

The European Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences
EJSBS Volume VI, Issue III (e-ISSN: 2301-2218)

The Impact Of Cultural Metaphors On Learning Effectiveness In English As A Foreign Language Curriculum



Jiin-Chyuan Lai^{a*}, Tsuilien Shen^b

^dDepartment of Applied Foreign Languages, Transworld University, Taiwan

^b Center for General Education, National Formosa University, Taiwan

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the benefits of teaching culture through metaphor in the EFL, English as a Foreign Language, classroom. Chinese learners of English would be expected to enhance their communication skills and use metaphorical insights as a way of developing new strategies when they are exposed to this cultural information in their own culture and the target culture such as in the USA. The researcher also expected that EFL or CFL, Chinese as a foreign language, learners could internalize this information and develop strategies that would enable them not only to facilitate communication with speakers the target language but that this information would empower them to use this cultural knowledge when communicating with native speakers of their own language (L1) since cultural metaphors are frequently and widely used in life. With a view to provide EFL teachers at university level and the EFL educational organizations where Chinese is a dominant language in the society with alternative perspectives in EFL education, findings from the research questions follows. The impact of this new teaching method, CLTCMP, Communicative Language Teaching with Cultural Metaphor Plan, on EFL learners' English reading comprehension, cultural metaphor understanding, the efficacy of the CLTCMP as measured from the students' performance and the perspectives of the EFL learners and teachers regarding their experiences and reflections on EFL learning and teaching in Taiwan is summarized.

Keywords: Foreign language curriculum, cultural metaphors, English as a foreign language, language learning effectiveness

© 2013 Published by C-crcs. Peer-review under responsibility of Editor(s) or Guest Editor(s) of the EJSBS.

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: marklai07@gmail.com

doi: 10.15405/ejsbs.92



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

1. Introduction

The formal study of English as a foreign language (EFL) is typically based on teaching students linguistic forms. This has been because linguists believed that language is organized around the study of linguistic forms. This model was called the First Generation of Cognitive Linguistics. Current research on language, however, argued for a different model of language learning, often described as the Second Generation of Cognitive Linguistics. Lakoff and Johnson (1980; 1999) argued that language is organized not around linguistic forms, but around cognitive categories. Lakoff (1987) provided the rationale for the claim that language has to do with the organization of ideas and their categories. But these works also made an additional claim. These authors also argued that language is a highly creative activity based on the use of figurative language (metaphor, metonymy, etc.). This was because metaphors provided some of the categories for the organization of thought.

Metaphor plays a dominant role in language. It is one of the major forces behind linguistic creativity. Metaphor is not only used to create new lexical domains, but also for new grammatical constructions. This new user of metaphor is a major part of the focus of this study. To understand how grammatical constructions can be metaphorical, one needs to delve into the emergent theory of cognitive linguistics with its research interests in conceptualization, categorization, grammaticalization, and the use of language for the communication of meaning. This is not to say that linguistic forms are not important to EFL curriculum and Instruction. They are. However, forms are used for the purpose of communicating in a meaningful way. This new way of communicating meaning consists of schemes, frames, and scenarios, which play an important role in teaching culture. Within the previous sections, several questions remain unanswered in the extant research. The following questions form the core of this research:

1.1 What is the impact of the CLTCMP teaching method on the students' understanding of English reading and American cultural metaphors?

1.2 What are the students' and teachers' perceptions of the new CLTCMP teaching method, including discovering whether the method is identified as effective or not?

2. Literature Review

Kovecses (2005) indicated that the analysis of metaphors in language could reveal a great deal of patterning. This strongly suggests that at least on an unconscious level, the linguistic metaphors also manifest elaborate structures. Kovecses (2005) suggested that linguistic expressions serve as indications of neuronal connections between two sets of neurons in the brain which correspond to intensity and heat. According to Kovecses's (2005)

re-analysis of the metaphorical linguistic expressions regarding the two sets of neurons, intensity and heat, identified by Alice Deignan (1995), the metaphorical expressions can be broken down into different possible metaphorical entailments of the intensity by heat. The functional analysis can also be applied in mass media such as television, broadcast and newspapers. Examples of the metaphorical expression analysis follow. Some of these applications were also used in the lesson plans of the experimental group of English learners. The use of these expressional skills in English would better students' understanding and increase communication skills with their audience, native English speakers.

There are numerous researches regarding cultural metaphor comprehension in the first language acquisition field, however, there are limited researches in the second or foreign language acquisition field (Ackerman, 1998). According to Ackerman (1998), psycholinguistic research suggests metaphorical statements can be processed as easily as literal one by native speakers; however, it is challenge for non -native speakers to understand the specific cultural meaning of metaphor that native speakers used daily.

As Khuuwaileh (1999) pointed, there are two suggestions regarding to overcome the cultural obstacles for EFL learners. First, it is a necessary for EFL teachers to create and design their own teaching materials and methods to fit in the specific cultural environment and to relate the EFL learners' cultural background. If not, there might cause wider gap between Western English Language Teaching (ELT) and/or EFL theory and overseas practice. Second, the EFL learners may not always have the opportunity to visit English -speaking countries due to different reasons such as the bias caused by stereotype or even the financial reasons. As Khuuwaileh (1999) stated, "we believe that much research is needed to investigate other cultural elements, like the hidden and confusing meanings of English collocations and phrasal verbs (e.g., tittle-tattle, iceberg, sitting on the fence, etc.) used by professors who are native and non -native speakers of English."

According to Robert N. St. Clair in *Visual Metaphor, Cultural Knowledge, and the New Rhetoric* (St. Clair, 2002), visual information is also another way of knowing, and it too is virtually invisible in the modern culture. St. Claire also pointed out that the metaphor of verbal form is highly significant in Western culture and has dominated centuries of social and cultural epistemological scripts. According to Winston Brembeck, "To know another's language and not his culture is a very good way to make a fluent fool of one's self" (Wiston Brembeck in preface to Levine & Adelman, 1995). To help Asian English learners get better understandings of what the modern western life philosophy is and how western people form their culture in the their society, it is essential for EFL teachers to teach culture by metaphor in EFL class.

2.1. The Role of Cultural Context in Language

Language must be learned within what sociologists call “the context of the situation” (St. Clair, 2002). In Asia, politeness forms an intrinsic part of the cultural milieu. As a matter of fact, this situation can be traced back in the teaching style in the cultural background in Asia. One of the important values in the education system in Asia is that students express their respect to teachers by keeping silent and by avoiding asking questions rather than challenging the teachers’ authority in class (Liu, 2001).

What if students have questions about the materials they have learned in class? From the researcher’s educational background experiences and observations in his teaching experiences in high school for the past eleven years, he finds two methods of questioning the teachers. Most students in the class choose to ask questions by writing notes to teachers . Teachers respond to the questions during the next class session. Some students ask questions between sessions or after class. Few students raise their hands and ask questions spontaneously as Americans students do. These ways of asking questions in class are considered to be appropriate in Asian classes. Also, it means that students respect their teachers’ academic position and avoid challenging that position by asking questions. However, while observing ESL, English as a Second Language, and mainstream classes in elementary and middle schools in New York State, the researcher observed, some strategies that EFL teachers in Asia may adopt. The strategies included class setting, using meaningful materials, and the classroom atmosphere. Students from Asia who are studying in USA or who are negotiating with English speakers are suggested to learn and to adapt new cultural metaphors. Different culture has its different interpretation about verbal or nonverbal language expression such as the way of face saving and what historians call “the Frontier Mentality” and what businessmen call “the self-made man.”

2.2. Metaphor and Linguistic Creativity

Metaphors play a significant role in linguistic creativity. In the aforementioned examples, one finds a metaphorical movement based on a change of state (from non - sleeping to sleeping state, from non-laughing to laughing state) and time (from the present state to a future state). This creative use of metaphor is the focus of this presentation. However, before delving into this topic, one needs to understand some of the trends and ideas that led up to this development. One needs to understand what the cognitive sciences are and why linguistics is a part of that new interdisciplinary thrust. One needs to investigate the concept of cognitive linguistics and its various explications in the form of cognitive

grammar. Similarly, one needs to have some familiarity with the concept of grammaticalization and how metaphor plays a dominant role in this endeavor.

How the concept of categorization has been redefined in the light of research by cognitive anthropologists and cultural psychologists on the nature of human categorization. There are numerous implications for the new approach to language and one of the most interesting comes from translation theory. For the first time, linguists have a viable model of computer translation that adequately addresses semantic domains, cultural history, and grammaticalizations across cultures.

2.3. Language as Symbolic Interactionism

What one learns from this new approach is that language, it turns out is not about the real world. It is not based on a theory of reference as envisaged by philosophers of language. Language is about how human beings organize and represent concepts (Dirven & Vespoor, 1998; Heine, 1997). Language is not a positivistic enterprise. It is phenomenological. Sociologists, for example, provide an interesting approach to how individuals interact symbolically. They call these symbols conversational images.

When two people meet each other for the first time, they create in their own minds what that other person is like. They create images of the other based on various kinds of information deriving from their culture, life styles, and past experiences. What is interesting is that when these same individuals meet again, they do not directly address each other, but they talk to the conversational image they have of the other person. These images are maintained for decades as evidenced by how parents still see their adult children as “my little girl” or “my little boy.”

3. Research Methods

A mixed-method, QUAN-QUAL approach was utilized in this research. This mixed-method research, formally defined as the class of research where the researchers mix or combine quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), involved experimental methods in conjunction with qualitative methods. The QUAN-QUAL model is a type of mixed-method model that integrates simultaneous quantitative and qualitative methods, which are weighted equally throughout the same study (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Because research suggests that quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of correlational relationship between variables, this study also employed quantitative measures to determine which factors associated with EFL learners’ prior language learning experiences

and cultural background influenced their English reading comprehension and understanding of American cultural metaphors. One correlational limitation noted by two prominent researchers is the difficulty of conclusively determining correlation when exposures to the participants are of short duration (Airasian, 1992; Patton, 2002). That was a limiting factor in this study where the Chinese-speaking learners of English were trained for only a few months. The qualitative approach was utilized to offset this limitation as personal perceptions were obtained to sustain the results of the quantitative measures. The qualitative portion, using the Constant Comparative Method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) added richness of perceptual perspective from the participants garnered through personal interviews.

3.1. Subjects

The participants in this study were the EFL Taiwanese adult learners in the Language Center (LC) at the China Institute of Technology (CHIT) in Taipei, Taiwan. These students were also enrolled in English classes. Sixty-nine (69) undergraduates from the Industrial and Engineering Management (IEM) department at CHIT, made up two intact classes for this study. Participating groups were randomly assigned to either the control or to the experimental group by flip a coin. Forty-three (43) participants, all juniors, were in the control group, named MC for having classes held on Mondays, and twenty-six (26) participants, all sophomores, were in the experimental group named TC because classes were held on Tuesdays. All of the participants took an American cultural metaphor understanding assessment, also made up of both covariate-test, ACMA-1 (American Cultural Metaphor Assessment) and post-test, ACMA-2. Seven (7) EFL teachers were invited to be the interviewees in this research.

3.2. Procedure

The sessions for MC and TC class were a total of 90 minutes for each class. Because the classes were pre-arranged, the participants in this study were not randomly selected. However, the researcher flipped a coin to choose which group would be the control and which would be the experimental group.

Quantitatively, the researcher used a quasi-experimental approach, nonequivalent control group design. The MC, control group received 8 neutral lessons, while the TC, experimental group received the American cultural metaphor lessons, called Communicative Language Teaching with Cultural Metaphor Plan (CLTCMP). With approval from both the organizations, the researcher taught both the control and the experimental group classes. The

purpose for this was to reduce sources for nuisance variables impeding the diagnosis of the instruction. The term lasted for eight weeks of the semester with eight 90-minute periods.

The focus group follow-up interviews with students were also conducted. In an effort to explain why the metaphor teaching worked or did not work, or worked in some ways, but not in others, and to improve English language competence level and cultural metaphor application skills, 23 out of 26 participants in the experimental group volunteered to participate in the interview. The researcher conducted focus group follow-up interviews with a semi-structured interview model. The follow-up interview question with EFL students is as following: After participating in the experimental research project, Communicative Language Teaching with Culture Metaphors Plan (CLTCMP), what are your reflections on participating in this research based on the goal of mastering English?

The focus group interview lasted for two hours. The semi-structured question was explained to the study group in two languages, Mandarin Chinese and English, to assure the participants' understanding. The first hour was conducted as a discussion forum. The bilingual discussion format first provided the participants with clearer interview questions, resulted in deeper responses from the participants, and thus yielded more meaningful data.

3.3. Lessons on Culture and Metaphor

The lessons developed for the participants of the two groups and were designed to facilitate enhancement of language skills, listening, speaking, reading, writing, and to promote understanding of the target culture. The two lesson plan models, CLTP version, neutral lessons, for the control group, and CLTCMP for the experimental group were basically the same. The only difference between the two model lesson plans is that the lesson in TC, the experimental group, included the materials of American Cultural Metaphor in the six categories of cultural metaphors: time, space, body, emotional, visual, and social metaphor.

In order to investigate the benefits of teaching culture through metaphor in the foreign language classroom, the environment was created based on the setting of American mainstream classroom where teachers provide authentic language teaching materials. The lesson plans, CLTP and CLTCMP in this study are basically designed and derived from two foundational theories. One is based on the Communication Language Teaching Approach (CLT). The other one is based on Bloom's Taxonomy with the view to developing higher critical thinking levels.

4. Results and Discussion

The statistical analysis shows that the CLTCMP, the cultural metaphorical teaching method, affected the EFL students' English reading comprehension slightly. That means students' English reading ability could be promoted through learning American cultural metaphors, more specifically idioms and slang. However, the statistical analysis shows that the CLTCMP did greatly influence the participants' American cultural metaphor understanding. That means that after eight weeks of instruction of cultural metaphor teaching, students learned much about American cultural metaphors. Using Point biserial correlation, the researcher found that there was no significance between ever previously having been taught American culture in EFL class and the ERC test. However, there was a moderate negative relationship between previously having been taught American culture in EFL class and American cultural metaphor understanding. This is the only significant difference found in the study with a moderate negative relationship between a subject's ACMU test score and previously having been taught American culture in EFL class.

The significant findings from the EFL students' and teachers' interviews and the monitor's notes show that cultural metaphors are perceived as being vehicles for understanding the deep meaning of the target language and culture. An important issue that some of the students and teachers pointed out is that for English learners there are barriers ahead of them. Low English proficiency blocks basic understanding of the meaning of the target language. This is understandable. Reaching for the meaning of cultural metaphors is quite impossible until a higher level of English is reached. Without using comparison with Chinese counterparts in Chinese and English transliterations, understanding cultural metaphors is difficult. Despite these difficulties, the mean of 93.04 achieved by the experimental group compared with the mean of 64.74 by the control group on the post-test, ACMA-2 proves the efficacy of CLTCMP.

For the purposes of examining the relationship between students' general backgrounds, cultural characteristics, and ERC and ACM understanding, the Pearson Correlation and Point biserial correlation analyses were conducted. The students' general background variable information was elicited after the teaching project in order to avoid biases by the instructor against the students during the teaching. Also, the students' cultural characteristic background information was gathered prior to the experimental teaching project in order to avoid the influence of cultural information derived from the materials in the project on students' preliminary cultural perceptions. The variables were sex, age, years of English learning, having attended an English cram school, having relatives speaking English, having interaction with English speakers regularly, immersing in English mass-

media regularly, having lived in English-speaking countries, the importance of western culture, having concept of cultural metaphor, having been taught eastern culture, having been taught American culture, , the importance of asking questions, and having acquired American culture at English cramschool.

According to the Pearson correlation and the Point biserial correlation, the following statistical significances were found: There are no significant differences among the students' age and years of learning English, and the two post-test results, TVE-JCEE-94-2 (a standardized English reading test) and ACMA-2. There are no significant differences among sex, having attended an English cram school, having relatives speaking English, having interaction with English speakers regularly, immersing in English mass-media regularly, having lived in English- speaking countries, the importance of western culture, having concept of cultural metaphor, having been taught eastern culture, the importance of asking questions, and having acquired American culture at English cram school and the two post-test results, TVE-JCEE-94-2 and ACMA-2. There is also no significance between previously having been taught American cultural in English class at school, and the post-test, TVE-JCEE-94-2. However, there is a moderate negative relationship ($r = -.34, p < .05$) between ever having been taught American culture in English class at school and the post-test, ACMA-2 result. The only significant factor found in the study is a negative relationship between a subject's test score and previously having been taught American culture in EFL class. This result, though surprising on the surface, may be because the concept of American culture is so broad. There are still several reasons might cause this effect. A direct reason could be the cultural stereotype issue involved in teaching and learning a culture through the eyes of people from another culture in a broad and complicated world. Even though students are learning the cultural metaphors in the target language, they still may misunderstand and them. Another reason could be due to a lack of use of or exposure to the metaphors and just merely forgetting the meaning over time. Understanding misunderstandings in life is an interesting topic for further study. Through the analysis and interpretation of the comparisons, the similarities and differences in students' responses on the American cultural metaphorical understanding tests provided Mandarin Chinese speakers and English speakers, to some degree, with some clues to greater understanding of both cultures.

The following section reports the findings from the qualitative data collected from the focus group follow-up interview with 23 (88%) students in the experimental group at the language center at CHIT after the experimental project. This interview feedback and notes were analyzed using the Constant Comparative Method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The concepts and themes from the focus group follow-up interviews with the students were

collected and quantified as percentages for better review. An expert in Chinese was invited to review the translation in order to triangulate the validity and reliability of the bilingual issue in this study.

4.1. The Impact of the CLTCMP Teaching Method on English Reading Comprehension

The statistical analysis shows that the CLTCMP, the cultural metaphorical teaching method, affected the EFL students' English reading comprehension slightly. That means students' English reading ability could be promoted through learning American cultural metaphors, more specifically, idioms and slang. The partial reason that leads to this result is that since metaphors are widely used in daily life there are cultural metaphors underlying parts of the ERC test. The participants were expected to increase their scores after learning more about culture. Therefore, a slight statistically significant difference in this study is understandable. This might still be a controversial question for language researchers because some linguists might argue that learning the target culture is not directly linked to reading comprehension skills.

The cultural teaching method, while affecting the results, did not greatly influence the participants' English reading comprehension. This might be because there were cultural metaphors underlying parts of the ERC test, the participants were expected to increase their scores after learning more about culture. However, this was an imbedded concept, not directly linked to reading comprehension skills. Therefore, the results obtained from this study are understandable. As Ackerman revealed (1998), "Metaphor in both teacher-made and authentic materials reduce comprehension scores, though the naturally occurring instances proved most challenging."

4.2. The Impact of the CLTCMP Teaching Method on the Students' Understanding of the American Cultural Metaphor

The statistical analysis shows that the CLTCMP did greatly influence the participants' American cultural metaphor understanding. This result is expected because the CLTCMP predominately and directly taught cultural awareness and cultural metaphors. The cultural teaching method greatly influenced the participants' cultural metaphoric knowledge. After eight weeks of instruction in cultural metaphor teaching, students performed well in understanding the American cultural metaphors.

This result is expected because the CLTCMP predominately and directly taught cultural awareness and cultural metaphors to EFL students in class. The cultural teaching method greatly influenced the participants' cultural metaphoric knowledge. This result might

not surprise some language researchers; however, it did suggest that cultural metaphors are often imbedded between the lines and occur in either verbal or printed form in the world.

As Picken (2005) stated, “By raising students’ awareness of Conceptual Metaphors (CMs), teachers can make their students more aware of the metaphorical potential of relatively invisible linguistic metaphors. This awareness should increase the visibility of the linguistic metaphors and raise the likelihood that students will read the metaphorically both in the short term and longer term.” Picken (2005) also pointed out that by raising students’ awareness of CMs, foreign language learners can establish their development as independent interpreters of literature (p. 143).

4.3. Students’ Perceptions of the New CLTCMP Teaching Method

The findings from the students’ perceptions and reflections about the new CLTCMP teaching method after participating in the experimental teaching project follow three parts: teaching materials, teaching method, and the overall comments. The teaching materials in CLTCMP were provided to students with alternative choices that inspired students to learn English. Responses quoted from the students included helpful, professional, productive, interesting, vivid, understandable, readable, enlightened, practical, positive first impression, and daily life basis. From the students’ responses on the teaching method of CLTCMP, the teaching method is quite different compared with their previous English learning strategies. The method provided a form of enlightenment to English learning, encouraged students to ask questions associated with the materials in class, stimulated students to express their ideas in words, and motivated students by eliciting interests and curiosity about cultural metaphors in English learning.

The CLTCMP teaching method was regarded as experiencing a form of American teaching style in class. There was frequent interaction between the researcher and students in class. From the students’ responses regarding the CLTCMP, the teaching method was identified as vivid, active, relaxed, less-pressure, alternative, diverse, humorous, enlightened, and interesting. Some students found that CLTCMP was an effective, creative, and productive method in English learning and served as an information provider because real stories and current events were introduced with impressive images. This essential element of the social contexts for people to establish a language system in mind was noted by Minsky (1985). Minsky noted that in addition to using language to form frames, scripts, metaphors, and the society of mind, one needs to look at the mind as a parallel processor, one capable of handling several scripts simultaneously, a situation comparable to how human languages function within social contexts.

The perception of degree of difficulty of teaching materials to EFL students was an issue in class. Some of the materials for students were too difficult to comprehend without bilingual translation to students. Therefore, Chinese translation might be needed for better students' understanding. This was supported by Krashen's Input Hypothesis.

According to Brown (2007), "A key element of the input hypothesis is that the input language must not only be understandable, thus the term comprehensible input, but should contain grammatical structures that are just a bit beyond the acquirer's current level of second language development" (p. 55). From the students' responses regarding the degree of difficulty in CLTCMP, some students think that the materials and issues brought to the discussion session in class were too difficult or abstract to understand. Conclusions about the degree of difficulty follow. English language only in class was a challenge to students. Using English only while teaching may train students' English listening comprehension, whereas, when students could not understand the true meaning, they might be frustrated, less-motivated, and stressed to learn English. When the second or foreign language learners feel stress, their progress of learning the target language would be hindered Krashen (1982). This situation happened especially to students with a low of English proficiency. Some students suggested that the instructor understand more about the obstacles that English learners have in order to provide more solutions to students' problems in learning English.

The duration of the experimental teaching project was 8 weeks, whereas, the whole study lasted approximately 5 months. The students indicated that the CLTCMP would be of more benefit if it could last longer. Motivation to learn would increase with an increase in exposure time. This comment became a correlational limitation in this study. As Patton (2002) and Airasian (1992) stated that it is difficult to conclusively determine correlation when exposures to the participants during a short duration. However, students saw the positive effects of the CLTCMP on their English cultural metaphor learning.

From the students' point of view, after participation in the experimental teaching plan regarding the role of cultural metaphor and its impacts on the communicative competence of one's mother and target language, the findings can be concluded as followings. First, metaphors are used daily in communication. Second, greater understanding of American cultural metaphors enables students to have more access to learning English, increasing meaning and effectiveness. As Heine (1997) pointed out, language uses metaphor to create new constructions, new meanings, new categories, and new semantic domains (p. 8). Third, cultural metaphors make students' English learning more interesting. Finally, it is very beneficial for EFL learners to know cultural metaphors which, in turn, help them to know the deep meaning of English expression. An example indicated by Bonvillain (2002) was that,

“The English language characteristically employs lineal metaphors to describe many different kinds of events ...such as “getting straight to the point” compared to “talking around the issue” (p. 67). On the contrary, typical Chinese expression use circle metaphors to elaborate on situations, for instance, *yuan maun*, literally means *round* and *full* and transliterated in English as *perfect*.

4.4. Perspectives from EFL Participant Teachers in Terms of Cultural Metaphor Teaching

The followings are the perspectives of the EFL participant teachers regarding the important role of learning culture and cultural metaphors in foreign language teaching and learning curriculum based on the comments on “To know another's language and not his culture is a very good way to make a fluent fool of one's self.” -Winston Brembeck (1995).

All EFL participant teachers agreed that understanding American culture and its cultural metaphors are extremely important to teaching and learning curriculum. Four main reasons why learning culture and cultural metaphors play an important role in foreign language teaching and learning curriculum emerged through the interviews. Language and culture cannot be separated. By understanding cultural metaphor, language learners can obtain the deeper meaning of language. Cultural metaphors cannot be obtained if language learners have trouble with understanding the meaning of vocabulary. Greater understanding of cultural metaphor can make second language learning more effective. Shiue and Yen (2005) suggested that EFL teachers use effective techniques in teaching language and develop new ones that help EFL students learn language in contexts with purpose. They also indicated that EFL students need to learn more than grammar with the view to surviving in the target culture because learning a language means to imply it in the target culture.

5. Conclusions

Metaphor accounts for linguistic creativity, and, most importantly, it accounts for how people think metaphorically across cultures. Finch (2000) pointed out, “Many agree with the proposal by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), Lakeoff (1987) and Mark Johnson (1987) that metaphor is an essential element in our categorization of the world and our thinking process.” One of the consequences of such results would be that the experience of processing cultural information across languages would enable foreign language learners to develop greater linguistic insights into processes that will enhance competence in second language and cultural competence in communicating with others.

This new information is not only about cultural metaphor but also about lesson problems associated with cultural dissonance. Cultural metaphors are not static but expand

with culture events and change. This research included the search for benefits of cultural teaching through metaphor and the perspectives and experiences of the EFL teachers and students regarding their teaching and learning of the target foreign language, English. As the researcher mentioned, without using comparison with Chinese language counterparts in Chinese and English transliterations, understanding cultural metaphors is difficult. Moreover, literal translations are impossible due to great disparities between languages, cultures, social histories, and other salient features of symbolic interaction. Possible further research would be about the function or role of translation and interpretation in the second or foreign language acquisition.

Acknowledgements

The author(s) declare that there is no conflict of interest.

References

- Ackerman, C. H. (1998). *The Effects of Authentic, Metaphor-Laden Prose on the Reading Comprehension of EFL Students at the College Level* Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- Brembeck, W. (1995). Wiston Brembeck in preface to Levine & Adelman.
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, Fifth Edition. Pearson Education, Inc. 10 Bank Street, White Plains, NY10606
- Dirven, R., & Verspoor, M. (1998). *Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
[https://doi.org/10.1075/clip.1\(1999\)](https://doi.org/10.1075/clip.1(1999))
- Finch, G. (2000). *Linguistic Terms and Concepts*. Macmillan Press Ltd.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-27748-3>
- Gay, L. R., & Airasian, P. (2003). *Educational Research Competencies for Analysis and Applications*. Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of ground theory. Strategies for Qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company. Heine, Bernd. 1997. *Cognitive Foundations of Grammar*. Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14–26.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033007014>
- Kovecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in culture: universality and variation*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511614408>
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, Fire, & Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.
<https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226471013.001.0001>
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. NY: Basic Books
- Minsky, M. (1985). *The Society of Mind*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and Evaluation Methods* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Research Methods Knowledge Base-Qualitative Validity
<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualval.htm>
- Picken, J. D. (2005). Helping Foreign Language Learners to Make Sense of Literature with Metaphor Awareness-raising. *Language Awareness*, 14(2-3), 142-152.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410508668830>
- Shiue, C., & Yen, A-L. (2005). *Cross-Cultural Studying a Refusal Strategies by Chinese Learners of English* Selected Papers from the Fourteenth International Symposium on English Teaching Taipei (pp. 517-526).
- St. Clair, R. N. (2002). *The Six Major Metaphors that Constitute Western Thought: Growth, Game, Form, Machine, Dramaturgical, Time and Space*. Lanham, PA: Edwin Mellen Press.