

the Spanish item but not by the English equivalents. Above all, when a new Spanish item is introduced, the student must be told which ranges of the English equivalent(s) offered are not covered by it. These equivalents are chosen only because some part of their ranges in some way or other overlaps with some part of some range of the Spanish items, but they are rarely if ever wholly congruent.

POLITZER, ROBERT L. AND CHARLES N. STAUBACH. TEACHING SPANISH: A LINGUISTIC ORIENTATION. WALTHAM, HAMSHIRE: BLAISDELL, 1965, pp. 165-8.

with the meanings of their individual components in other situations: for example, one must contrast *vez* in *una vez*, *tres veces*, et cetera, with the expressions *de vez en cuando*, *en vez de*, and *cada vez más*; and where an element appears in several idioms, as does *vez*, the several expressions must also be used in contrast.

(B) TEACHING OF "COGNATES"

So far we have considered English and Spanish similarities and overlaps only as a problem, as sources of interference. There is, of course, little doubt that the existence of cognates (words similar in form and meaning in both languages) is also a great help which must be exploited to the fullest. In the teaching of cognates two situations should be distinguished: teaching them as "active vocabulary" and teaching them for recognition purposes as passive reading vocabulary. In the first situation they are likely to constitute a special pronunciation problem. The similarity in form intensifies English interference—the possibility of English reaction to Spanish orthographic symbols, as, for instance, the reflex /ʃan/ instead of /syon/ in such words as *comunicación* and *extensión*. In either situation it is helpful to point out to the student the general pattern of cognate correspondence, but it is only in the passive reading situation that the student should be encouraged to rely on that pattern alone. Cognates taught for active use should be taught in connected speech patterns and in active production, and the student should be warned against the active use of any cognate that has not been expressly presented in the vocabulary materials. The pattern of correspondence between Spanish and English words to be presented here allows the student who is reading Spanish to deduce the meaning of Spanish words within a context. They are not predictors which enable the student to make up his own "cognates" for active use.

In many cases the Spanish words and English words are orthographically identical or differ only in minor spelling patterns, which do not create any problems in identifying the Spanish "cognates," such as English *mortal*, Spanish *mortal* or English *responsible*, Spanish *responsable*.

Some of the more important cognate patterns in the realm of noun or adjective endings are (omitting all those which are orthographically identical):

English	Spanish	Examples
-ace	- <i>acio</i>	palacé— <i>palacio</i>
-ade	- <i>ada</i>	brigade— <i>brigada</i>
-ance, -ancy	- <i>ancia</i>	abundance— <i>abundancia</i>
-ant	- <i>ante</i>	constant— <i>constante</i>
-arian, ary	- <i>ario</i>	centenarian— <i>centenario</i>
-ence, -ency	- <i>encia</i>	tendency— <i>tendencia</i>
-ent	- <i>ente</i>	accident— <i>accidente</i>
-ice	- <i>icio</i>	precipice— <i>precipicio</i>
-ion	- <i>ión</i>	infusion— <i>infusión</i>
-ism	- <i>ismo</i>	socialism— <i>socialismo</i>
-ist	- <i>ista</i>	artist— <i>artista</i>
-mony	{ - <i>monia</i> - <i>monio</i>	ceremony— <i>ceremonia</i> patrimony— <i>patrimonio</i>
-tion	- <i>ción</i>	station— <i>estación</i>
-ty	- <i>dad</i>	charity— <i>caridad</i>
-y	{ - <i>ia</i> - <i>ía</i>	academy— <i>academia</i> energy— <i>energía</i>

The above list is only partial—perhaps twice as many more ending correspondences for nouns can be given. A list for adjectives would be nearly as long. We confine ourselves to a few very common patterns:

-ant	- <i>ante</i>	abundant— <i>abundante</i>
-arious, -ary	- <i>ario</i>	precarious— <i>precario</i> ordinary— <i>ordinario</i>
-ct	- <i>cto</i>	perfect— <i>perfecto</i>
-ent	- <i>ente</i>	confident— <i>confidente</i>
-ite	- <i>ito</i>	infinite— <i>infinito</i>
-ive	- <i>ivo</i>	intensive— <i>intensivo</i>
-ose	- <i>oso</i>	verbose— <i>verboso</i>
-ous	{ - <i>oso</i> - <i>o</i>	luminous— <i>luminoso</i> continuous— <i>continuo</i>

There are also some patterns of correspondence among verbs. A great many English verbs which end in an orthographic ("silent") -e, that is, which end in a consonant sound, correspond to Spanish verbs of the -*ar* conjugation: *examinar*, *inspirar*, *causar*, *curar*, *combinar*.

*imaginar, conservar*. Many other English verbs lack any distinctive ending and may correspond to Spanish verbs of any of the conjugations: desert—*desertar*, admit—*admitir*, and comprehend—*comprender*. Some verb-ending morphemes shape into patterns of correspondence:

-fy	-ficar	signify— <i>significar</i> certify— <i>certificar</i>
-ute	-uir	substitute— <i>substituir</i> constitute— <i>constituir</i>
-ate	-ar	impersonate— <i>impersonar</i> implicate— <i>implicar</i>
-ize	-izar	specialize— <i>especializar</i> theorize— <i>teorizar</i>
-duce	-ducir	produce— <i>producir</i> deduce— <i>deducir</i>
-duct	-ducir	conduct— <i>conducir</i> induct— <i>inducir</i>
-eive	-ibir	conceive— <i>concebir</i> perceive— <i>percibir</i>

Among the many suffixes which transform Spanish word roots into other words of more or less derivative meaning, few have a noticeable similarity to English. For example, Spanish *-ino* corresponds to English *-ine* in *alabastrino* and *elefantino*, but many derivative words such as *azulino* and *blanquecino* do not have English counterparts; the noun suffixes *-dad* and *-ción* have been included above.

Among prefixes more cognate correspondences occur. Most of them will be recognized at sight, at least when they are prefixed to cognate roots, as in *examine—examinar*, *incorrect—incorrecto*, *conclude—concluir*. With relatively few exceptions these prefixes will be recognized when heard as well as when they are seen. It hardly seems necessary in this place to spell out many examples.

The English initial clusters of *s + consonant*, while not prefixes in the same sense as those we have been discussing, do need to be compared systematically with the cognate words which in Spanish begin with a "supporting" or prothetic /e/: *spirit—espíritu*, *station—estación*, et cetera.

Mention should be made in passing of the very frequent use of *a-*, *en-*, *em-*, and *des-* as verbal prefixes, as in *tornillo—atornillar*; *botón—abotonar*; *botella—embotellar*; *freno—enfrenar*; *hoja—deshojar*; and *pluma—desplumar*. This is but one of many forms of word-making in which

parallels or partial parallels with English may open the way for learning other items which hardly correspond at all.

The recognition and learning of the pattern of cognates of English and Spanish is really a special application of the process we referred to at the end of the chapter on morphology: the learning of the derivational cognates. In some cases the main roots of the words as well as the derivational morphemes are cognates, as in *stupidity—estupidez*, and in others the derivational morpheme may not be a cognate of English while the root of the word is. At any rate, the recognition of the derivational suffix or prefix and its subtraction from the stem will usually reveal the cognate. For example, once we know that *-eza* is a noun ending, we can recognize the cognate and with it the total meaning of *delicadeza*, *alteza*, *grandeza*. Once we recognize the prefix *des-* as a derivational prefix, indicating "negation" or "contrary to," we can make an informed guess at the meaning of *descompuesto*, *descargar*.

#### (C) GENERAL PROBLEMS IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

The main contribution which linguistics can make to the teaching of vocabulary lies in those aspects which have been discussed under Sections A and B above: the comparison between English and Spanish vocabulary and the process of derivation. There are many other aspects of the teaching of vocabulary—less directly connected with linguistics—which are nevertheless important. We shall mention them briefly. First of all, there is the perennial problem of what words to teach, the problem of determining which words are the most "frequent" and thus most necessary. This problem has often been obscured by the failure to differentiate between function words, grammatically determined words, and replacement words, on the one hand, and content words on the other. The former are comparatively few in number and are a necessary and inevitable part of the utterance. From the point of view of active production, they must be taught as part of the structure; from the point of view of passive recognition, they practically need not be taught at all. Their frequency of occurrence is so great that they teach themselves. As far as the content words are concerned, their frequency depends entirely on circumstances and so does the necessity of knowing them. If someone wants to say something about the gearshift of a car, he needs to know the word for that object; whether the word is frequent or not is quite irrelevant in that particular moment. Many of the frequency lists which have been established are based on works of literature, often heavily weighted with 19th century novels. To use them as guides

d) establish and analyze larger sets of words in English. Find the nearest-equivalent sets for Spanish. Be aware of the grade of correspondence. If there are differences determine the distinctive properties. Follow the technique, used for the analysis of meals (Fig. 2.2-2). (The problem lies in the feature selection.)

#### suggested sets

- 1- BUILDINGS: house, church, skyscraper, ...
- 2- ROOMS where special activities are performed: kitchen, office, study, ...
- 3- FURNITURE to sit on: chair, bench, couch, ...
- 4- KITCHEN CONTAINERS and utensils for cooking: pot, pan, jar, ...
- 5- INSTRUMENTS and articles for eating: plate, cup, fork, ...
- 6- INSTRUMENTS for writing: pen, pencil, typewriter, ...
- 7- VEHICLES on wheels: car, tren, bicycle, ...
- 8- SHIPS: vessel, boat, ferry, ...
- 9- VISUAL PERCEPTION: see, look, glance, ...<sup>1</sup>
- 10- MOTION "per pedes": go, walk, run, ...
- 11- EATING AND DRINKING: devour, swallow, nip, ...
- 12- DIALOGUING: reason, argue, quarrel, ...
- 13- MOOD: sad, desperate, frustrated OR glad, happy, excited, ...

#### 2.3 IDIOMS

The last section of this chapter dealt with words in their denotational meaning, sometimes taking into account cultural connotations, as in the study of 'meals'. One power of human language, however, has not been mentioned yet: the power of creativity. In the following one aspect of creativity, the ability to coin idioms, will be discussed.

<sup>1</sup> see Elerick, "Contrastive Semology"

#### 2.3.1 The character of idioms

A definition of 'idiom', commonly used, says that it consists of more than one word, but that its meaning is not derivable from the meaning of the single units. This means that the whole expression, normally a phrase, has a total meaning as one lexical unit. It can, then, be taken as a lexical item during step III of the analytical processes of CA.

Nida distinguishes an idiomatic expression from a normal phrase as an "exocentric" vs. an "endocentric semantic structure"<sup>1</sup>. Wallace Chafe, when describing his conception of language, dedicates a whole chapter to "The Effect of Idiomatization"<sup>2</sup>, a phenomenon that, as he supposes, requires the additional postsemantic process of 'literalization'. DiPietro established in his course<sup>3</sup> a continuum on which lexical items can be arranged. It starts with the 'literal meaning' and leads over to more steps to the idiom. He illustrated his hypothetical statement with the word 'leg', as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Nida, 1964, p.95

<sup>2</sup>Chafe, Chapter 5

<sup>3</sup>"Contrastive Analysis", by Professor DiPietro, Georgetown University, Summer 1977

Fig. 2.3-1

literal meaning	extended meaning	metaphorical meaning <sup>1</sup>	idiomatic meaning TO PULL ONE'S LEG
LEG	LEG	LEG	LEG
(part of the human body)	leg of a chair	leg of a journey (stage of a voyage)	to tease somebody

Fig. 2.3-1: continuum scale for 'leg', from literal to idiomatic use

It is possible to find in all languages<sup>2</sup> large numbers of lexical forms, that are used in all, or almost all, grades of idiomatization; 'heart' for instance, as organ of the human or animal body, 'heart' as standing for 'breast', 'bos om', the 'heart of a country' as its vital center, and the 'broken heart', indication the total defeat of a person's feelings, like a lost love or something similar.

<sup>1</sup>DiPietro offered a paper at the PCCLLU, in Honolulu, Hawai, on January 14, 1971, on "Contrastive Analysis And Linguistic Creativity". In Part 5 of this paper, he discussed "metaphor as a tool of linguistic creativity", (Mim., G.U.)

<sup>2</sup>In the same paper, DiPietro points to the universality of metaphorical use of language.

Looking at the lexicon of a language from this point of view (another idiom) one is surprised to realize how large is the number of meanings other than denotational. Dictionaries do not distinguish, in most cases, between the different grades of literality. The field is still little explored by semanticists.

Now the question arises about the purpose of using idioms. It seems that the idiomatic expression shifts the meaning from one semantic field to another. This other one is normally concerned with everyday life activities or experience. It often substitutes a concrete and familiar concept for an abstract, a less familiar, or even taboo, word. Idioms are not 'slang', i.e., they are established, not transient, expressions, from the diachronic viewpoint. So, they often give a colorful insight into features of the cultural life from the past. The English idiom 'kick the bucket' (to die), that one is normally unable to relate to the physical circumstances when 'bucket' is understood as 'pail', takes a more literal, or realistic, meaning when 'bucket' is looked at as the middle beam on the ceiling of a barn, where animals are hung up to be slaughtered<sup>1</sup>. Receiving the "coup de grâce", "estiran

<sup>1</sup>This interpretation was suggested by Dr. DiPietro, and is reinforced by a similar interpretation, suggested tentatively in the OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

la pata", as the corresponding idiom goes. The meaning, so, becomes clear from a vivid image, related to human experience in a more rural ly oriented society.

Idioms even extend to proverbs. In this case, they seem to lose their inflectionality as a phrase which normally goes in the predicate of a sentence. Proverbs are built in rigid sentences that stand for one concept; e.g., the Spanish proverb "él que mucho abarca, poco aprieta" is used as judgement of a superficially done action or a shallow person.

It would sound strange if its syntactic structure were changed.

### 2.3.2 Examples from English and Spanish

In the following, a series of English and Spanish idioms (sometimes proverbs) is listed under different headings for references to human experience<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Here also, the stimulus is a handout from Dr. DiPietro's class, in which he listed several idioms under the following headings: 1) extensions from human body references, 2) extensions from animal body references, 3) animal references in comparison, 4) color references, 5) fruits, vegetable references, 6) references to the elements (especially 'air'), 7) idioms with 'hot', 'cold' in English, 8) expressions of undesirable equations, 9) home activities, 10) miscellaneous activities.

### I HUMAN BODY

- 1- look at someone from head to toe  
mirarle a uno de pies a cabeza
- 2- to be nosy  
tener más ojos que una piña (goes under # III, too)
- 3- the apple of his mother's eye (goes under # III, too)  
la niña de sus ojos
- 4- to pull one's leg  
tomarle el pelo a uno
- 5- to split hairs  
encontrar pelos en la sopa (goes under # VII, too)
- 6- calentarle la cabeza a uno
- 7- to have it on the tip of one's tongue  
tenerlo en la punta de la lengua
- 8- to risk one's neck  
arriesgarse el pellejo
- 9- play it by ear
- 10- put one's foot in one's mouth  
meter la pata
- 11- poke one's nose in  
meter la nariz en
- 12- to be all ears  
ser todo orejas
- 13- by the skin of one's teeth  
por un pelo
- 14- (in) cold blood  
de (a) sangre fría
- 15- te doy la mano y te agarras del pie

## II ANIMALS

- 1- heads or tails  
águilar / sol (goes under # IV, too)
- 2- sly as a fox  
astuta como una zorra
- 3- to work like a horse  
trabajar como un burro
- 4- to eat like a pig  
comer como un marano
- 5- tanto pecar él que mata la vaca como él que le detiene la pata
- 6- let sleeping dogs lie
- 7- to kill two birds with one stone  
matar dos pájaros de un tiro
- 8- don't count your chickens before they are hatched
- 9- el que por su gusto es buey, hasta la coyunda lame (goes under #VI)  
too)
- 10- camerón que se duerme, se lo lleva la corriente
- 11- one bird in the hand is better than two in the bush  
más vale pájaro en mano que diez volando
- 12- to rule the roost
- 13- caerse de pie como un gato  
tener siete vidas como un gato
- 14- to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs  
matar a la gallina de los huevos de oro

## III FRUITS, VEGETABLES, PLANTS

- 1- peaches-and-cream complexion  
piel de manzana
- 2- pedirle peras al olmo
- 3- él que a buen árbol se arrima, buena sombra lo cobija
- 4- árbol que crece torcido, nunca su tronco endereza
- 5- to find a needle in a haystack  
encontrar una aguja en un pajar
- 6- to beat about the bush  
andarse por las ramas
- 7- la media naranja (spouse)
- 8- de tal palo tal astilla

## IV AIR, EARTH, WATER, ...

- 1- to leave things in mid-air  
dejar las cosas volando
- 2- to build castles in the air  
hacer castillos en el aire
- 3- to clear the air  
despejar el ambiente
- 4- to go fly a kite  
¡vete a volar!
- 5- put on airs
- 6- down to earth
- 7- to be in hot water

## V COLORS

- 1- to see red
- 2- quedarse en blanco
- 3- an off-color joke  
un chiste colorado
- 4- humor negro
- 5- green with jealousy  
verde de envidia

## VI WORK, DOMESTIC CHORES, PROFESSION, ENTERTAINMENT

- 1- al ojo del amo engorda el caballo
- 2- del dicho al hecho hay mucho trecho
- 3- al que madruga, Dios le ayuda (goes under #IX, too)
- 4- better late than never  
más vale tarde que nunca
- 5- él que mucho abarca, poco aprieta
- 6- a new broom sweeps well
- 7- la ropa sucia se lava en casa
- 8- tapar el pozo después de muerto
- 9- to put the cart before the horse  
poner el remedio después de la enfermedad
- 10- si se alivió fue la Virgen, si se murió fue el doctor (goes under # IX)  
too)

## VII KITCHEN, FOOD

- 1- to have one's cake and eat it, too  
tener el pollo en el corral y en la cazuela (goes under # II, too)  
chiflar y comer pinole  
mamar y dar topes
- 2- las cuentas claras y el chocolate espeso
- 3- dose of one's own medicine (goes under # VI, too)  
darle una sopa de su propio chocolate
- 4- tener la sartén por el mango
- 5- del plato a la boca se cae la sopa
- 6- to put something on the back burner  
ponerlo al fuego lento
- 7- too many chefs spoil the soup  
entre muchos cocineros, se quema la comida
- 8- the more you eat the more you want
- 9- cucarachos en sartén nuevo
- 10- don't bite off more than you can chew (corresponds to Spanish VI-5)

## VIII CLOTHING

- 1- to wear the pants  
llevar los pantalones
- 2- es bueno el encaje pero no tan ancho.

## IX RELIGION

- 1- palo dado, ni Dios lo quita
- 2- no le da agua ni al gallo de la pasión

- 3- tanto quiere el diablo a su hijo hasta que le saca un ojo
- 4- más sabe el diablo por viejo que por diablo
- 5- go to hell
- vete al diablo

This list of idioms is, of course, fragmentary<sup>1</sup>. From the few examples, however, it becomes obvious that English and Spanish idioms share many features. The sources, i.e., the origin of the sayings is not considered in this study. From a superficial first glance, one might notice that several idioms, common among languages of the Indo-European Family, can be traced back to Bible quotations, to the Aesop Fables, etc. A thorough study of this point concerns the literary critic and the philologist rather than the descriptive linguist who works on a comparative synchronic study of two languages.

2.3.3 Analysis of a set of idioms from English and Spanish

To analyze similarities and differences in the use of idioms, several approaches are possible. Primary consideration could focus on the

<sup>1</sup>It has been made up from students' contributions, mainly.

frequency, or on the situational or stylistic level of usage. In the study presented here, the literal meaning is selected as feature of departure. The criteria applied to all features are 'equal', 'similar', and 'different', symbolized by "=", "≈", and "≠", respectively. The features under consideration are the following:

MEANING understands the literal, i.e., denotational, meaning of an idiom; e.g., 'to kick the bucket' equals 'to die'.

SEMANTIC FIELD OF REFERENCE refers more or less to the headings under which the quoted idioms are categorized. This categorization, however, is flexible and incomplete.

SPECIFIC SEMANTIC FEATURES OF REFERENCE determine the specific items within the same field; e.g., 'work like a horse' and "trabajar como un burro" belong both to the semantic field of reference that deals with 'animals'. The specific features, however, are different (or 'similar'): 'horse' vs "burro".

SEMANTICO-SYNTACTIC DEEP STRUCTURE requires the kind of analysis as proposed in Chapter 1; i.e., the types and the functional relationships between the elements involved in terms of verboids and case categories.

SURFACE STRUCTURE deals with the syntactic realization of the phrases or clauses; i.e., whether they are simple, or complex and/or compound sentences, which type of phrases they represent (infinitive phrase, prepositional phrase, ...), if there is a transitive or an intransitive verb, an active or a passive construct; in short, structural surface comparison of any kind.

INFLECTIONALITY informs whether the idiom is always used in a rigid way or if it allows for inflections, concerned with changes of subject, tense, mode, etc.; e.g. "al que madruga, Dios le ayuda" is rigid in its application as a complex sentence, without any change allowed, whereas 'kick the bucket' can be used with different subjects and with different time references.

Idiom	literal meaning	mean- ing	semantic field refer- ence	specific semantic features	semantico- syntactic D-struct.	surface structure	inflect- ionality
to risk one's neck arriesgarse el pelo	take a serious risk	=	= human body	≠ neck vs. pellejo	=	≠ non-refl. vs. refl. poss. vs. nonposs.	= flexible
to have one's cake and eat it, too tener el pollo en el corral y en la cazuela	desire 2 things which are mutually exclusive	= both	≈ both: kitchen and food Sp: animals	≠ cake vs. living and to-fry chicken	≠ 2 verboids 1 object vs. 1 verboid 1 object 2 locatives	≈ infinitive V + DO conjunct. Sp: Prepph.	= rigid you can't... one can't... no puedes... no se puede...
dose of one's own medicine darle una sopa de su propio chocolate	somebody's negative ex- perience with his own theory	=	≈ something to taste	≠ medicine vs. food	≠ V + A + SO action vs. V + B + O act/proc	≠ V intr. + PP vs. V tr. + IO + DO + PP	= flexible
build castles in the air hacer castillos en el aire	dream of something not easily to become true	=	= air and buildings	≈ build vs. hacer diff. grades of abstr.	=	=	= flexible

Fig. 2.3-2: Analysis of a few idioms from English and Spanish

This analysis shows several deficiencies. Gertz, 1982

2.3.4 Suggested analyses

- 1- Find the literal meanings for the idioms, listed in 2.3.2
- 2- Analyze a good deal of them, following the suggestions from 2.3.3
- 3- List more idioms and analyze each individually
- 4- Find pairs of idioms in English and Spanish that share one main feature, either meaning or semantic field reference
- 5- Analyze those pairs of idioms in the one or the other way. (In case of shared semantic field of reference, reverse the order of the first two features from the table, since meaning might differ)
- 6- Investigate with informants about the frequency of usage of an established set of idioms as well as the situations in which these idioms are used. (You can design questionnaires with the frequency scale ( never ..... always) and the 'whom-to' scale. Then have native speakers from both cultures and languages fill them out. If you obtain statistically valid data, include the feature in your table.