Teaching Metaphor and Metonymy of Emotion Expressions:
The Effects of Metaphoric Mapping Approach

Yi-chen Chen & Huei-ling Lai
Yuan Ze University & National Chengchi University

The relationship between metaphor and metonymy is so intricate that it is described as a slippery continuum with blurry boundary (Barden, 2010). One good example to demonstrate the continuum is emotion expressions. At one end of the continuum are metonymic expressions that involve human beings' physiological reactions; for instance, the expression *hot under collar* indicates increased body heat when being angry. At the other end are metaphoric expressions that utilize conceptual mappings of different domains, linking corresponding traits between source and target domains. For example, *anger* is mapped to the domain of *fire*. Moreover, some expressions involve combinations of metonymic principles and metaphoric concepts; *throw a tantrum* is such an example, which originally refers to an insane behavior but is metaphorically mapped to the emotion anger. Thus, emotion expressions can be deemed as locating on the metaphor-metonymy continuum (see Table 1). Research has shown that language learners react differently to emotion expressions along the continuum. In Chen and Lai's (2012) study, EFL learners showed their capability of distinguishing metaphors from metonymies, and were more certain about their judgments in identifying metaphoric expressions than in metonymic ones; furthermore, EFL learners recognized more easily emotion expressions that were taught than those about other subjects like *love* and *idea* that were not taught. Their findings suggest that explicit teaching instructions should be given to raise learners' awareness of the nature of figurative language and shared universal experiences, and that an equal attention should be given to metaphor and metonymy.

Many approaches have been proposed to teach L2 learners metaphor and metonymy. Some assist L2 learners to recognize metaphoric themes behind the metaphoric expressions (Boers, 2000, 2001; Boers & Stengers, 2008), and some encourage L2 learners to notice cross-linguistic comparisons (Deignan, Gabry, & Solska, 1997; Low, 1988). While their effects on learning vary, most claim L2 learners' better comprehension of figurative language and longer retention period of learned expressions. However, those methods mainly focus on metaphors and rarely pay attention to metonymy, and they concentrate on highlighting the differences between languages and cultures, but fail to utilize the common and universal knowledge to facilitate L2 learners' comprehension.

The present study, adopting Kövecses' (2001) idea, proposes a teaching approach, the Metaphoric Mapping Approach, which emphasizes not only cross-domain and within-domain mapping processes but also the similarities and differences between languages and between cultures. The study also evaluates the teaching effects of such an approach on facilitating the development of EFL learners' awareness, comprehension, and retention. Participants were 115 university students in Taiwan. Two instruments, the Awareness Test and the Comprehension Test, were designed and employed to measure EFL learners' performances before and after implementing the approach. The results show that MMA facilitates awareness of metaphors formed with abstract concepts, and improves comprehension of culture-specific expressions. The findings shed light on the effectiveness of to EFL teaching of metaphor and metonymy.

Table 1. *Metonymy-Metaphor Continuum (Chen & Lai, 2012)*

Metonymy	Metaphoric metonymy	Metonymic metaphor	Metaphor
Based on conceptual metonymy.	Based on the combination of metaphor and metonymy principles.		Based on conceptual metaphor.