

The 6th FT Teaching and Research Mini-Conference in Matsuyama
September 25, 2011

For citation:

Shiwaku, Risa (2011) Conceptual Fluency of Japanese EFL Learners: Appropriation of L2 Conceptual Metaphors. In: Reinelt, R. (ed.) (2011) *Foreign Language Learning and Teaching Places: Schools, Universities and Others* Rudolf Reinelt Research Laboratory EU Matsuyama, Japan, p. 77 – 86.

Conceptual Fluency of Japanese EFL Learners: Appropriation of L2 Conceptual Metaphors

Risa Shiwaku

Graduate Division of Foreign Studies,
Master's Program in Linguistics,
TESOL Program, Sophia University
Email: risa_shiwaku@yahoo.com

Research Questions

1. To what extent have Japanese EFL learners appropriated L2 metaphorical concepts?
2. Does the level of their appropriation of L2 metaphorical concepts differ depending on whether or not they have lived in an English-speaking country for an extended period of time?
3. What metaphorical concepts seem difficult/unfamiliar to Japanese EFL learners?

Methodology

Participants

	# of learners	L1	Age	Year	Gender	Department	Length of living in an English-speaking country
Group 1	11	Japanese	19-20	4 freshmen & 7 sophomore	2 males & 9 females	English Language and Studies	More than 3 years (Mean=6.42, SD=3.40)
Group 2	11	Japanese	19-20	9 freshmen & 2 sophomore	2 males & 9 females	English Language and Studies	0 years

Data Collection and Analysis

Time & Place	Task	Target metaphors ¹	Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - June & July, 2011 - In the school library - Once for each participant - About 1 hour but no time limit imposed 	Interpretation task: 25 metaphorical statements →Choose the meanings from 1. A literal interpretation 2. An erroneous interpretation 3. A correct interpretation 4. "Don't know some word(s)/expressions(s) in the choices" 5 literal statements →Fake questions	1. TIME IS MONEY 2. IDEAS ARE FOOD 3. UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING; IDEAS ARE LIGHT-SOURCES; DISCOURSE IS A LIGHT-MEDIUM 4. HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN 5. VIRTUE IS UP; DEPRAVITY IS DOWN	Calculate # and % of correct responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall - Each metaphor - Each metaphorical linguistic expression → Compare the results among the groups

¹ Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Target metaphors and metaphorical statements (from Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

Metaphor 1: TIME IS MONEY

Question number

Statement

- 5 That flat tire cost me an hour.
 - 14 This gadget will save you hours.
 - 18 You need to budget your time.
 - 23 Is that worth your while?
 - 27 I've invested a lot of time in her.
-

Metaphor 2: IDEAS ARE FOOD

Question number

Statement

- 1 We don't need to spoon-feed our students.
 - 9 That's food for thought.
 - 15 He devoured the book.
 - 24 What he said left a bad taste in my mouth.
 - 30 Let me stew over that for a while.
-

Metaphor 3: UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING...

Question number

Statement

- 8 Now I've got the whole picture.
 - 12 What is your outlook on that?
 - 20 I see what you're saying.
 - 25 Let me point something out to you.
 - 29 It looks different from my point of view.
-

Metaphor 4: HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN

Question number

Statement

- 2 I'm depressed.
 - 10 Thinking about her always gives me a lift.
 - 16 He's really low these days.
 - 22 My spirits rose.
 - 28 I'm feeling down.
-

Metaphor 5: VIRTUE IS UP; DEPRIVITY IS DOWN

Question number

Statement

- 4 He is high-minded.
 - 11 Don't be underhanded.
 - 17 That would be beneath me.
 - 19 That was a low-down thing to do.
 - 26 She is upright.
-

- For citation:
- Shiwaku, Risa (2011) Conceptual Fluency of Japanese EFL Learners: Appropriation of L2 Conceptual Metaphors. In: Reinelt, R. (ed.) (2011) *Foreign Language Learning and Teaching Places: Schools, Universities and Others* Rudolf Reinelt Research Laboratory EU Matsuyama, Japan, p. 77 – 86.

0

CONCEPTUAL FLUENCY OF JAPANESE EFL LEARNERS: APPROPRIATION OF L2 CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS

THE 6TH FL TEACHING AND RESEARCH MINI-CONFERENCE IN MATSUYAMA
@ EHIME UNIVERSITY

SEPTEMBER 25, 2011

Risa Shiwaku

Graduate Division of Foreign Studies,
Master's Program in Linguistics,
TESOL Program, Sophia University
email: risa_shiwaku@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION: SCT& THE CONCEPT OF MEDIATION

- Sociocultural Theory (SCT)
- Developed by L.S. Vygotsky & his colleagues
- Human mental activities
- Indirect, **mediated** by artifacts
- i.e. Interaction w/ others & oneself by artifacts
- **Artifacts**: all human-made objects
- e.g. pens, books, numbers, language, concepts
- ⇒**Mediation** (Vygotsky, 1981)

2

INTRODUCTION: SCT & L2 LEARNING

- L2 learning: always **dynamic** (⇔fixed, predictable)
- How learners are mediated→Future development
- L2 learning > building up knowledge
- (Re)forming one's cognition**
- by activity, mediational artifacts
- L2 Learners: Learn linguistic rules & words

3

INTRODUCTION: LEARNING L2 CONCEPTS

- Concepts:
- Culturally organized artifacts
- Play a central role in regulating our mental activity (Vygotsky, 1987)
- Learning L2 concepts
- Challenging for L2 learners (Danesi, 1995)

4

INTRODUCTION: LEARNING L2 CONCEPTS

- **Conceptual fluency**
- "to know, in large part, how that language 'reflects' or encodes concepts on the basis of metaphorical reasoning" (Danesi, 1995, p.6)
- **Metaphorical competence**
- "the ability to comprehend and use metaphors in a given language as used in natural discourse" (Nezhad & Hashemian, 2006, p.75)

5

WHAT ARE CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS?

Lakoff and Johnson (1980)

- Metaphor ≠ a matter of language
→Thought & action
- Our ordinary conceptual system
→Metaphorical in nature
- Language
→An important source for what the conceptual system is like

6

WHAT ARE CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS?

- "Understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another"
(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5)
 - "Understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain"
(Kövecses, 2010, p.4)
- CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN A IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN B**
e.g. LIFE IS A JOURNEY, ARGUMENT IS WAR

7

WHAT ARE CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS?

ARGUMENT IS WAR

- Your claims are *indefensible*.
 - He *attacked every weak point* in my argument.
 - His criticisms were *right on target*.
 - I *demolished* his argument.
 - I've never *won* an argument with him.
 - You disagree? Okay, *shoot!*
 - If you use that *strategy*, he'll *wipe you out*.
 - He *shot down* all of my arguments.
- (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)
- Underlying metaphorical linguistic expressions

8

APPROPRIATION OF L2 CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN TERMS OF SCT

- Appropriation of L2 conceptual metaphors
→L2 metaphors = psychological artifacts
- The assumption:
Understand L2 linguistic metaphors
→ Have appropriated the underlying conceptual metaphors



To what extent are L2 learners able to appropriate L2 conceptual metaphors?

(Lantolf, 2006)

9

STUDIES ON L2 METAPHORICAL COMPETENCE

- Danesi (1986)
 - University classroom learners of Italian
 - Interpretation task, translation task & paraphrasing task
- Difficulties dealing with metaphorical aspects
- Danesi (1993)
 - Advanced university learners of Spanish
 - Metaphorical density of written texts
- Significant differences from L1 speakers

10

STUDIES ON L2 METAPHORICAL COMPETENCE

- Russo (1997)
 - L2 learners of Italian of different proficiency
 - Metaphorical density
- Reliance on L1 conceptual metaphors
- Keckes and Papp (2000)
 - Hungarian L1 classroom learners of French, Russian & English as L2 (aged 14 to 16)
 - Metaphorical density
- Reliance on L1
Lower-proficiency > Higher-proficiency

11

THE STUDY: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent have Japanese EFL learners appropriated L2 metaphorical concepts?
2. Does the level of their appropriation of L2 metaphorical concepts differ depending on whether or not they have lived in an English-speaking country for an extended period of time?
3. What metaphorical concepts seem difficult/unfamiliar to Japanese EFL learners?

12

THE STUDY: PARTICIPANTS

- o 22 Japanese EFL students at a private university
- o Department of English Language and Studies
- o 12 freshmen & 9 sophomore (aged 19 to 20)
- o 18 females & 4 males
- o Group 1: Lived in an English-speaking country for more than 3 years (n=11)
- o Group 2: No living-abroad experience (n=11)
- o 6 NSs of English →Baseline data

13

THE STUDY: DATA COLLECTION

Data collection took place...

- o During June & July, 2011
- o At a room located in the school library
- o Once for each participant

The task:

- o A questionnaire & an interpretation task (adapted from Danesi, 1986) (+ a production task)
- o About 1 hour but no time limit imposed

14

THE STUDY: INTERPRETATION TASK

30 multiple-choice questions:

25 metaphorical statements

+ 5 literal

statements

- o Metaphorical statements

→From Lakoff and Johnson (1980)

- o Literal statements →Fake questions

15

THE STUDY: INTERPRETATION TASK

Choices:

- o a literal interpretation
- o an erroneous interpretation
- o the correct interpretation
- o "I don't know some word(s) or expression(s) in the choices above."

(Adapted from Danesi, 1986)

16

THE STUDY: INTERPRETATION TASK

- o Example:

" We don't need to spoon-feed our students."

- a) We don't need to feed our students with a spoon. [LITERAL]
- b) Our students are well-behaved. [ERRONEOUS]
- c) It's not necessary to give our students every possible help. [CORRECT]
- d) "I don't know some word(s)/expression(s) in the choices above."

17

THE STUDY:
TARGET CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS

- TIME IS MONEY
- IDEAS ARE FOOD
- UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING; IDEAS ARE LIGHT-SOURCES; DISCOURSE IS A LIGHT-MEDIUM
- HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN
- VIRTUE IS UP; DEPRAVITY IS DOWN

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

18

THE STUDY:
METAPHORICAL STATEMENTS

Metaphor 1: TIME IS MONEY

- That flat tire cost me an hour.
- This gadget will save you hours.
- You need to budget your time.
- Is that worth your while?
- I've invested a lot of time in her.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

19

THE STUDY:
METAPHORICAL STATEMENTS

Metaphor 2: IDEAS ARE FOOD

- We don't need to spoon-feed our students.
- That's food for thought.
- He devoured the book.
- What he said left a bad taste in my mouth.
- Let me stew over that for a while.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

20

THE STUDY:
METAPHORICAL STATEMENTS

Metaphor 3:

UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING; IDEAS ARE LIGHT-SOURCES; DISCOURSE IS A LIGHT-MEDIUM

- Now I've got the whole picture.
- What is your outlook on that?
- I see what you're saying.
- Let me point something out to you.
- It looks different from my point of view.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

21

THE STUDY:
METAPHORICAL STATEMENTS

**Metaphor 4:
HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN**

- I'm depressed.
- Thinking about her always gives me a lift.
- He's really low these days.
- My spirits rose.
- I'm feeling down.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

22

THE STUDY:
METAPHORICAL STATEMENTS

Metaphor 5:

VIRTUE IS UP; DEPRAVITY IS DOWN

- He is high-minded.
- Don't be underhanded.
- That would be beneath me.
- That was a low-down thing to do.
- She is upright.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

23

THE STUDY: ANALYSIS

- Calculate # and % of correct responses
- Overall
- Each metaphor
- Each question
- Compare the results among the groups
- Small # of participants
- No statistical analysis

24

RESULTS: TOTAL CORRECT RESPONSES

The number and the percentage of correct responses for all questions

	# of correct responses	% of correct responses
Group 1	211 (out of 275)	76.73
Group 2	205 (out of 275)	74.55
Total	416 (out of 550)	75.64

*NSs: 142 out of 150 correct responses ⇒ 94.67%

RESULTS: CORRECT RESPONSES FOR EACH METAPHOR

The number and the percentage of correct responses for each metaphor

Metaphor	Group 1		Group 2		Total	
	# (out of 55)	%	# (out of 55)	%	# (out of 110)	%
Metaphor 1: TIME IS MONEY	43	78.18	47	85.45	90	81.82
Metaphor 2: IDEAS ARE FOOD	44	80.00	42	76.36	86	78.18
Metaphor 3: UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING...	46	83.64	49	89.09	95	86.36
Metaphor 4: HAPPY IS UP...	54	98.18	49	89.09	103	93.64
Metaphor 5: VIRTUE IS UP...	23	41.82	18	32.73	41	37.27

RESULTS: METAPHOR 1 "TIME IS MONEY"

The number and the percentage of correct responses for Metaphor 1

Question	Group 1		Group 2		Total	
	# (out of 11)	%	# (out of 11)	%	# (out of 22)	%
Q5. That flat tire cost me an hour.	10	90.91	11	100	21	95.45
Q14. This gadget will save you hours.	9	81.82	10	90.91	19	86.36
Q18. You need to budget your time.	6	54.55	7	63.64	13	59.09
Q23. Is that worth your while?	7	63.64	8	72.73	15	68.18
Q27. I've invested a lot of time in her.	11	100	11	100	22	100

RESULTS: METAPHOR 2 "IDEAS ARE FOOD"

The number and the percentage of correct responses for Metaphor 2

Question	Group 1		Group 2		Total	
	# (out of 11)	%	# (out of 11)	%	# (out of 22)	%
Q1. We don't need to spoon-feed our students.	11	100	10	90.91	21	95.45
Q9. That's food for thought.	3	27.27	5	45.45	8	36.36
Q15. He devoured the book.	9	81.82	6	54.55	15	68.18
Q24. What he said left a bad taste in my mouth.	11	100	11	100	22	100
Q30. Let me stew over that for a while.	10	90.91	10	90.91	20	90.91

RESULTS: METAPHOR 3 "UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING..."

The number and the percentage of correct responses for Metaphor 3

Question	Group 1		Group 2		Total	
	# (out of 11)	%	# (out of 11)	%	# (out of 22)	%
Q8. Now I've got the whole picture.	11	100	11	100	22	100
Q12. What is your outlook on that?	10	90.91	10	90.91	20	90.91
Q20. I see what you're saying.	11	100	11	100.00	22	100
Q25. Let me point something out to you.	4	36.36	6	54.55	10	45.45
Q29. It looks different from my point of view.	10	90.91	11	100	21	95.45

RESULTS:
METAPHOR 4
"HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN"

The number and the percentage of correct responses for Metaphor 4

Question	Group 1		Group 2		Total	
	# (out of 11)	%	# (out of 11)	%	# (out of 22)	%
Q2. I'm depressed.	10	90.91	11	100	21	95.45
Q10. Thinking about her always gives me a lift.	11	100	11	100	22	100
Q16. He's really low these days.	11	100	11	100	22	100
Q22. My spirits rose.	11	100	7	63.64	18	81.82
Q28. I'm feeling down.	11	100	9	81.82	20	90.91

RESULTS:
METAPHOR 5
"VIRTUE IS UP; DEPRAVITY IS DOWN"

The number and the percentage of correct responses for Metaphor 5

Question	Group 1		Group 2		Total	
	# (out of 11)	%	# (out of 11)	%	# (out of 22)	%
Q4. He is high-minded.	2	18.18	6	54.55	8	36.36
Q11. Don't be underhanded.	4	36.36	2	18.18	6	27.27
Q17. That would be beneath me.	5	45.45	1	9.09	6	27.27
Q19. That was a low-down thing to do.	6	54.55	5	45.45	11	50.50
Q26. She is upright.	6	54.55	4	36.36	10	45.45

DISCUSSION

- o Appropriated English conceptual metaphors
→Room for improvement (cf. NSs)
- o Little difference b/w Group 1 & 2
- o Familiar: Metaphor 1, 3, 4
Unfamiliar: Metaphor 5
- o Metaphor 4: Group 1 > Group 2
→Frequently exposed while abroad?

32

LIMITATIONS

- o # of participants
- o Level of participants
- o Target conceptual metaphors & expressions
- o Interpretation only
- o Why are certain metaphors familiar/unfamiliar?
⇒Need closer investigation

33

IMPLICATIONS

- o Learnability of L2 conceptual metaphors?
→ESL & EFL contexts
- o Learning & teaching of L2 concepts
→Focus on metaphors important but unfamiliar to the learners

34

IMPLICATIONS

- More empirical research on:
- o Other conceptual metaphors
→What metaphors should be learned?
 - o Effects of experience of living in a TL environment
 - o Production
 - o Learnability & teachability
→How can learning & teaching of L2 concepts be facilitated?

35

REFERENCES

- Danesi, M. (1986). The role of metaphor in second language pedagogy. *Rassegna italiana di linguistica applicata*, 18, 1-10.
- Danesi, M. (1993). Metaphorical competence in second language acquisition and second language teaching: The neglected dimension. In J. E. Atatis (Ed.), *Language, Communication, and Social Meaning*. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Danesi, M. (1995). Learning and teaching languages: The role of "conceptual fluency". *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(1), 3-20.
- Kecskes, I., & Papp, T. (2000). *Foreign Languages and Mother Tongue*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Lantolf, J. P. (2006). Sociocultural Theory and L2: State of the art. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28(1), 67-109.
- Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

36

REFERENCES

- Nezhad, M. R. T., & Hashemian, M. (2006). The development of conceptual fluency & metaphorical competence in L2 learners. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(1), 73-100. *fluency framework for teaching Italian as a second language*
- Russo, G. A. (1997). *A conceptual*. PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ont.
- Swain, M., Kinnear, P., & Steinman, L. (2010). *Sociocultural theory in second language education: An introduction through narratives*. Toronto: MM Textbooks.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1981). The genesis of higher mental functions. In Wertsch, J. V. (Ed.), *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). The collected works: Vol. 1. Problems of general psychology (R. W. Rieber & A. S. Carton, Eds.). New York: Plenum Press.

37