A NEED FOR CONCEPTUALLY FLUENT LANGUAGE LEARNERS: RETHINKING THE USE OF TRANSLATION METHOD IN THE TEACHING OF IDIOMS[1]

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ABSTRACT

Recently the notion of conceptual fluency has attracted much attention owing to its potential to native-like use of foreign language. It has conclusively been shown that comprehending the concepts of the target language, L2 learners may acquire the ability to speak as native speakers. Situated within the framework of developing conceptual fluency of L2 learners, this study examined whether the type of instruction has an effect on the conceptual fluency development of beginner level adult EFL learners. The participants consisting of 38 beginner level preparatory students of School of Foreign Languages of Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University were divided into two groups. The experimental group was exposed to a translation method rested on the comparison of L1 and L2 concepts to learn idioms taken from the songs while the control group learned these idioms through traditional translation method. The data included students' one minute response paper gathered after each treatment which lasted 3 weeks and a 20 item-multiple-choice post-test. An ANCOVA analysis of the post-test scores showed that the experimental group accomplished better than the control group. The content analysis of the students' one minute response paper also highlighted that translation method rested on the comparison of L1 and L2 concepts increased the awareness of the participants towards the non-literal meaning of English idioms. It appears that translation method comparing L1 and L2 concepts might contribute to the conceptual fluency development of beginner level adult L2 learners.

Key Words: Conceptual fluency, translation method, teaching idioms.

1. Introduction

The notion of conceptual fluency has long received the attention of researchers due its potential to native-like use of a foreign language. Danesi (2000) explains that even in the 21st century, educators question why language students lack the ability to speak as native speakers. The "unnaturalness" in students' discourse can be explained by the fact that they cannot scaffold the surface and the conceptual levels of language. He identifies two kinds of fluency: "the ability to control surface structure as verbal fluency and the ability to interconnect this level with its underlying conceptual structure as conceptual fluency" (p. 13). "While students-produced discourse texts often manifest a high degree of verbal fluency, they invariably lack the conceptual appropriateness that characterizes the corresponding discourse texts of native speakers" (Danesi, 1992, p. 490).

Whong (2011) indicates that conceptual fluency is derived from the view that concepts shape the structures of language. In other words, language reflects the concepts underlying it, which is determined by a specific culture. In the same vein, Kecskes (1999) defines conceptual fluency as "close-to-native use and comprehension of concepts of the target language (p. 146). He states that L2 learners form target language conceptualizations by using the conceptual base of their mother

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tongue. On the contrary, they have to learn to think and perceive as native speakers do so as to produce native-like utterances.

There seems to be a consensus that what language learners' discourse lacks is conceptual fluency. Kecskes and Papp (2009) explain the views of Danesi. They emphasize that grammatical, communicative and metaphorical competence are interconnected in a discourse programming. However, conceptual fluency is more important than grammatical and communicative knowledge since it constitutes the basis of them. Nonetheless, while learning a foreign language, learners acquire grammatical and communicative knowledge isolated from conceptual knowledge in the target language. Thus, their language use is different from that of native speakers (Kecskes & Papp, 2000). Andreou and Galantomos (2009) indicate that to be conceptually fluent in the target language both knowledge of figurative language and considerations of various conventions such as societal, cultural are necessary. They also highlight that the components of conceptual competence such as metaphors, metonymies and idioms are seen as parts of figurative vocabulary in everyday discourse.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on conceptual fluency. Several studies investigating conceptual fluency have been carried out on the basis of cross-linguistic perspectives (Boers, 2003; Can & Can, 2010; Özçalışkan, 2003). Data from several studies have also revealed particular ways of enhancing conceptual fluency of language learners (Andreous & Galantamos, 2009; Kömür & Çimen, 2009; Moktari & Talebinezhad, 2014; Ortaçtepe, 2013; Khosniyat & Dowlatabadi, 2014). Overall, these studies highlight the crucial role of conceptual competence in the acquisition of a foreign language.

The results of the research up to now were based upon data gathered from intermediate or advanced level language learners. As Kecskes and Papp (2000) point, it is a misleading belief that conceptual fluency is necessary for advanced learners. On the contrary, students with low levels of conceptual fluency may not produce discourse that sounds native-like. The present study seeks to obtain data which may address this research gap with the help of a systematic approach to enhance the conceptual fluency level of beginner language learners by using a new version of translation method. By doing so, this study aims to investigate whether using translation method focusing on comparing conceptual structures of both L1 and L2 contribute to beginner level language learners' conceptual fluency. It is expected that the findings of the study may add an alternative method to improve language learners' conceptual fluency in the literature. It is noteworthy to mention that songs including idioms were the major source of material used in this study. As Danesi (1992) reminds us so-called authentic materials including metaphorical structures do not develop students' conceptual fluency.

The following research question constituted the essence of this study:
        Does the type of instruction have an effect on the conceptual fluency development of beginner level adult EFL learners?
        To answer the research question the null hypothesis was formulated:
        The type of instruction does not have an effect on the conceptual fluency development of beginner level adult EFL learners.
        The alternative hypothesis of the study was:
        The type of instruction has an effect on the conceptual fluency development of beginner level adult EFL learners.

2. Literature Review

L2 learners acquire good instruction of grammatical and communicative knowledge but they still speak or write by using their L1 conceptual system, which creates conceptual inappropriateness in the target language. Therefore, conceptual fluency which refers to native-like use of the target language has taken the rightmost place in second language teaching. Talebinezhad (2007) claims that the problem of language learners in communicating in the target language is not pertinent to lack of linguistic or communicative knowledge. It is mainly rooted from the use of metaphorical language which is composed of both language and culture. The results of his study demonstrate that while using a foreign language, learners transfer the meaning potential of their mother tongue due to insufficient knowledge of the concepts in the target language.

Metaphorical language (metaphors, idioms) is seen as a reflection of native-like communication and the inclusion of it into language teaching entails the development of conceptual fluency. In this sense, so much attention has been paid to idiomatic expressions as a part of the process of being conceptually fluent in a foreign language. Idioms are fundamental properties of native speaker speech production since they are permanently used in every day discourse. Thus, they provide insight for language learners with native-like metaphorical use. As Kecskes and Papp (2000) emphasize, metaphorical competence constitute an important part of conceptual fluency. In the same vein, using idioms correctly is one of the appealing qualifications of fluent speakers of English (Schmid, 2000). Hence, the teaching of idioms becomes a major area of interest within the field of second language teaching.

An idiom can be defined as "a phrase which has a different meaning from the meaning of its separate components" (Berman et al., 2011, p. 98). They further explain that the words, their order or grammatical forms of idioms are fixed. Sometimes the meaning of an idiom can be recognized via guessing the meaning of a single word but mostly the meaning is totally different. Thus, it is a troublesome aspect of English. Kovecses and Szabo (1996) describe idioms as "linguistic expressions whose overall meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of constituent parts" (p. 326).

Similarly, for Kovecses (2002) idioms "consist of two or more words and that the overall meaning of these words cannot be predicted from the meanings of constituent words" (p. 199). Historically, idioms were considered to be isolated parts of language because they were not associated with any conceptual system. Therefore, they did not receive a prominent place in the teaching of a foreign language. Whereas, in a cognitivist view, they are recognized as products of a particular conceptual system. Namely, they are "conceptual not linguistic in nature" (p. 201).

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the ways of teaching idioms to improve language learners' conceptual fluency. Kömür and Çimen (2009) investigated the effect of using conceptual metaphors in teaching idioms in a foreign language context. The participants were 32 first-year students of ELT Department who were taking the course "Lexical Competence". They prepared lesson plans to teach both idiomatic expressions and the underlying logic behind them. The results showed that this strategy increased students' use of idiomatic expressions.

This view is supported by Moktari and Talebinezhad (2014) who considered whether using short stories increase conceptual fluency of L2 learners. In this study, 15 low-intermediate level students

in the experimental group received the treatment of teaching idioms through short stories. They concluded that the experimental group performed better than the control group. Therefore, they suggested using short stories to develop conceptual fluency of L2 learners. Similarly, Khosniyat and Dowlatabadi (2014) traced the development of using idiomatic expressions young Iranian EFL learners. They used conceptual metaphors in 3 Disney movies. The results revealed that the participants in the experimental group learned idioms easily. So, using movies might contribute to learners' conceptual fluency.

In his Ph.D. dissertation, Norafkan (2013) investigated how authentic and computer assisted language learning-based English materials contributed to learners' metaphorical competence and conceptual fluency. In this experimental study, the control group was exposed to textbook materials while the treatment group was subjected to authentic materials and instruction by trained native speakers. The results of the study revealed that the experimental group had a more increased level of conceptual skill and metaphorical structure than the control group. The experimental group also showed a remarkable ability to apply metaphors in their oral discourse. Another important finding was that conceptual fluency and metaphorical competence were closely linked to each other. Additionally, Boers (2003) claims that the inclusion of conceptual metaphors into language teaching materials has the potential of motivating students to acquire L2 figurative expressions. Cross-linguistic similarities and differences need to be emphasized during the teaching of figurative idioms.

In another study, Andreou and Galantomos (2008) suggest a conceptual syllabus for the teaching of metaphors and idioms based on the cognitive linguistic approach in a foreign language context. They label three requirements for it: (a) L2 learners need to be informed about the pervasiveness of metaphors in a language and the background of cognitive linguistic approach to achieve an awareness of metaphors; (b) the development of materials for communicative purposes is also essential; (c) it is also necessary to break down the aims of such a syllabus into small manageable units for L2 learners. Regarding practical issues, the inclusion of imageable idioms into the syllabus may be of help for L2 learners to deal with figurative meanings of idioms. Emphasizing both literal and metaphorical meanings of idioms is also a crucial part of this syllabus. Since idioms are culture-specific, arranging a conceptual syllabus rested on universal and culture-specific metaphors needs to be taken into consideration.

The notion of conceptual fluency has attracted a lot of interest in the second language teaching. Following the ideas of Danesi (1992), who emphasizes the importance of conceptual competence in second language teaching, several attempts have been made to explore the ways of improving students' conceptual fluency. Several studies have consistently focused on the tools to be used in classroom activities such as short stories, phrasal verbs, movies rather than methods to develop conceptual competence in classroom settings. Kecskes and Papp (2009) claim that there has been little research about appropriate methods in the development of conceptual fluency. It is anticipated that if appropriate methods are used, L2 learners may also comprehend appropriate use of metaphorical language, which leads to the mastery of L2 conceptual system.

3. Method

As mentioned earlier, Kecskes and Papp (2009) claim that there has been little research about appropriate methods in the development of conceptual fluency. Previous studies have constantly focused on the tools to be used in classroom activities such as short stories, phrasal verbs, movies. On the other hand, some particular methods may also develop language learnes' conceptual fluency in classroom settings. Hence, the goal of the current study was to find out whether the type of instruction has an effect on the development of conceptual fluency of beginner level adult EFL learners.

This study adopted a mixed-method design. The qualitative data elicitation technique used in this study was students' one minute response paper. It enabled the researchers to figure out the strengths and weaknesses of the type of instruction applied in the classroom setting. A post-test held at the end of the treatment was the quantitative part of the study. The analysis of the post-test revealed whether the type of instruction had an impact on the development of beginner level language learners' conceptual fluency.

3.1 Participants

As stated before, it is a misleading belief that conceptual fluency is necessary for advanced learners. On the contrary, students with low levels of conceptual fluency may not produce discourse that sounds native-like (Kecskes & Papp, 2000). 2 English preparatory classes of School of Foreign Languages of Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University participated in the present study. Totally, they consisted of 38 beginner level adult language learners whose ages ranged from 18 to 20. A pre-test was not administered to determine their level because at the beginning of the term, a proficiency test prepared by the testing unit of School of Foreign Languages of Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University was applied. One of the researchers also taught English to the participants. In this regard, intact group comparison design was used to select the participants. "The intact group comparison design uses two groups, one of which is affected by the event or treatment, the other of which is not. Instead of comparing the performances of one group before and after the event or treatment, this design compares the scores of two groups, only one of which was affected by the event or treatment" (Bless, et al., 2006, p. 79). Two classes were randomly put into two similar groups: one group as the experimental group and the other as the control group. The experimental group received the treatment applied by the researcher, but the control group was taught by another English instructor.

3.2 Materials

Idioms were the primary focus for the development of conceptual fluency in this study. Songs were used to provide authentic contexts to teach idioms. Danesi (1992) reminds us so-called authentic materials including metaphorical structures do not develop students' conceptual fluency. To construct the materials, 3 songs including "The Best" by Tina Turner, "La isla Bonita" by Madonna and "Dancing Queen" by Abba were selected. The logic behind selecting these songs as the material of this study was that they were included in the teachers' package of New English File Elementary coursebook. So it would not be wrong to state that they were suitable for the level of

the participants. It is also noteworthy to mention that idioms were not chosen around a central theme.

Regarding the treatment of the study, at least 3 idioms in each song were selected and a lesson plan was prepared (Appendix 1). An activity book called "Using the Mother Tongue" by Deller and Rinvolucri (2008) provided the researcher useful insight while preparing the lessons plans. An activity "Word for Word English" supplied the steps for the teaching of selected idioms. As it was stated in the book, the purpose of the activity was to demonstrate how differently metaphors function in the target language by using idioms, collocations or metaphors. In this sense, the purpose of the activity perfectly matched with the ultimate aim of the study.

There were mainly two variables in the study: types of instruction (independent variable) and conceptual fluency development (dependent variable). Since the translation method constituted the independent variable of the study, it would be beneficial to explain it in detail. Harden (2009) indicates that an institutional environment may not provide language learners with the opportunity to develop workable problem solving strategies. However, the acquisition of complex set of skills requires problem solving activities which create a room for language learners "to analyze the conceptual structure of the L2 and to try to communicate within this particular framework" (p. 129). In this regard, translation activities which go beyond literal translation may serve as a means to reflect on the conceptual frameworks of both L1 and L2. The essence of problem solving strategy underlying this new version of translation method can be summarized as:
Subgoal 1: Deciphering the message
Strategy 1: Literal translation
Result 1: Partial failure: too many gaps to be meaningful
Return to
Subgoal 1: Deciphering the message
Strategy 2: Filling the gaps with hypothetically meaningful items
Result 2: A possible version of the message has been constructed.
Proceed to
Subgoal: Finding equivalences in L1 with the potential to transmit the message
Strategy: Comparing the conceptual spaces and the structural procedures of L1 and L2
Result: A possible version of the message has been constructed (p.128).
          On the other hand, traditional translation method in which the control group was exposed did not involve the comparison of concepts in L1 and L2.

3.3 Procedure

3 lesson plans were developed by making use of a translation activity called "Word for Word into English" adapted from Deller and Rinvolucri (2008). Additionally, three strategies of translation method described by Harden (2009) were implemented in the lesson plans: literal translation, filling the gaps with hypothetically meaningful items and comparing the conceptual spaces and structural procedures of L1 and L2.

These plans were applied in the main course classes in which students have 10 hours in a week. Each lesson plan was carried out for about 25 minutes in 3 weeks due to limited time. Throughout the application, students were asked to write one-minute response paper based on 2 questions at the end of each application.

The aim of the lesson plans was to help the participants understand the use of L2 idioms by comparing the functions of idioms both in L1 and L2. At the beginning of the treatment, the researcher utilized a worksheet named as "the-mouth-of-the-horse" downloaded from the website flocabulary (n.d.) to make the literal and non-literal meaning clear. Each of the lesson plans started with the introduction of at least 3 idioms taken from the song. The researcher wrote the idioms on the board and asked students to translate them word for word into mother tongue. At this point, students did not need to understand the idioms. This was the first strategy: literal translation described by Harden (2009). The worksheet consisting of the activities and the lyrics of the song was distributed. They were first asked to fill in the blanks in the lyrics with idioms on the board and then they listened to the song and checked their answers. This strategy constituted the second strategy of the translation method defined by Harden (2009): filling the gaps with hypothetically meaningful items. Finally, working in groups, students interpreted the idioms, found the equivalents in L1 and compared them with the ones in L2. This was the final strategy of the translation method: comparing the conceptual spaces and structural procedures of L1 and L2. Finally, the researcher distributed a matching activity and asked students to match the idioms with their meanings.

Regarding the control group the same songs were used. However, this group was exposed to traditional translation method by another English instructor. The English instructor wrote the selected idioms on the board and translated them into Turkish. Then, students listened to the song and filled in the blanks with the idioms. They also did the matching activity including the idioms and their meanings. In the end, they were asked to write a one- minute response paper. After 3 weeks, both groups received the post-test consisting of 20 multiple-choice items.

3.4 Data Collection

The qualitative part of data collection constituted students' one minute response paper which was used as subject instrument in the study. Utley (2011) states that students are asked to comment on two questions at the conclusion of the class in this method. The first question required identifying the most important thing students learned in the class, which gave them the chance to reflect on their learning experience. The second question dealt with unclear parts of the class, which identified how well students were learning. Suffice it here to add that students' one-minute response paper were written in Turkish since they were not at the appropriate level to communicate in English in such a situation.

The quantitative data collection method used in this study was a post-test held after the treatment finished. In order to see whether the type of instruction had an effect on the development of conceptual fluency of the participants, a 20 multiple-choice item post-test was developed by the researchers. A sentence including an idiom was provided and students were asked to choose the correct meaning of the idiom given. In order to use appropriate sample sentences which helped students guess the meaning of the idiom, Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms was used. The test was checked by 2 English instructors in order to make necessary corrections and revision before it was administered. However, if the validity test had been performed, it would have been more accurate to construct the validity of the post-test.

Johanson and Brooks (2010) claim that there exist few recommendations about sample size for a pilot study in social science. To illustrate, Michael (1995, cited in Johanson & Brooks, 2010)

suggested 10 to 30 participants for a pilot study for practical reasons such as simplicity, easy calculation, and the ability to test hypotheses. Thus, 5 students from each group were selected randomly and the post-test was piloted. These students also participated in the original study. It is worth to note that more reliable data would have been gathered if the pilot study had been performed with a different group who are at the same level with the participants of the original study. Students were explained that the aim of the application was to measure the reliability of the test.

Collected data were analyzed using SPSS 16. The Cronbach Alpha level was .468 which was very low. This might result from item 9 and 14 which had zero variances and they were removed from the analysis by the SPSS. Thus, these items were changed. The participants were asked to answer these newly added questions. The Cronbach Alpha level of the modified post-test was .581., which was still under .7. However, "With short scales, it is common to find low Cronbach alpha (e.g. .5). In this case, it may be more appropriate to report the mean inter-item correlation for the item" (Pallant, 2005, p. 90). Ideally, "optimal mean for inter-item correlation values range from .2 to .4" (Briggs and Cheek, 1986, cited in Pallant, 2005, p.90). The optimal mean for inter-item correlation of the modified post-test was .35, which was acceptable. Table 1 shows item total-statistics of the pilot study of the post-test. In the column "Alpha if item deleted", it was apparent that the values for each item were not much higher than the final Cronbach Alpha (.581). As a result, it was not essential to remove any items in the post-test.

Table 1: Item-total statistics of the pilot study of the post-test.

	Item-Total Statistics			
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
item1	35,7000	20,678	,175	,575
item2	36,0000	24,667	-,297	,619
item3	35,3000	21,344	,102	,590
item4	36,2000	21,956	,265	,563
item5	35,5000	22,944	,049	,584
item6	34,8000	24,844	-,351	,620
item7	35,0000	16,667	,728	,452
item8	35,0000	20,000	,660	,517
item9	35,8000	18,844	,541	,507
item10	36,0000	19,778	,495	,523
item11	35,5000	19,389	,311	,546
item12	35,8000	25,289	-,347	,637
item13	35,7000	18,233	,549	,498
item14	36,0000	20,667	,346	,546
item15	35,4000	22,711	,192	,573
item16	35,7000	24,900	-,303	,628

item17	35,5000	24,278	-,239	,610
item18	36,1000	20,989	,298	,553
item19	36,3000	21,789	,361	,557
item20	35,2000	21,511	,157	,575

3.5 Data Analysis

Weber (1990) mentions "content analysis classifies textual material, reducing it to more relevant, manageable bits of data" (p. 5). He explains that in a content analysis, ideas are put into categories including one or many words, which are presumed to have similar meanings. The data gained from students' one-minute response paper were exposed to content analysis. The quantitative analysis of the data involved independent sample t-test and a one-way ANCOVA. SPSS 16 was used to analyze and interpret the results of the pre-test and the post-test. Frequencies, means and standard deviations were first computed to give an overall comparison of both groups. Independent sample t-test was employed in order to determine whether both groups had the same level of proficiency of English by using their proficiency test scores as pre-test scores. A one way ANCOVA was performed to figure out whether the application of the treatment had any considerable effects on the conceptual fluency development of beginner level adult EFL learners.

4. Findings

In an effort to investigate whether the type of instruction has an effect on the conceptual fluency level of beginner level adult EFL learners, a 20-item multiple-choice was constructed as a post-test in the present study. In addition, students' one minute paper was kept during the treatment which lasted three weeks. So as to make sure that the participants had the same level of proficiency of English before the treatment, an independent sample t-test was performed by using their scores of proficiency exam held at the beginning of the term.

As shown in Table 2, the experimental group (mean= 32) and the control group (mean= 25) differ in their pre-test scores.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the pre-test scores

	Group Statistics				
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretestscores	experimental	19	32,4211	10,66831	2,44748
	control	19	25,0526	12,35347	2,83408

Table 3 illustrates the independent sample t-test statistics of the pre-test scores. The p-value (.58) was slightly greater than .05, which showed that the variances of the two groups were equal. There was a statistical difference in the mean scores of the pre-test scores for each of the two groups (p=0.5, d=0.6). Hence, the statistical analysis of the results of the post-test scores was based on one-way ANCOVA. "This technique is often used when evaluating the impact of an intervention or experimental manipulation, while controlling the pre-test scores" (Pallant, 2002, p.267).

Table 3: Independent sample t-test statistics of the pre-test scores

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pretestscores	Equal variances assumed	,303	,585	1,968	36	,057	7,36842	3,74462	-,22602	14,96286
	Equal variances not assumed			1,968	35,252	,057	7,36842	3,74462	-,23161	14,96845

The descriptive statistics regarding the performance of students in the post-test were reported in Table 4. The experimental group's mean (49.47) was higher than the control group's (40.26). One unanticipated finding was that, the scores of the control group in the post-test (sd=8.5) were homogenous contrary to the scores of the experimental group (sd=15).

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of the post-test scores

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: posttest scores

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Experimental	49,4737	15,08262	19
Control	40,2632	8,57543	19
Total	44,8684	12,97018	38

However, as shown in Table 5, Levene's test of equality of error variances indicates that the assumption of equality of variance was not violated (p=089, F=3. 05). As for the effect size, this was a small effect. It might appear that the treatment made positive contributions to the conceptual fluency development of the participants in the experimental group but they had not been able to reach the desired level. Namely, their native-like use of the conceptual system of English to guess the nonliteral meanings of English idioms might be limited owing to their proficiency level of English. This discrepancy could also be attributed to the fact that traditional translation method is rested on the literal translation of the idioms using L1 concepts. Being familiar with these concepts, the participants in the control group might supply the meaning potential of the idioms from their own mother tongue. Seemingly, the fact that they had the same L1 language experiences might lead to more homogenous results in the post-test scores of the control

Table 5: Levene's test of equality of error variances

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances[a]

Dependent Variable: posttest scores

F	df1	df2	Sig.
3,055	1	36	,089

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + pretest scores + group

Table 6 compares the results of the tests of between subject effects. The experimental group significantly differed from the control group in terms of their scores on the post-test (p= .016, partial-eta squared=.155, power=69). As for the effect size, it was a large effect size. In this case, it might not be wrong to state that the treatment (the use of translation method based on the comparison of L1 and L2) contributed to the conceptual fluency development of the participants. The effect of the pre-test scores (the covariate of the study) was not statistically significant (p=.29, partial eta squared= .032).

Table 6: Tests of between-subjects effects

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: posttest scores

Source	Type II Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	979,001[a]	2	489,500	3,266	,050	,157	6,532	,583
Intercept	11796,555	1	11796,555	78,714	,000	,692	78,714	1,000
Pretest scores	173,080	1	173,080	1,155	,290	,032	1,155	,182
Group	965,647	1	965,647	6,443	,016	,155	6,443	,694
Error	5245,341	35	149,867					
Total	82725,000	38						
Corrected Total	6224,342	37						

a. R Squared = ,157 (Adjusted R Squared = ,109)

b. Computed using alpha = ,05

The estimated marginal means as stated in Table 7, revealed that the pre-test scores might not affect the treatment. The treatment group (mean=50) did better than the control group (mean=39) when we factored out the influence of the covariate (the pre-test scores).

Table 7: Estimated marginal means

Estimates

Dependent Variable: posttest scores

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
experimental	50,174[a]	2,883	44,321	56,026
Control	39,563[a]	2,883	33,710	45,416

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: pretest scores = 28,7368.

As illustrated in Table 8, the pair wise comparison, there were statistical differences between the mean differences of the pairs (p=.016). Owing to the statistical differences between the experimental and control groups (95% CI in mean difference: 2, 20) and the control to experimental group (95% CI in mean difference: -20, -2) and p < 0.5 which was lower than the alpha level (.05), the null hypothesis that type of instruction does not have an effect on the conceptual fluency development of beginner level adult EFL learners was rejected.

Table 8: Pair wise comparisons

Pair wise Comparisons

Dependent Variable: posttest scores

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[a]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
experimental	Control	10,610*	4,180	,016	2,125	19,096
Control	experimental	-10,610*	4,180	,016	-19,096	-2,125

Based on estimated marginal means

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

a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

In sum, a one-way ANCOVA was conducted to compare the effects of type of instruction to the development of conceptual fluency of beginner level adult EFL learners. The independent variable was the type of instruction and the dependent variable included the post-test scores administered after the treatment. Pre-test scores (the scores of proficiency exam) were used as the covariate in the analysis. There was a significant difference between the two groups on the post-test scores (p=.016, partial eta squared=.155, power=.69). Pair wise comparisons between the experimental and the control group found differences at p=. 016.

Content analysis was employed to analyze and interpret the data gathered from students' one-minute response paper. As mentioned earlier, it included two questions: the first question required identifying the most important thing students learned in the class and the second question dealt

with unclear parts of the activity. On the issue of the most important thing related to this activity, most of the participants in the experimental group emphasized that sometimes literal meaning might not be the ultimate meaning that could be derived from an idiom. Thus, it might be more beneficial to think about non-literal meaning conveyed by a sentence. In addition, non-literal meanings of idioms in English were totally irrelevant to the ones in Turkish. In this regard, it may be suggested that these activities paved the way for the participants in the experimental group to figure out different concepts in English and Turkish, which was similar to the findings of Kömür and Çimen (2009). Some participants commented that:

"What is meant in a sentence may not be always the literal meaning. Sometimes, we need to think non-literally."
"Like in Turkish, non-literal meaning exists in English."
"This activity makes me to think in English and learn the true meanings of English idioms."
"When I think in Turkish, it is difficult to understand the meanings of English idioms."

It is also apparent that students came to an understanding that literal translation was not sufficient to understand the meanings of English idioms. The quotes below indicated that the participants viewed literal translation as an insufficient attempt to figure out English idioms. As Harden (2009) explains literal translation does not supply much information. Thus, learners need to create a kind of conceptual sense.

"The powerful part of the activity is confusing. I mean, I understand that I can't translate from English to Turkish by using word-to-word translation. So, I have learned to think logically."
"I think, this activity is enjoyable. But I feel worried when I don't know the meanings of English idioms given. They are totally different from those in Turkish."
"It is not sufficient just to translate words to understand the meanings of English idioms."
As for the unclear parts of the song activities, the following themes might be stated:
- It would be better to use more examples.
- Translation of English idioms was troublesome.
- It was difficult to guess the meanings of the idioms from the sentences.

The most striking one was that most of them found it hard to translate from English to Turkish because English idioms had different non-literal meanings. It might explained by the fact that they experienced some comprehension problems due to the cross-cultural differences. Below is the quote some participants stated in their one-minute response paper.

"It is difficult for me to find Turkish equivalences of English idioms because they have different meanings."
"English idioms are not related to Turkish idioms."
"I can't find the meanings of English idioms in Turkish since it is very different from the ones in Turkish."
On the other hand, the participants in the control group viewed these song activities differently. All the participants wrote sentences similar to the given quotes.
"I learned new idioms, phrases and words."
Only 2 participants mentioned non-literal meanings of the idioms.
"I learned new idioms with the help of this activity. I listened to a good song having non-literal meanings."
"I learned different ways of telling something"

What is surprising with the data was none of the participants stated a problem related to the translation activity.

Although different opinions of the participants were quite obvious, it has to be underlined that most participants in the experimental group came to realize that there exits non-literal meaning for the idioms. Thus, literal translation fails short to understand the salient meanings of the idioms. From the findings of the present study, it would not be wrong to state that the participants in the experimental group benefited from the implementation of learning idioms by using translation method based on the comparison of L1 and L2 concepts. On the contrary, the control group was unable to retrieve the non-literal meaning of the idioms studied. They considered the activities as an attempt to teach new vocabulary. Overall, the qualitative analysis of the data collected from students' one-minute response paper provided evidence for the claim that conceptual fluency of the L2 learners can be greatly aided by translation method which offers support for the comparison of concepts both in L1 and L2.

5. Conclusion

Conceptual fluency which can be defined as native like use of a foreign language has become a major area of interest in the field of language teaching. Seemingly, language learners lack conceptual competence in L2 although they have high grammatical competence, which might lead to unnaturalness in L2. Danesi (2000) explains the reasons of this unnaturalness by the fact that language learners are unaware of conceptual structures of L2. Therefore, there have been a number of studies aimed to improve the conceptual fluency of language learners by means of different sources (Kömür & Çimen, 2009; Hashemian & Talebinezhad, 2006; Khosniyat & Dowlatabadi, 2014; Yasuda, 2010).

The main goal of the current study was to determine whether the type of instruction affects the development of conceptual fluency of beginner level adult EFL learners. Songs were used as the materials of the treatment. Pre-set idioms were taught to the experimental group by using a translation method based on the comparison of L1 and L2 concepts suggested by Harden (2009). The control group was exposed to traditional translation method while learning idioms through songs. The statistical analysis of the post-test scores revealed that the treatment group did better than the control group. Thus, it would be concluded that the translation method based on the comparison of L1 and L2 concepts enhanced the conceptual fluency level of EFL learners.

The content analysis of the students' one-minute response paper was interpreted with respect to (a) the most important thing students learned in class, (b) unclear parts of the activity. The most obvious finding to emerge from the content analysis was that the translation method rested on the comparison of L1 and L2 concepts helped students become aware of different conceptual knowledge of English idioms from Turkish idioms. Thus, word to word translation might be insufficient to figure out the non-literal meaning of English idioms. On the contrary, those in the control group who were taught idioms by using traditional translation method considered this activity as a way of learning new idioms. It was apparent from their comments that they were not aware of the non-literal meaning of English idioms which were mostly different from the ones in Turkish. As for the unclear parts of the activity, most of the participants in the experimental group

found it hard to translate English idioms to Turkish whereas none of the participants in the control group commented on this issue.

Overall, the type of instruction had an effect on the conceptual fluency development of beginner level adult EFL learners. Hence, this work contributes to the existing knowledge by providing an alternative method (translation method comparing L1 and L2 concepts) to enhance the conceptual fluency level of language learners. However, the findings were subjected to at least two limitations: Firstly, in this experimental setting, the time span for the teaching of idioms was short owing to the limited time. Longitudinal studies may be conducted for future research. Secondly, the treatment was implemented to the experimental and the control groups by different researchers, which might bring about reliability problems. More reliable data would be gathered if the treatment had been applied to both groups by the same researcher.

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Appendix 1

A SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

1. Write the idioms on the board and ask students to translate them for word for word in Turkish.

stuck on your heart   come to me wild   my heart's on fire   take my heart

2. Distribute the worksheet and ask students to fill in the blanks with the given idioms. After they complete the song, they listen to it and check their answers.

*** Listen to the song and fill in the blanks with the idioms below.

stuck on your heart   come to me wild   my heart's on fire   take my heart

THE BEST

I call you when I need you, (1) _____
You come to me, (2) _____and wild
When you come to me give me everything I need

Give me a lifetime of promises and a world of dreams
Speak a language of love like you know what it means
And it can't be wrong, (3) _____ and make it strong, baby

You're simply the best, better than all the rest
Better than anyone, anyone I've ever met
I'm (4) _____ and hang on every word you say
Tear us apart, baby, I would rather be dead

In your heart I see the star of every night and every day
In your eyes I get lost, I get washed away
Just as long as I'm here in your arms, I could be in no better place

You're simply the best, better than all the rest
Better than anyone, anyone I've ever met
I'm stuck on your heart and hang on every word you say
Tear us apart, baby, I would rather be dead

Each time you leave me I start losing control
You're walking away with my heart and my soul
I can feel you even when I'm alone, oh baby, don't let go

3. Ask students to work in groups of 4-5 and find the equivalents of the idioms in Turkish.

4. After discussing the equivalents of the idioms in Turkish as a whole class, give feedback to students. Finally, they try to match the idioms with their meanings in English.

*** Match the idioms with their meanings.

1-	Be stuck on someone	a-	to be burning
2-	Come to someone wild	b-	to make someone love you
3-	Be on fire	c-	be connected to someone
4-	Take someone's heart	d-	to be enthusiastic about someone