

Zacharias, S. (2021) Review of Piquer-Píriz & Alejo-González (2020): Metaphor in Foreign Language Instruction. Metaphor and the Social World, 11(2), pp. 361-367. (doi: 10.1075/msw.00023.zac) [Book Review].

There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/249936/

Deposited on: 3 September 2021

 $Enlighten-Research \ publications \ by \ members \ of \ the \ University \ of \ Glasgow \ \underline{http://eprints.gla.ac.uk}$

Piquer-Píriz, A. & Alejo-González, R. (Eds). (2020). *Metaphor in Foreign Language Instruction*. In Applications of Cognitive Linguistics [ACL], 42. Berlin & Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH. 285pp. ISBN 9783110626735 (HB); 9783110630367 (EB).

Reviewed by Sally Zacharias (University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK)

The collective volume "Metaphor in Foreign Language Instruction," edited by Ana Piquer-Píriz and Rafael Alejo-González, and dedicated to Dr. Fiona MacArthur, offers the reader a timely, urgent and comprehensive overview of the study of metaphor in second language (L2) teaching contexts. As pointed out by Piquer-Píriz and Alejo-González in their introductory chapter, since Lakoff and Johnson's book "Metaphors we live by" (1980), there has been a growing body of compelling evidence in favour of cognitive linguistics instruction in the language classroom. However, there has been little positive impact on mainstream teaching and materials in Foreign Language classrooms. To address this, Piquer-Píriz and Alejo-González have brought together 12 chapters, written by renowned scholars, providing in-depth, systematic and rigorous reviews, as well as crucial insights into key theoretical issues and analyses of metaphor research in L2 pedagogical settings.

In the introduction of the volume, Piquer-Píriz and Alejo-González cover what they see to be the key issues in the field of applied cognitive linguistics: (1) that the concept of metaphorical competence needs further clarification and development; (2) that little research in the field has reached material writers and practitioners; (3) that there is a need to extend research to languages other than English, and (4) individual learner needs linked to age, proficiency level, and learning context should be addressed. These four issues act as a springboard for the rest of the volume. The editors have chosen to organise the volume into two main parts. Part I consists of four review articles that focus on relevant theoretical issues. Part II is divided into two sections, with the first consisting of five chapters exploring learners' knowledge of figurative language and how they can use it. The final three chapters investigate how this knowledge can be integrated and developed in a classroom context.

In the first chapter of Part I, Gibbs provides a useful overview of what he sees as some of MacArthur's most influential work on metaphor. He reviews four studies each exemplifying the need for the researcher "to see generalities in detailed particularities of real people in different circumstances" (p. 34). Firstly, he reviews her cross-linguistic study on the primary metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING in 27 conversations of university tutors and their students, in five different European universities (MacArthur, Krennmayr, & Littlemore, 2015). Gibbs brings to the reader's attention the significance of the study, by rightly reminding them that although the primary metaphor has universal character across different languages, the findings demonstrate how differently this metaphor surfaces across the conversations about learning and knowledge, depending on the languages of the speakers, and the very context-specific constraints of the interactions taking place.

Following on from this, Gibbs then reviews MacArthur and Piquer-Píriz's (2007) study on young second language learners' understandings of body-part metaphors. The researchers show that although young learners understand these metaphors, albeit differently to adults, their metaphorical reasoning varies according to both the adaptive and communicative requirements of the context. The third study in

Gibbs' chapter, by MacArthur (2005), focuses on conventional horse-riding metaphors in Spanish and English. This study is interesting because it highlights, contrary to common belief, how the entrenchment of these metaphors is caused by the familiarity of the target domain and not the widespread familiarity of the source domain (most people do not ride horses today). In this study, MacArthur cautions to metaphor analysists who eagerly seek out the embodied experience and shows, with her study, how speakers use their cultural repository as a motivating foundation. The fourth study of the chapter looks at how non-native English speakers talk together in English and create hybrid metaphors. By analysing the metaphors in situated context, McArthur (2016) highlights the importance of understanding metaphor as a discourse phenomenon and that adopting strict native-speaker norms in understanding metaphor use is unhelpful. In the final study of the chapter, MacArthur (2015) exemplifies some of the difficulties she encountered when applying the MIP and MIPVU methods for identifying metaphors in discourse. By focuses on a corpus of conversations between university lecturers and their students (non-native speakers of English), she demonstrates the complexities of the methods but without denying their usefulness. Gibbs reminds us that the lesson McArthur tries to tell us with all these studies is that all "metaphor use is inherently contextualised, situated, and particular to individuals and specific discourse practices" (p. 34). This message acts as an underlying thread and shapes the following chapters in the volume.

In the second chapter of Part 1, Low looks back at his highly influential paper, "On teacher metaphor" (1988) 30 years on. He highlights what he sees to be issues identified in his original paper as being still relevant for today's L2 metaphor researchers, thus laying a further theoretical base for the rest of the volume. First, how to define metaphor, second, the functions of metaphor, third, what metaphoric competence is and finally issues related to teaching and learning of metaphor. With this, Low reminds us of MacArthur's (2017) claim that there is little excuse for continuing to marginalise metaphor in EFL and FL teaching.

Following on from this, Piquer-Píriz begins her chapter by debunking the commonly held notion that children are incapable of thinking metaphorically. She claims that this misconception has been upheld by analysts imposing adult norms on children's thinking patterns. In her chapter, she explores research that exposes the particularities of young children's figurative thinking and explains their inability to sometimes understand non-perceptual metaphors by drawing our attention to the fact that they frequently do not have the domain knowledge to draw on whilst processing the metaphor. She also makes an important insight that children's figurative reasoning may be related to the filling of gaps in their growing conceptual and linguistic systems. In her chapter, Piquer-Píriz explores some of the key milestones of the research in children's figurative reasoning over the past 30 years, including what she sees as an important overlooked theoretical account of the acquisition of figurative language by children, namely Johnson's (1999) constructional grounding theory. She then presents a fascinating review of her own work on young children's figurative reasoning in the L2.

In the fourth and final chapter of the theoretical papers, Suárez-Campos, Hijazo-Gascón and Ibarretxe-Antuñano provide a thorough overview of how Conceptual Metaphor Theory has been applied to research on the acquisition and teaching and learning of L2 Spanish. By including findings from researchers working directly in the classroom, the authors are able to look at some of the complexities of teaching and learning metaphor related to individual learning styles, the amount of exposure to the target language, and the conceptual differences between the first and second languages, thus recommending that learners adopt a variety of strategies to infer meaning from metaphorical expressions. The research reinforces the important claim, made elsewhere in the book, that systematic teaching of metaphor in the L2 classroom provides a coherent framework for students and, in turn, helps them develop cognitive skills and autonomy.

In the first chapter of the empirical studies in Part 2, Littlemore, Pérez-Sobrino, Julich and Leung look at why some word-colour associations are more universal than others across English and Cantonese, two languages used by speakers from very different cultural backgrounds. Their findings show that although there are many universals between these two languages (e.g., red is associated with anger), there are many divergencies too. The perceived embodiment of associations played a crucial role in determining the level of agreement whilst divergences were accounted for by cultural differences. The study explored, in considerable depth, some fascinating implications for language teaching and learning, for example, if the association has a strong bodily basis in the L1 the learner is less likely to modify this association when learning the L2.

Philip's contribution to the volume provides compelling evidence of some of the strategies and decision-making processes translators use when translating metaphors, by looking at how trainee translators on a final (fifth) year translation course at an Italian university translated a series of English texts into Italian. This study used AntConc (Anthony, 2017) to assist with identifying and analysing metaphors. The findings highlight some of the pitfalls translators face, from not recognising a source text metaphor as a metaphor to ignoring the co-text surrounding the metaphor, especially the collocations, grammar, and syntax. A welcome layer of analysis in the chapter was the focus on the L2 language proficiency of the translator and their ability to translate metaphor successfully. Interestingly, Philip's findings suggest that lower proficiency students find it harder to translate metaphor successfully.

Following this, we find out how Krennmayr applies the Wmatrix (Rayson, 2008) web interface as a corpus analysis tool in a novel way to 27 office hour consultations in English between Spanish Erasmus students and university lecturers in five European universities from the European Corpus of Academic Talk (EuroCoAT). The study sets out to investigate the extent to which the students' use of sight metaphors align with their lecturers' use. Her findings show there are asymmetries in the use of sight metaphors, with lecturers using a wider range of sight metaphors and with a higher frequency. This is important, as a greater alignment of metaphor use is key for discourse coherence and signalling one's understanding to the other speaker. The innovative aspect of the study is the use of the Wmatrix tool which through its semantic tagger and 'keyness analysis', provides the researcher a method of speeding up the comparison of metaphor across two corpora, the lecturers' and the students' corpora.

In the next chapter Nacey focuses on the L2 English language production of 45 Norwegian 5th-13th grade High school pupils (aged 10-19). She explores the development of metaphors in her specially compiled corpus, "Tracing Written Learner Language" TraWL. The aim of the study is to investigate how metaphor distribution and function develops as the L2 proficiency of the writer increases. Despite the relatively small data set, her results clearly show that when proficiency increases so does the metaphor density, with all texts of the highest grades (11-13) containing metaphor clusters. She links this increase to the increasing proficiency of the writer but also to the more abstract nature of the topics set in the higher grades. The qualitative analysis is illuminating as it reveals how the function of the metaphors diversifies as the pupils' progress through school.

Following on from this, Castellano-Risco and Piquer-Píriz provide an extensive examination of the connection between metaphoric competence and more general vocabulary studies and observe an unfortunate lack of interest from both fields in each other's work. Their study addresses this gap by analysing the correlation between 79 Spanish secondary students' vocabulary knowledge, measured by well-established tools in vocabulary studies such as the 2K and the Academic Level versions of the Vocabulary Levels Tests (Schmitt, Schmitt & Clapham, 2001) and the Productive Vocabulary levels Tests (Laufer & Nation, 1999), and a specific aspect of metaphoric competence, namely, their receptive understanding of metaphorically used words. The students were asked to take the tests twice, first during their third year and again during their fourth year of compulsory secondary education. Their findings suggest that there is indeed a correlation. This is not only an important and necessary first step towards a richer understanding of metaphoric competence, but also a much-needed integration and recognition of metaphoric competence in vocabulary studies and in language proficiency testing more broadly.

In the first of the final three chapters that focus on the application of knowledge about metaphor to learning contexts, Wang, Boers and Warren detail their investigation into whether 25 third year university students, majoring in English, are more likely to retain the meaning of English idioms one week after they had encountered them, if the learners were also given the literal meaning. The idioms were presented to the learners during an interview during which the learners were given the meaning of the idiom together with its literal underpinning. An innovative element of the research design was that they were also given the opportunity to comment on the clarity of the link between the two. During a second, shorter interview, the learners were asked to recall the meaning of the idioms. The findings show that there is a significant correlation between the learners' retention of the idiom and being exposed to its literal meaning. In some cases, even if the link was considered obscure, the learner was more likely to remember the idiom. Interestingly, the perceived transparency of the idiom and the literal meaning appeared to be of greatest value to the learners with the lowest proficiency score.

Alejo-González and García-Bermejo, in the following chapter, provide a thorough and transparent examination of the patterns of metaphor in two primary Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) textbooks in Spain, Natural Science ByMe: Primary 5 (2014) and Social Science ByMe: Primary 5 (2014). They set out to investigate the frequency of metaphor in these materials, whether certain parts of speech are overused or underused and what, if any, are the main sources of variation between disciplines and in the different moves and stages in a CLIL lesson. They expected the metaphor density in the textbooks to be similar to other academic registers but found, somewhat surprisingly, the metaphor density of CLIL textbooks to be lower.

In the final chapter of the volume, Saaty sets out to investigate the extent to which the intervention of conceptual metaphor awareness-raising teaching methods, including enactment methods, impact on the students' receptive understanding and retention of the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, as well as the students' ability to produce the metaphor in writing. By comparing the scores to a control group, which taught the same set of metaphorical expressions as a semantic cluster, Saaty demonstrates that both the students' understanding and retention of these metaphorical expressions does indeed improve, if they have been taught conceptual metaphor awareness, by guessing and creating links between the source and target domain, for example. The students who benefitted the most were those who were encouraged to physically enact the expressions with their bodies. However, Saaty found that the students did not perform better in their writing.

Despite the range and diversity of perspectives and methodological approaches, the volume is arranged logically and coherently. There are a number of further strengths of the volume that are worthy of note. It strikes a good balance between tackling thorny, unresolved theoretical issues and displaying an impressive array of recent empirical studies in the field. Second, are the rigorous and systematic reviews of the literature found in all chapters and the attention paid by the authors of the empirical studies to mapping out and explaining the methodological details of their research. These aspects make the volume particularly useful for novice researchers who may seek guidance on setting up their own projects. One minor limitation is that at the end of the volume there is no summative chapter, reminding the reader of the key themes of the volume or looking ahead to the future of the field. As much of this is outlined in the introduction, the reader needs to revisit these points there, but it would be helpful to have them reformulated in a final chapter.

To conclude, I fully recommend "Metaphor in Foreign Language Instruction" to anyone interested in the teaching and learning of metaphor in the foreign language classroom. It is a must read for all researchers in the field of applied cognitive linguistics, both those new to the field who are unfamiliar with the area, and more experienced researchers who wish to take stock of the field as it now stands.

References

Anthony, L. (2017). AntConc version 4.3.4. Waseda University: Tokyo <u>http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/</u> (accessed February 2018).

- Johnson, C. (1999). *Constructional grounding: The role of interpretational overlap in lexical and constructional acquisition*. PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkley.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Laufer, B. & Nation, P. (1999). A vocabulary-size test of controlled productive ability. *Language Testing*, 16(1), 33–51.
- Low, G. (1988). On teaching metaphor. Applied Linguistics, 9(2), 125–146.
- MacArthur, F. (2005). The competent horseman in a horseless world: Observations on a conventional metaphor in Spanish and English. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 20, 71–94.
- MacArthur, F. (2015). On using a dictionary to identify the basic senses of words. *Metaphor and the Social World*, *5*, 124–136.
- MacArthur, F. (2016). When languages and cultures meet: Mixed metaphors in the discourse of Spanish speakers of English. In Raymond Gibbs (ed.), *Mixing metaphor* (pp. 133–154). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- MacArthur, F. (2017). Using metaphor in the teaching of second/foreign languages. In Elena Semino & Zsófia Demjén (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of metaphor and language* (pp. 413–425). Abingdon & New York: Routledge.
- MacArthur, F., Krenmayr, T. & Littlemore, J. (2015). How basic is UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING when reasoning about language? Asymmetric uses of sight metaphor in office hour's consultations in English as academic lingua franca. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 30, 184–217.
- MacArthur, F. & Piquer-Píriz, A. M. (2007). Staging the introduction of figurative extensions of familiar vocabulary items in EFL: Some preliminary considerations. *Ilha do desterro: A journal of English Language, Literatures in English and Cultural Studies*, 53, 123–135.
- Rayson, P. (2008). Wmatrix: a web-based corpus processing environment. Computing Department, Lancaster University <u>http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/Wmatrix/</u>.
- Schmitt, N., Schmitt, D. & Claphman, C. (2001). Developing and exploring the behaviour of two versions of the Vocabulary Levels Tests. *Language Testing*, 18(1), 55 – 88.

Dr Sally Zacharias School of Education St Andrews Building 11 Eldon Street Glasgow G3 6NH

Sally.Zacharias@glasgow.ac.uk