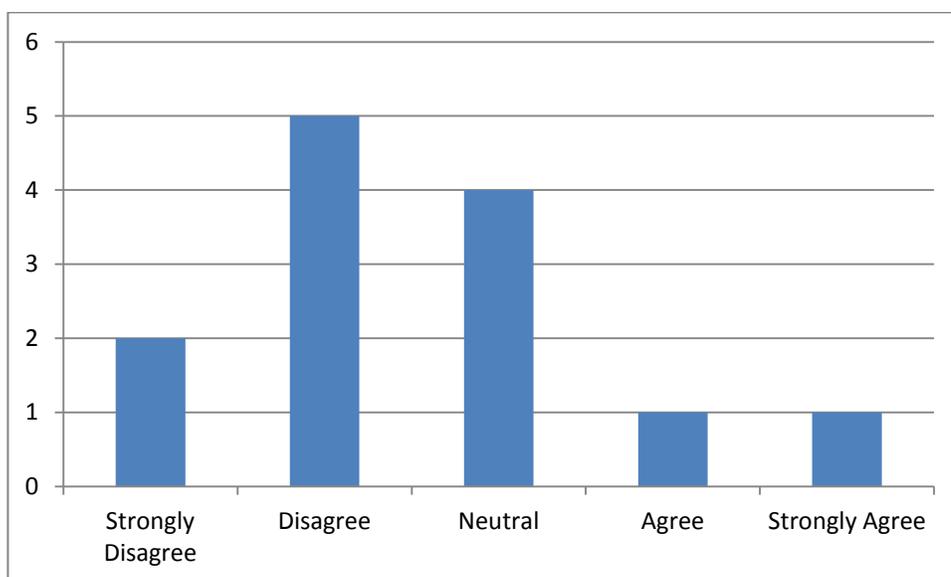
*Figure 5.* Frequency of responses to questionnaire item 1

According to the mode response of 4 shown in Table 11, and response frequencies shown in Figure 5, the participants generally agreed with the idea that associating the English idioms with their Turkish counterparts while learning them helped them produce them on the DCT (Q1).



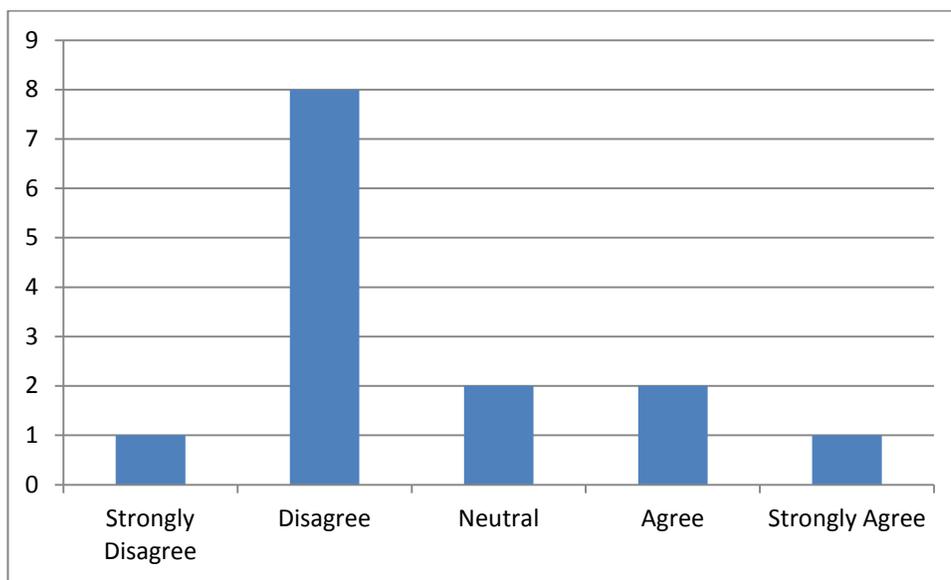
*Figure 6.* Frequency of responses to questionnaire item 2

According to the mode response of 5 shown in Table 11, and the response frequencies shown in Figure 6, the participants also agreed that associating the English idioms with their Turkish counterparts helped them produce the idioms' contexts in the Writing Prompt (Q2).



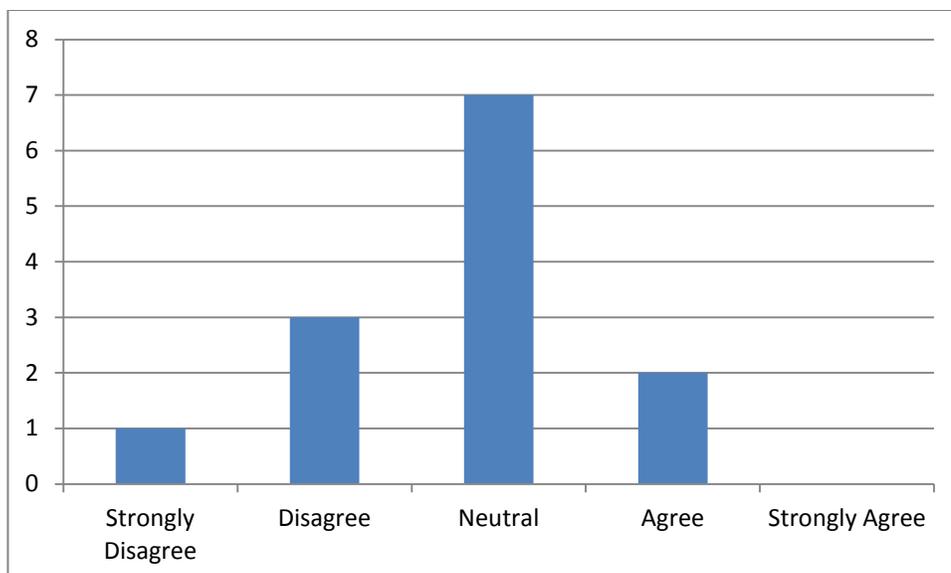
*Figure 7.* Frequency of responses to questionnaire item 3

According to the mode response of 2 shown in Table 11, and the response frequencies shown in Figure 7, the participants generally disagreed with the idea that the English idioms without Turkish counterparts were easier to produce on the DCT (Q3).



*Figure 8.* Frequency of responses to questionnaire item 4

According to the mode response of 2 shown in Table 11, and the response frequencies shown in Figure 8, the participants also generally disagreed with the idea that the contexts of English idioms without Turkish counterparts were easier to produce in the Writing Prompt (Q4).



*Figure 9.* Frequencies of responses to questionnaire item 5

And finally, according to the mode response of 3 shown in Table 11, and the response frequencies shown in Figure 9, the participants were neutral on the issue of leaving Turkish out of the workshop completely (Q5).

The responses to the questionnaire revealed that the sample generally agreed with the idea that the idiomatic expressions and their respective contexts with L1 equivalents were easier to produce on the DCT and Writing Prompt. They generally disagreed that the expressions without an L1 equivalent were easier to produce. They were neutral as to whether Turkish should be left out of the learning process when dealing with idiomatic expressions. Overall, the questionnaire responses reveal a positive attitude towards the effectiveness of the study's treatment, focusing on L1 and L2 equivalent expressions when learning idioms.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the data analysis of the pre- and post-DCTs, pre- and post-Writing Prompt, and questionnaire responses of the sample. In the first section, the

DCT data and example responses to the DCT relevant to the first research question, "*to what extent does the availability of an equivalent idiom in EFL learners' L1 affect the accurate production of that idiom in L2?*" were presented and an ANOVA test was run to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in mean gain score amongst the three categories of idioms between the pre- and post-test. In the second section, the Writing Prompt data and example responses to the Writing Prompt relevant to the second research question, "*to what extent does the availability of an equivalent idiom in EFL learners' L1 affect the accurate production of its context in L2?*" were also presented and an ANOVA test was run to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in mean gain score amongst the correctly produced contexts of the three categories of idioms between the pre- and post-test. In the third section, the mode questionnaire responses pertaining to the third research question, "*what are EFL learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of focusing on L1 and L2 equivalent expressions when learning idioms?*" were presented. The following chapter will present a summary of the study, the findings and discussion, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

### Introduction

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of focusing on the availability of equivalent formulaic expressions, namely idioms, in an individual's native language (L1) and second language (L2) on that sample's ability to accurately produce them and their contexts in the second language. In this regard, the research questions addressed in this study were:

1. To what extent does the availability of an equivalent idiom in EFL learners' L1 affect the accurate production of that idiom in L2?
2. To what extent does the availability of an equivalent idiom in EFL learners' L1 affect the accurate production of its context in L2?
3. What are EFL learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of focusing on L1 and L2 equivalent expressions when learning idioms?

In order to answer these research questions, the study implemented a pre- and post-test design. Three instruments were used on a sample of 15 students at Bilkent University FAE ENG 101 course. The students had university level English proficiency as determined by the University's English preparatory school. The instruments included a Discourse Completion Test (hereafter DCT), a Writing Prompt, and a perception questionnaire. Between the pre- and post-test of the first two instruments, a workshop was given by the researcher in which the distinctions between three categories of idioms were emphasized: Category I, word-for-word English translations of the idiom used in Turkish; Category II, conceptually similar English versions of the idiom used in Turkish;

and Category III, idioms specific to the English language. Improvement in the test scores on both the DCT and Writing Prompt between the pre- and post-tests, especially in the first two categories, was expected to show the effectiveness of the study's treatment: focusing on and emphasizing the availability of equivalent or similar idioms in the sample's L1 when learning those idioms' counterparts in L2.

The first step in the data analysis was entering the scores of the pre- and post-DCTs and Writing Prompts into SPSS. To answer the first two research questions, descriptive statistics were presented, and then normality and one-way ANOVA tests were run to determine if one category of idioms made more of a statistically significant improvement than the others in terms of the gain scores. Later, the participants were given a Likert-style questionnaire regarding their opinions of the treatment. They were entered into SPSS, and modes and frequencies were calculated to determine the most salient answers to each item in order to answer the third research question.

This chapter consists of four sections. The first section will present the findings from the study in detail referring to relevant literature and research questions. The next section will discuss pedagogical implications based on the results. The third section will present the limitations of the study and finally, the fourth section will give suggestions for further research based on those limitations.

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### **The Extent to Which the Availability of an Equivalent Idiom in an EFL Learner's L1 Affects the Accurate Production of That Idiom in L2**

The first research question of the present study aimed to explore the extent to which emphasizing the availability of an equivalent idiom in the learner's L1 helped that learner accurately produce that idiom in L2. In order to answer this question, the pre-

and post-DCT scores were analyzed with SPSS, calculating the gain scores among the three categories of idioms and running a one-way ANOVA between the categories. The results showed a great increase in accurately produced idioms in all three categories between the pre- and post-DCT, which may be attributed to the explicit instruction of the idioms during the study's workshop. This notion is supported by various studies including Bardovi-Harding and Vellenga's (2012), which found that metapragmatics and focused noticing activities regarding formulas (i.e. formulaic language training) was related to increased formulaic language use. Boers et al. (2006) concluded that raising students' awareness of formulaic language promotes the use of it, and therefore enhances speakers' perceived fluency. Wood (2009) also confirmed that focused instruction and exposure to many authentic examples of L1 speakers using formulaic language have improved the learners' fluency and the amount and complexity of formulaic language used. In addition, Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) concluded that comparing and contrasting with L1 is ideal for learning formulaic expressions, which supports this initial finding of the current study. In this regard, the current study confirms the role of explicit instruction in promoting the acquisition and use of formulaic language.

While the focused instruction of this study's workshop may have caused a great increase in the accurate production of idioms, the increase was not found to be greater in one category of idioms over the other two. The participants improved at a relatively even rate in all three categories of idioms. But, an interesting finding of this study is that while the improvement was proportionally similar over the three categories, the participants showed an affinity towards the Category II conceptually similar idioms in terms of the total number of correctly produced idioms. This may be attributed to the fact that

proficient language learners can relate to a concept of an idiom but may be hesitant to translate it word for word as they would have for this study's Category I idioms. The prevalence of such a habit is accounted for in the literature and can be explained by the following arguments: Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) and Ortactepe (2013) claim that L2 learners may avoid word-for-word translations or expressions overly familiar to them. These studies also found that the contexts in which the expressions are used play an important role in their acquisition.

Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) indicated that competent L2 learners may avoid word-for-word translation or L1 transfer. The conceptual knowledge of Category II idioms may allow the students to apply such idioms elsewhere as they may process them in chunks. Category III idioms were most likely distant and foreign to the participants and thus difficult to produce. The results of Ortactepe's (2013) study may also support this claim. Her study found that certain expressions already familiar to a student may be avoided in order not to sound cliché. In other words, this study's participants may have avoided the word-for-word translation (Category I) idioms and preferred the Category II idioms because they were both conceptually familiar with how the Category II idioms are used, and also aware that they are not the same exact expressions in Turkish.

Ortactepe (2013) also found that the familiarity with speech contexts may enhance the adoption of formulaic expressions, meaning that knowing when to use the conceptually similar idioms of Category II (and to a slightly lesser extent, the word-for-word translation idioms of Category I) promoted their accurate production over the distinct Category III idioms. Similarly, Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) may support this notion that familiar speech contexts enhance the formulaic language adoption. They contend that many idioms can be problematic for L2 learners in terms of comprehension even

with sufficient context. In other words, even with the authentic contextual cues given on the DCT, it is possible the participants did not understand the idioms, especially in Category III, where the idioms' usage was the most unfamiliar to them. In addition, errors made on the DCT in wording or grammar of the target idioms (one of the most common types of errors seen in this study) could be attributed to Boers and Lindstromberg's (2012) argument that whereas L1 speakers may store such expressions holistically, L2 learners may tend to construct the expressions word-by-word, allowing for such errors.

From the results of this study and the support of the above mentioned studies it can be concluded that while focused instruction on the idioms improved the accurate production of idioms in all categories at an even rate, L2 learners may have an affinity towards conceptually similar idioms (Category II) over all in terms of total correct in the pre- and post-tests, because as competent language learners, they may try to avoid translating word-for-word (Category I), and are unaccustomed to the usage of expressions not in their native language repertoire (Category III).

### **The Extent to Which the Availability of an Equivalent Idiom in an EFL Learners' L1 Affects the Accurate Production of its Context in L2**

The second research question of the present study aimed to explore the extent to which emphasizing the availability of an equivalent idiom in the learner's L1 helped that learner accurately produce the idiom's context in L2. In order to answer this question, the pre- and post-Writing Prompt scores were analyzed with SPSS, calculating the gain scores among the three categories of idioms and running a one-way ANOVA between the categories. The results showed a great increase in accurately produced idioms in all three categories between the pre- and post-Writing Prompt, which like for the DCT, may

be attributed to the explicit instruction of the idioms during the study's workshop. In addition to the literature that claims explicit instruction of formulaic expressions promotes their acquisition and thus usage in appropriate contexts (e.g., Bardovi-Harding & Vellenga, 2012; Boers et al., 2006; Wood, 2009; Nesselhauf, 2003; Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012), this could also be supported by the fact that many of the participants' responses in the Writing Prompt were examples used by the researcher in the workshop, especially for Category III idioms, whose appropriate contexts were the least familiar to them.

Similar to the results of the DCT, the participants showed an affinity towards the Category II, conceptually similar idioms, when correctly producing their contexts on the Writing Prompt. This means they were both more comfortable working with that category and accurate in doing so. While the explicit instruction during the workshop promoted a relatively equal gain score across all categories, the total number of correctly produced contexts were highest in Category II, followed by Category I, and then lowest in Category III. In general, the participants performed better in the Writing Prompt as opposed to the DCT, especially on the pre-test where there was only one correct answer total on the DCT. This could be attributed to the findings of Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) which stated that L2 learners have good receptive knowledge of a range of formulaic sequences but still fail fully to develop this resource. Given that as part of the Writing Prompt, the participants were provided with the target idioms to work with, this could have triggered their memory of how to use them and produce their appropriate contexts. Whereas in the DCT when there was no formulaic language provided and many participants left items blank, the Writing Prompt allowed the participants to

perform better or at least attempt a correct response because seeing the expressions helped them create the context.

From the results of this study and the support of the above mentioned studies it can be concluded that while focused instruction on the idioms improved the accurate production of the contexts of the target idioms in all categories at an even rate, L2 learners may have an affinity towards working with conceptually similar idioms (Category II) because as competent language learners, they may try to avoid basing their usage of the idioms on translating word-for-word (Category I), and are unaccustomed to the usage of expressions not in their native language repertoire (Category III). Overall, it can be said that providing the participants with a list of the target idioms triggered their receptive knowledge and allowed them to be more successful in the Writing Prompt creating appropriate contexts for the idioms than producing the idioms themselves as they were asked to on the DCT.

### **EFL Learners' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Focusing on L1 and L2 Equivalent Expressions When Learning Idioms**

The third research question of the present study aimed to determine the L2 learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of focusing on L1 and L2 equivalent expressions when learning idioms. In order to answer this question, a Likert-style questionnaire asking their opinions on the teaching methodology and whether or not it helped them perform well in the tests (see Appendix 5) was administered to the participants after completing the post-DCT and post-Writing Prompt. The responses showed that the participants mostly agreed with the idea that idiomatic expressions and their respective contexts with L1 equivalents were easier to produce on the DCT and Writing Prompt. They generally thought that the expressions without an L1 equivalent

were more difficult to produce, which is supported by the low number of accurately produced Category III idioms and the respective contexts in the study's DCT and Writing Prompt. They were neutral as to whether Turkish should be left out of the learning process when dealing with idiomatic expressions. Overall, the questionnaire responses reveal a positive attitude towards the effectiveness of the study's treatment, focusing on L1 and L2 equivalent expressions when learning idioms.

These results are supported by the literature that says explicit instruction of target idioms promote their acquisition and thus usage in appropriate contexts (e.g., Bardovi-Harding & Vellenga, 2012; Boers' et al., 2006; Wood, 2009; Nesselhauf, 2003; Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012). In addition, the participants' positive attitude towards the study's treatment is parallel to those studies in the field that support comparing L1 and L2 equivalences (e.g., Yamashita & Jiang, 2010; Nesselhauf, 2003) and opposes those studies which hold that L1 and L2 equivalences come automatically and naturally to L2 learners and thus more attention should be given to L1 and L2 differences (e.g. Hama, 2010; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993).

From the results of this study and the support of the above mentioned studies it can be concluded that students feel comparing L1 and L2 equivalent expressions helps them produce both the expression and the expressions' contexts accurately. However, considering the neutral attitude towards including L1 in learning such expressions, it must be considered on a case by case basis whether or not such a methodology is appropriate or favorable for a particular group of students.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

According to the findings of this study, after a two hour workshop on target idioms that were split into three categories, 1) word-for-word English translations of the

idiom used in Turkish; II) conceptually similar English versions of the idiom used in Turkish; and III) idioms specific to the English language, the participants greatly improved their ability to produce the target idioms and their contexts, and felt that the methodology of the workshop, focusing and emphasizing the existence of idiomatic equivalences in their native language, helped them achieve this. Therefore, certain important pedagogical implications can be derived from the present study regarding formulaic language and specifically, idioms.

The primary pedagogical implication that can be drawn from this study is that target formulaic expressions, namely idioms, should be focused on and taught explicitly due to the fact that both the findings of this study and the relevant literature show that it is this explicit instruction that helps students acquire idioms and use them in appropriate contexts. After giving explicit attention to the target idioms in the workshop, the students' ability to produce the target idioms and their contexts improved greatly in all categories. Therefore, this study and the relevant literature (e.g., Bardovi-Harding & Vellenga, 2012; Boers' et al., 2006; Wood, 2009; Nesselhauf, 2003; Meunier, 2012; Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012) support the explicit instruction of idioms in university classes, especially in Turkey, where idioms are not a common topic of instruction. It is the responsibility of the instructors to bring students' attention to these expressions, how they are used appropriately, and when appropriate, the ability to translate word-for-word and/or conceptually from the students' L1.

Another pedagogical implication that can be derived from the present study has to do with student preferences. Given that the current study's participants had a generally positive attitude towards the methodology that involved emphasizing L1 and L2 equivalents but had a neutral attitude towards whether or not L1 (in this case, Turkish)

should be left out of the process altogether, it is the instructors responsibility to analyze and determine the appropriateness or favorability of such a strategy based on their own particular group of students and their respective needs and interests. It is the duty of the teacher to be dynamic and base their methodology on the preferences of the students.

To conclude, teachers and students can benefit from the findings of this study by including target formulaic expressions in their course curricula, and determining the appropriateness or favorability of drawing comparisons to the students' L1 when learning such expressions in L2.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The present study involved certain limitations that may suggest that the reader handle its findings with caution. The first and foremost limitation of the study was the time constraint. Due to the time constraint for both the researcher and the participants, and the fact that idiomatic expressions represented a topic area outside of the curriculum of the participants' normal class instruction, the researcher was only provided with four classroom hours for both the workshop and the data collection phases of the study. Needless to say, a larger time frame reserved for the workshop may have affected the students' ability to produce the idioms and their contexts. Because of the shortness of the amount of time allotted to the researcher, a lot needed to be covered in a short period of time and could have caused the participants to express boredom or confusion, thus affecting their ability to perform well on the DCT and Writing Prompt.

A second limitation of the study was the sample size. With only 18 participants, the sample was small to begin with. Moreover, some participants were unable to attend the workshop or complete the post-testing which brought the sample size down to 15 and 14 on the DCT and Writing Prompt, respectively. As stated in Chapter 4, the

observed powers of the DCT and Writing Prompt data were .42 and .51, respectively, whereas Huck (2012) indicates that in educational research, the observed power is expected to be no less than 80% in order to have a sample large enough to show a statistically significant difference across categories of the data.

Thirdly, the lack of a recall test inhibits the researcher from drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of the study's methodology on a more long-term ability to produce the target idioms and their contexts.

A larger time frame, larger sample size, and a recall test could have given more insight on the effectiveness of the study's treatment and could have possibly allowed the researcher to generalize the results in a more confident manner.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Based on the findings and limitations of the current study, some suggestions for further research can be made. Primarily, because the current study was conducted with a fairly small sample size, another study could be conducted with a larger number of participants in order to generalize the potential findings. Secondly, because the current study involved only a two-hour workshop due to time constraints, additional research could be conducted to determine whether the current study's results were more about short-term memory than long-term acquisition and retention. A study with a longer period of time and target idiom workshops may have yielded different results. A recall DCT and/or Writing Prompt could be administered to measure the formulaic language acquisition and production after an interval of time has passed since the post-testing. In addition, the current study's results are limited to Faculty of Academic English students at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey, and therefore additional research could be done at other universities in the country, as well as with different language combinations in

other countries. Similarly, further studies could be conducted with students of higher levels of proficiency to determine whether students with English proficiencies higher than the FAE ENG 101 level could more easily accurately produce equivalent idiomatic expressions and their respective contexts.

While future studies could uphold the aim of the current study, different research designs could be implemented. For example, a control and experimental group design could be used with varying amounts of emphasis and focus on L1 and L2 equivalent formulaic expressions during the respective workshops. Also, an interview set up could be used in place or in addition to a questionnaire in order to better understand the participants' opinions on the study's treatment methodology.

Further research could also be conducted on reasons why and in what way participants produced incorrect idioms or inaccurate contexts for them and whether or not this has to do with the category that the idiomatic expression falls under. Finally, additional research could be conducted regarding the accurate production of formulaic expressions in spoken discourse as opposed to the current study's written-form context. Whether or not the participants also have an affinity towards the conceptually similar idioms (Category II) in spoken discourse could be a topic of study in this regard.

### **Conclusion**

The current study, conducted with 15 university-level Faculty of Academic English students, aimed to determine the effectiveness of focusing on the availability of equivalent formulaic expressions, namely idioms, in an individual's native language (L1) and second language (L2) on that sample's ability to accurately produce them and their contexts in the second language. The findings revealed that explicit instruction of formulaic language effectively promoted the students' ability to produce both the target

idioms and their contexts on the post-DCT and Writing Prompt, which suggests that the explicit teaching with emphasis on L1 and L2 formulaic expressions positively affects its acquisition. Additionally, the results showed that students had an affinity for conceptually similar (Category II) idioms in terms of the total number of correctly produced expressions and contexts in the study's instruments, but that the students had a relatively equal rate of improvement across all three categories in terms of gain score between the pre- and post-DCT and Writing Prompt. The findings of this study are parallel to the literature that highlights the effectiveness of explicit instruction of formulaic expressions on students' ability to accurately produce it (e.g., Bardovi-Harding & Vellenga, 2012; Boers' et al., 2006; Wood, 2009; Nesselhauf, 2003; Meunier, 2012; Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012).

Recent literature in the area of formulaic language has confirmed the benefits of using it and the elevated level of proficiency its users are perceived to have (e.g., Wray, 2008, Wood, 2006). Many studies attest to the positive effect memorization can have on the ability to use formulaic language (e.g., Wray & Fitzpatrick, 2008) or the effect L1 has on the ability to understand L2 formulaic language (e.g., Yamashita & Jiang, 2010), but little research has investigated ways to *promote* the memorization and production of L2 formulaic expressions and their contexts. To conclude, it is hoped that the findings and pedagogical implications of this study demonstrate the effect that drawing students' attention to the existence of L1 equivalences has on the memorization and subsequent production of those expressions and their contexts in L2, and the benefits of explicit instruction on formulaic expression production across all categories of idioms: word-for-word translations, conceptually similar idioms, and idioms particular to the English language.

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**APPENDICES****Appendix 1: Consent Form****CONSENT FORM**

**The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of a methodology for teaching idioms on their production and the production of their contexts. I agree to participate in the study and hereby give my permission for the researcher to use the data collected.**

**Name****Email**

## Appendix 2: Discourse Completion Test

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### DISCOURSE COMPLETION TEST

**Directions:** Read the situations and the short texts that follow. Fill in the blank with an appropriate English expression related to the scenario.

1. **Situation:** A man is discussing other love opportunities.  
It didn't work out with my girlfriend, but I am young and there are \_\_\_\_\_ . I won't be alone forever.
2. **Situation:** A boss welcomes her new employee.  
We are pleased to offer you this job and look forward to having you. \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. **Situation:** A boss advises his employee that there will soon be a lot more work than there is now.  
Enjoy the lull and down-time. It is just the \_\_\_\_\_. It is about to get a lot more hectic.
4. **Situation:** A man suggests not giving much importance to a test result.  
I just think that people ought to take these results \_\_\_\_\_ and not assume that they are necessarily any more authoritative than what they already know.
5. **Situation:** A girl advises her friend to not stress about the future.  
Stay flexible and be calm. Sometimes it's better to just \_\_\_\_\_ and see what happens.
6. **Situation:** An employee stresses because his boss is constantly watching and pressuring him to work harder.  
I feel like my boss is \_\_\_\_\_. He wants the assignment by Monday and I feel like he's always behind me watching everything I do.
7. **Situation:** A man hears rumors from a few people about the availability of a dog he wants to adopt.  
He was thinking about adopting a big dog, and he heard \_\_\_\_\_ that there was a Pitbull at the clinic.
8. **Situation:** A runner explains that she felt a little sick and so did not perform well.  
I was feeling a little \_\_\_\_\_ at the championship and didn't do that well in my race.
9. **Situation:** A mother reflects on how her son always behaved with proper conduct and integrity.

In his teens, he kept to \_\_\_\_\_, earning straight A's in school, even as he built his career.

10. **Situation:** A man cannot answer the investigator's question from memory.

-Do you remember the exact date she came to your house?

-No, not \_\_\_\_\_, but I can find out and get back to you.

11. **Situation:** Sue had been waiting for Steve for awhile, but was glad he arrived at least.

So you finally decided to show up? Well, \_\_\_\_\_, I guess.

12. **Situation:** A reporter comments on the differences between news reports on men and women sports.

Comparing news coverage of men's and women's sports is like comparing \_\_\_\_\_. After all, men's college sports such as football and baseball have no fully developed women's versions.

13. **Situation:** A man boasts about his friend to a possible employer when that same friend suddenly calls.

You're in luck, sir. As it just so happens, James is an expert accountant. He...[phone rings], well \_\_\_\_\_, he's calling right now!

14. **Situation:** A man explains that he knew the general facts, but did not understand a situation fully enough to act on it properly.

We knew what was going on, but didn't have \_\_\_\_\_ the depth of impact, its real dimension or what we could do about it.

15. **Situation:** A chef comments on how difficult owning a restaurant is.

You have to understand all the different problems, and it's not just \_\_\_\_\_. You have to be a good real estate agent, a good designer, a good buyer, and a good public relations person.

16. **Situation:** A woman moves on from a tough situation.

That dispute is all \_\_\_\_\_ for me now. There is no point in dwelling on it or living in the past.

17. **Situation:** A man explains that he really wants his friend to reveal some news.

I can't wait for you to \_\_\_\_\_ and fill me in on that well-kept secret!

18. **Situation:** A news reporter predicts future effects of continued use of a certain weapon.

It didn't kill anyone, this is a good thing. But it is only the short-term view. \_\_\_\_\_, it will be catastrophic.

19. **Situation:** A woman scoffs at a ridiculous idea and asks her co-worker to be reasonable.

You want to make our gas \$7 per gallon? Come on, \_\_\_\_\_.

20. **Situation:** The police report that a suspect was planning to cause mischief or commit crime.

Meanwhile, the suspect was \_\_\_\_\_. He'd created a fake identity and made a new passport for himself.

21. **Situation:** A chef boasts how in his restaurant everything is made in house and without pre-prepared ingredients.

Everything from the sauces to the breads and desserts is homemade, made \_\_\_\_\_, using fresh ingredients from local farms.

22. **Situation:** A man decides something has gone on long enough and he needs to set boundaries.

Well, it stops. It stops right here and now. This is where we \_\_\_\_\_.

23. **Situation:** A woman tells a friend how easy it is to retrieve and use media information.

With new media, everything is \_\_\_\_\_. Gone are the days when you would search newspapers for specific information.

24. **Situation:** An economist conveys the uncertainty of the specifics of a bill.

Everyone wants to cut corporate taxes, but how big those cuts will be and how to pay for them is still \_\_\_\_\_.

25. **Situation:** A student asks his friend to watch and make sure nothing bad happens to his belongings.

I'm coming back. My laptop is here. Will you please \_\_\_\_\_ it?

26. **Situation:** A news reporter introduces the topic of future, soon to happen plans of the company NASA.

We're talking this hour about NASA's scientific future, about missions that are \_\_\_\_\_ like this summer's mission of the Mars Curiosity rover.

27. **Situation:** A political analyst says that winning the election in Michigan is available to anyone willing to compete for it.

There will be an obvious winner in Arizona like there was in Florida. Michigan is not like that. Michigan is \_\_\_\_\_ in terms of delegates.

28. **Situation:** A woman jokes about a generally accepted principle or unofficial rule that is not always accurate or reliable.

There's a clue on Superman's ethnic origins. It's a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ that when a name ends in "man", M-A-N, that the person whose name that is, is either a superhero or Jewish or both.

29. **Situation:** A man threatens to hurt someone if he ever has the opportunity to.

She won't give me his name. But if I ever \_\_\_\_\_, there will be a fight.

30. **Situation:** A man says the repair man in Manchester charges a very expensive amount of money.

We need new brake lights. I could take the car to a man in Manchester but he charges a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.

31. **Situation:** A friend tells Susan that it is Susan's turn to take action.

I've done all I can. The \_\_\_\_\_, Susan. Take it away.

32. **Situation:** An analyst thinks Congress needed to be more attentive, active, and aware.

Congress should have been more \_\_\_\_\_ here during the whole period of time. President Clinton was calling on more regulation and it didn't happen.

33. **Situation:** A friend thinks that the word "efficient" is the absolute perfect way to describe a concept.

-It seems like online matchmakers would be efficient.

-You know, I think you \_\_\_\_\_ with the word efficient. That's the reason why people contact matchmakers. That's the reason why people go online.

34. **Situation:** A friend calls another friend randomly after awhile of not talking or seeing each other.

A few weeks later, Linda called Sue \_\_\_\_\_ to say she and John were headed to New York.

### Appendix 3: Expression List

Category I: Equivalences (11)	Category II: Conceptually Similar (11)	Category III: Distinct (12)
Other fish in the sea. (13) (Denizde başka balıklar da var.)	Welcome aboard. (132) (Aramıza hoş geldin.)	With a grain of salt. (233)
Calm before the storm. (36) (Fırtına öncesi sessizlik.)	Breathing down my neck. (21) (Polis ensemde.)	Through the grapevine. (89)
Go with the flow. (213) (Akışına bırak.)	Better late than never. (77) (Geç olsun güç olmasın.)	Under the weather. (70)
Off the top of my head.* (106) (Aklıma ilk gelen.)	Apples and oranges. (217) (Elma ile armut.)	The straight and narrow. (155)
Water under the bridge. (77) (Köprünün altında suyu.)	Speak of the devil. (39) (İti an, çomağı hazırla.)	Have a handle on X.* (676)
In the long run.* (3249) (Uzun vadede.)	A piece of cake. (261) (Çocuğun oyuncağı.)	X is on the horizon.* (2046)
Draw the line.* (717) (Çizgi çekmek.)	Spill the beans. (63) (Ağzındaki baklayı çıkarmak.)	Up for grabs.* (600)
At your fingertips. (163) (Parmaklarının ucunda.)	Give me a break.* (529) (Beni rahat bırak.)	Rule of thumb.* (826)
Up in the air.* (1198) (Havada kaldı.)	Up to something.* (281) (Bir işler çevirmek.)	Arm and a leg. (101)
Get my hands on.* (175) (Elime geçerse.)	From scratch.* (1829) (En baştan.)	On the ball. (684)
(The ball is) in your court.* (33) (Top sende.)	Keep an eye on X.* (1490) (Göz kulak olmak.)	Hit the nail on the head. (117)
		Out of the blue. (896)

\*Liu, D. (2003). The most frequently used spoken American English idioms: A corpus analysis and its implications. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(4), 671-700.

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### Appendix 4: Writing Prompt

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### WRITING PROMPT

Directions: Chose 5 idioms from the list below and mimic the items on the fill-in-the-blank test. Create a situation statement, followed by a short text using the idiom.

Other fish in the sea.	Welcome aboard.	With a grain of salt.
Calm before the storm.	Breathing down my neck.	Through the grapevine.
Go with the flow.	Better late than never.	Under the weather.
Off the top of my head.	Apples and oranges.	The straight and narrow.
Water under the bridge.	Speak of the devil.	Have a handle on X.
In the long run.	A piece of cake.	X is on the horizon.
Draw the line.	Spill the beans.	Up for grabs.
At your fingertips.	Give me a break.	Rule of thumb.
Up in the air.	Up to something.	Arm and a leg.
Get my hands on X.	From scratch.	On the ball.
(The ball is) in your court.	Keep an eye on X.	Hit the nail on the head.
		Out of the blue.

## Appendix 5: Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### QUESTIONNAIRE

**Directions:** *Read the statements and make a check mark in the appropriate box based on your opinions.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1) Associating the English idioms with their Turkish counterparts while learning them helped me produce them on the test.					
(2) Associating the English idioms with their Turkish counterparts helped me produce their context in the Writing Prompt.					
(3) I found the idioms without Turkish counterparts easier to produce on the test.					
(4) I found the idioms without Turkish counterparts' context easier to produce in the Writing Prompt.					
(5) I would have preferred to leave Turkish out of the workshop.					