Higher Language Proficiency Doesn't Help: A Study of EFL Learners' Perception of Figurative Language Expressions

Dr. H. Vahid Dastjerdi∗
Esfahan University

ABSTRACT

   Metaphors are considered in traditional linguistic approaches as a matter of language only- independent of any conceptual system (Kovecses & Szaho, 1996), while in modern cognitive approaches, they are considered differently, i.e. they form our ordinary conceptual system in terms of which we both think and act (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

   Teaching EFL learners to internalize figurative language has always proved a difficult experience. The difficulty seems to be irreducible as the learners' language proficiency develops. At the same time, in typologically- different languages like English and Farsi, certain tropes may cause more problems for EFL learners, e.g. metaphors are *more* problematic for overseas students (Littlemore, 2001). On this basis, the present study aims at developing a documented profile of the relationship between the EFL learners' level of language proficiency and the extent of their ability to understand figurative language, thereby testing the following hypotheses: a) the development of the EFL learners' general language proficiency does not reduce their problem with internalizing figurative language in a significant way, and b) metaphorical expressions are more robust than other tropes in the learning process.

Keywords: 1. Metaphorical Expressions   2. Figurative Language   3. Translation 4. Language Proficiency 5. Conceptual System 6. Cognitive Approach.

∗ Assistant Professor of TEFL

1. INTRODUCTION

The great multitude of previous research concerning the effects of the mother tongue on L2 acquisition, transfer and interlanguage development has provided researchers with a good number of thought-provoking findings about the nature of second language acquisition, among which the following two form the basis of the present research: a) it has been held that identical structures of the native and target languages are not considered to necessarily result in 'positive transfer' (with positive transfer defined as the facilitation of L2 learning through the learner's knowledge of the L1), and b) most studies in SLA have focused on examining the form or structure (i.e., spelling, pronunciation and grammar, rather than meaning) of literal or non-idiomatic language in typologically-related languages like English and Spanish, with the highly pervasive figurative language having been almost totally untouched.

Concerning the second point, it is to be noted that we encounter little research within the field of SLA since 1970s to study different forms of the figurative language for the purpose of verifying the extent of their transferability as well as translatability which has been argued to be hampered by cultural and linguistic barriers (Schàffner, C., 2004). Kellerman (1977), Fernando and Flavell (1981) and Irujo (1986) are, however, rare examples of research on a specific form of the figurative language, namely *idioms*, in connection with transfer and interlanguage development.

Understanding the way figurative language works is indispensable for a true appreciation of art and literature, but figurative language is used not merely in these two domains; it prevails in our culture and everyday lives. Politicians, advertisers, physicians and generally everybody use figurative language, and many use it very badly. Understanding how it works helps us interpret what people, texts and verbal modes of discourse really say, and what they try to communicate to their addresses. Figurative language through which 'we talk about abstract concepts using the terms for more concrete concepts' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) has traditionally been described in terms of such categories as simile, metaphor, allusion, personification and so forth (Hatch & Brown, 1995). Among these categories, 'metaphor' (defined as a unit of discourse used to refer to an object, concept, process, quality, relationship or world, to which it does not conventionally refer, e.g., *The river nosed past*- Goatly, 1997) is the most pervasive, both in prose and verse as well as in learning and teaching (Thornbury, 1991; Block, 1992) and in ordinary communication, oral and

written alike. As the most pervasive trope of figurative language, metaphors are, in fact, considered to be perceptually- and socially-based categories of figurative language (Lakoff & Turner, 1989) which occur across languages and are thus universal (Clark, 1973). They are considered in traditional linguistic approaches, "as a special set of the larger categories of words, as a matter of language only; taken to be items of the lexicon that are independent of any conceptual system" (Kovecses & Szaho, 1996).

In cognitive semantics, metaphors are however considered differently. Here, a brief review of the definition, classification and theories of metaphor, based on modern approaches, seems to be in order.

1. 1. Definition of Metaphor

Metaphor which is usually seen as one among the different tropes (i.e. simile, idiom, metonymy, irony, etc.) available to a language user, can be seen as a fundamental principle of all language use. According to Lakoff and Johnson(1980), our ordinary conceptual system in terms of which we both think and act is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Based on this view, metaphor has been defined as follows:

'Metaphor' is a unit of discourse used to refer to an object, concept, process, quality, relationship or world, to which it does not conventionally refer. It is fundamentally conceptual, not linguistic, in nature, and it is realized as a set of conceptual mappings or ontological correspondences that obtain between a source and a target domain (Lakoff, 1993). As an example, in *Love Is a Journey*, the metaphor involves understanding one domain of experience, *love* (source domain), in terms of a very different domain of experience, *journey* (target domain).

This definition is the one among many others focused in this study.

1. 2. Classification of Metaphor

A major classification of metaphors in the cognitive approach is as follows:

1. An **ontological metaphor** is, by definition, a metaphor which refers to commodities, events, activities, and states as human beings, objects, substances, and containers, respectively. One important ontological metaphor is personification metaphor (e.g. full- moon face). For Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 34) ontological metaphors "allow us to make sense of phenomena in the world in human terms - terms that we can understand on the basis of our own motivations, goals, actions, and characteristics."

2. An **Orientational metaphor** is a class of conceptual metaphor, which enables us to structure our life in terms of directionality using prepositions such as *up/down*, *front/back*, *above/below*, or directional verbs

such as *fall*, *fly*, *die*, etc. One example of orientational metaphors is UP IS GOOD / DOWN IS BAD. Here the UP orientation is connected with life, health and, fitness, whereas the DOWN orientation is often associated with unconsciousness, sickness, and even death.

3. A **structural metaphor** is another class of conceptual metaphor which maps inanimate onto animate domains, and in some cases gives them a degrading dimension. For example, sometimes we Farsi speakers, talk of animate beings like men and women as food and utter statements such as *he devoured her with his eyes* (i.e. he drank her with his eyes), *I fancied eating her* (i.e. I lust for her), *he is potato* (i.e. he is an indifferent person), etc. These metaphors are structured by the conceptual metaphor, A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD.

1. 3. Theories of metaphor

In so far as the theories of metaphor are concerned, there are two major views to be referred to here:

1. The *traditional view* (non-constructivism) which has the following claims:

    a. reality exists independent of human knowledge and language.

    b. reality is described through the medium of literal language, not figurative or metaphorical language.

    c. metaphorical language is at best ornamental, at worst misleading.

This is, in fact, a *microscopic view of metaphor*, which studies metaphor only at sentence level, and not as part of any metaphorical system.

2. The *contemporary view* (constructivism) which has the following claims:

    a. reality is based on human knowledge and language, and is not directly accessible.

    b. reality is described through figurative language, especially metaphors.

    c. metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but in thought and action.

This is a *macroscopic view of metaphor*, which studies metaphors at sentence level as signs of underlying metaphorical systems or models.

*EXAMPLE: **ARGUMENT IS WAR** (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980)*

This underlying metaphor or metaphorical concept gives rise to expressions or entailments as follows:

    Your claims are indefensible.

    He attacked every weak point in my argument.

His criticisms were right on target.
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.

The macroscopic view of metaphor or CMT (Conceptual Metaphor Theory) is closely related to cognitive linguistics and psychology with the cognitive commitment to explore links between language, body and mind. Cognitive science has recently provided researchers with adequate empirical evidence to the effect that metaphor does not transcend human experience, as traditionally thought; it is rather greatly grounded in embodied experience, i.e. the body gives rise to metaphor that both revitalizes language and expresses seemingly forgotten relations (Gibbs, et al 2004).

A final word to end this rather brief review is that CMT's pervasive nature of metaphor in everyday language, and the culture- specific nature of metaphorical concepts where in two languages 'cultural patterns may exhibit the same conceptual metaphors but differ in their linguistic manifestations' (Steen, 2004), are of great importance to this study and all other studies related to foreign language teaching (Low, 1988), and should invoke every language teacher to thinking; for if 'every concept (including metaphorical concepts) and every embodied experience are inherently shaped by culture' as Gibbs puts it (RAAM IV 2001--appendix I), what should a language teacher do to care adequately for this issue in connection with teaching, learning, materials preparation, translation and so on, when the learners' culture stands in contrast to the FL culture?

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Having taught translation courses, specifically the course, 'The Application of Idiomatic Expressions to Translation', for many years, the researchers have experienced great difficulty in making EFL learners internalize figurative language concepts. The difficulty seems to be irreducible as the learners' language proficiency develops. At the same time, it seems that in typologically- different languages like English and Farsi (appendix II), certain tropes cause more problems for EFL learners. On this basis, the present study aims at developing a documented profile of the relationship between the EFL learners' level of language proficiency and the extent of their ability to understand figurative language, thereby finding answers to the following questions and testing the related hypotheses:

Q1: Is there any significant relationship between the learners' general EFL proficiency and the perception of figurative language?

Q2: Which type of figurative language causes more problems for Iranian EFL learners?

Based on the above questions, the following two hypotheses were formulated:

H1: The development of the EFL learners' general language proficiency (as measured by the currently used proficiency tests such as the OPT and the MELAB) does not reduce their problem with the figurative language in a significant way.

H2: Metaphorical expressions (conceptual metaphors, in particular) cause more problems for Iranian EFL learners.

2. 1. Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 90 Iranian EFL university learners studying at 3 different levels: 30 freshmen, 30 seniors, and 30 graduate students. They represented the three levels of intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced learners respectively. It is to be noted that each group was chosen, through appropriate proficiency tests, from among more than sixty students studying at the relevant level.

2. 2. Materials

Three sets of materials were used: versions P & Q of the MELAB (Michigan Test) and a version of OPT (Oxford Test) to choose more proficient students at each of the above- mentioned levels, and a set of 100 English figurative expressions (appendix III). The latter was prepared with the assumption that figurative language, in general, is problematic for Iranian EFL students, more so are metaphorical expressions. The set included:

1. Sixty metaphors with a high frequency of daily usage (picked up on the basis of native speakers' judgment), all grounded in embodied experience.

2. Ten metonymies

3. Ten similes

4. Twenty idiomatic expressions of different types

2. 3. Procedures

To ensure that the participants in this study are homogenous, a MELAB test was first administered to more than 60 M.A. students in TEFL at different universities of the Isfahan Province (The University of Isfahan and a number of Azad Islamic universities), and 30 students who scored 1 *sd* above the mean were selected as the advanced participants. An OPT was

also administered to more than 60 freshmen and 60 seniors at the University of Isfahan, and 30 intermediate and 30 upper-intermediate participants were selected in like manner.

Then, the above- mentioned set of 100 figurative expressions (Vahid, 2001) were given to each group of the chosen subjects. They were asked to provide either the exact equivalents or the true meanings of the expressions in Farsi. The results provided by each group in the above-mentioned four categories were then scored and statistically analyzed. This analysis was aimed at removing the interaction effect between the two variables (i.e. the type of figurative language and the level of proficiency) and therefore, a Two-way ANOVA without interaction was used.

2. 4. Discussion of Results

The statistical analysis of the results (appendix IV) came to verify both hypotheses and thus, what was hypothesized on the basis of practical experience in teaching figurative language expressions proved to be empirically true. The table below clearly shows the following findings:

Table 1: The Participants' Means (score percentages) for the Four Metaphorical Categories.

	etaphors	Metonymies	Similes	Idioms
Freshmen students	18.310	28.33	30.33	24.167
Senior students	18.673	32.33	32.33	25.167
Graduate students	19.480	33.00	34.67	27.333

The means of the participants' scores speak for themselves, i.e. while the participants in all three groups have relatively low scores in all types of figurative language, their scores for the metaphorical expressions are remarkably lower. A number of points are to be mentioned in this respect and in connection with how metaphorical expressions have been interpreted by the participants in this study:

First, the range of the scores is surprisingly narrow, i.e. the means of the scores of all the three groups are almost the same in each category. This is worth considering in FLT contexts, particularly in terms of the general claim of the study proposing that figurative language per se is problematic for all levels of non-native speakers. This can also be inferred from the interaction between groups and variables (f= .502, p = .807) indicated in table 2 below:

Table 2: The Results of the ANOVA.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	11491.652	11	1044.696	14.102	.000
Intercept	261054.035	1	261054.035	3523.821	.000
Group	609.570	2	304.785	4.114	.017
Variable	10658.926	3	3552.975	47.960	.000
Group * Variable	223.156	6	37.193	.502	.807
Error	25780.763	348	74.083		
Total	298326.450	360			
Corrected Total	37272.415	359			

Second, the findings show the participants' better performance in appreciating both *similes and metonymies*, although in understanding metonymies they show a very slight out-performance as the inferential statistics indicates (table 2). This can be attributed to the nature of these two types of figurative language, which provides the participants with helpful clues. In fact, in similes there are points of similarity helping the participants to conceive them with more ease, and in metonymies this role might be played by the part-whole relationship inherent in them.

Third, while the participants' scores are the lowest in the category of metaphors in all the three groups (which is in itself indicative of the fact that the participants have the greatest problem in comprehending this specific trope), the range of the participants' scores is the lowest too in this respect, i.e. the range of scores from freshmen to graduates is very limited (18.3-19.4, almost one point in all) in comparison to the same range for other categories. This indicates that in all levels of language proficiency, the participants have *almost the same* degree of difficulty in understanding metaphors. In other words, the limited range of scores in metaphor section provides further support for the main claim of this study, namely that knowledge of figurative language is limited in Iranian EFL learners regardless of their general language proficiency level.

3. IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. The results of this study show the need for a shift from literal language (traditional linguistic approach) analysis, i.e., the study of syntax, phonology and lexis of the learners' language, to figurative language

analysis (cognitive-linguistic approach) or the study of the semantic structure of words in combination as well as their relationships with the learners' concepts, emotions and experiences (Hatch and Brown, 1995). This shift constitutes a complementary effort on the researchers' part to verify anew previous findings in the field of second language acquisition, and thus to enhance the validity of corresponding theories.

2. The inclusion of appropriate types of metaphors in the syllabi for all levels of language pedagogy and the practice of them inside and outside classroom settings are, in fact, highly recommended. It is obvious, however, that the metaphors used for this purpose should not be chosen from the category of dead or inactive ones which are labeled as obsolete or unnatural by target language speakers. Metaphors connected with bodily experience, as those used in this study, will best serve the purpose; for as Gibbs, et al put it (2004), metaphorical thought and language arise from and are grounded in embodiments and metaphors grounded in embodied experience revitalize language—an interesting phenomenon resulting in active, natural metaphors appropriate for learning and teaching.

3. Input enhancement can be the backbone of any discussion of learning metaphorical language. This is to be achieved through semantic transparency, i.e. making the learners aware of the conceptual meaning of metaphors, using the formula: Topic, Image, similarity. Here the idea is that metaphors should be presented in the manner whereby the learners are more likely to develop a sense of the functions of language which in turn will increase their ability to comprehend not only plain language but also figurative expressions (Nerlich, 2001).

4. Enhancing the L2 learners' ability to perceive and produce all types of target language metaphors should be coupled with the awareness (on the part of both teachers and learners) as to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of using metaphorical language in a given register in the target language (Baker, 1992). In fact, teachers should be conscious, and make L2 learners conscious of such questions as style, register and rhetorical effect, and accordingly, guide them to produce or avoid producing (Vahid and Talebinezhad, 2002) certain metaphors in specific target language contexts. This can be a guideline for translators and translation students as well.

APPENDIX I

Gibbs' Note

Thank for your thoughtful observation. You make an excellent point. My belief is that every concept and every embodied experience is inherently shaped by culture. This makes cross-cultural communication, and translation rather difficult. (but not necessarily impossible). Your example of taking an oath is quite appropriate here. The words may be similar in different languages (e.g. "I swear...") but the cultural obligations and answers depends greatly on the situation / culture. There may be an abstract concept of "swearing" as a practice that appears in all cultures, and what this means is quite culturally specific.

APPENDIX II

Persian & English

Genetically the same, Typologically different

A West-Germanic language → A member of Indo-European Family of languages.

A member of Indo-Iranian Family of languages. → A branch of Indo-European Family of languages.
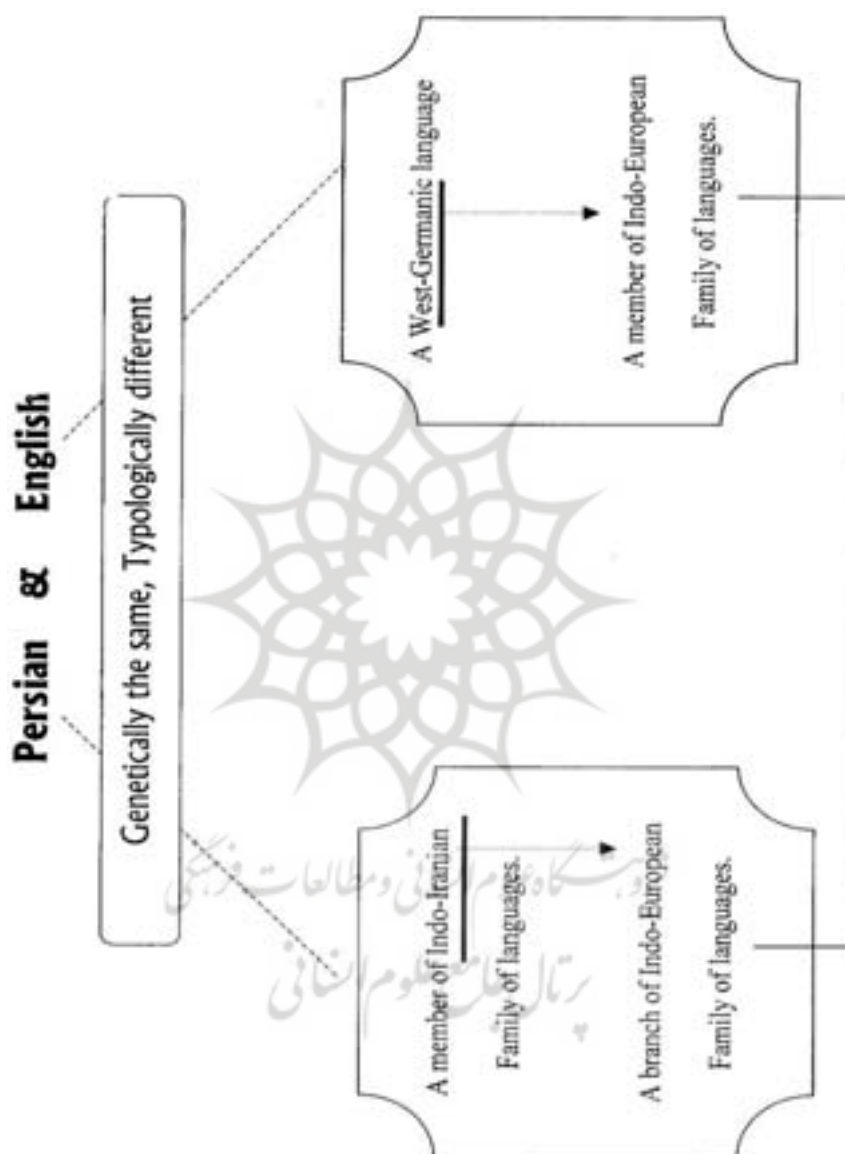
APPENDIX III

Fig. Lg. Test

Instruction:

Provide the exact Farsi equivalents or the true meaning of the following expressions and sentences: -

1. cost someone an arm and leg ----------------------------------
2. see the back of something ----------------------------------
3. pull someone's leg ----------------------------------
4. have no backbone ----------------------------------
5. blood is thicker than water ----------------------------------
6. He's GA Picasso in his den. ----------------------------------
7. have a bone to pick up with someone ----------------------------------
8. Sally is like a block of ice. ----------------------------------
9. in the flesh ----------------------------------
10. one's brain child ----------------------------------
11. pick someone's brain ----------------------------------
12. have an eye for something ----------------------------------
13. show one's face ----------------------------------
14. sit on something ----------------------------------
15. stand on one's own feet ----------------------------------
16. lend someone a hand ----------------------------------
17. John's wife resembles her mother. ----------------------------------
18. reveal one's hand ----------------------------------
19. Jack of all trades ----------------------------------
20. put one's back into something ----------------------------------
221. The buses are on the strike. ----------------------------------
22. spine of a book ----------------------------------
23. leg of journey ----------------------------------
24. in a flash ----------------------------------
25. crop hair ----------------------------------
26. plant a kiss ----------------------------------
27. A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle. ----------------------------------
28. within a hair's breadth ----------------------------------
29. be in high spirits ----------------------------------
30. It makes no odds. ----------------------------------

31. pour out one's heart to someone ----------------------------------
32. turn something over in one's mind ----------------------------------
33. We need some new faces around here. ----------------------------------
34. fight a losing battle ----------------------------------
35. My car is like a beetle. ----------------------------------
36. have a heart of gold ----------------------------------
37. have butterflies in the stomach ----------------------------------
38. The Senate thinks abortion is immoral. ----------------------------------
39. Love showed in her eyes. ----------------------------------
40. get on someone's nerves ----------------------------------
41. be a bone of contention ----------------------------------
42. bare bones of something ----------------------------------
43. Mary eats like a pig. ----------------------------------
44. break the back of something ----------------------------------
45. take a back seat ----------------------------------
46. be bosom friends ----------------------------------
47. The time hasn't arrived at the press conference yet. ----------------------------------
48. get one's own back ----------------------------------
49. give one much elbow room ----------------------------------
50. make one's flesh creep ----------------------------------
51. have feet of clay ----------------------------------
52. John's wife is like his umbrella. ----------------------------------
53. by the skin of one's teeth ----------------------------------
54. give someone the creeps ----------------------------------
55. be sore-hearted ----------------------------------
56. shed tears of blood ----------------------------------
57. see something in black and white ----------------------------------
58. keep a person at arm's length ----------------------------------
59. talk one's head off ----------------------------------
60. make head or tail of one's words ----------------------------------
61. We need some new blood in the organization. ----------------------------------
62. hit the headlines ----------------------------------
63. lie in one's face ----------------------------------
64. blow one's mind ----------------------------------
65. My love is like a red red rose. ----------------------------------
66. a feather in one's cap ----------------------------------
67. May the evil eye be averted. ----------------------------------

68. prick the ears and listen ----------------------------------
69. give someone the sack ----------------------------------
70. Washington is insensitive to the needs of people. ----------------------------------
71. offer one's head in devotion ----------------------------------
72. bury face in hands ----------------------------------
73. take someone for a ride ----------------------------------
74. An answer stares you in the face. ----------------------------------
75. keep one's language down ----------------------------------
76. be a dishy person ----------------------------------
77. Mrs. Johnson frowns on blue jeans. ----------------------------------
78. make one's present felt ----------------------------------
79. his inward eye on the spire ----------------------------------
80. hear a ping at the far edge of one's mind ----------------------------------
81. Not to worry is like telling the mind not to blow. ----------------------------------
82. have stick-thin legs and arms ----------------------------------
83. bank on someone ----------------------------------
84. have a bush to the outward eye ----------------------------------
85. have a full-moon face ----------------------------------
86. There are a lot of good heads in the university. ----------------------------------
87. take a leaf out of someone's book ----------------------------------
88. sit with one's eyes glued to … (e.g., the TV) ----------------------------------
89. get an honest bone in one's body ----------------------------------
90. get back on one's feet ----------------------------------
91. The brain works the way a machine computes. ----------------------------------
92. be on its (one's) last legs ----------------------------------
93. One good turn deserves another. ----------------------------------
94. drive one out of one's mind ----------------------------------
95. have a barren mind ----------------------------------
96. sink one's teeth into ----------------------------------
97. We need a couple of strong bodies for our team. ----------------------------------
98. be in the center of one's field of vision ----------------------------------
99. She sounded like a whole party of people. ----------------------------------
100. a dog in the manger ----------------------------------

APPENDIX IV: STATISTICS

Raw Scores of the Three Proficiency Groups on Metaphorical Expressions Test (out of 100)

Row	Fresh 1	Fresh 2	Fresh 3	Fresh 4	Senior 1	Senior 2	Senior 3	Senior 4	Graduate 1	Graduate 2	Graduate 3	Graduate 4
1	16.6	40	30	25	19.8	40	40	30	19.8	20	30	30
2	16.6	30	30	25	15.0	20	20	50	21.4	30	40	30
3	15.0	20	50	35	19.8	20	30	20	19.8	40	40	15
4	16.6	40	20	30	18.3	50	40	15	19.8	50	20	25
5	16.6	50	30	30	19.8	30	20	30	16.6	30	30	25
6	16.6	30	30	15	18.3	40	50	20	18.2	40	40	35
7	23.0	10	30	30	18.2	20	40	15	16.6	30	50	20
8	15.0	30	20	10	18.3	50	40	25	16.6	40	20	20
9	15.0	30	50	35	19.8	40	50	30	19.8	30	40	30
10	18.3	30	40	20	16.6	40	50	30	23.0	30	50	30
11	15.0	30	10	20	21.4	30	30	25	21.4	20	20	30
12	21.4	20	20	15	18.3	30	30	25	23.0	30	30	35
13	13.4	50	30	10	18.3	20	40	15	19.8	40	30	30
14	18.2	20	30	30	19.8	10	30	15	21.4	30	50	30
15	18.2	40	20	25	18.3	40	40	25	21.4	50	30	20
16	15.0	30	50	10	18.3	40	20	20	19.8	30	30	30
17	16.6	20	10	35	19.8	40	30	15	21.4	50	30	25
18	24.6	20	30	25	16.6	20	50	20	21.4	40	30	35
19	24.6	40	30	30	18.3	60	30	30	19.8	10	50	30
20	16.6	30	30	15	21.4	40	10	25	19.8	20	20	20
21	21.4	10	40	30	18.3	30	20	15	16.6	40	40	25
22	19.8	40	20	25	18.3	40	30	20	16.6	40	40	30
23	16.6	20	50	15	18.3	40	30	35	21.4	20	20	30
25	19.8	30	40	25	16.6	50	20	25	19.8	20	50	20
26	16.6	10	20	25	16.6	20	30	15	19.8	50	40	30
27	19.8	20	30	25	19.8	10	10	20	19.8	30	30	35
28	16.6	30	40	20	18.3	20	20	30	16.6	30	30	30
29	21.4	30	20	35	19.8	30	20	30	19.8	30	40	35
30	19.8	30	40	40	18.3	30	40	35	16.6	40	30	20
									16.6	30	40	20

Descriptive Statistics and the Related Graphs of the Scores of the Three Proficiency Groups
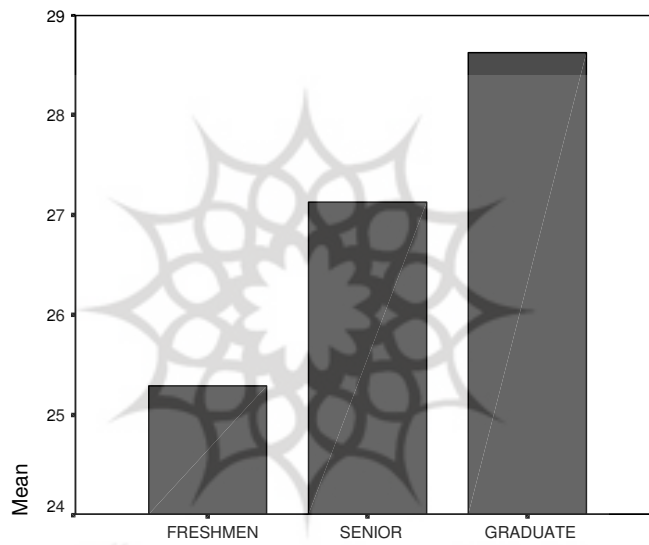
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
FRESHIDI	30	10.00	40.00	24.1667	8.3132
FRESHSIM	30	10.00	50.00	30.3333	11.2903
FRESMETA	30	13.40	24.60	18.3100	3.1424
FRESMETO	30	10.00	50.00	28.3333	10.5318
GRADIDI	30	15.00	35.00	27.0000	6.1026
GRADMETA	30	16.60	23.00	19.4800	2.0326
GRADMETO	30	2.00	50.00	32.4000	11.4639
GRADSIM	30	20.00	50.00	34.6667	9.7320
SENIDI	30	15.00	50.00	25.1667	9.2367
SENMETA	30	15.00	21.40	18.6733	1.3754
SENMETO	30	10.00	60.00	31.1667	12.1544
SENSIM	30	10.00	50.00	32.3333	11.9434
Valid N (listwise)	30				
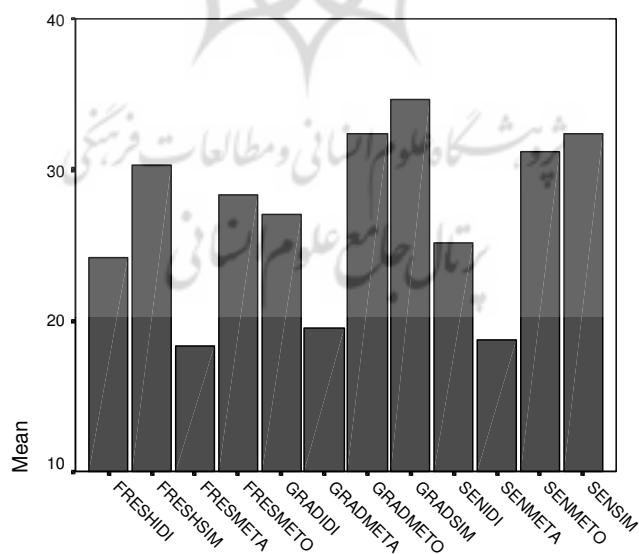
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
FRESHMEN	4	18.31	30.33	25.2843	5.3111
GRADUATE	4	19.48	34.67	28.6200	6.8554
SENIOR	4	18.67	32.33	27.1225	6.5710
Valid N (listwise)	4				

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SIMILE	3	30.33	34.67	32.4433	2.1722
IDIOM	3	24.17	27.33	25.5567	1.6151
METONYMY	3	28.33	33.00	31.2200	2.5251
METAPHOR	3	18.31	19.48	18.8200	.5992
Valid N (listwise)	3				
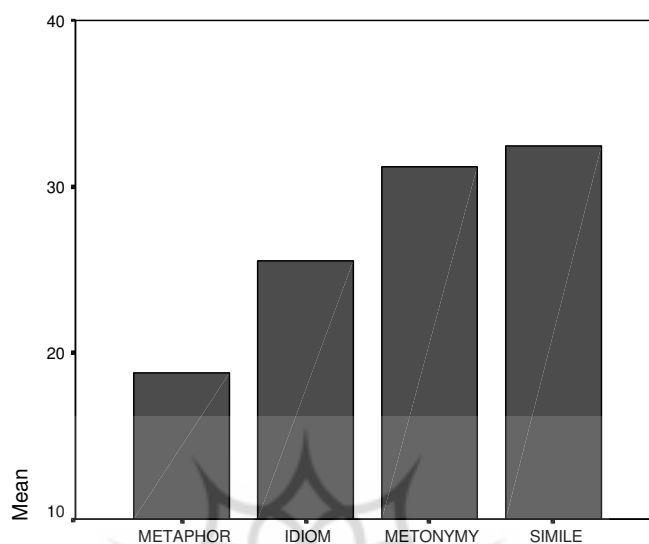
REFERENCES

Baker, M. (1992). **In Other Word.** London: Routledge.

Block, D. (1992). *Metaphors we Teach and Learn by*. **Prospect**. 7 (3), 42-55.

Clark, H. (1973). *What's in a Word? On the Child's Acquisition of Semantic in his First Language.* in: Moore, T. (Ed.), **Cognitive Development and the Acquisition of Language.** New York: Academic Press, 65-110.

Fernando, C. and Flavell, R. (1981). **On Idiom: Critical Views and Perspectives.** vol. 5. University of Exeter: Exeter Linguistic Studies.

Gibbs, R. (2001). Personal Communication, RAAM IV, Universit'e de Manouba, Tunis, Tunisia.

Gibbs, R., Costa Lima, P. L. and Francozo, E. (2004). *Metaphor is Grounded in Embodied Experience*. **Journal of Pragmatics**. 36, 1189-1210.

Goatly, A. (1997). **The Language of Metaphors**. London: Routledge.

Hatch, E. and Brown, C. (1995). **Vocabulary, Semantics, and Language Education.** Cambridge: CUP.

Irujo, S. (1986). **The Effect of Transfer on the Acquisition of Idioms in a Second Language.** Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Boston University.

Kellerman, E. (1977). *Toward a Characterization of the Strategy of Transfer in Second Language Learning.* **Interlanguage Studies Bulletin**. 2 (1), 58-145.

Kovecses, Z. and Szaho, P. (1996). *Idiom: A View from Cognitive Semantics.* **Applied Linguistics**. 17 (3), 326-356.

Lakoff, G. (1993). *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor*. in: Ortony, A. (Ed.), **Metaphor and Thought**. Cambridge: CUP.

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980). *Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language*. **Journal of Philosophy.** 77, 453-86.

Lakoff, G. and Turner, M. (1989). **More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor.** Chicago: UCP.

Littlemore, J. (2001). *Metaphors as a Source of Misunderstanding for Overseas Students in Academic Lectures.* **Teaching in Higher Education**. 6 (3), 333-351.

Low, G. (1988). *On Teaching Metaphor*. **Applied Linguistics.** 9 (2), 95-115.

Nerlich, B. (2001). **Semantic development and semantic change-with special reference to metaphor and metonymy**. http://www.le.lc.uk/ psychology/metaphor/semdev.html.

Schaffner, C. (2004). *Metaphor and Translation: Some Implications of a Cognitive Approach.* **Journal of Pragmatics**. 36, 1253-1269.

Steen, G. (2004). *Introduction: Metaphor Across languages.* **Journal of Pragmatics**. 36, 1183-1188.

Thornbury, S. (1991). *Metaphors we Work by: EFL and its Metaphors.* **English Language Teaching Journal**. 45, 193-200.

Vahid Dastjerdi, H. (2001). The Role of Conceptual Mappings in the Perception and Production of L2 Metaphorical Exprssions. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The University of Isfahan**.**

Vahid Dastjerdi, H. and Talebinezhad, M. R. (2002). *Conceptual Mappings: Perception and Production of L2 Metaphorical Expressions.* **The International Journal of Humanities**. 9 (3), 47-61.