

# Metaphorical Awareness in the EFL Classroom: A Comparative Analysis of Metaphorical Systems in English and Japanese

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**Abstract:** Although metaphor is often considered to be of little importance in language learning, it is much more pervasive in actual language use than typically realized. As such, the awareness and understanding of the differences between linguistic and conceptual metaphor are of great significance to the language learner. As conceptual metaphors are much more difficult to identify within language, they can prove quite problematic for the language learner, particularly in cases where the underlying concept differs between L1 and L2. To illustrate these points, this paper will analyze two newspaper articles of the same topic, one in Japanese and one in English, identifying the actual number of metaphors present, as well as examining a number of specific examples. Practical tasks for helping raise students' awareness of metaphor will also be suggested.

要約：言語を学ぶ上で、隠喩はそれ程重要ではなく思われがちだが、しばしば無意識に使われ、かなり浸透している。「普通メタファー」と「概念メタファー」の違いを意識し理解することは、言語を学ぶ者にとって、大変意味のあることだ。言語上で概念メタファーを見つける方が難しいので、言語を学ぶ者にとっては難しい。特に母国語と外国語の基礎概念が違う場合はなおさらだ。このことからここでは、日本語と英語で書かれた同じ話題の新聞記事を分析し、隠喩がいくつあるのか見つけだし、例文をいくつか調べてみた。メタファーに対する生徒の意識を高めるため、実用的な使い方が提案されている。

## 1. Introduction

It appears that in the realm of TEFL metaphor is not considered a topic worthy of class time, as the use of 'figurative language' has commonly been associated as being restricted to 'creative' uses in poetry and prose. However, researchers such as Lakoff and Johnson opened the doors to a new understanding of metaphor in 1980 with *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 2003). Ever since then, with researchers such as Kovecses (2002), Holme(2004), Littlemore, and Low (2006) building on this area, it has become more apparent that metaphor permeates much more of everyday language than traditionally thought.

Even though this new understanding of metaphor and its implications in TEFL have been around for almost 30 years, it seems there is still very little class time devoted to metaphor and its bearing on the language learner. Littlemore and Low (2006: 268) argue that although

metaphor is 'highly relevant to second language learning, teaching, and testing', 'the ability of second language learners to use metaphors is often still not seen as a core ability'. One major issue in developing students' awareness of metaphor is that most occurrences are 'hidden' to the untrained eye, not just in learning English, but also in a learner's L1. Indeed, metaphorical uses of a given word can be more common than the word's literal meaning. Additionally, as many metaphors can be analyzed in a variety of ways, approaching this field of language understanding in the classroom can be intimidating to both teacher and student. Despite these challenges, metaphorical awareness is an invaluable tool for the learner of English, particularly in their becoming more autonomous in language acquisition.

This paper will attempt to offer some insight into these issues by first clarifying what metaphor is and the forms it may take. Through the process of comparing and contrasting actual metaphorical usage in authentic Japanese and English newspaper articles, the analysis will illustrate the prevalence of metaphor in everyday use, and expose some of the problems metaphor may present to the EFL student. Finally, possible activities for helping students develop a better awareness of metaphor utilizing authentic texts will also be explored.

## 2. Defining metaphor

The definition of metaphor can prove quite elusive, given the range of forms they can take. Lakoff and Johnson point out that many see metaphor as 'characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action' (2003: 4), and they then go on to argue the contrary. Perhaps it may be more helpful to understand metaphor as the process of talking about something in terms of another linguistically, topically, or conceptually unrelated thing, with the purpose of comparing, and realizing certain qualities of, that which is stated to that which is metaphorically implied. Research over the years has provided us with both the notions of 'metaphorical linguistic expressions' (Kovecses, 2002: 4) and 'metaphorical concepts' (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003: 8). These have been coined 'linguistic metaphor' and 'conceptual metaphor', respectively.

### 2.1 Linguistic metaphor

Linguistic metaphors more commonly represent the traditional idea of metaphor, and put simply, can be understood as the actual words or phrase that is used to make a comparison to something unrelated. Knowles and Moon say of the function of linguistic metaphor, 'much more can be conveyed, through implication and connotation, than through straight forward, literal language' (2006: 9).

Linguistic metaphor is commonly analyzed by identifying its *topic*, *vehicle*, and *grounds* (Coulthard et al., 2009: Unit 7). In the example *young children's minds are sponges*, 'sponge'

is a linguistic metaphor that can be understood through the process of establishing 'young children's minds' as the described *topic* of the statement, and 'sponges' as the *vehicle* that delivers the item of comparison. The *grounds* of understanding would be that sponges absorb the liquid around them, in the way that young children's minds 'take in' knowledge. For native English speakers, which features of the vehicle are intended to be transferred to the topic are typically understood subconsciously. However, this linguistic metaphor may present more of a challenge to EFL students whose L1 does not employ this specific figurative comparison.

## 2.2 Conceptual metaphor

In contrast to the notion of linguistic metaphor, the more recent understanding of conceptual metaphor varies in that the metaphorical comparison is not explicitly stated in the words of an expression but rather understood through an implied underlying concept. Many times these concepts are founded on basic human experience, are applied to less tangible concepts, and result in metaphorical understanding in a large extent of common language use. Holme supports this with 'conceptualization suggests the act of bringing something within our cognitive grasp, or of giving it a form that our minds can know and make use of' (2004: 12).

Conceptual metaphor is analyzed by a *source domain* from which certain characteristics are 'mapped onto' a *target domain* to help in how we understand it. Using an example from one of the texts analyzed in this study, in *it is also necessary to wrestle with tax reform*, our understanding and image of *wrestling* or a physical struggle is easy for us to visualize and apply to the more abstract notion of making a policy decision. Such a concept could be generalized as DECIDING ECONOMIC POLICY IS A STRUGGLE, with specific senses of the source domain, a struggle with an adversary, being 'mapped onto' the act of deciding economic policy, the target domain. It is important to note that conceptual metaphors are meant to be understood in one direction, hence it should not be conversely deduced from this example that A STRUGGLE IS DECIDING ECONOMIC POLICY, as there are no specific features of policy decisions being applied to a struggle.

With this understanding of conceptual metaphor, it becomes immediately apparent that linguistic metaphors can also be analyzed for their underlying conceptual systems. So, while not all conceptual metaphors are realized through a linguistic metaphor, all linguistic metaphors can be traced to an underlying conceptual metaphor. This view is supported by Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 7), as well as Deignan, Gabrys, and Solska (1997: 352). For example, again in *young children's minds are sponges*, specifically the absorbent quality of a sponge functions as a conceptual *source domain*, which is 'mapped' on to the conceptual *target domain* of 'children's learning processes' and provides us with a generalized conceptual understanding of learning as 'soaking up' knowledge, or LEARNING IS ABSORBING.

As will be illustrated in this paper, the use of conceptual metaphors can be difficult to detect, particularly for the language learner, considering that this is a way of looking at language that Littlemore suggests 'few people other than linguists would see as figurative' (2006: 8).

### 3. The language learner and metaphor awareness

As metaphorical usage can vary from culture to culture, language learners constantly run into examples of figurative language in English that does not translate to their own languages' linguistic or conceptual systems. In such cases where the figurative use is not so transparent, a number of problems arise for the language learner, the most basic being the realization that they are not dealing with literal language.

As many metaphors are founded on basic human conceptualizations that transcend actual language, it is not surprising to find that many conceptual metaphors are shared among different languages (Deignan, Gabrys, and Solska, 1997: 353). However, as will be illustrated in the newspaper analysis, just as many differences exist, and identifying unfamiliar conceptualizations pose that much more trouble for the EFL student. Amplifying this problem is the fact that varying concepts can be applied to any given metaphor, based on the reader or listener's interpretation. Littlemore even suggests that conceptual metaphors are at best 'informed guesswork' and that 'we can never be certain about our formulations' (2006: 13). In the above example of *wrestling with tax reform*, other possible conceptual understandings could be:

DECIDING ECONOMIC POLICY IS A GAME  
DECIDING ECONOMIC POLICY IS A SPORT  
DECIDING ECONOMIC POLICY IS WAR  
ECONOMIC POLICY IS AN ADVERSARY  
And so on...

Each concept slightly changes our sense of the original text, altering the 'thematic development' of any other information on this topic that may follow. Deciphering the writer's intended understanding is dependent on contextual clues, as well as familiarity with common English conceptualizations. Without experience in how to deal with metaphor, language learners not only risk being unable to understand, but ultimately risk misinterpreting, unaware that they have even done so.

### 4. Analysis of metaphorical systems in authentic texts

With these points in mind, and focusing in on the Japanese learner of English, we shall investigate some similarities and differences between metaphorical usage in Japanese and

English. For this study two newspaper articles on the declining Japanese economy, and each respective writer's opinions for how Japan can escape its recession, were chosen. Both articles were analyzed in their original languages: the New York Times in English and the Nippon Keizai Shinbun (Japan Economics Newspaper) in Japanese. By comparing and contrasting the metaphorical systems found, we may see how pervasive metaphorical usage is and may better understand the figurative thought conceptions of each language. From this analysis, we may identify tasks that can be used to raise metaphorical awareness in Japanese learners of English.

Table 1  
Comparison of Identified Metaphorical Systems

	English New York Times Article (NYT) (936 total words)	Japanese Nippon Keizai Shinbun Article (NKS)  (original article: 1,602 Japanese characters) (English translation: 876 total words)	Total
Identified instances of metaphor (each metaphor is counted only once, regardless of the number of possible conceptual interpretations)	62	81	143
Identified instances of conceptual metaphors (a single metaphorical instance may be interpreted through differing conceptual themes)	68	98	166
Identified common conceptual 'themes' between both articles	-	-	12
Identified 'shared' conceptual metaphors that are used in the other language (although may not be present in the article being compared to)	34	58	-
Identified 'culturally unique metaphors' not used in the other language	25	18	-

\* Japanese metaphors are identified according to their original sense in Japanese, not according to their translated English equivalent, unless the English translation has the same sense of the Japanese metaphor.

Table 1 above shows heavy metaphorical use in both the Japanese and English articles. Closer inspection of each article shows a wide range of both linguistic and conceptual metaphor, some uses and concepts shared across both languages, and others not. Although focus on differences will help to identify challenges for language learners, it is important to note the large number of shared metaphorical concepts and how this raw data lends to the previous argument for this case.

In the following section, we will analyze some specific examples of metaphor found in both articles. In doing so, common themes and patterns will emerge, and differences will become apparent. Through our understanding of these systems, metaphors that could pose problems for language learners will become more evident.

#### 4.1 Common metaphorical systems

Analysis of both articles provided 166 instances of conceptual metaphor usage between the two articles, such as ECONOMIC HARDSHIP IS WAR, ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IS A BODY OF WATER, and IDEAS ARE PLANTS. It is interesting to note that 68 of these instances can be condensed into 12 common conceptual themes that appear in both articles:

A COUNTRY IS A MOVING BEING  
 POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE LIVING BEINGS  
 POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IS A LIVING BEING  
 POLITICS IS A GAME  
 POLITICS IS WAR  
 ECONOMIC POLICIES ARE OBJECTS WITH PHYSICAL MASS  
 AN ECONOMY IS A MACHINE  
 ECONOMIC DECISIONS ARE A WATER VESSEL  
 PAST ACTIONS ARE OBJECTS LEFT AS A GIFT  
 LESS PEOPLE IS DOWN  
 ECONOMIC STATUS IS A PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE HUMAN BODY  
 ECONOMIC RECESSION IS BEING CONFINED

As these last two conceptual themes share the largest number of common instances, they will be focused on in more detail below.

#### 4.2 Examples

ECONOMIC STATUS IS A PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE HUMAN BODY provided 6 examples from the New York Times (NYT) and 4 examples from the Nippon Keizai Shinbun (NKS) articles:

**Example 1** (NYT): Japan is not so much (a) *the sick man of Asia* as the (b) *region's economic Lazarus*, (c) its vital signs long ago shut down by poor policy making.

There are three separate examples of metaphor here, complementing each other in a type of extended metaphor.

- (a) Topic: the Japanese economy  
Vehicle: *sick man of Asia*  
Grounds: A strong economy is necessary for economic vitality.
- (b) Topic: the Japanese economy  
Vehicle: *Lazarus*  
Grounds: As Lazarus was a biblical figure who was brought back to life, the writer implies here that although the Japanese economy was 'killed' by fiscal policy, Japan will regain economic power.
- (c) Topic: the Japanese economy  
Vehicle: inferred as 'a (dead) person who has no vital signs'  
Grounds: When someone is admitted to a hospital in critical condition, their vital signs are monitored until they recover or are pronounced dead.

These three specific metaphorical examples are not used in Japanese. The Lazarus metaphor in particular may present a challenge to non-Christian cultures. However, 'Nippon no keizai ga yowamatta' (the Japanese economy has grown weak), which also refers to a condition of health, could alternatively be used.

**Example 2** (NYT): *Hobbled by* the weakest productivity growth among the Group of 7 industrial powers, Japan has been supplanted by China

- Topic: the Japanese economy  
Vehicle: inferred as 'a person who walks/proceeds with a limp'  
Grounds: Improper development / lack of strength in the legs can hamper a person's ability to walk/progress.

There are two occurrences of this same metaphorical usage of 'hobble' in the NYT article. The exact metaphorical usage of 'walking with a limp' is not used in Japanese, although a similar Japanese expression, 'keizai no ashi wo hipparu' (pulling the legs of the economy) could be used to imply progress is being impeded.

**Example 3** (NYT): As *rich countries tighten their belts*, it makes sense for Japanese companies

to look at fast-growing developing economies

Topic: inferred as 'an economically-strong country spending / consuming less than they normally would'

Vehicle: tighten their belts

Grounds: A person who decides to lose weight by consuming less will tighten their belt to constrict their stomach, limiting the amount they need to eat before feeling 'full'.

In Japanese, a related metaphorical expression would be 'saifu no himo ga katai' (for the pull-strings of ones wallet to be tight). Japanese wallets of yesteryear were simple pouches with a draw-string. Saying that the pull-string is 'tight' implies a miser, saying it is 'loose' implies someone who spends frivolously. The concept of constricting or the tightening of an opening in order to conserve is similar to both languages.

**Example4** (NKS): The deterioration of politics is *pulling the legs of the economy* (In Japanese, 'seiji no rekka ga keizai no ashi wo hippari' illustrates slowing down or hindering someone's progression by holding their legs.)

Topic: inferred as 'hindering the economy from progressing'

Vehicle: *pulling the legs*

Grounds: A living being needs to have the free use of its legs in order to move forward / move freely.

'Pulling ones leg' in English refers to joking with or tricking someone, yet the conceptual use in 'forcibly inhibiting someone' is similar in either case, be it inhibiting progress or realization of the truth. An English metaphor more similar in use to 'ashi wo hippari' and also present in the NYT article would be 'to hobble'. Alternatively, English metaphors may also speak of something being 'tied down', 'pulled down', or 'weighted down' by something that hinders its progress.

We will next look at another conceptual metaphor that shared examples between both articles: ECONOMIC RECESSION IS BEING CONFINED.

**Example 1** (NYT): the confirmation Monday of its (Japan's) *emergence from recession*

Topic: inferred as 'improvement in the Japanese economy'

Vehicle: *emergence*

Grounds: The sense of emergence here is that of coming out of somewhere that one has been confined, perhaps a prison.



'Emergence' is not similarly used in Japanese, although a comparable sense of escaping from confinement is found in 'nuke dasu' (to break loose).

**Example 2 (NKS)** : To *escape from recession*, a combination of economic stimulus and restructuring is essential (In Japanese, 'dasshutsu' literally means 'to escape' or 'breakout' and is metaphorically understood as 'to get out of difficulty').

Topic: inferred as 'improvement in the economy'

Vehicle: *escape*

Grounds: The sense here is forcibly removing oneself from confinement, such as breaking out of a prison. Improvement of the economy would equal escape from the recession.

There are three separate occurrences of this metaphor in the NKS article. Compared to the NYT example of 'emergence' above, 'escape' has a similar, yet much stronger sense of actively freeing oneself from confinement. The metaphorical use of 'escape' would also be understood in English.

**Example 3 (NKS)**: Questions we must ask about the general elections are about *an exit strategy that will decide Japan's future* and a strategy for growth. (In the Japanese 'Nippon no shorai wo kimeru deguchi senryaku', 'deguchi' literally means 'exit' or 'way out', and 'senryaku' is a strategy or tactic to escape from the current economic depression.)

Topic: inferred as 'a plan for improving the economic situation'

Vehicle: *an exit strategy*

Grounds: Adding the necessity to devise a plan to leave a place or situation implies that one is 'trapped' or 'hindered' in some way.

This metaphor is also used in English.

#### 4.3 Orientational metaphor

In addition to the metaphorical concepts that are shared between English and Japanese in these articles, it is also of interest to note common orientational metaphors between the two languages within the topic of economics. Lakoff and Johnson differentiate orientational metaphor as 'one that does not structure one concept in terms of another but instead organizes a whole system of concepts with respect to one another' (2003: 15).

Some themes found in both articles follow under one of Lakoff and Johnson's key orientational metaphors, MORE IS UP / LESS IS DOWN:

MORE FINANCIAL INVESTMENT IS UP / LESS IS DOWN  
 MORE FINANCIAL GAIN IS UP / LESS IS DOWN  
 LESS TRUST IS DOWN  
 FEWER PEOPLE IS DOWN  
 MORE TAXATION IS UP  
 GAINING MORE ATTENTION IS UP

Understanding of orientational metaphor is just as important to the language learner, as is shown in the examples that arise in these two articles. Orientational metaphor is understood and analyzed as a type of conceptual metaphor, also with similarities and differences across languages. However, although cultures may share orientational concepts, 'which concepts are oriented which way and which orientations are most important, vary from culture to culture' (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003: 25).

#### 4.4 Dissimilar metaphorical systems

Analysis of both newspaper articles also reveals metaphorical systems not used in the other language: 25 instances from the New York Times article and 18 instances from the Nippon Keizai Shinbun article (see Table 1). Instances where the underlying conceptual metaphor is not shared will likely be more difficult for the language learner to decipher. We will look at a few examples from the New York Times article that could cause problems for the EFL student:

**Example 1 (NYT)** : But some of the very reasons behind Japan's years of *stagnation* have a good chance of *raising its profile* in Asia once more

The conceptualization of 'stagnation' could be understood as ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IS A BODY OF WATER. A Japanese metaphor that could be used here is 'kusaru' (to go rotten, spoil, or decay). 'Raising one's profile' illustrates the concept GAINING ATTENTION IS UP. In Japanese, 'mochi agaru' (be lifted up, be raised up) may be used, but the sense is of someone else doing the lifting. Although the orientational usage is similar in both languages, the specific realization differs.

**Example 2 (NYT)** : As *rich countries tighten their belts*, it makes sense for Japanese companies to look at fast-growing developing economies

Also previously analyzed above as ECONOMIC STATUS IS A PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE HUMAN BODY, this conceptualization implies that having money equals eating more or that EATING MORE IS BETTER. Traditional Japanese foods are very healthy and meal portions in Japan are typically quite modest. As overeating and obesity are also looked down

upon in Japan, eating more than necessary would not be a shared value in Japanese culture.

**Example 3** (NYT) : As things stand, *Japan is adrift, anchored neither in East nor West* and *scoring badly* on virtually all *globalization criteria*

Although 'adrift' not used identically in Japanese, the conceptual theme of ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IS A BODY OF WATER in 'Japan is adrift' could be compared with 'nagasareteiru' (to be tossed around in the water) in Japanese. This metaphor could also be interpreted as ECONOMIC DECISIONS ARE A WATER VESSEL, which also works with the image of the second metaphor here in a country being 'anchored'. Countries cannot be 'anchored' in Japanese, but they can 'tsukamaru' (grab hold of something). This conceptualization is also common to Japanese, exemplified with another unique linguistic metaphor from the Nippon Keizai Shinbun article: 'Obama's American Administration *cut the rudder* from marketplace standards to government intervention', which compares a decision made by the Obama administration to steering a boat.

The final two metaphors in this example, 'scoring badly' on 'globalization criteria' could imply that COOPERATION WITH OTHER NATIONS IS A TEST. These two metaphors do not share linguistic or conceptual grounds in Japanese, although a related alternative could be 'Nippon ga okureteiru' (Japan is late / falling behind).

As shown in these few examples, there are many instances where metaphors across languages can differ either linguistically, conceptually, or have no common grounds at all. Additionally, some metaphors are culturally weighted and require more than just interpretation to be understood. All of these examples pose a challenge to the language learner and illustrate the importance of metaphorical awareness.

## 5. Activities to help raise metaphorical awareness

In the following activities, in order to decipher and retain figurative language, students should always be aware of the various meanings of words in the metaphor, search the context for clues to the writer's intended meaning, as well as explore the connections of relevant culturally weighed metaphor in English. Littlemore (2006: 25) makes similar suggestions for teaching metaphor.

### 5.1 Recognition and analysis of metaphor in L1

As even native speakers can be unaware of metaphorical language, an ideal place to start would be activities that focus on recognition of metaphor in the student's L1. It's clear that if learners are unaware of metaphor in L1, they may translate metaphors in L2 literally, as

Deignan, Gabrys, and Solska (1997: 355) point out. Having students analyze metaphor by topic, vehicle, and grounds, as well as working with conceptual metaphor in L1, will help develop metaphoric awareness transferable to L2 once they start working with the English text. It is also important to match the text to the ability and interest of the class, and the text could be cut into shorter parts to make it more manageable.

Students could be asked to work with the L1 article in groups, identifying and analyzing what they believe to be metaphorical constructions, and explaining how they came to their conclusions within the group. Groups would compare their findings in a class discussion, the teacher guiding the discovery process where necessary. Allowing the students to explore different possible interpretations associated within the context, students will better come to understand the function of metaphor. Lazar (1996: 46) supports this practice in arguing that 'the learner needs to unravel the covert connections in the utterance through a process of inference' between the elements being compared in metaphor. By giving the students the opportunity to think about *how* they say things in their L1 and *why* that language is in fact figurative, they are developing skills in metaphorical awareness that will transfer to their understanding of English. Additionally, with classroom discussion of the L1 metaphors being conducted in English, instances of culturally unique metaphor will also become more apparent to students.

## 5.2 Interpretation of English metaphorical systems

Having developed some understanding of metaphorical systems in their L1, students will be ready to look at English metaphors. Before diving into English texts, start with the English interpretations of the L1 metaphors that were discovered in the above activity. Encourage students to use these English metaphors in their own original written or spoken constructions. By comparing and contrasting their understating of metaphorical uses with each other, they expand their ability to use the metaphor and identify incorrect uses. When working with conceptual metaphor, focusing on analysis of the source and target domains may help with student's retention. Littlemore and Low (2006: 272) agree with this strategy. After the teacher has worked through a few examples with the class, students could work on analyses in groups, focusing on metaphorical systems shared with the L1 before moving on to dissimilar ones.

The next stage would be looking at the English text, similar in topic and length to, and sharing some metaphorical systems already encountered in, the L1 text. As in the above activity, students attempt to identify metaphor and discuss their reasoning as a class. Again, it is through the process of discovery and reasoning that students will develop the ability to identify and correctly interpret metaphor on their own. These skills are effectively developed in group activities where students can compare and contrast their understandings with each other. Lazar (1996: 47-50) and Littlemore and Low (2006: 198) similarly emphasize the importance of student discovery.

Afterwards, by breaking up the text, the teacher could assign tasks that identify a number of English metaphors, and ask students to analyze and interpret. This could be approached in a number of different ways to be done in groups or individually such as: a straight-forward analysis of topic, grounds, and vehicle, identification of possible conceptual interpretations, translation of the metaphor into similar use in L1, or a multiple choice activity with students focusing on reasoning why they understand the metaphor in a specific way. Regardless of the task, in students' working through their interpretations of an English metaphor, particularly when a specific metaphor is not used in the L1, they are reasoning through the process of imagery, which in turn naturally develops their awareness of metaphor in general. In thinking about various possible interpretations as illustrated previously, as well as taking note of the context, students will be able to more accurately interpret metaphoric usage. Additionally, with practice in looking at metaphors in varied authentic materials, students will see more patterns in, and become familiar with, common English conceptualizations.

It should be noted that teachers need to consider student's levels when proposing to focus on metaphor in the classroom. Indeed, Deignan, Gabrys, and Solska (1997: 358) warn that the use of 'intellectually challenging' approaches to teaching metaphor 'might not be suitable for less motivated students' and that certain levels 'might not be equipped with the necessary metalanguage for discussion'.

### 5.3 Culturally-weighted metaphor

Culturally weighted metaphors are not necessarily the 'next stage' in raising students' metaphorical awareness, as deciphering these metaphors will likely prove the most difficult, and will have to be dealt with as encountered. However, when approaching culturally weighted metaphor, teachers should be aware of what they are asking of their students.

Although some sociolinguists argue that 'English is neutral' in terms of there being no cultural requirements for learning the language, as shown in a number of the examples in Section Four, conceptual and orientational metaphors do indeed bring along 'cultural baggage' from their originating language. These types of metaphors will likely require either teacher explanation or students researching the cultural background of the metaphor. Depending on the teacher, students, and context in which English is being taught, this is an area which requires care concerning the explanation and use of such metaphor. As illustrated previously, some metaphors, particularly those based in religious beliefs or conceptual ideology, may not only be uncommon to the language learners' L1, but possibly even at odds with their own cultural beliefs. Teachers must remember that in asking students to utilize certain metaphorical language, we are also asking them to *think* and *speak* in terms of cultural beliefs that they may not hold to be true.

## 6. Conclusion

Through distinguishing the understandings of both linguistic and conceptual metaphor, this paper has attempted to bring light to the prominence of metaphorical systems actually present in everyday language and illustrate the importance of metaphorical awareness for language learners. Although many researchers have exposed the need for such training, and contributed various strategies to approach this subject, the 'fuzziness' involved in identifying, analyzing, and understanding conceptual thought is likely a major factor in the lack of classroom attention metaphor receives.

Focusing on the analysis of two similar newspaper articles in both Japanese and English, we were able to compare and contrast the metaphorical systems present in both languages, and identify issues that could pose difficulties for students. Finally, progressive classroom activities that focused on group-based work, brought students attention to the context in which metaphor arises, and allowed chances for students to discover and experiment with metaphorical usage in both L1 and L2 were suggested. Specific attention was also made to the sensitivity required in dealing with culturally weighted metaphor.

Regardless of the difficulties surrounding the teaching of metaphor, recent research and the relatively new understanding of conceptual metaphor has shown its importance and the potential obstacles it presents to language learners in everyday language. It has become clear that not attending to the EFL student's need to develop metaphorical awareness is certainly 'pulling the legs' of their potential language ability.

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