

The Effect of Two Attention-drawing Techniques on Learning English Idioms

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Abstract—This study investigated the effectiveness of three methods for teaching idioms. Sixty two intermediate EFL learners from a language school in Kerman were divided into three classes to be taught in three conditions: the etymological elaboration experimental group (N=20) was taught 16 target idioms in a text along with the etymology of each idiom; the typographic salience experimental group (N=20) was taught the same text as the previous group but the 16 target idioms were in boldfaced type and red; and the traditional control group (N=22) was taught the same text in plain typeface with no etymology for idioms. The participants in the three groups were not informed about the posttest and the delayed posttest. The results of the comparison between the posttest and the delayed posttest scores of all the three groups indicate that the participants in etymological elaboration outperformed the participants in the other two groups in terms of idioms' retention and recall. These findings are suggestive that the most effective method of teaching idioms vis-a-vis their retention and recall is etymological elaboration.

Index Terms—etymological elaboration, typographic salience, formulaic sequences, idiomatic knowledge

I. INTRODUCTION

Formulaic sequences (FS) or multiword expressions (MWE) are ubiquitous in and constitute the backbone of any type of natural language. The ubiquity and centrality of these multiword units has been attested by scholars and researchers in the field of second language learning and teaching (Carter, 2004; Boers, et al., 2014; Hayati, et al., 2013; Martinez, 2013; Siyanova-Chanturia, 2015; Stengers, et al., 2014, Wood, 2010;). Thus, if FSs are so pervasive, then language learners are constantly exposed to a bombardment of figurative expressions throughout their learning process and they have to create a large repertoire of figurative expressions for active usage (Boers, et al., 2004). On the other hand, Learning FSs presents a big challenge to foreign language (FL) learners. Apart from the challenge faced by FL learners, researchers and teachers acknowledge the importance of teaching and learning formulaic sequences in the foreign language classroom because these FSs serve a number of communicative functions (Peters, 2012). Nevertheless, little research has been undertaken on the most effective techniques, especially the implementation of attention-drawing techniques, in teaching formulaic sequences (for the type of recommended techniques, see Boers et al., 2006; Jones and Haywood, 2004; Peters, 2012). The purpose of this study is, thus, to investigate the effect of two techniques on Iranian EFL learners' retention and recall of English idioms (idioms are subsumed under formulaic sequences). The two techniques that are intended to prompt learners to take notice of the idioms are the etymological elaboration, whereby the origins of idioms are presented to the learners, and typographic salience through which target idioms are underlined and in red.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Siyanova-Chanturia (2015) enumerates different kinds of formulaic sequences, such as, *collocations* (fast food), *binomials* (black and white), *multi-word verbs* (rely on), *idioms* (tie the knot), *speech formulae* (what's up?), *discourse markers* (by the way), *lexical bundles* (as well as), *expletives* (damn it!), *grammatical constructions* (the -er the -er), and many more. These types of FSs abound in everyday discourse. Several studies have reported on the frequency estimates of FSs in written texts and everyday speech of native speakers. Erman and Warren (2000) estimated that 55% of any written text is comprised of FSs. From the spoken discourse perspective, Foster (2001) concluded that 32.3% of native speakers' speech, mostly unplanned speech, consisted of FSs. Also, Pollio, et al. (1977) estimated that every minute of native speakers' spoken language contained four FSs on average.

It's due to this abundance of FSs in everyday written and spoken discourse that apart from traditional classroom interest in them, FSs are the main focus of interest in different fields, such as *computer assisted language learning*

(CALL) (Stengers, et al., 2014), *mobile learning* (M-learning) (Hayati, et al., 2013), *machine translation* (Cholakov, et al., 2014), *eye tracking* (Siyanova-Chanturia, 2013; Siyanova-Chanturia, et al., 2011; Carrol and Conklin, 2014, 2015), *neurolinguistics* (Boulenger, et al., 2012; Zhang, et al., 2013), and *brain diseases/damages* (Reuterskiöld, and Van Lancker-Sidtis, 2013; Van Lancker-Sidtis, 2006).

Thus, it goes without saying that with regard to the facilitative role of FSs in language processing (Hsu, 2014) and their pervasiveness, especially idioms, in the everyday discourse of English speakers, learners' attention should be directed toward learning this type of FS. The mastery of the meaning and form of idioms are very crucial in the process of language learning because the former may pose interpretability problems for L2 learners (Martinez and Murphy, 2001) and the latter helps students use and produce the idiom themselves. This latter case, in turn, will cause students to come across fluent and native-like (Boers and Lindstromberg, 2008).

Etymological elaboration vs. typographic salience in teaching idioms

Attention-drawing techniques have mostly been used in the teaching of vocabulary (Peters, et al., 2009; Schmitt, 2008), and only recently in the instruction of FSs (Boers and Lindstromberg, 2009). One of the techniques for directing the learners' attention toward English idioms is etymological elaboration (= a term coined by Boers, et al. (2004), which means providing learners with the literal, original use of an idiom). According to Stengers, et al. (2014) there are at least two reasons for incorporating information about the origin or literal uses of idioms: 1) it lends concreteness and imaginability to the idiom whereby facilitating learning, a phenomenon at the heart of Dual Coding theory; 2) after being familiar with the origin of the idiom, the learner can make an educated guess at its abstract (idiomatic) meaning.

In a series of studies, Boers, et al. (2004, 2007) have zeroed in on the effectiveness of this particular technique on L2 learners' idiom retention and recall. In their 2004 study, Boers, et al. provided the experimental group with the literal, original use (etymology) of the target idioms, while no information regarding the etymology of the idioms was given to the control group. The findings of the study showed that the scores of the experimental group was significantly higher than those of the control group, thereby supporting the assumption that etymological elaboration effectively helps learners retain and recall idioms.

Also, Boers, et al. (2007) investigated the learning of idioms through etymological elaboration. In this study they examined two possibilities: 1) using etymology as a channel for the comprehension of idioms, and 2) using etymology as a channel for learners' appreciation of the informal nature of certain idioms. Their experiment regarding the first possibility revealed quite encouraging results, whereas the second possibility was less convincing.

Another technique in drawing the learners' attention toward English idioms is typographic salience, for example by italicizing, underlining, or boldfacing a certain item or even using a different color. Since FL learners may not take note of idioms while reading a text, typographic salience could be a useful technique to alleviate this problem.

There are few studies whose main focus has been on typographically salient items. One of these studies is Bishop's (2004) computer-based research which revealed that those words and formulaic sequences which were typographically salient, that is, those items in red and underlined, were clicked on more by the experimental group (N= 21) compared to the control group (N= 23) who read the same text as the experimental group but with plain target words and formulaic sequences. Participants in the experimental group clicked more on the FSs so as to find out their meanings. One thing that is lacking in Bishop's study is that it did not demonstrate whether typographic salience had any positive effect on the recall of FSs.

In another computer-based study which investigated the clicking behavior and text comprehension of French L2 learners, de Ridder (2002) used blue-font hyperlinked words in the text. Her findings revealed that while reading the text, the learners were inclined to click on the highlighted words to discover their meanings. Nevertheless, de Ridder found no positive effect regarding the impact of increased clicking on the word retention by the learners.

In her recent study, Peters (2012) made an attempt to investigate the effect of two techniques, namely, instruction intervention and typographic salience, on learners' form recall of single words and formulaic sequences. The results of this study showed that although instruction (whose purpose was to draw the participants' attention to formulaic sequences while reading a text) had an effect on the recognition of formulaic sequences, it had no effect on the recall of formulaic sequences. Typographic salience seemingly facilitated the learning and recall of vocabulary, but like the experimental group, the treatment group received the lowest recall scores. Thus, there was no difference between the experimental group (N= 14) and control group (N= 14) regarding their recall of formulaic sequences.

Rational and research questions

The appropriate and correct application of idioms either in spoken or written production presents a big challenge to English learners, especially EFL ones, from elementary to even advanced learners. Not only do foreign language learners make more errors when producing formulaic sequences, the findings of previous studies also suggest that they tend to overuse some formulaic sequences (Peters, 2012). Despite the fact that the mastery of idiomatic expressions is pivotal in achieving a native-like fluency in language production and use, the paucity of research in the area of multiword expressions seems evident in different fronts. From the processing perspective, there is a regrettable lack of research into the processing of L2 idiomatic expressions by language learners (Cieslicka, 2006; Durran and Schmitt, 2010; Siyanova-Chanturia, 2015). Regarding the place of multiword expressions in ELT syllabi, Martinez (2013) rightly states that:

“... to date there has been a general lack of any kind of principled integration of multi-word expressions in ELT syllabi, and it is often the textbook that guides the scope and sequence of language that is presented (p. 185).”

Finally, from a pedagogical angle, there has been little research into the most effective methods of teaching formulaic sequences (Alali and Schmitt, 2012).

Research to date has yielded mixed results regarding the impact of pedagogical techniques on formulaic sequences, especially idioms, retention and recall and no study has compared the effect of etymological elaboration and typographic salience on learners’ retention and recall of idioms. This study tries to make an attempt to find out which technique is most useful regarding: 1) the retention of the target idioms, and 2) the recall of those idioms. Thus, the current research will try to address the following research questions:

- 1) What is the effect of etymological elaboration on the retention and recall of the target idioms?
- 2) What is the effect of typographic salience on the retention and recall of the target idioms?
- 3) Which attention-drawing teaching method is more effective in terms of idioms retention and recall?

III. METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of this study were 62 male and female adult students ranging in age from 20 to 30 years. Initially, 76 intermediate students studying English at Qeshm language institute in Kerman took the pretest. Out of these students, 14 students who received high scores were excluded from the study because their scores showed that they were already familiar with the target idioms. Then, the remaining students were randomly assigned to three groups, each of which receiving instruction on the same target idioms used in a text in three different methods, namely the etymological elaboration method (N= 20), typographic salience method (N= 20), and traditional method (N=22). The ANOVA analysis of the participants’ pretest scores showed that the participants in these three groups were homogenous with regard to their idiomatic knowledge or *formulaic competence* (Celce-Murcia, 2008).

Materials

A key step in the development of the material was the selection of the target idioms. In the previous studies on idioms, researchers have used various criteria for choosing their target idioms. Boers, et al. (2007) chose idioms based on their thematic classifications (source domains). Other researchers (e.g., Hayati, et al. 2013) used available textbooks as their sources of idioms. Author’s intuition has also been another way of idiom selection (e.g., Guo, 2008). A more scientific way for choosing idioms is first consulting dictionaries, and then using frequency bands of idioms to decide on the suitability and frequency of use of the target idioms (e.g., Boers, et al. (2004)). This study made use of this last criterion for idiom selection. Firstly, forty idioms were chosen from four different dictionaries: *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* (Siefring, 2004), *Red Herrings and White Elephants* (Jack, 2005), *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (Ammer, 1997), and *Dictionary of Idioms and Their Origin* (Flavell and Flavell, 1992). The criteria for the selection of the idioms were as follows: 1) Care was taken to include idioms that were not taboos or culturally loaded; 2) Those idioms that had direct L1 equivalence were factored out; and 3) The selected idioms’ frequency bands were looked up in Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies, 2008) to make sure that the idioms were frequently used in English¹. (See Table 1 for the frequency of the target idioms.)

After selecting the idioms, all of them were sent to an English native speaker to concoct a text in which sixteen idioms were randomly used out of the complete list of the idioms. After the text was written, it was emailed to five more English native speakers to rule out any inconsistencies with regard to the appropriate use of the idioms.

TABLE 1:
FREQUENCY OF THE TARGET IDIOMS

<i>Idioms</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Spoken</i>	<i>Fiction</i>	<i>Magazine</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Academic</i>
Off the beaten track	95	9	12	42	20	12
A bone of contention	104	29	8	13	28	26
Bite the bullet	118	44	13	21	29	11
To the bitter end	222	48	43	45	61	25
A chip off the old block	35	8	14	5	7	1
At the drop of a hat	140	32	42	35	20	11
Nip something in the bud	11	2	0	4	4	1
Keep a stiff upper lip	81	30	21	13	15	2
Barking up the wrong tree	36	12	10	5	9	0
At the end of one’s tether	75	14	17	31	12	1
By hook or by crook	28	9	5	5	2	7
On the back burner	234	63	20	59	65	27
Know the ropes	20	3	5	8	3	1
Go belly up	44	10	4	8	19	3
A dime a dozen	101	18	38	18	21	6
Lose one’s marbles	2	0	1	1	0	0

Later on, two versions of the text were prepared for the study. In one format, the target idioms were highlighted in red and underlined. This version was intended for the group that was to receive typographic salience method of instruction. The second format which included plain target idioms was intended for etymological elaboration and

traditional methods, but for the etymological elaboration method of instruction a PowerPoint slide was prepared for each idiom which contained the meaning and origin of the idiom.

Procedure

This study was carried out with three classroom groups, two experimental groups and one control group. Two weeks after gauging the participants' idiomatic knowledge through pretesting, they were randomly assigned to one of the three groups. Then, the experiments commenced. Three teachers, including the researcher himself, simultaneously taught the three groups, each in a one-hour-long session. Three different methods of instruction were also utilized to teach the educational material which was a text containing 16 target idioms. The traditional classroom (control group) read the plain text and the teacher just explained the meaning of each target idiom to the participants.

For the first experimental group, that is, the typographic salience classroom, the target idioms had previously been highlighted in red and underlined. The meanings of the idioms had also been glossed. After the participants read the text, the teacher explained the meaning of each idiom to them. As for the etymological elaboration classroom (the second experimental group), the same plain text as that of the traditional group was read by the participants. But, in addition to reading the text, the participants were shown 16 slides each of which contained the meaning and the origin of an idiom. Like the text for the typographic salience group, the meanings of the idioms had been glossed for the second experimental group as well. Immediately after the experiments, the participants in all groups took the posttest. The posttest was the same as the pretest with just some changes regarding the place of choices for multiple-choice questions.

A month after the immediate posttest and without any forewarning, the participants took the delayed posttest. This test was a modified version of Computer Adaptive Test of Size and Strength (CATSS) which was developed by Laufer and Goldstein (2004). CATSS was originally made for the testing of individual words. To test the receptive and productive knowledge of meanings and form of words, CATSS utilizes translations. But in its modified paper-and-pencil version, the translation section of CATSS was eliminated and the form and meaning recognitions were all in English. In the original version of CATSS there are no multiple-choice items. For the purpose of this study, multiple-choice tests were prepared. In the form recognition section of the test, one word of an idiom was replaced by another word, rendering it non-idiomatic.

In order to check for the validity of this adapted version of CATSS, a few pilot studies were conducted. In the first stage, it was emailed to three English native speakers to check for any incomprehensibilities or problems. Then, five nonnative English teachers read the questions on the test to make sure that the test items were not too easy or too difficult for the participants. In the final stage, 25 students who were similar to the research participants, but were from another language school took the test. These students were quite unfamiliar with the test and the results showed that they could not guess the answers of each item. These results indicated that the tests were well-written for the purpose of the study.

Table 2 shows a schematic representation of the design of the study.

TABLE 2:
THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>Activities</i>
1- 62	three groups	pretest: multiple-choice test
1-20	etymological elaboration (experimental)	reading a plain text+ origins of the idioms
21-40	typographic salience (experimental)	reading a text with idioms underlined and in red
41-62	traditional (control)	reading a plain text
1-62	three groups	posttest: multiple-choice test
1-62	three groups	delayed posttest: CATSS modified version

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Table 3, the descriptive statistics for all three groups obtained from the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest clearly indicates that in all three groups there has been an overall improvement in the participants' idiomatic knowledge vis-à-vis the effect of teaching methods.

TABLE 3:
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PRETEST, POSTTEST, AND DELAYED POSTTEST

<i>Groups</i>	<i>Pretest</i>		<i>Posttest</i>		<i>Delayed posttest</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Etymological elaboration	13.50	1.960	24.40	2.873	21.25	2.04
Typographic salience	12.20	1.105	19.60	2.137	16.95	3.08
Traditional	13.36	.658	15.86	2.145	13.50	2.06
Total	13.03	1.487	19.82	4.256	17.11	4.008

A *repeated-measures* ANOVA was also run to check for any significant difference between the results of the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest in each group. As the data in Table 4 shows, the mean scores of the participants were significantly different from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest in each group ($p= 0.01$). These scores demonstrate that the three methods of teaching idioms were effective in terms of increasing the participants' knowledge of idiomatic expressions.

TABLE 4:
THE SUCCESS RATE OF PARTICIPANTS IN ALL GROUPS

Groups	Test	n	Mean	SD	F	df	p	Size effect
Etymological Elaboration	Pretest	20	13.50	1.960	74.68	19	0.01	0.88
	Posttest	20	24.40	2.873				
	Delayed posttest	20	21.25	2.048				
Typographic Saliency	Pretest	20	12.20	1.105	129.79	19	0.01	0.84
	Posttest	20	19.60	2.137				
	Delayed posttest	20	16.95	3.086				
Traditional	Pretest	22	13.36	.658	14.38	21	0.01	0.65
	Posttest	22	15.86	2.145				
	Delayed posttest	22	13.50	2.064				

The analysis of covariance between the instructional methods

Following the *repeated-measures* ANOVA, a one-way between-groups analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine any statistically significant differences between the posttest and delayed posttest scores of the three different instructional methods. The independent variable was the type of instructional method, and the dependent variables consisted of the posttest and delayed posttest scores, respectively. Participants' scores on the pretest were used as the covariate in the analysis. Also, initial tests were run to ensure that the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variances, homogeneity of regression slopes, and reliable measurement of the covariate were not violated. According to Table 5, there are significant differences between the teaching methods vis-à-vis the posttest ($F(2, 58) = 66.19, p = .01$) and delayed posttest ($F(2, 58) = 55.96, p = .01$) scores of the participants. Although the pretest scores of the three groups were almost similar, indicating that the participants were homogeneous in terms of their idiomatic knowledge, statistically significant differences were found between the posttest and delayed posttest scores. In Table 5, the posttest effect size (Partial eta squared = 0.69), as well as the delayed posttest effect size (Partial eta squared = 0.65), are also included which are indicative of the presence of a magnitude of differences between all the groups. These effect sizes, in turn, zero in on the significant differences derived from the results.

TABLE 5:
TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Posttest	768.377	2	384.189	66.190	0.01	0.69
Error	336.650	58	5.804			
Delayed posttest	641.490	2	320.745	55.967	0.01	0.65
Error	332.393	58	5.731			

As Table 6 illustrates, to determine which method of instruction was more effective in terms of idioms retention, Bonferroni test, which compared the posttest scores of the three groups, followed. Through multiple comparisons, statistically significant differences were found between the mean score of etymological elaboration group and typographic saliency group's mean score ($p = 0.01, mean\ difference = 5.038$). The mean score of etymological elaboration group also was significantly different from that of traditional group ($p = 0.01, mean\ difference = 8.561$). By comparing the mean scores of typographical saliency group and traditional group, it is clear that typographic saliency method of instruction was more effective in helping the participants retain the idioms ($p = 0.01, mean\ difference = 3.523$).

TABLE 6:
BONFERRONI TEST RESULTS FOR MULTIPLE COMPARISONS BETWEEN POSTTEST SCORES

(I) methods	(J) methods	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound		Upper Bound
Etymological Elaboration	Typographic Saliency	5.038*	0.821	0.01	3.396	6.681
	Traditional	8.561*	0.745	0.01	7.070	10.053
Typographic Saliency	Etymological Elaboration	-5.038*	0.821	0.01	-6.681	-3.396
	Traditional	3.523*	0.793	0.01	1.936	5.110
Traditional	Etymological Elaboration	-8.561*	.745	0.01	-10.053	-7.070
	Typographic Saliency	-3.523*	.793	0.01	-5.110	-1.936

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

In terms of idioms recall, the results of Bonferroni test (Table 7) revealed that, like idioms retention, etymological elaboration group outperformed both typographic saliency group ($p = 0.01, mean\ difference = 4.835$) and traditional group ($p = 0.01, mean\ difference = 7.806$).

TABLE 7:
BONFERRONI TEST RESULTS FOR MULTIPLE COMPARISONS BETWEEN DELAYED POSTTEST SCORES

(I) methods	(J) methods	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Etymological Elaboration	Typographic Saliency	4.835*	0.816	.01	3.202	6.467
	Traditional	7.806*	0.740	.01	6.324	9.288
Typographic Saliency	Etymological Elaboration	-4.835*	0.816	.01	-6.467	-3.202
	Traditional	2.971*	0.788	.01	1.394	4.549
Traditional	Etymological Elaboration	-7.806*	0.740	.01	-9.288	-6.324
	Typographic Saliency	-2.971*	0.788	.01	-4.549	-1.394

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Thus, it can reasonably be said that the most effective method of teaching idioms is etymological elaboration because the statistics above indicate a significant difference between this instructional method and the other two methods vis-à-vis their impact on the participants' retention and recall of English idioms.

The results of the study indicate that the most effective method for teaching idioms is the presentation of etymology of the idioms through etymological elaboration method. One possible explanation for the success rate of the participants in learning the idioms via etymological elaboration method is that explaining the origin of idioms to learners has a mnemonic effect to it. According to Boers, et al. (2007), etymological elaboration is likely to call up a mental image of a scene which can be stored in memory alongside the verbal form, and which can subsequently provide an additional pathway for recall. This lies at the core of Dual Coding theory (Paivio, 1986) that utilizes verbal representations and mental images, the latter functioning as a mnemonic in processing the verbal input. The concreteness and imageability given to idioms (Strengers, et al., 2014) by etymological elaboration is also at the heart of the Levels-of-processing theory (Cermak, and Craik, 1979) which claims that deeper levels of analysis bring about more complex, permanent, and robust memory traces.

Another plausible account for the effectiveness of etymological elaboration method is that learners enjoy an extra context for learning idioms. In addition to the context in which the idioms are used, learners are exposed to the origins and stories of how the idioms came into being. Hence, enhancing the possibility of learning the idioms due this additional exposure. Meanwhile, the etymologies of idioms are interesting enough *per se* to encourage learners to pay more attention to the meaning, and possibly to the form, of idioms.

The findings of this study are in line and favor of the findings of Boers, et al. (2004, 2007) that assume presenting learners with the literal etymology of figurative idioms generally enhances their idiomatic knowledge.

Typographic saliency, on the other hand, appears to be a more effective teaching method than its traditional counterpart. The results of the study are in accord with the studies by Peters (2012) and Bishop (2004) because, in general, these scholars found supporting evidence that typographic saliency mode of instruction is an effective method which aids learners to learn the target idioms successfully.

V. CONCLUSION

This study aimed at gauging the effectiveness of three methods for teaching idioms, namely etymological elaboration, typographic silence, and traditional methods. In general, the findings of the study are indicative of etymological elaboration being the most effective method in assisting learners to learn the target idioms. The comparison of the posttest and delayed posttest scores of all the three groups indicated that etymological elaboration had a long-lasting effect on idioms' retention and recall.

Since in plain texts idioms may not be noticed by learners, one way to help them recognize these formulaic sequences is through typographic saliency whereby idioms are highlighted to be noticed. But simply highlighting idioms may not guarantee the successful learning of idioms on learners' part. Etymological elaboration, on the other hand, has reasonably proven to be an effective method of teaching idioms, for it provides learners with the origin of idioms, hence aiding them to master the idioms even permanently. Etymological elaboration is a sort of mnemonic technique which is in line with the assumptions of Dual Coding theory and Levels-of-processing theory whose final outcome is the rather permanent mastery of idioms by learners.

With regard to the application of etymological elaboration for teaching idioms some questions are raised: "To what extent can teachers make use of etymological elaboration?", "Can they find the etymology of all the idioms they intend to teach?", or "Will they have sufficient time to present the etymology of idioms in classroom?" The answers to these questions may appear discouraging, but teachers should incorporate etymological elaboration in their teaching of idioms whenever possible because it will function as a mnemonic technique, resulting consequently in a long-lasting effect on learning idioms.

Note:

Martinez (2013) believes that data banks provide information about the frequency of a particular item in that corpus, but not what that frequency figures mean, thus, because an item does not appear frequently in a corpus should not necessarily indicate that it is not useful.

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