

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF LEXICAL (NON-) EQUIVALENCE ON THE ACQUISITION OF L2 EMOTION TERMS

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ABSTRACT

Researchers in the field of vocabulary acquisition have identified several factors that affect L2 vocabulary learning, including word frequency, concreteness, and cognate status. Another factor that can also affect L2 vocabulary learning is related to partial equivalence and non-equivalence between L1 and L2. This factor was neglected by models of L2 lexical representation since they view L2 learning as linking between new forms and pre-existing concepts. This study investigated the effect of word equivalence type on the acquisition of L2 emotion terms by Moroccan learners of English. It was predicted that acquisition of English emotion terms would be facilitated by similarities in equivalence but complicated by differences because learners need to know the range of situations where partially-equivalent or non-equivalent emotion terms apply. This hypothesis was explored through a multiple-choice task, performed by three groups of participants: 44 native speakers, 51 advanced learners, and 51 intermediate learners of English. The results revealed that when there was an equivalence between L1 and L2, learners did not face any problems in using English emotion terms. Nevertheless, L2 emotion terms that have partial or no equivalents in L1 complicated acquisition for learners.

KEYWORDS: *Acquisition, Emotion Terms, Lexical Equivalence*