Designing Classroom Activities for Learning Idioms:
Comparing Metaphor Awareness Method and Translation Method

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〈要旨〉

　イディオムは日常言語において頻出する項目であるにもかかわらず，文法的な説明になじまない扱いにくい表現として，効果的な学習法は現在まで提示されてきていない。そういった従来の学習法の問題点を踏まえ，本稿では，イディオムの概念を支えている概念メタファー（Lakoff & Johnson, 1980）を援用した体系的な学習方法が従来の訳読方式の学習方法と比べて，イディオムの理解と産出に効果があるかどうかを調査した。結果，体系的な学習方法が訳読方式の学習方法よりも理解・産出両面で，統計的により有意に効果があることが示された。しかし，一方で，アンケート調査から学習者の中には，訳読方式を好むものがいるという興味深い結果も明らかになった。この結果は，教授法の優位性と学生の嗜好は必ずしも一致しないということを示唆している。

1. Introduction

　Idioms are pervasive in everyday language（Jackendoff, 1995）and hence are important to master for improving communication skills. Erman and Warren（2000）discovered that prefabricated word combinations or formulaic sequences compose about 55% of both spoken and written discourse. However, many students encounter difficulties in learning idioms due to the idioms' irregular and idiosyncratic behavior（Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Irujo, 1993; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993）. In applied linguistics, there have been some attempts to solve this problem by making use of image schema and conceptual metaphors in cognitive linguistics and the results are promising. However, image and conceptual metaphors are sometimes too abstract and don't seem to have the intended effect on learning idioms that they should. Moreover, the main area of interest in the previous research is a one-shot experiment on vocabulary acquisition which is often isolated from context（i.e. words and fixed phrases of phrasal verbs and idioms）. Considering the fact that idioms are frequently found in both spoken and written language, idioms should be learnt through communication, too. However, little research has been done to forecast how the results of discoveries are applied to actual classroom communication activities.

　The purpose of this paper is therefore to explore making use of a cognitive linguistics point of

view in a classroom setting to enhance the students' ability to retain idiomatic expressions. The vehicle used here is pictures and conceptual metaphors for learning idioms in a systematic way through classroom activities. We decided to use pictures, because idioms encode experiences that people often have in conceptual, sensory and emotional context（Langlotz, 2006）and so pictures could help students to understand the situation by looking at them.

In the following paper, first we will explain some important concepts such as conceptual metaphors and the accompanying knowledge in cognitive linguistics and L2 research which would help the students to retain idiomatic expressions. We will then present our materials for learning idioms for the classroom activities, which are integrated into a communication-based syllabus. This is followed by the results of a comparison of using the metaphor awareness method and the translation method for learning idioms. Thirdly, we will present questionnaire survey results taken from the students who received the one-semester instructions.

2．LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Idioms in Cognitive Linguistics

There are many debates over how idioms are best defined, but no conclusive unified definition has been proposed so far. In this paper, we will use the following definition of idioms: "a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other meaning elements, which is, or appears to be prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar"（Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 1）. So, the term idioms includes "*saying*"（e.g. let the cat out of the bag）, "*proverb*"（e.g. a stich in time saves nine）, "*phrasal verbs*"（e.g. take part in）, "*binomial*"（e.g. step by step）, "*frozen similes*"（e.g. crystal clear）, "*formulaic expressions*"（e.g. at first glance）and so forth（Gibbs, 1994, p. 269; Moon, 1998, p. 22）.

In the cognitive linguistic view, many studies have noted the connection between metaphors and idioms. For example, native speakers of English know that *spill the beans* is almost completely compositional or analyzable in metaphorical sense because the term beans refers to an idea or secret and spilling refers to an act of revealing the secret. There are underlying conceptual metaphors, such as THE MIND IS A CONTAINER and IDEAS ARE PHYSICAL ENTITIES, which motivate the structure of idiomatic expressions and help us understand them（Lakoff & Johnson, 1980）.

Moreover, cognitive linguistic analyses of idioms provide some evidence for the idea that idioms do not exist as separate units within the lexicon but actually reflect coherent systems of metaphorical concepts（Lakoff, 1987; Kövecses, 2002; Kövecses & Szabó, 1996）. In their view,

figurative expressions are understood through conceptual metaphors which involve a mapping from the source domain to the target domain. For example, the idiomatic phrases *let off steam, blow your stack, flip your lid, lose your cool, get steamed up* can be motivated by the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER.

Furthermore, many studies have shown that images lie at the basis of numerous metaphorical constructions（Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999; Peña, 2008）and images serve to provide the basic map necessary for interpretation of idioms. This idea can be supported by Paivio（1969）, who argues that imagery accelerates acquiring knowledge. This is called *dual coding theory*. It has been proved that memory retrieval is much greater when nonverbal information is accompanied by verbal information. For example, a word "apple" evokes an associated image to form a mental representation of "the apple"（Paivio 2006）.

In sum, in the cognitive linguistic view, idioms are structurally motivated by images and conceptual schema, which underlines everyday experience. Thus, it would be possible to apply this idea to teaching idioms as one of the methods because idioms are not random but systematic and structured.

2.2 Idioms and cognitive linguistics in L2 learning

The cognitive linguistics paradigm has been introduced to the second language acquisition research, and since the 1990s, exploiting non-arbitrary aspects of vocabulary learning has been proposed as stimuli for such engagement（detailed overview can be found in Hoang（2014））.

Specially, combining images and conceptual metaphors for idiom learning has proved to be effective, when introduced in classroom instructions and integrated with the school syllabus. Boers and Lindstromberg（2006）for example, propose classroom activities where students mime or draw the literal meaning of the idioms. Boers, Demecheleer, & Eyckmans（2004）examined the effects of etymological elaboration on recalling idiom expressions（e.g. to *cut no ice with someone*; to *be waiting in the wings*）. They argued that idioms' meaning can be traced back to each source domain, because if the students trace back the meanings of idioms, they are more likely to retain the meaning as a mental image of a concrete scene. Csabi（2004）conducted an experiment of teaching *hold* and *keep* to 52 Hungarian secondary school students by using pictures in a classroom setting, and compared the teaching methods of pictorial supports combined with conceptual metaphors to translation methods. The author found that the combination of pictures and conceptual metaphors is more effective than translation methods. Vasiljevic（2013）let the students draw pictures of an idiom's meaning by themselves and they learned through their own drawings. The result of this method was positive; students successfully both retained and used idioms in different contexts. The author speculated that this method forces students to pay attention to the form of a series of lexis

（e.g. *top of the world*, to *go all out*） when they express the meaning of each idiom.

Based on the previous studies, this paper aims at developing a communication based syllabus with pictures on the basis of a cognitive linguistic framework, in which we hope to achieve a coherent way of learning metaphors and idioms. We believe focusing on classroom activities rather than a single experiment is a new and effective method for retaining and using idioms. Because most of the previous research tends to be a one shot-experiment, students did not have enough time to automatize idioms and could not successfully perform tasks, such as completing sentences and using words in conversations.

Research questions

In examining the effects of systematically designed metaphor-awareness instruction on students' idiom learning,

1） Does the metaphor awareness group show more improvement than the translation group based on the post-test result?

2） Does the metaphor awareness group show greater improvement regarding the accurate use of idioms based on classroom activities than the translation group?

3. METHOD

3.1 Participants

We set up two groups of Japanese university students （Metaphor awareness group of 29 students, Translation group of 15 students）. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 20 years old. Both the metaphor awareness group and the translation group had a placement test conducted by the university in the beginning of the semester, and were placed at the same level of lower intermediate （a TOEIC score of 300 - 400）. The number of students in each class was determined by university administration. The two groups had similar TOEIC score results, and the same teacher taught both groups. Students are all non-English language majors, and they have only two university English classes during the year, while they, of course, may be exposed to other English learning – on their own, thorough TV, media, reading, etc. These classes are 90 minutes long. The pedagogical portion of each lesson, less time spent on taking attendance and other administrative detains, was 80 minutes each week. Classes met for 15 weeks during the semester, so 14 weeks of instruction, excluding weeks that were spent on test taking and other administrative tasks. Classroom materials were centered on using idioms.

3.2 Selecting conceptual metaphors

We firstly categorized idiomatic expressions under 14 conceptual metaphors, ⟨COMMUNICATION IS EXCHANGE⟩, ⟨A WORD IS A PACKAGE⟩, ⟨UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING⟩, ⟨UNDERSTANDING IS SEARCHING⟩, ⟨THINKING IS MOVING⟩, ⟨SOLVING IS CONTROLLING⟩, ⟨NEGOTIATION IS BATTLE⟩, ⟨ARGUMENT IS COMPROMISE⟩, ⟨EMOTION IS TEMPERATURE⟩, ⟨EMOTION IS FORCE⟩, ⟨HUMAN RELATIONS ARE PHYSICAL CONTACTS⟩, ⟨DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIP IS BUILDING⟩, ⟨LIFE IS A JOURNEY⟩, ⟨LIFE IS A SAILING⟩, by referring to previous studies and textbooks (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Boers, 2000; Wright, 2002) and designed our syllabus (See Appendix 1). The criteria of choosing conceptual metaphors are typicality and productivity of idioms (in other words, conceptual metaphors which cover many idioms). Then, based on an idea proposed by King (1999), we chose 5 to 10 idiomatic expressions in each unit considering imageability and familiarity of native English speakers (i.e. *dawn on me, shed light on, see through, in black and white, all clear, plain as day, gray area, in the dark, get the (whole) picture* for ⟨UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING⟩) (See Appendix 2). From a pedagogical point of view, we included different kind of idioms rather than concentrating on some expressions like phrasal verbs, because it might be too narrow to focus on only phrasal verbs in a one semester communication class. Note that some idioms have variations such as "blow one's top" or "blow one's stack." For simplicity's sake, the authors chose one and taught it only. As Boers, Lindstromberg, Littlemore, Stengers, & Eyckmans (2008) chose highly imaginative words (ex. *rooted, embraced*), we also considered the expressions which can convey the intended meaning by drawing a picture. To keep the quality of drawing the same, we asked professional animators to draw all the pictures. They were paid for their work.

3.3 Tests

A pre-test, which is identical to the post-test, was carried out, which consists of two parts (section one and section two). Section three, a usage quiz was added to the post-test. In other words, section one and two are included in the pre-test and post-test while section three was use only in the post-test. Section one is all multiple choice questions of idiom comprehension quiz (20 questions). The students were asked to choose either an explanation of an idiom or choose an idiom out of three which best describes the part of the sentence. Section two is a semi-productive quiz (10 questions), which requires students to choose an idiom from a list of idioms and fill in the blank. Section three is a production quiz, where learners are required to create sentences using idioms.

Students had some familiarity with about half of the idioms used on the test. However, we didn't eliminate idioms that the students already knew. Given that these are students in a tertiary

institution, with six years of compulsory English lessons in secondly school and a variety of exposure to the language from self-study, media of private tuition, it might be impossible to find a large set of idioms with which everyone was unfamiliar.

3.4 Classroom worksheet

Each unit consists of 4 activities（1 Guessing the meanings, 2 Understand the dialogue, 3 Understand the meanings of idioms, and 4 Semi-production）（See Appendix 3）. The Activity 1 "Guess the meanings" aims to invite students to hypothesize about the idiom's image and to process the verbal information through a visual channel（i.e. dual coding）, which requires cognitive effort. The purpose of Activity 2 "Understanding the dialogue" is to invite students to understand the idioms in a clear context（Fragiadakis, 1993）and to let students notice the idioms grouped by common categories, which contributes to the students' language awareness. The purpose of Activity 3 "Understanding the meaning of the idioms" is to understand the idiom expressions not through translation but through pictures. Lastly, Activity 4 "Production" aims to give the students an opportunity to use the idiom in a new context.

3.5 Instructions

First we conducted pre-test to check how many idioms the students knew. Then, they learnt idiomatic expressions through a semester（a 15 week semester, 90 minutes each）. The first week students were given a pre-test which continued for 20 minutes. Then, they received a worksheet of the first chapter which we made up. The lessons went on for 14 and in the 15th week, students received the post-test. Students had the half class period, to complete it, up to 45 minutes including answering a questionnaire. A brief questionnaire was given to participating students. While this was not the main focus of the study, the researchers were interested in getting the students' opinion about the effectiveness of materials they used.

Both the metaphor awareness group and the translation group were given a worksheet at the beginning of every lesson. But there were some differences in the first activity. The metaphor awareness group was given idiom expressions accompanied by their associated pictures, which show the literal sense of the target words. They guessed the meaning of idioms through pictures in order to stimulate mental visualization and process the verbal information through a visual channel. As Boers et al.（2008）noted, there are risks to picture only presentation. Pictures alone may not guide students to an appropriate interpretation, so students were provided with pictures in combination with verbal explanations（See Shen, 2010）. Thus the teacher gave an explanation as to how the expressions are categorized, why those expressions are put together based on conceptual metaphors（word meanings of the source domain and figurative meaning of the target domain）. In

contrast, the translation group was given the same expressions as the picture group but without pictures. They were given a translation activity where they used a dictionary to find the most appropriate meaning of each idiomatic expression. The teacher explained that the expressions are grouped by categories such as time, journey, and communication and that putting similar expressions together would maximize the effect of grouping under themes. The teacher then checked the translation exercise with the students, so that any misinterpretations were corrected.

The second activity was practicing dialogues, which invited both the metaphor awareness group and the translation group to understand the idioms in a proper context and to recognize the idiom expressions as chunks. The differences between groups were follow-up comprehension questions. The metaphor awareness group was asked to answer language-focused questions（i.e. what is in common among the underlined idiom expressions）, while translation group had content questions,（i.e. why does she get angry?）. The activities for the metaphor awareness group let students notice the idioms grouped by common categories, which contributed to the students' language awareness. The third activity is a multiple choice exercise where the students choose the best description or the most appropriate paraphrase of each expression from 3 options. This activity intends to reinforce the students' understanding of meaning. Lastly, the fourth activity is sentence completion or gap fill items. Students choose the most appropriate idiom expressions from the list. This task would be considered in the middle of receptive activities and free writing. Through the activities students recycle the target expressions.

Table 1 Summary of Activities of Metaphor Awareness Group and Translation Group

	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4
Metaphor Awareness Group	Guessing the meaning through pictures	Practicing dialogues to understand the idioms in a proper context	Choosing the corresponding meaning of idioms from multiple choices.	Semi-production activities to retain the idiom expressions in a new context
Translation Group	Translating the meaning using a dictionary			

4. RESULTS

4.1 Test results

The basic statistics（*mean* and *SD*）of pre-test and post-test in the metaphor awareness group and the translation group are reported in table 2, which was categorized by each section.

Table 2 *Summary of Test Results*

	Group	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
1 Comprehension（out of 20）	Metaphor Awareness	11.66	2.82	16.79	2.10
	Translation	10.13	3.24	14.27	2.57
2 Semi-production（out of 10）	Metaphor Awareness	1.62	1.50	6.10	2.02
	Translation	1.33	1.72	4.40	3.11
3 Usage（out of 10）	Metaphor Awareness	----	----	5.72	2.46
	Translation	----	----	3.75	2.54

We used a one-way between-groups analysis of covariance（ANCOVA）approach for answering the research question: that is whether the metaphor awareness group has a higher mean score in the post-test than the translation group in sections 1 and 2. The reason for using ANCOVA is that our focus is to see whether there is a mean difference between the post-test of the two groups. ANCOVA approach allows adjusting for pre-test scores between the two groups, and this adjustment ensures that post-test differences certainly are a result of the two different treatments. In this analysis, students' scores on the pre-test is a covariate. The independent variable is the type of treatment （metaphor and translation）, and the dependent variable is post-test. In section 3, students produced sentences using an idiom to show their understanding. This was done only in the post test because it would be too hard for them to do it before learning.

In section 1, the ANCOVA for the metaphor awareness group and the translation group on pre versus post-test regression scores was found to have statistically significant effects, F（1, 42）= 8.88, p = 0.0004, indicating that the post-test score was higher in the metaphor awareness group（adjusted mean score = 16.65）than in the translation group（adjusted mean score = 14.55）. There was a medium effect size between the pre and post-test scores, as indicated by r2 value of 0.14 as Cohen （1988）defined that r2 as the effect size can be interpreted with 0.02 as a small, 0.13 as a medium, and 0.26 as a large effect.

In section 2, the ANCOVA for the metaphor awareness group and the translation group on pre versus post-test regression scores was found to have statistically significant effects, F（1, 42）= S5.00, p = 0.03, indicating that the post-test score was higher in the metaphor awareness group （adjusted mean score = 6.02）than in the translation group（adjusted mean score = 4.57）. There was a large relationship between the pre and post-test scores, as indicated by r2 value of 0.33.

Lastly, in section 3, we conducted an independent sample Weltch's *t test* and compared sentences which students produced in the metaphor awareness group with those produced in the translation group. We used Weltch's *t test* because section 3 was conducted only in the post-test due

to difficulties of producing idioms before learning as mentioned before, and students' numbers in each group were different. There was a significant difference in the test score for metaphor awareness group（M = 5.72, SD = 2.46）and translation group（*M* = 3.75, *SD* = 2.54）; *t*（30）= 2.52, *p* = 0.017）. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d is medium（*d* = 0.79, or effect size = 0.37）.

4.2 Questionnaire results

We conducted a brief questionnaire in the last class. Students were asked to answer three questions with a Likert scale of 5（very useful）to 1（not useful）and one open ended question. Although questionnaires are generally longer, perhaps 10 items or more, in this case, the authors were interested in focusing on an immediate and direct response the structure of the materials used for teaching – pictures, translations, dialogues and categorization.

Both groups think the way they were taught was useful. Most of the students in the metaphor awareness group endorsed the use of pictures, dialogues and categorization. Compared to the metaphor awareness group, the translation group found the translation, dialogues and categorizations helpful. Although it was not the purpose of this study, the questionnaire results for the translation group show, perhaps not surprisingly, that they were satisfied with the translation method, the method that most of their six years of compulsory English education has employed. Some students personally said to the authors that, "I would rather have the Japanese translation of each idiomatic expression than pictures." Previous experience or learning habits of English might have an influence on their learning. Although the students' self-considered satisfaction with the teaching materials and methods was not a specific focus of this study, nonetheless their opinions are included as of possible interest for future study.

5. GENERAL DISCUSSION

5.1 Response to Research Question（1）

The results from the comparison between pre-test and post-test（section 1 and 2 in Table 2）of the metaphor awareness group and the translation group revealed that students of the metaphor awareness group retained the meaning of idioms more effectively than the translation group. It is thought that the memory of the metaphor awareness group was enhanced by two factors. Firstly, presenting idioms categorized by the same metaphor would work better for the metaphor awareness group students to remember idioms. This is supported by previous research which has revealed that words and phrases would be stored in a network of items linked by shared semantic properties（Anderson & Reder, 1979; Bybee, 2013; Köevecses, 2002, 2005）. In addition, conceptual metaphor may let students pay attention to the relationship among idiomatic expressions, and

analyze the meaning of idioms, which resulted in deep processing.

Secondly, concrete pictures intensified remembering a unit of language, and it enabled the students to retain the meaning of idioms. According to dual coding theory, an image reinforces the activation of the associate word and the image, and the words are linked in the cognitive system. In addition to dual coding theory, studies in psychology also have proved that meaningful information processing such as associating meaning of words and phrases with images leads to better memory storage（Sadoski & Paivio, 2001）.

Our results not only support most of the previous studies（ex. Bores et al., 2008）which claims that conceptual metaphors and pictures help L2 learners retain idiom's meaning, but also indicate that categorizing idioms by conceptual metaphors and presenting them with pictures to the students could be useful to learn idioms as classroom activities, because conceptual metaphors and pictures successfully helped the students to form a linkage between new words and pre-existing lexical semantic representations and register them in their memory（See Condon & Kelly, 2002）.

5.2 Response to Research Question（2）

The results from comparison between the metaphor awareness group and the translation group in the post-test（section 3 in Table 2）revealed that the metaphor awareness group signifi-cantly produced more sentences with idioms than the translation group. Cameron and Deignan （2006）claimed that successful metaphor acquisition by a second language learner would require them to acquire the relevant conceptual or meaning representation that the metaphor typically conveys, to be aware of lexico-grammatical patterns and to acquire the relevant form where meaning is represented. Thus it could be said that we successfully aided students in producing as well as retaining idioms though previous research yielded mixed results regarding the effect that conceptual metaphor has on appropriate use of idioms.

Secondly, pictures and conceptual metaphors would reduce students' burden of language processing. If conceptualization or understanding the meaning of idioms plays a reduced role, more room would be left in the memory for encoding lexico-grammatical pattern and encoding the meaning of idioms. To put it another way, when understanding meaning of idioms does not come easily, this would exert an influence of language use（Sadoski & Paivio, 2001）. Storage in two distinct locations would also provide us with a greater opportunity for a memory to be retained and retrieved. In our case, since the metaphor awareness group could remember idioms because of the pictures, this also helped them remember the form/grammatical patterns and remember these as well.

6. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that awareness of conceptual metaphor had a more significant effect for both idioms understanding and using than translation. This study supports most of the previous studies based on cognitive linguistics. Moreover, we believe we could propose some insightful results. First, it was revealed that pictures which showed an instance of language use or a particular meaning are helpful for learning idioms. Second, classroom activities are helpful for both retaining and using idioms, because they helped the students to remember the usage of idioms for a long time. Thirdly, most of the previous studies were one-shot experiments but we showed that a cognitive linguistic view could be applied to the classroom and enable students to learn idioms in a systematic and coherent way.

It must be acknowledged that students' self-reported satisfaction with the translation method of instruction was actually slightly higher than the metaphor awareness method of study, which has been the focus of this research. However, the students endorsing the translation method of learning are on familiar ground, as most Japanese public education relies almost exclusively on grammar-translation methodology for school textbooks, instruction and test preparation. Thus, not only is this method familiar and perceived as reliable by students, it is also comfortable. Further, having not been exposed extensively to often methods of learning, such as guessing the meaning from a text without a dictionary, analyzing grammar pattern, using language in a context etc., students have no choice but to rely on translation. It would be interesting to compare methods in a future study by exposing a group to two methods, perhaps in successive semesters, and compare the test results as well as students' perceptions of the efficacy of the two methods.

We also had some limitations of this study such as we used concrete or imaginable idioms only, and also we had a rather small number of participants. However, though we need to consider these limitations, we believe our research added unique insights to idiom learning studies. Not only was this research based on a carefully controlled experiment, but it also aimed at integrating idiom learning into classroom activities.

We hope that more research would apply theoretical approach as a bridge between theory and practice.

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APPENDIX 1

Syllabus

Week	Unit	Contents	Week	Unit	Contents
1	1.1	Communication is information exchange	9	5.1	Emotion is temperature
2	1.2	A word is a package	10	5.2	Emotion is force
3	2.1	Understanding is seeing	11	6.1	Human relations are physical contacts
4	2.2	Understanding is searching	12	6.2	Making relation is building
5	3.1	Thinking is moving	13	7.1	Life is a journey
6	3.2	Solving is controlling	14	7.2	Life is sailing
7	4.1	Negotiation is battle	15		Review
8	4.2	Argument is compromise			

APPENDIX 2

| Unit	*List of the Words and Phrases Students Learnt*
1.1	come up with, put forward, spill the beans, give an idea, keep a secret, bear that in mind, take back, out of the blue, steal an idea
1.2	put it this way, in a nutshell, sounds fishy, food for thought, open a can of worms, take my word for it
2.1	dawn on me, shed light on, see through, in black and white, all clear, plain as day, gray area, in the dark, get the (whole) picture
2.2	hit upon, figure out, delve into, show up, in depth, dig down, scratch the surface
3.1	on the right track, lose track, along the same line, miss the point, step by step, jump to conclusions ,come straight to the point
3.2	as far as I know, on shaky ground, down to earth, beat around the bush, not a leg to stand on, up in the air, beat around the bush, settle down, cover a lot of ground, not to have a leg to stand on
4.1	cross swords with, cast the first stone, add fuel to the flame, Shoot!, throw cold water on, knock down, under fire, stick to one's guns, beat up
4.2	draw the line, make peace with, bury the hatchet, bite the bullet, be with you
5.1	get cold feet, blow one's top, blow up, cool down, on top of the world, over the moon
5.2	put up with, out of one's mind, lose one's temper, short temper, get a grip, at the end of one's rope, take the bull by the horns
6.1	keep in touch, get through to, get along with, family ties, break up, make up with, keep in touch, scratch one's back
6.2	build bridges, mend fences, at arm's length, tie the knot, pull strings
7.1	get your feet wet, shake a leg, a long way to go, see the light at the end of the tunnel, all downhill from, burn your bridges, pass away, out of the woods, get it over with, end up, burn one's bridges
7.2	be on board, hit the deck, miss the boat, a tight spot, ride the wave, on the rocks, in the same boat, clear sailing

APPENDIX 3

Examples of Activities

Unit 2.1

Understanding is Seeing

| Light helps us see and distinguish things, whereas lack of light blocks our understanding. |
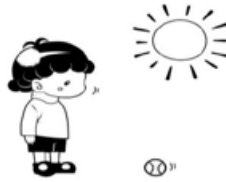
Guess the Meaning

In pairs, make use of the images to guess the meaning of each expression, and write the meaning in the space next to the images.

Expressions	Images	Your guess
1. in the dark 2. plain as day / all clear 3. dawn on me		1._____ 2._____ 3._____
4. shed the light on 5. see through 6. get the (whole) picture		4._____ 5._____ 6._____
7. in black and white 8. gray area	black gray white clear blur clear	7._____ 8._____

Understand the Dialogue

Read the dialogue and answer the questions below.

Professor Johnson: Hello, Ethan, can I help you with something?

Ethan: I am really (1) **in the dark** about the causes for World War I.   I wonder if you can (1) **shed some light on** them for me.

Professor Johnson: It seems (2) **plain as day** to me.   What is giving you problems?

Ethan: I thought I understood in class.   But, when I got home, (3) **it dawned on me** that I was not (4) **getting the whole picture.**   History is really confusing.

Professor Johnson: I understand.   Well, it is not all (5) **in black and white**.   Some causes are in (6) **a gray area**.

Ethan: Why did France fight in the war?

Professor Johnson: Here, I have a handout with all the causes listed by country.   This should help you (7) **see through** the details and (8) **get the whole picture.**

Ethan: Well, it is not (9) **all clear** yet but this looks like a big help.   Thanks so much, Professor Johnson.

Questions

1. Why did Ethan need help from Professor Johnson?

2. Ethan said, "I thought I understood in class. But when I got home, it dawned on me that I was not getting the whole picture." What does 'dawn on' mean?

3. What idea or theme do the expressions "shed some light on," "plain as day," "dawn on me," and "all clear" have in common?

Practice Conversation

Practice the above conversations with a partner. Take turns being each character. Practice looking at your partner and making good eye contact.

Match the Expressions

Choose one from the three options provided below that best describe the words in bold type of (1) to (9) in the dialogue

(1) in the dark

    a. paint a room a dark color

b. not know about something that other people know about

c. keep a promise

(2) shed the light on

a. reveal something

b. pour out

c. cause to disappear

(3) plain as day

a. easy to see or understand

b. very soon

c. old fashioned

(4) it dawned on me

a. begin to become light in the morning.

b. understand things after a period of not understanding them

c. begin to develop an

allergy or condition

(5) get the (whole) picture

a. guess something

b. understand a situation

c. break open

(6) in black and white

a. having formal manners

b. in the dark

c. clear moral choice of right or wrong

(7) gray area

a. a region in which

unemployment is relatively high

b. an area where two mixed characteristics exist

c. a concept that is hard to define

(8) see through

a. cheer for

b. understand

c. attend

(9) all clear

a. honest

b. favorite

c. obvious

Production

Use the idioms in the box, and fill in the blanks.

1. We're still _____ about whether any jobs are going to be cut.

2. These studies _____ the problem of international crimes.

3. I understood only a few words, but I _____.

4. Religious morals are clearly explained _____.

5. The book cleared up a lot of _____ that the user manual didn't explain well.

6. When I look at your face, I can _____ your lies.

7. It was _____ that he was not enjoying the movie. He was sleeping the whole time.

8. It just _____ that today is my father's birthday.

dawned on me   shed the light on   see through   in black and white
all clear/plain as day   get the (whole) picture   in the dark   gray area

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