# METAPHOR AND THE ESL CLASSROOM

THESIS

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This paper concentrates on the viability of using metaphor as a teaching tool in the English as a Second Language classroom. In doing so, a semantically-based theory of metaphor, like that presented by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), is employed as a base for the examination. Such a theory of metaphor presents a dramatic shift from theories, especially Aristotle's, of the past. The theory of metaphor proposed by Lakoff and Johnson contends that language is essentially metaphorical and that much of our 'commonsense' knowledge about the world is derived from interpretations of reality and is manifested in metaphors central to a culture and its language. If this theory is true, then it stands to reason that a student attempting to learn English as a Second Language could profit greatly from metaphor instruction because such instruction would aid all areas of the language acquisition process.

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine metaphor as a means of facilitating language teaching, specifically the teaching of English as a second language. Such a study has not been undertaken before and is possible only because of current work in the areas of psycholinguistics, discourse analysis, second language teaching pedagogy, and the study of metaphor itself.

Metaphor has long occupied an awkward position in the study of language, primarily because of the influence of Aristotle and his theory of name transference, which appeared in The Poetics. Seen from the Aristotelian perspective, metaphor was a happy accident of language which took advantage of the elasticity of words. This theory cast metaphor into the realm of deviant language use, a view which held sway for centuries and affected the vast majority of the research and work conducted in this area.

The perspective noted above began to lose influence in the twentieth century because of the work of rhetoricians, philosophers of language, the anthropological linguists of the twenties and thirties, and those linguists who later ventured beyond the formalist views which dominated the field in the middle part of this century. All of this research had one common denominator: the problem of meaning

in language. Rather than focusing on just the phonological or lexical phenomena of language, these researchers began to address problems of meaning and interpretation and speculated about what semantics might tell us about language processing, cognition, culture, and the nature of language in general. Such work has made it possible to examine metaphor in a new light.

Because this thesis is concerned with the exploration of metaphor as a teaching tool for language learning, it concentrates on the semantically centered work in the field of metaphor. This limitation is in keeping with the goal of a language learner: to communicate meaningfully in another language. Although recent research in metaphor has yielded data with ramifications for many disciplines, such as philosophy, literature, linguistics, psychology, the cognitive sciences, anthropology, and theology, the present work limits itself to those disciplines which relate directly to second language acquisition.

This paper does not therefore attempt a comprehensive study of the history of metaphor theory. However, in Chapter I, I do present a historical account of the evolution of semantically based metaphor theory in light of the other theories it grew out of. In tracing this history, I attempt to show that a semantically centered view of metaphor is more satisfactory than other, narrower ones as far as general understanding of the subject and its relation to

language acquisition. Such a view of metaphor is predicated on certain views toward culture, language, perception, and language learning which are the focuses of Chapters II and III respectively.

Chapter II examines the often controversial relationship between language, culture, and perception and the role metaphor plays in this relationship. While this paper explores this relationship, no attempt at a definitive sorting out of the issue is made. What the paper arrives at is a moderate relativist position concerning the connection among the areas being considered. Such a position states that at some level, languages and cultures express relativistic interpretations of phenomena in the world. These interpretations are often manifested in metaphors which reflect a culture's basic understandings of the world and how it operates. Some of these metaphors in English are examined and contrasted with those found in other, non-Indo-European languages. Metaphors of this type are so deeply entrenched in a language and a culture's understanding of the world that their metaphorical nature is scarcely noticeable to the native speaker. Such metaphors present 'common-sense' knowledge of the world and 'the way things are.' By contrasting examples of these metaphors in English with alternative interpretations of phenomena, I hope to show that a moderate relativistic position is tenable and also useful as a basis for second language teaching.

In Chapter III, I examine psycholinguistic research which supports a holistic, conceptual view of language processing, a view also found in a semantically centered theory of metaphor. The implications of this view in relation to second language learning pedagogy are then addressed. If metaphorical concepts of the type noted above are manifested in a language in such a way as to be scarcely noticable as metaphors, then second language teachers will probably be blissfully ignorant of them. And if these concepts reflect basic interpretations of the world, then second language teachers, being ignorant of these metaphors as metaphors, will miss an excellent opportunity to expose their students to concepts which could be exceptionally beneficial for them. Metaphorical concepts permeate a language and reveal a great deal of information about the culture that uses them. Exposure to key metaphorical concepts could benefit all areas of second language acquisition. How metaphorical instruction might aid specific language skills, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, audience awareness, and acculturation, is also examined.

Chapter IV presents a syllabus of metaphor instruction to be used in an intermediate/high level English as a Second Langauage class. Besides the syllabus, reading and listening exercise texts are given.

The goal of this paper is to present a semantically based view of metaphor applicable to language instruction.

In attempting to justify such a view and the application of it, I examine metaphor theory, the relationship between language, culture and perception; the psycholinguistic area known as schema theory; and the relationship of schema theory to current ESL pedagogy.

Any such examination of a field as broad as the study of metaphor, and with as many implications, must necessarily be limited. The limitations of this study are directly attributable to the purpose of the paper as stated above. These limitations can be discerned from three goals: 1) finding a theory of metaphor which explains the semantic aspects of this linguistic phenomenon; 2) postulating what this theory tells us about language processing, meaning, and understanding of the world; and 3) examining how such a view of metaphor could be applied to a language learning environment.

# CHAPTER I

## A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON METAPHOR

In the history of the study of metaphor, Aristotle plays a major role. His analysis and definition of metaphor, especially in The Poetics, remained sacrosanct until the early part of this century. It was not so much Aristotle's definition that sealed metaphor's fate, but what fate did with Aristotle's definition, which was to relegate metaphor to the fields of study which exclude everyday discourse. Paul Ricouer (1977:14), in commenting on Aristotle's concept of metaphor, states

> 'the destiny of metaphor [was] sealed for centuries to come: henceforth it [was] connected to poetry and rhetoric, not at the level of discourse, but at the level of a segment of discourse, the name or the noun.'

(Ricouer's definition of discourse itself is a conservative one: he considers the domain of discourse to be the sentence; nothing beyond the sentence level is considered.) We will now look at Aristotle's definition of metaphor, attempt to show how it influenced the course of theoretical work done on metaphor, and examine the results of this influence.

Aristotle's definition of metaphor is as follows: 'Metaphor is the application to one thing of the name belonging to another' (1982:67). This definition of metaphor, and how it is formed, contains three essential ideas:

1) metaphor is something that happens to the noun, 2) it is defined in terms of movement, and 3) metaphor is the transposition of a name that belongs to something else. The main point of relevance here is that substitution occurs.

> 'The metaphorical word takes the place of a non-metaphorical word which could have been used (on condition that it exists); so [the metaphorical word] is doubly alien, as a present but borrowed word [the name being borrowed from something else] and as a substitute for an absent word.' (Ricouer 1977:19)

The three ideas necessary for Aristotle's definition rest on three assumptions: 1) deviation from ordinary usage of the noun (name), 2) borrowing the noun from an original domain, and 3) substitution for an absent but available word (Ricouer 1977:20). There are many other a priori concepts operative in this definition, but the three most important are deviation, borrowing, and substitution, for they are the ones that relegated metaphor to the realm of poetry and rhetoric. These three assumptions regarding metaphor and its operation lead Aristotle to cast metaphor as an aberration of language, one which functions poetically and breaks from ordinary language usage. Aristotle assumes that words have proper meanings attached to them. Therefore, metaphorical usage of a word violates its proper meaning and proper usage by having a noun function as a substitute for another noun which can and should be (because it is the

'correct' noun) used. Thus, the study of metaphor cannot properly fall under the aegis of a discipline which studies language as used in everyday discourse, or in 'correct' language usage.

Metaphor remained in the fields of poetry and rhetoric as a deviation from 'ordinary' language until I. A. Richards rescued it in 1936 with The Philosophy of Rhetoric. Richards first attacked the concept of words having proper, or correct, meanings residing in them. His argument needed only to raise the issues of context (i.e., words change meaning according to context) and misunderstanding (i.e. the misunderstanding that occurs when people attempt to communicate). This last issue negates the proper meaning concept because if words had proper and unambiguous meanings, then misunderstanding would not occur. The recipient of a communicative message, in this situation, would function merely as a decoding device. Richards takes the concept even further and posits that misunderstanding occurs because people believe words have static meanings.

> 'A chief cause of misunderstanding ... is the Proper Meaning Superstition ... a superstition which forgets (as it commonly does) that the stability of the meaning of a word comes from the constancy of the contexts that give it its meaning. Stability in a word's meaning is not something to be assumed, but something to be explained' (1936:11).

Richards then widens his offensive to dispatch Aristotle's view of metaphor. He disposes of Aristotle's view of metaphor quite easily as a consequence of the above argument because Aristotle's definition is based on the assumption that words have proper meanings. Richards quotes the following passage from The Poetics and uses it as a target for his assault: 'The greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted to another: it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances' (1936:89). Again there are several assumptions operative in this statement, a few of which Richards argues against. The first is that an 'eye for resemblances' is a gift of some sort that cannot be taught (1936:89). Richards counters that the only way we can live or speak is through our eye for resemblances: 'The mind is a connecting organ ... [which] always [tries] to find connections' (1936:125-126). The argument of the mind as a connecting entity will become more important later.

The second assumption, and the one Richards most vehemently attacks, is 'that metaphor is something special and exceptional in the use of language, a deviation from its normal mode of working' (1936:90). He states that metaphor's role in rhetoric has been viewed as a 'happy trick' which exploits the accidental versatility of words (1936:90). Deception, then, is the cloak worn by the user of a metaphor, for he has violated the correct usage of

words and exploited their versatility. Richards claims rhetoricians and philosophers fell prey to the 'proper meaning superstition' which led them to distrust metaphor and consider it something akin to what Hindus might call 'maya,' or illusion. The main thrust of his point is that rhetoricians, and others, have duped themselves into avoiding the obvious: words are not the things they represent nor do they have static meanings. They have ignored what Shelley knew, that 'language is vitally metaphorical' (Richards 1936:90). Rhetoricians, Richards asserts, have been content to contend with superficial problems of language. In the process, they have ignored the deeper, more meaningful aspects of language, namely its fundamentally metaphorical nature and what this metaphorical nature tells us about human verbal interaction. The blame for this situation rests with Aristotle's assumptions concerning metaphor and its operation and what his successors did with these assumptions, that is, to label metaphor as a lingusitic freak. Classified as such, metaphor was rarely accorded the type of attention necessary to understand the depth at which it functions in language. Richards made a quantum leap in the study of metaphor with The Philosophy of Rhetoric, in asserting that 'metaphor is the omnipresent principle of language' (1936:92).

Aristotle erred in stating metaphor is merely a case of the 'shifting and displacement' of words. While it is true

that the metaphorical nature of an utterance is often located in one word, Aristotle's name (e.g., the word 'up' in, 'I'm feeling up today'), the metaphor does not occur due to the simple swapping of words, for as Richards asserts a word is not 'a substitute for ... one discrete past impression but a combination of general aspects ... that is itself a summary account of the principle of metaphor' (1936:93). Aristotle ignores the conceptual aspect of words: the connotations and concepts associated with each word. Thus, 'fundamentally [metaphor] is a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts' (1936:94). Metaphor functions as an interaction between concepts. Therefore, words are not what need to be examined, but rather the concepts they embody, for they will tell us much more about language and the cognitive processes involved.

As concepts become the focus of consideration, delineating the differences between concepts and propositions might be profitable because some confusion between the two might arise. 'Concepts [are] general categories in terms of which propostions are formulated and experience is processed' (Hudson 1980:75). Concepts are meanings stored in memory which have linguistic and/or experiential bases. Statements created by combining concepts are propositions. Propositions are statements which express relationships between, ideas on, and opinions about, concepts and are often expressed as sentences. A combination of concepts, perhaps

in the form of a proposition, is required to form a metaphor.

If concepts become the focus of study, then some of the problems which arise when examining discrete parts of metaphors can be avoided. Stephen A. Tyler (1978) states that many of the problems encountered when trying to understand metaphors stem from an attempt to find logical bases for them in order to explain their formation and operation. One of the reasons we attempt to rationalize metaphors is the 'proper meaning superstition.' If words have proper, static meanings, then metaphors will have logical explanations: there will be a logical reason for the transference of the name (in Aristotelian terms). 'The problem here is that we are treating symbolic metaphors as if their making and understanding were analytical processes ... when in fact we formulate and understand them as wholes in a context' (Tyler 1978:319). If words have proper meanings, then the meaning of an utterance is merely the sum of its parts, and as such, each utterance can be quantitatively analyzed. But words give rise to concepts; we take them and their general aspects in as whole entities in a context. A view of metaphor that incorporates the conceptual aspects of words and avoids the traps laid by the 'proper meaning superstition' presents a more satisfactory way of examining metaphor because concepts, rather than the words which invoke them, bear the brunt of scrutiny.

More impetus for concentrating on the concepts evoked, or expressed, by metaphors comes from the work done in psycholinguistics, especially in the area of schema theory (which will be examined in some detail later). This work shows the conceptual operations of metaphor to be similar to what occurs in the brain during language processing. We receive, process, and understand linguistic information in a holistic, rather than a discrete manner. We do not construct anew, as Tyler states, old (or standard) metaphors familiar to us through our language and culture each time we use them (1978:319). They exist in our memories as whole entities; '[old metaphors] are collocations, whole schemata rather than analytic constructs' (1978:319). So whenever we receive or produce a metaphor of this sort (e.g., 'she fell into a depression') the evocation, or activation, of the concepts and ideas associated with the metaphor and necessary for comprehension is a holistic process. The concepts come in a package. Such metaphors are so deeply engrained in our experience that we are usually unaware of their being metaphors. 'When we use or understand an old metaphor, it springs readily to mind without our being more than scarcely aware of its metaphoric status' (Tyler 1978:319).

A word is often the fulcrum of the metaphor. It appears in a context which allows it to have metaphoric status, but interaction between word and context creates an interaction and intercourse between contexts and thoughts.

This interaction is the metaphor. Thus, the word is not the end result of the metaphoric function; rather it serves as a catalyst for a host of interacting concepts which together yield a metaphorical concept.

A metaphorical concept can be expressed by a proposition (e.g., 'I'm feeling up today') but is the result of more than a mere combination of two separate concepts. A metaphorical concept arises through a dialectical process which yields a third concept different from the combination of the two. One of the concepts (e.g. feelings) is understood, thought and spoken of in terms of the other concept (e.g. up). The meaning of such a proposition is not arrived at by merely combining the concepts of feelings and up. Hudson (1980:76) claims that the meaning of a proposition is 'worked out' through inferences. I would claim that metaphorical concepts (metaphorical concepts being comprised of old metaphors as opposed to creative, or new, metaphors which are processed and understood differently than old ones) are indeed concepts and not propostions because we have them stored as wholes in our memories, as Tyler asserts, and we require no inferencing to understand them: feelings are associated, on some level, with up and down in our memory. Concepts, as we will see in the next chapter, correspond to, and can be viewed as being analogus with, schemata. Both concepts and schemata, as viewed by psycholinguists, are considered holistic organizations of

information in the brain which are used in processing and understanding new experience.

Above I noted Richards' assertion that the mind is an organ whose essential function is connecting, and that we proceed through life by making connections. Richards goes to great lengths to state that language is not just a mirror of thought, but he does make some interesting comments concerning the similarities and connections between language and thought. One of the areas where such a connection occurs is metaphor. 'We cannot get through three sentences of ordinary fluid discourse without [metaphor] ... Even in the rigid language of the settled sciences we do not eliminate or prevent it without great difficulty' (1936:92). Richards goes on to examine the way in which metaphor functions as a means for two contexts to interact. This examination leads Richards to an insightful observation, '<u>Thought</u> is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and metaphors of language derive therefrom' (1936:94). The mind as a connecting organ naturally gravitates toward metaphor, and this gravitation allows for concepts to interact and comparisons to spring forth. Thought itself is essentially metaphoric and language as a result of, and a completer of, cognitive processes is also inherently metaphorical. With these assertions, Richards anticipates Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

Lakoff and Johnson echo Richards: 'Human <u>thought</u>

processes are largely metaphorical' (1980:6). They go on to state,

> 'we have found ... metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature' (1980:3).

Their thinking represents a complete turnaround from the views which stemmed from the Aristotelian approach to metaphor. Rather than being an aberration of language which stands out in everyday discourse, metaphor is the basis for thought, language, and our conceptual systems. While Richards concludes that thought in general is essentially metaphorical, Lakoff and Johnson go a step further to state that the concepts active in metaphor are the basis for all of our understandings of the world, and hence, the shaper of our everyday realities (1980:3). This way of viewing metaphor is a far cry from the mere name transference and the 'happy accident' of metaphors past.

Lakoff and Johnson look at linguistic expressions of various concepts and conclude that two, or more, different types of things or concepts are often 'partially structured, understood, performed and talked about in terms of' one another (1980:5). Metaphor can be concisely defined as thinking or talking of something in terms of something else. As an example, Lakoff and Johnson examine the following

metaphorical concept: 'Argument is War.' (As mentioned earlier, metaphorical concepts can be, and often are, expressed by propositions.) They list various linguistic manifestations of this particular concept:

Your claims are indefensible.

He attacked every weak point in my argument.

Her 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. (1980:4).

Lakoff and Johnson stress the point that we do not simply talk about arguments in terms of war, but that we actually think of arguments as war. 'Many of the things we do in arguing are partially structured by the concept of war' (1980:4). We actually lose arguments, make strategies, defend ideas, and attack positions when arguing. Lakoff and Johnson argue that a metaphor such as this is one which we live by in our culture and, as such, 'it structures the actions we perform' (1980:4). So when we argue, we are actually engaged in a war of sorts: not physical, but certainly verbal war.

To support their contention, Lakoff and Johnson ask us to think about a culture in which an argument is conceived of as a dance with the participants working together to

create 'a balanced and aesthetically pleasing' performance (1980:5). They rightfully contend that people in such a culture, with such a view of what an argument is, would not only perceive arguments in a different way than we do, but would also talk about them and experience them in a completely different way. In fact, 'we would probably not view them as arguing at all: they would simply be doing something different' (1980:5).

Thus, our culture's conception of what an argument is, what one does when arguing, and what happens in an argument, is in part determined by our concepts of war. 'The concept is metaphorically structured, the activity is metaphorically structured, and, consequently, the language is metaphorically structured' (1980:5). And, Lakoff and Johnson remind us, the normal way we conceive of and talk about argument is in terms of war; such thinking and expressions are not the abberations historical rhetoric made of metaphor and metaphorical concepts: they are the stuff of everyday existence. These kinds of metaphors are so deeply sown in our minds that their metaphorical nature is not readily apparent. In fact, as Lakoff and Johnson assert, 'the metaphor is not merely in the words we use -- it is in our very concept [of whatever it is we are considering, e.g. argument]' (1980:5). Our metaphorical concepts are the basis of our conceptual systems. We talk about things the way we do because we perceive them, and conceive of them,

that way. Lakoff and Johnson, then, see our thoughts and cognitive processes as being essentially metaphorical, a hypothesis which will be the subject of the first part of the next chapter. For them, the linguistic metaphor is not separable from the metaphorical concept (1980:4-6).

In this brief, and admittedly selective, overview of the history of metaphor, we have come a long way from the Aristotelian transference theory. Starting with this theory, the metaphor was seen as being a simple transference of name. By using a name of one thing for another thing, metaphor constituted a variance from the language of everyday discourse because the borrowed name was not used as its proper meaning dictated. Aristotle contends that the 'eye for resemblances' required to create and effectively use metaphor is something out of the reach of the average person. He also asserts that since metaphor is merely word transference, it is a word-level phenomenon. As such, metaphor has nothing to do with thought, nor for that matter, normal conversation and correct language use.

Ricouer says that the word is indeed the basis for the metaphor, but the word appears in a context (the sentence) which allows the word to function metaphorically. Richards and Tyler counter that often a word, or phrase, in a context, is indeed the focus of the metaphor; however, what occurs is a transaction and intercourse of concepts related to the word, or phrase, in the context and this transaction

is the crux of metaphor. Simply focusing on the word is not enough; one must examine the associated concepts if one wants to understand metaphor.

The history of metaphor can be seen as widening its focus from the word, to the word in context, to metaphorical concepts. Lakoff and Johnson continue to widen the focus when they propose that metaphors are the basis of our conceptual systems. They contend 'metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in the person's conceptual system' (1980:6). To give Aristotle his due, a distinction must be made between fresh metaphors and old, or 'frozen' metaphors; fresh, or nonce, metaphors are those created on the spot to better explain or understand something. With fresh metaphors, some of Aristotle's assertions would have credence. Old metaphors would then be those of which our system of understanding the world is formed, those which we have a difficult time viewing as metaphor, those whose metaphorical nature we are blissfully ignorant of, because they determine what we consider to be 'the way things are.' Old metaphors are the metaphorical concepts, and metaphors, with which we will be concerned.

1. Aristotle. 1982. The poetics. Translated by James Hutton. New York and London: W.W. Norton.

2. Hudson, R. A. 1980. Sociolinguistics. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

3. Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1980. Metaphors We live by. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

4. Richards, I. A. 1936. The philosophy of rhetoric. New York: Oxford University Press.

5. Ricoeur, Paul. 1977. The rule of metaphor. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.

6. Tyler, Stephen A. 1978. The said and the unsaid. New York, San Francisco, and London: Academic Press.

# CHAPTER II

## LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND PERCEPTION

This chapter will place the study of metaphor in the context of the nature of the relationship between language, culture, and perception. This broader question will lead us into a consideration of the different ways cultures (and their languages) divide up reality. After considering some different interpretations of reality, I will examine two metaphorical concepts basic to our culture. We will look at how these metaphorical concepts might have evolved, what they tell us about ourselves (and our culture), and how they are manifested linguistically.

Metaphor, as stated earlier, may be most simply defined as understanding or speaking of something in terms of something else. Given this definition, language as a whole can be viewed as a metaphorical process, for language is composed of arrangements of sounds (or graphemes) which arbitrarily stand for something else (e.g. the 'real' world, experience, etc.). Words do not have proper, static meanings nor are they the things they represent; thinking they are is analogous to mistaking the map for the territory. As Lakoff and Johnson assert, it is through language and metaphor that we project our concepts onto the world, understand the world, and function in the world. This

assertion implies that concepts exist a priori and are then applied to the world. Certain concepts are culturally and linguistically a priori, not absolutely a priori. They exist a priori for the individual in that they are part of a culture and language which is conventional and which the individual must learn. Metaphorical concepts, then, form the basis for our conceptual system, and this system is a reflection of our culture and world-view.

How much language, culture, and perception influence one another has been, and still is, a matter of considerable controversy and research in anthropology and psycholinguistics. However, it is safe to say that language, culture, and perception are inextricably bound and mutually dependent and influential. It stands to reason that culturally important views and ideas would be treated by a language as being important. A language must allow for selective organization of the world, or else the work of the world would never get done. This selective organization influences perception to a large extent. Thus, language and metaphor allow us to extract culturally and personally important and relevant information from new experiences, interrelate it, and contextualize it. '[Metaphor] may be regarded as a structure forcing us to see reality in a certain way ...' (Shibles 1971:16).

The Shibles quotation above leads us to two major topics in the study of the connections between language,

culture, and perception: relativity and determinism (the latter being manifested in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis). Relativity (which can be considered solely in terms of culture or in terms of the connection between language and culture) in its extreme form, states that languages and cultures differ randomly from one another and express very different views and understandings of the world. The extreme version of relativity discounts, to a large extent, the idea that there is an underlying base of human experience understandable to all of humanity. Such a view implies that different people in different parts of the world experience the world differently and 'live in very different intellectual and physical worlds' (Hudson 1980:84). The differences between cultures are reflected in the languages used by a culture. The issue of determinism is concerned with the influence that language has on thought. Implicit in determinism is a certain amount of relativity, for determinism states, in its extreme form, that the language used by a culture expresses interpretations of the world, and the language then determines how a person understands and thinks about the world.

Benjamin Lee Whorf, along with Edward Sapir, is often associated with those who consider language to be the determinant of thought. Whorf went to great lengths to state that he was not proposing that thought is simply the byproduct of language; however, he strongly believed, as did

Sapir, that language exerted a powerful influence on thought. Whorf (1956:134), in quoting Sapir, sums up their views on the topic:

> 'It is quite an illusion to imagine that one really adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group.'

A view such as this seems to imply that language, in and of itself, influences world-view. However, Whorf does soften his stance: 'Which was first: the language patterns or the cultural norms? In the main, they have grown up together, constantly influencing each other' (1956:154). He sees language as repesenting the mass mind, which is culture. Whorf (1956:134-5) implies that language has greater influence on behavior than culture or perception:

> 'It is not so much in ... special uses of language as in its constant ways of arraying data and its most ordinary analysis of phenomena that we need to recognize the influence it has on other activities, cultural and personal.'

This quotation implies that language is responsible for analysing and organizing experience and in this regard it influences cultural and individual action. If, as Lakoff

and Johnson contend, our conceptual system is metaphorical, then it is possible to see how one might arrive at the assumption that language determines thought and perception.

While extreme versions of both relativity and determinism have been thought to be untenable (see Hudson 1980:73-105), moderate versions of both theories have shown themselves to be useful and applicable in attempting to understand the intricate and complicated relationships of language, culture, and perception. The position taken in this thesis constitutes a blend of the moderate versions of realtivity and determinism as they pertain to metaphorical concepts. Such a position states that to a certain degree cultures and languages hold relative understandings of the world which may or may not differ radically from those held by other cultures and languages. 'Basic,' or commonsense, knowledge of the world, manifested in metaphorical concepts, reflects this relativity. These concepts then lead an individual to certain views of the world and determine to some extent how the individual understands the world and its operations. I am not saying that individuals are prisoners of their language and culture. Rather, I am stating that many of the perspectives operative in day-to-day living are the product of a culture and language and do not necessarily reflect some universal fixed understanding of the world.

To attempt to determine which of the three (i.e. language, culture, or perception) is the most important and

influential is futile and unnecessary. However, it is safe to assert that language gives access to the values of a culture and, as such, allows for selective organization and perception of the world. This selective organization, in terms of how things are categorized and perceived, is culturally determined to a large extent. If it is necessary for a person to focus on particular phenomena, either for survivalistic or societal reasons, then the language will reflect this need and allow adequate expression in this area. Not only will the language allow speakers to express themselves, but it will also facilitate their ability to communicate about this area because the linguistic resources are rich here. The language serves as a clue to what is important in a culture.

Selective organization and perception occur because one cannot take in the world in gestalt form. Or rather, one cannot take in all of experience in gestalt form. Harnard states,

> 'even the instantaneous perceptual resolution of [experience] is limited. There is more information 'out there' than we can perceive directly ... Given that the real world is informationally richer than our finite processing capabilities, it follows that if there is to be any learning from experience, this must involve some reduction of experience.' (1982:191)

Becker echoes this idea: 'In every situation there are

certain stimuli which must be excluded from perception' (1962:99). We are physically limited by our senses, limited to the extent that it is impossible for us to experience the raw data of sense experience as a whole. The position taken here does not argue against gestalt, or holistic, experience of the world. Rather it proposes that the world is filtered through our conceptual system, because it is physically necessary to do so, and that what passes through the filter as perception and experience is in gestalt form. Merleau-Ponty suggests that since we view our individual bodies (the body being what he considers to be the central vehicle for understanding the world) as a whole, rather than combined separable units, we tend to view the world as a unit, an aggregate (1962:149). Thus perception can be thought of as a limited gestalt. The limits on the gestalt arise from our physical limitations, but the choices as to what we will focus on with our limited perceptual resources are determined to a certain extent by our conceptual system, which is metaphorical in nature and culturally biased.

Two sets of interrelated phenomena have become evident in the last few paragraphs: organization and perception, and individual and society. An attempt at sorting through these phenomena might be useful at this point. Individuals are born into a society (culture) which has in a sense already organized much of the world for them. This organization is represented by the a priori concepts (often metaphorical)

discussed above. The individual develops through unique experience and interaction with the world a system that represents 'the way things are.' To understand the process completely would require the consideration of as many variables as there are people. What can be examined manageably is what is attained through the cultural structure. The individual's system of organizing the world is to a large extent culturally determined since the individual relies upon others when learning, and much of this learning occurs in the already extant context of culture. This cultural organization then affects perception. It colors what is perceived and accepted by the individual's limited perceptual system. This study is concerned with what is acquired by the individual as basic understanding of the world through cultural channels, and specifically that understanding which is expressed by metaphorical concepts central to the culture.

What, then, is culture and what is its connection with language and perception? Hudson (1980) cites an anthropological definition of culture proposed by Ward Goodenough which considers culture to be knowledge acquired or gained from other people, i.e. what is not acquired from 'biological heritage' (74). While this is a satisfactory definition of culture, more light might be shed on the matter by examining the goals or function of culture. 'The main task of culture ... is to provide the individual with the con-

viction that he is an object of primary value in a world of meaningful action' (Becker 1962:81). Culture allows the individual to be a meaningful part of a larger, also meaningful, aggregate. Becker goes on to state that it is through language that we are allowed to act meaningfully in a culture. According to this position, culture allows us to consider ourselves an important part of a meaningful situation, and language allows us to act meaningfully within the structure of the society. The culture determines to a large extent what is important, and hence meaningful. The language used by a culture allows its user to perceive what is meaningful. Lakoff and Johnson assert that 'the most fundamental values in a culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in the culture' (1980:22). The language of the culture reflects and helps form the values of the culture, and the users of the language are led by the language and the culture to perceive and understand the world in a certain way. This is not to say that an individual is incapable of perceiving or understanding the world in any way other than the norm for his native language and culture. People who learn foreign languages, or adapt to different cultures, or experience other views of the world disprove such a notion everyday. Neither is it necessary to know another language in order to understand another world-view. My purpose here has been to show the interrelatedness of language, culture,

and perception, rather than to argue in favor of the 'tyranny' of language.

## Dividing Up Reality

The philosophical position underlying the claims of this section is summed up by the following statement: there is no completely objective reality. Tyler states, 'our everyday experience, to say nothing of contemporary science, confirms perspectival reality' (1978:403). I am not going to argue in favor of 'extreme' relativism. Rather, I am stating that to a certain degree languages appear to express different interpretations of the world. These interpretations are, obviously, relative to, and are observable in, language and the concepts which give rise to, and are expressed by, a language. Tyler continues the train of thought:

> 'We cannot engage in systematic doubt about the reality and meaning of the world at the same time as we act meaningfully in it anymore than we can sustain doubt that our words have meaning as we write and speak them in the hope of accomplishing some aspect of the world's work.' (1978:405)

In order to act, we have to continue the illusion, suspend the disbelief, and in doing so create a meaningful world with truths and reality; however, this reality is relative, a product of our creativity. As intriguing as the philo-

sophical resonances of these ideas are, I wish to veer away from that particular path and instead follow a route which will examine some fundamental concepts we, as a culture, hold about the world, how these might differ from other views, and thus, how reality is to a large extent relative.

In speaking comparativley about concepts upon which facts about the world are based, I will for this general section occasionally use a term, Standard Average European (SAE), used originally by Whorf, to refer to the West and Western tradition as reflected in typical aspects of its culture and language systems. The concepts which we will briefly look at in this section will be important because much of the information we derive from them will not only serve to show the contingent nature of reality (and all of the implications for language, culture, and perception inherent in this view), but also provide a basis for understanding some of the metaphorical concepts to be examined later in this chapter.

An interesting way of examining some of the fundamental views that a culture holds is to see whether or not it has a propensity for perceiving phenomena more as process or as thing (manifested linguistically as verbs or nouns, if such categories are applicable in the language). Tyler observes, '<u>Things</u>, both as fact and concept, are hegemonic in Standard Average European language and thought' (1983:1). This particular tendency has several consequences and can be attri-

buted to different factors. One consequence is our tendency to view phenomena as being static. Since static things can be held, observed, and analyzed, such a view has contributed to our typically analytic way of verifying reality.

> 'Science and philosophy have for centuries been sustained by unquestioning faith in perception. Perception opens a window on to things ... In thus developing the concept of the thing, scientific knowledge was not aware that it was working on a presupposition.' (Merleau-Ponty 1962:54)

That is, the concept of 'things' is a presuppostion which is not necessarily verified by external phenomena. But to consider things as being otherwise is to counter our most fundamental beliefs, our common sense: certainly the table I am writing on is a thing. Whorf contends "Newtonian space, time, and matter are no intuitions. They are recepts of culture and language. That is where Newton got them' (1956:153). The table is not a thing? Perhaps it is a process. Perhaps it is flowing and becoming just as I write: contemporary physics would say this view is correct. Though contemporary physics may contend my desk is not a static entity, try to tell the man on the street that and he will think you have dwelt too long in the halls of academia to know anything about the world.

> 'Monistic, holistic and relativistic views of reality ... are badly handicapped in appealing to the "common

> herself refutes them ... but because they must be talked about in what amounts to a new language." (Whorf 1956:152)

Language facilitates certain types of perception and reflects certain biases. A new language would help point the way to different understandings of the world, but the concepts associated with the language would do much more than the language itself in altering our perception.

Different ways of interpreting phenomena may be seen for example in Hopi (an American Indian language) and Koya (a Dravidian language). Tyler observes that there is little use for things in Koya because things are distrusted; in their religious and philosophical tradition 'substance is not permanent, unchanging essence, it is the stuff of maya, the illusory, endlessly changing flux' (1983:24). The tendency among the Koya is to observe the world as being more process than thing, more verb than noun. Whorf (1956:155) notes,

> 'our metaphorical system, by naming nonspatial experiences after spatial ones, imputes to sounds, smells, tastes, emotions and thoughts qualities like the colors, luminosities, shapes, angles, textures, and motions of spatial experience.'

Thus, we conceive of the world as consisting of formless extensional matter which needs to be joined to form before there can be real existence (Whorf 1956:158). The Hopi have

there can be real existence (Whorf 1956:158). The Hopi have no such view of matter. Whorf infers from Hopi grammar that existence may or may not have form, but what it does have is intensity and duration (1956:158). While space and time form the basis of our universe, the Hopi base theirs on space and 'duration,' which cannot be conceived or spoken of in terms of space. The Hopi concept of space, and their way of talking about it, is quite different from ours. While we often metaphorically apply space to non-spatial things (time, intensity, and emotions), the Hopi do not allow such metaphorical extensions (1956:159). Thus, their perception of what space is and how it relates to the rest of the world is different from ours.

While interpretation of space varies some from culture to culture, the classical culturally relative phenomenon is time. SAE languages treat time as being linear. The future is in front of us, the past behind, and we live in a narrow area called the present through which the future swarms into the past. We live in an eternal now, moving forward through time on a straight line which leads to death, the end of the line (our line). Time is a thing, and a valuable thing at that. It can be wasted, spent, squandered, saved, divided, used wisely or unwisely, etc. Our metaphors for time include the succession of seasons, the seasons themselves, beginnings and ends, and, of course, the view that time is linear and an object (Tyler 1978:361). The nouns which

'dawn') are treated much as any other noun: they can be pluralized and are 'objectified' (Whorf 1956:142). It is difficult for us to conceive of time in any other way. That is the way time is, for us. As mentioned many times above, our concepts of the world determine reality, and language serves to support and reflect these concepts.

In Hopi, time is the idea of things 'becoming later and later' (Whorf 1956:143). Thus, tomorrow is not, as it is in the West, another day. It is the same day returning, 'a little older but with all the impresses of yesterday' (1956:151). Such a concept of time, derived from Whorf's analysis of temporal verb forms, reflects the importance the Hopi culture places on repetition, duration, and intensity. According to Ong (1982) an emphasis on these phenomena is not unusual in oral-based cultures. Ong states that analytic study is the result of literacy while oral cultures learn by repetition and apprenticeship (1982:8). Whorf confirms this analysis of learning. The Hopi emphasize the necessity of repetition. They learn by doing and have observed that hard work and single-minded repetition of activities yield positive results. Repetition, duration, and intensity form an important base for their understanding of the operation of the world. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that these concepts should crop up in their view of time. Discussions of time are not thing-focused in Hopi as they are in most SAE languages. Rather, they are often

durationally-based. For example, one cannot say in Hopi that 'summer is hot'; one can only say 'summer is WHEN conditions are hot, WHEN heat occurs' (Whorf 1956:143). The language will reflect what the culture values: we value things while the Hopi value processes. This value of processes may be seen in the importance placed on preparation in Hopi culture. The Hopi expend much time and energy preparing for an event, such as rain or crop dances, because they believe that if everything is adequately prepared, then the event will be successful. The ceremony once underway is repeated over and over again to ensure success. Repetition and expenditure of energy are believed to yield positive results (Whorf 1956:148-9).

Reality is largely relative, and the concepts which form our realities are based on assumptions. Yet, these concepts <u>are</u> our reality. The concepts are biased toward what we consider important in the world and, via language and these concepts, we are led to perceive the world in certain ways, ways meaningful to us. And these concepts are essentially metaphorical in nature.

## Metaphorical Concepts

Here we will examine two types of metaphorical concepts found in English: orientational and visual metaphors. Besides looking at the linguistic manifestations of these concepts, we will also consider possible sources for the

concepts, we will also consider possible sources for the concepts and what the concepts might tell us about our culture and world-view.

## Space: The Human Frontier

Due to physical factors, humans are constrained in similar ways in their interactions with their environment. Such constraints, and the factors which give rise to them, would seem to be a good place to find shared metaphors in different languages. 'Since metaphor is based on the perception of similarities, it is only natural that when an analogy is obvious it should give rise to the same metaphor in various languages ...' (Ullmann 1963:188-9). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) assert that many orientational metaphors are generally spatial ones based on the physical limitations, attributes, and nature of the human body. The major thesis of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception (1962) is that the body is the basis for all knowledge of the world and the self. He asserts that 'the body is the general medium for having a world' (1962:146), and 'the experience of our own body teaches us to realize space as rooted in existence' (1962:148). Most humans stand in an upright position, walk facing the direction they are moving, sleep lying down, etc. Thus, there are physical factors which determine how we function in the world and perceive ourselves as functioning in the world. The relationship of our bodies to a certain basic environment provides a central

means for understanding the world. How these factors are interpreted and incorporated into a language will vary from culture to culture. I lay no claim to the universality of orientational metaphors, only to the situations from which they arise: the physical relations characteristic of the human situation.

I used the Ullmann quotation above with some trepidation. Metaphor is indeed often based on similarities, and obvious analogies should give rise to the same metaphor. However, what may be an obvious analogy in one culture may not necessarily be so in another. Perception of similarities is often culturally determined (which should be obvious based on what we observed above: it would be difficult for two cultures to come up with the same analogy for a table if one perceived it as a thing and the other as a process). The Ullmann quotation is useful though in discussing the apparent basis for orientational concepts, which is the human body. Since the body functions in relation to the world in much the same way from culture to culture, metaphors based on this relationship are easily explainable to people from other cultures who may or may not have the same metaphorical expressions in their languages.

Orientational metaphors perform a typical metaphorical function in English: to allow one to speak of, and understand, the abstract in terms of the physical. Such a function of orientational metaphors should not be too sur-

prising given our fondness for things. After all, what, in SAE, appears to be more thing-like, solid and constant than our bodies?

The Up-Down opposition as used in English metaphor was the subject of a study conducted by William Nagy (1974), cited in Lakoff and Johnson (1980:15). Nagy asserts that in our culture "Happy is Up; Sad is Down." Thus, we say,

'I'm feeling <u>up</u>.'

'That <u>boosted</u> my spirits.'

'My spirits <u>rose</u>.'

*'She needs a <u>lift</u>.'

'I'm feeling <u>down</u>.'

*'He's been <u>down</u> so long that even <u>bottom</u> looks <u>up</u> to him.'

'I <u>fell</u> into a <u>depression</u>.'

*'She <u>collapsed</u> under the weight of her sadness.'

(Examples with an asterisk are my own. The others come from Lakoff and Johnson.) Lakoff and Johnson suggest that the physical basis for this metaphor might be the way one's posture is affected by one's state of mind. (It is, of course, arguable that an individual's posture has not always been affected by mental states in the same way throughout the history of English speaking cultures, but the theory for the physical basis for this metaphor seems to be a fairly safe one.)

Another general assertion proposed by Nagy is "Health

and Life are Up; Sickness and Death are Down." Linguistic support for this can be seen in the following:

He's at the peak of his physical abilities.

Lazarus rose from the dead.

She's in top shape.

He's sinking quickly.

His health is declining.

He dropped dead.

(Lakoff and Johnson 1980:15) Lakoff and Johnson's suggestion as to a possible physical basis for this metaphor comes from the fact that serious illnesses usually force one to lie down, and when one dies, one is usually unable to remain upright.

There is an entire barrage of general metaphoric associations for up and down, most of which yield largely positive connotations for the 'up' side and negative ones for the 'down.' These associations and concepts bring to mind Whorf's assertions about English using spatial metaphors to discuss spaceless, or nonextensional, things. Also it is important to remember that not only do we talk of these things in spatial terms, but we conceive of them in spatial terms. As Lakoff and Johnson point out, our thoughts and concepts of 'up' and 'good' are partially structured by concepts of space. In fact, we think that is the way things are: up and good are spatially structured to a certain extent. However, such a structuring may be limited to our

culture and explaining such concepts to someone from another culture, whether or not they conceive of up as good and down as bad, will help them understand our culture and world-view.

## I See What You Mean

In a paper entitled, 'The Vision Quest in the West, or What the Mind's Eye Sees,' Stephen Tyler (1983) examines the hegemony of the visual in Western culture and language. Since, in our culture, the visual sense holds dominance over the others and is considered to be the most empirically valid, it is the one most often metaphorized for cognitive processes. This gives rise to the vast array of phrases which link vision with understanding, mental processes, and knowledge. Examples include:

I see what you mean.

*Look at it from my point of view.

*She's seen that kind of logic before.

*Look at it from both sides.

*He will show you his ideas.

I just wanted to see what it tasted like.

(Examples without an asterisk come from Tyler (1983:6), and those with are my own.)

Tyler's paper traces the seeing = knowing equation (1983:10) back to its etymological roots and follows it through its Greek and Latin counterparts into contemporary languages, specifically English. As stated earlier, things

hold dominance in our culture and in SAE culture. Tyler proposes that the hegemony of things 'entails the hegemony of the visual as a means of knowing/thinking ... [which] creates a predisposition to think of thinking/knowing as seeing ... [and such a view] is not universal' (1983:2). The dominance of the visual, and the metaphorization of cognitive processes as visual, is not found in many languages outside the Indo-European family.

The propensity for the West to interpret phenomena as 'things' is reflected in Aristotle's definition of metaphor. In his definition, the focus is completely on the noun. The noun transfers; no other part of language is allowed to carry metaphorical qualities. Nouns, of course, represent things.

An interesting sidenote to this discussion of things, is the way in which 'matter' has expanded its meaning metaphorically. We say,

'All that matters is that she should live.'

'In all matters, she excels.'

In these sentences 'matter' equals situations which equal things. Also, matter is equated with importance.

This predilection for viewing the world as chiefly composed of things leads to the metaphorizing of thoughts and ideas as things. True, we can think (process), but we must think of something; there must be an object of thought. Since ideas and thoughts are things, they can be seen, held,

turned over, torn apart, put back together, rearranged, etc., but most especially seen. (Once again, we have provided spatial qualities for spaceless phenomena and reified the phemomena as things.)

Tyler cites several reasons for the rise of the visual in the West, two major ones being science and the literacy on which it depends. The tendency to favor things precedes literacy, certainly widespread literacy, in the West and, in fact, creates a situation favorable to literacy because the written word is viewed as 'frozen speech.' Writing is the 'thing' temporal speech is not. Such a view, as Tyler points out, leads to a trust of writing not accorded to speech. Writing and reading are primarily visual activities. Vision allows for the study of immobile things and, in fact, prefers immobile things (Ong 1982:32). A text is the immobile representation of language: a thing which can be visually examined. Ong (1982) and Goody and Watt (1963) assert that literacy has deeply influenced cultures and the way they perceive reality. In the West, literacy followed and reinforced a bias towards things. Oral cultures have taken a different tack. Ong's book, Orality and Literacy, (1982) examines major differences between literate and oral cultures. Ong points out the tendency in oral cultures is to prefer processes to things. Oral peoples tend to regard, for example, speaking as an action unto itself and not the result or reflection of thought (1982:32).

to be additive in expression rather than subordinative, and aggregative rather than analytic (1982:37-8). Oral cultures are additive in expression for pragmatic reasons, mainly for the convenience of the speaker and the audience. The additive nature of oral expression allows simple links between ideas and events which makes the discourse easy to follow. Such additive expression also clusters ideas into aggregate units so as not to place too heavy a burden on the audience's memory. Written discourse, on the other hand, lacks much of the existential qualities (e.g. facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures, etc.) of oral discourse which help convey meaning. Thus, it is reliant upon more complex syntactic structures to help convey meaning and relationships between events and ideas (1982:38). Writing 'freezes' speech enough to allow for subordinative expression and analytic thinking. The technology of writing separates thoughts and moves away from the totalizing (aggregating) tendencies of oral cultures (1982:39). Such tendencies in oral cultures again stem from memory constraints. Writing frees up memory. Oral cultures do not have this luxury. Their expression is intimately bound up in the ephemerality of speech. Ong goes on to assert that literacy restructures consciousness and allows for disciplines such as science, history, philosophy, and the study of language to develop and attain importance in the West.

Another consequence of the hegemony of the visual is the Western preoccupation with objective science. This pursuit all but ensured vision a place of honor in the sensorium since observable (seen) phenomena can be measured and quantified. Our culture finds internal, subjective experience to be suspect; oral cultures typically do not (cf. Ong and Whorf). Only external, objective phenomena are considered legitimate, and such a condition complements our placing such an emphasis on objects. Our validation of our interpretation of reality, how we determine what is 'really' real and 'really' reality, rests on scientific objectivity, and on our belief in scientific objectivity as something desirable, real and attainable. The emphasis we place on objects, literacy, and objective science supports an essentially visual understanding of the world. Obviously this objective thrust did not cause literacy. Conversely, it was not caused by literacy. Each fed the other, resulting in a visual bias in terms of understanding the world and validating that understanding.

It might be assumed from what we have seen about oral cultures that they probably do not think highly of science, or, for that matter, that they even possess what we would call science. And since they prefer processes to things, they probably would not prize the visual as much as we do in the West, nor would they metaphorize knowing/understanding as visual. The current state of research is far from com-

plete; however, based on what has been observed, such general assumptions seem to hold up. For example, in Dravidian langauges such as Koya, 'verbs of vision do not predominate as metaphorical bases of thinking/knowing' (Tyler 1983:21). The usual method of reporting thought employs verbs of saying or telling (Tyler 1983:21). There are two interesting implications of this: 1)conceiving of thought as internal speech (an idea once posited by Plato in Theaetatus), and 2) conceiving of thoughts as activities/events. As to the first point, there is a general principle operative, "in reporting thoughts, report it as speech in a direct quote" (Tyler 1983:22). In reference to the second point, Tyler reports that in Koya 'thoughts are not nouns' (1983:22). Since the Koya find things suspect, it makes sense they would not 'have' thoughts and would, instead, simply think. Their culture distrusts things and emphasizes processes, as did Heraclitus. Therefore, it is not surprising that their language should focus on the processual and their 'thinking of thinking' as speaking and as an event, just as our emphasis on things is reflected in a language which encourages 'thinking of thinking' as seeing and providing thought with objects (nouns) to think about.

> 'Our thinking about thinking presupposes the commonsense meaningfulness of [things, representation, sense, rationality] ... and rejects whatever falls out-

> side them. That is the reason "reason' is not universal; it is relative not to an a priori form of thought, but to a discourse that forms a cultural a priori sedimented from commonsense.' (Tyler 1983:25)

This 'cultural a priori sedimented from commonsense' forms our conceptual system, much of which is composed of the metaphors that help determine our world-view and the way things are. But this world-view is only our world-view. As Ong observes,

> 'perception of objects is in part conditioned by the store of words into which perceptions are nested. Nature states no "facts": these come only within statements devised by human beings to refer to the seamless web of actuality around them' (1982:68).

So we come back to our earlier claim that there is no completely objective reality. Interpretation of reality, how reality is perceived, and how it is spoken of, all involve metaphorical processes. Language, culture, and perception are largely intertwined. If one could get at the metaphors held to be central to a language and a culture, one would have a valuable key to understanding both the culture and the language.

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# CHAPTER III

## JUSTIFICATION AND APPLICATION

Central to the teaching of a foreign language is how meaning is created and understood, since the ultimate goal is to have your students capable of understanding and being understood in the second language. With the recent swing back to semantics in linguistics, aided by research being done in psycholinguistics, ESL teachers have a body of literature which addresses the area of meaning to base their pedagogy on. Research in discourse analysis and psycholinguistics has shown the language comprehension process to be a more interactive one than that posited by structuralist or formalist theories, which typically dealt with meaning by simply avoiding it (cf. Tyler 1983). One of the most important and influential concepts to come out of this research in psycholinguistics is schema theory, which has helped define the theory of interactive creation of meaning in language.

An interactive view of meaning creation is commensurate with the view that words do not contain absolute meaning. Such an idea posits that something other than the lexicon, along with syntactic and semantic rules, is operative in the understanding of language. Tyler states 'we understand the meaning of utterances by attending as much to who said what

to whom, how, when, where and why as to what was said' (1978:384). While this observation considers the role of context and pragmatics in the comprehension process, it still does not address the main aspects of what comprehension entails. 'Meaning is formed as a result of the dynamic interaction between existing abstract knowledge structures and the clues available from the message' (Schallert 1982:27). If words had absolute meaning, then the recipient of a communicative message would merely function as a decoding device and there would be no chance of ambiguity or misunderstanding. However, ambiguity and misunderstanding do occur. The 'abstract knowledge structures' referred to above are the recepient's key to understanding a communicative message.

## Schema Theory

Psycholinguistics has played an increasingly important part in ESL pedagogy, especially in the area of reading. As the concept of interactive, or cooperative, creation of meaning began to hold more sway, schema theory became the basis for much of the theoretical work. 'Schemata are abstract structures that represent what one holds to be generally true about the world' (Schallert 1982:20). Schemata are organized knowledge, not random bits of information, about the world and

'are meant to represent all kinds of knowledge ... [in-

> cluding] schemata for objects, events and facts, for academic topics, for social situations and routine series of actions (often called scripts), and for how information is typically presented (as in story schemata). Even one's own understanding of what knowledge is, how to increase and monitor it, can be represented in schemata.' (Schallert 1982:21)

Schemata, then, are the essential structure of thought. They are our knowledge and experience, hierarchically structured and organized, which we call into play in any given situation.

Schema theory, as it relates to reading pedagogy, states that the reader brings knowledge of the world to a reading situation and that comprehension occurs with the interaction between reader knowledge and text. The text excites certain schemata in the reader which the reader applies in interpreting the text. This series of events constitutes the interactive process of gaining meaning from the reading situation. Should the reader apply schemata inappropriate to the text, due either to poor text clues, incorrect interpretation of text clues, or lack of shared knowledge, comprehension will not occur. Also, what may occur through the application of inappropriate schemata is miscomprehension, which might be worse than the scenario presented above because the reader assumes that comprehension has occured when it has not.

Processing of a text, according to schema theory, functions in a twofold manner: bottom-up processing and top-down processing. Bottom-up processing originates in the text and is data driven; top-down processing originates with the reader and is conceptually driven. The more general information is at the top and the more specific information at the bottom (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983:557). The data in the text stimulates certain schemata through bottom-up processing. These schemata in turn, activate concepts derived through top-down processing which may or may not be consistent with the concepts anticipated by the reader based on concepts arrived at earlier in the reading process. Without going into too much detail about the reading comprehension process at this point, we can see how schema theory corresponds to the interactive view of reading in which the reader follows an analysis by synthesis process. He samples, predicts, tests, and confirms when reading (Nattinger 1984:397). Schemata are used by the reader to make predictions, thereby facilitating the processing of the subsequent text. However, schema theory does not place the burden of interpretation solely on the reader. Encompassed by schema theory is the interactive concept: schema theory explicitly takes into account author, text, and reader contributions to the reading process (Schallert 1982:29).

For reading purposes, Carrell and Eisterhold divide schemata into <u>formal</u> and <u>content</u> schemata (1983:560). For-

mal schemata account for a reader's knowledge of rhetorical structure (e.g. what one would expect from a certain type of story or essay). Content schemata focus on the topic of the text (e.g. Christmas, economics of the Middle Ages, English Renaissance theater, etc.) and are, therefore, more culturally specific than formal schemata (though the cultural relativity of rhetorical structures should not be underestimated) and can cause the most problems. The problems caused by content schemata essentially are ones of comprehension and miscomprehension. If someone does not possess knowledge regarding the topic of a text, then he will have a difficult time processing the text. By projecting inappropriate schemata onto a text, the student will either not comprehend the text or will create an incorrect understanding of it.

Tyler (1978) discusses another general type of schemata which are equally applicable to reading, and all other language tasks, called meaning schemata. Meaning schemata constitute commonplace knowledge (e.g. existence, agent functions, attributions, patient functions, comparison, etc.) (1978:245). They 'allow us to construct what [someone] might have said even if we did not actually hear his whole utterance ... and to "follow" an argument or conversation' (Tyler 1978:238). Tyler contends that '[following] someone's meaning is actually anticipating and projecting ahead of what we are hearing or reading' (1978:238).

Meaning schemata form the basis for such projection. Meaning schemata bridge the division between formal and content schemata, containing aspects of both. It comprises 'common sense' knowledge regarding what we know about the world, allowing us to follow a conversation by predicting and filling in information gaps. Meaning schemata allow for communicative exchanges because the participants involved share basic understandings of the world and what occurs in it. Tyler (1978:240) goes on to explain that

> 'because [meaning schemata] reflect our natural metaphysical disposition to think of the world as consisting of things more or less real, known by their attributes and characteristic patterns of aggregation, they have a certain psychological and linguistic reality.'

The reality hinted at here is the way in which we interpret the world. It is the reality which we think of as common sense.

## Metaphor and Schema Theory

Much attention recently has been paid to content schemata which have fallen under the rubric of 'background knowledge' in ESL jargon. (For an explanation and example of the application of the concept of 'background knowledge,' see Johnson, 1982.) The concept of 'background knowledge' asserts that the more the ESL reader knows about a topic, the more easily and deeply comprehension occurs. The logic

behind such an assertion is rather obvious. Pat Carrell (1985) has presented research which tentatively shows that familiarity with formal schemata, especially rhetorical structure, benefits the reading comprehension process. Carrell's research also tentatively shows that students familiar with the rhetorical structure being used in an article, and the function of the structure, had an easier time anticipating what would come next in the reading.

While the research being done on these types of schemata is interesting and useful, it seems to me that the concepts covered by meaning schemata would be equally as useful as those encompassed by either formal or content schemata. The definition and examples of meaning schemata, as presented by Tyler, are very similar to what Lakoff and Johnson present as metaphorical concepts. Basic concepts used in the interpretation of external phenomena can be seen as being organized by meaning schemata and represented by metaphorical concepts. Here the divisions between language, thought, and perception are vague indeed.

Schemata are hierarchically arranged (Schallert 1982, and Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983). Such an arrangement can affect understanding of a text. 'Higher level schemata can constrain the interpretation and acquisition of input information' (Schallert 1982:37). Higher level schemata are conceptually driven while lower level schemata are detail, or data, driven. Since meaning schemata contain basic con-

cepts of the world, it is safe to say that metaphorical concepts constitute higher level schemata.

Where higher level schemata affect the reading comprehension process of an ESL reader is fairly easy to discern. If there are existing, unmodified schemata which do not coincide with the text operating for the ESL reader, then comprehension will not occur. Carrell and Eisterhold state 'it seems clear that readers activate an appropriate schema against which they try to give a text a consistent interpretation' (1983:559). So, for example, imagine an ESL student running across the following lines: 'Tom wanted to see what Mary's feelings were about the dead cat. He viewed her ideas on the topic with a discerning eye and concluded she was indeed unhappy.' If he did not have a schema which would allow the visual aspects of these lines to be interpreted as cognitive processes, then he would have a difficult time understanding the text. The difficulty would increase if the lines quoted above came before the following: 'Tom decided to see Mary about the matter; he left immediately and would have stepped on the poor dead animal in question had he not seen it at the last moment.' To avoid confusion when processing a text, the reader must have appropriate schemata because 'top-down processing helps the listeners/readers to resolve ambiguities or to select between alternative possible interpretations of the incoming data' (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983:557). Since top-down

processing is conceptually driven, the schemata activated to help alleviate problems of interpretation would also be conceptually based. The example text above serves to show that if the student has the proper schemata, or has had previous schemata expanded to include the necessary information, then he will have no trouble at all contending with the various usages of 'seeing' in the passage. If not, the problems are readily apparent.

The malleability of schemata is an area of contention in psycholinguistics. Some theorists assert that when one is acquiring a second language, new schemata must be developed, that the concepts in the student's first language (L1) are so different from those in the second language (L2) they cannot be incorporated by existing schemata. While this is certainly true of some concepts, especially those environmentally unique to a culture (e.g. the existence of many terms for different types of snow or sand in some cultures), I believe many of the concepts expressed in a language arise from things basic to the human situation and that modification of existing schemata is possible, necessary, and ongoing, not only in language acquisition but for all knowledge schemata. Schallert asserts 'the configuration of the schemata making up one's knowledge is not static but dynamic, and changes from moment to moment in response to comprehension process demands' (1982:22), and that 'schemata develop, that is, they become more elaborate

and more specific' (1982:24). Schemata, seen in this light, are not rigid and separate. Rather, they are flexible and expandable. They overlap and contain subschemata.

The metaphorical concepts discussed in the previous chapter could provide examples of where the limits of flexibility might lie. The concept 'Up is Good;Down is Bad' contains qualities familiar to most humans; however, their culture, language, or experience may never have put them together in a way that would yield a concept of 'Up is Good;Down is Bad.' I would contend that since the qualities exist in some form, probably in schemata of opposition (up/down and good/bad), the acquisition of this metaphorical concept would simply require an expansion and modification of existing schemata.

On the other hand, the 'Seeing = Knowing' concept provides a more complicated situation. While many Western (largely literate) cultures have a very similar concept, many oral-based, and also many Eastern, cultures do not. In situations where a student from an oral-based culture is attempting to learn a language of a literate culture, especially in dealing with concepts related to cognition, I would posit that new schemata would probably be created in acquiring the 'Knowing = Seeing' concept. However, like all knowledge, the concept would not be created out of a vacuum.

Pearson, Hansen, and Gordon, in reporting research they conducted on reading comprehension for ESL students, state

'the findings support the notion of comprehension as a process of integrating novel information into pre-existing schemata' (1979:10). The idea that comprehension occurs interactively when existing knowledge of the the reader/listener is able to cohere with and incorporate the signals being sent through the text (either written or spoken), is essentially the key to schema theory. Schema theory is commensurate with other work that has been done in the area of psycholinguistics which has shown comprehension to be an interacitve process. In a study on vocabulary acquisition, Nagy and Herman claim 'instruction must aim at establishing rich ties between new words and prior knowledge' (1984:21). And T. Hudson asserts 'the reading problems of the L2 reader are not due to an absence of attempts at fitting and providing specific schemata ... Rather the problem lies in projecting appropriate schemata' (1983:9).

The statement by T. Hudson is an interesting and, I think, important one, because it is not necessary to have students attempt to fit the input information into existing schemata: they will do that on their own. What must be done is to have the student project onto the text the schemata necessary to interpret it correctly. Tyler states 'we understand utterances and texts by providing them a context of possible experience, making with them and for them ... dramas of the reasonable and the likely' (1978:454). However, what are 'reasonable and likely' in terms of possible experience

is often culturally determined. A student without the schemata modifications needed to fit texts into what English speakers and thinkers find possible will have a difficult, if not impossible, time comprehending an English text. My contention is that a minimal amount of instruction in metaphorical concepts central to English, and their linguistic manifestations, would help the ESL student modify, expand, or create schemata and provide him/her with the ability to project the appropriate schemata for many possibly ambiguous or uninterpretable texts, texts which the native speaker would find basic or commensensical.

## Areas of Application

The psycholinguistic research in schema theory points to a holistic, conceptual view of language processing. This view is commensurate with a semantically centered theory of metaphor as expressed in meaning schemata and metaphorical concepts. I have argued that metaphors are at the center of many cultural and linguistic concepts, that they affect perception and organization, and that they constitute high level schemata. These metaphorical concepts, which reflect commonsense knowledge about the world, are such an integral part of language and understanding that we are scarcely aware of their metaphorical nature. If this is the case, and if metaphorical concepts are essential to language, then ESL teachers are failing to expose their students to an important facet of language, especially in terms of supplying

instruction which could facilitate holistic language processing. Because metaphorical concepts permeate all aspects of language, ESL teachers need to be made aware of these concepts so they can integrate them into their teaching. Such instruction should profit all areas of language processing and allow for greater comprehension and expression, while also avoiding miscomprehension, because of the exposure to an aspect of language which reveals world-views and values of a culture.

While metaphor instruction should aid all areas of language processing, there are three specific skills which I will examine: listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and audience awareness as it pertains to composition and acculturation. One reason for examining listening and reading comprehension is that the research conducted in these areas shows the role schemata play in these processes. However, the major reason for choosing these particular skills is a fairly obvious one. Since metaphorical concepts present world-views and interpretations of reality, they will be produced in texts (spoken or written) by native speakers and without their even really being aware of the metaphors. Students who are trying to learn a language have to understand these texts and need to be able to recognize and understand the metaphorical concepts used if they are to comprehend the texts. Correspondingly, if the student can move from recognition of these concepts to production of

them, then this will profit audience awareness in that the student will construct his texts for his audience.

Research in psycholinguistics supports the hypothesis that the listening comprehension process is comprised of four steps. Given below is a linear depiction of a non-linear process:

1. Verbatim content enters short-term memory.

2. Constituent analysis ('chunking') occurs. The verbatim content in short-term memory is 'chunked' into thought groups.

3. Ideas are extracted from the thought groups and placed into longer term memory.

4. Short-term memory fades (Clark and Clark 1977:49).

(The listener can be in any or all of the steps at any given moment of the listening comprehension process.)

In steps 2 and 3, assumptions regarding intent and meaning on the part of the speaker are made by the listener (see Tyler 1978:238 concerning the following of a conversation). He/she makes inferences regarding the direction the speaker is going based on the verbatim content which enters short-term memory. So that which would most improve the listening comprehension process would be that which facilitates aspects of the process in which ideas are extracted from constituent analysis.

Psycholinguists have also shown that the reading

comprehension process enters the listening comprehension process somewhere; although the exact point has not been determined. However, it can be assumed that the reading comprehension process includes something very similar to steps 2 and 3 of the listening comprehension process. '[The reader] makes tentative guesses about meaning, which will then be rejected or confirmed as the reading progresses' (Nattinger 1984:397). As mentioned earlier, the reader follows an analysis by synthesis process. He/she samples, predicts, tests, and confirms when reading.

Reading and listening, viewed in this manner and in what we have examined regarding schema theory and the comprehension process, are not passive activities. Rather they are quite active, requiring that the reader or listener provide meaning, or help create the meaning, of the discourse. And, again, that which would aid the assumption-making portion of the process would most improve listening and reading comprehension. Schallert states 'activated schemata guide inferences' (1982:32). Inferencing is essential to the prediction step of the analysis by synthesis process, and activating the appropriate schemata is essential in making correct inferences. If the correct schemata are not activated, comprehension cannot occur; moreover, if the student does not have the requisite schemata, they cannot be activated.

The student who is a proficient reader in his native

language already possesses the reading strategies needed to perform analysis by synthesis and to project the appropriate schemata. Information about metaphorical aspects of the language being studied will allow him/her to tap these strategies and provide new contexts and necessary schemata for them, ones appropriate to the language task at hand. So, for example, rather than misinterpreting the linguistic manifestations of the 'Up is Good; Down is Bad' or 'Seeing = Knowing' concepts, the ESL reader versed in these metaphors would extract the ideas necessary for correct comprehension and continue along smoothly. Metaphor, and metaphorical concepts, allow for the organization of seemingly semantically aberrant, or unusual, phrases.

It seems apparent that English language metaphorical concepts could aid the ESL student in the idea extraction aspect of the reading and listening comprehension processes. Aid in this part of the comprehension process facilitates the most interactive stage of the process and, in keeping with the prevalent thinking on the topic, that which allows the reader/listener to interact most fruitfully with the text will provide him with the most benefit. By honing the listener's or reader's skills in the assumption-making (or predicting) area, the comprehension level is improved.

That reading improves writing has long been held as a truism. This belief is expressed in the saying, 'You can be a reader and not be a writer, but you can't be a writer and

not be a reader.' Reading improves a student's knowledge of sentence, paragraph, and essay construction. In general, it helps construct the intuitive base writer's depend on. The more the reader knows about the functions of a language, and the culture and values presented through the language, the more effective the reader can be in applying this knowledge to his/her writing. Stephen Krashen states, 'better writers have acquired the written dialect via reading' (1984:28). But to state that a type of instruction which directly benefits the reading comprehension process will also profit composition requires a pedagogical leap of faith from receptive to productive skills which some are not willing to take.

However, I believe knowledge of specific metaphorical concepts will aid the ESL writer by helping him be more aware of his/her English audience. Audience awareness (knowing who one's audience is and something about how they view, understand, and interpret the world) is an important part of the composition process and one which is difficult for the ESL student, and all naive writers, to grasp and be conscious of when writing. Metaphorical concepts, especially those which are organized by meaning schemata, would be especially useful in helping the ESL writer understand his/her audience. I am not saying that metaphor instruction will necessarily improve composition skills and audience awareness. I am, however, saying that, with meta-

phor instruction, an ESL teacher can take a student from a non-SAE culture and language group and tell him/her, 'Here is your audience, and this is how they view and understand the world.' By consciously teaching metaphorical concepts, and showing how these concepts reveal interpretations of the world, a teacher may be able to fix the idea of a Western audience in the student's mind. And if the student is able to grasp these concepts and apply them to the writing task, he/she should be able to write a more effective composition than someone who has not been so exposed.

Another aspect of composition and metaphor deserves brief mention: the area of rhetorical structures. Two rhetorical structures have connections with basic metaphors in English: description and narration. Description, by its very nature, is essentially visual. While the use of primarily visual detail in description is not metaphorical, such usage reveals the visual bias found in Western cultures, for visual detail is the most useful and salient information found in a descriptive passage for a Western audience. If Western readers can picture the object being described, then they feel they can know and understand what the object is. Non-Western readers, however, would not necessarily have this visual bias or require this kind of information in a descriptive passage.

Narration is inextricably bound to the 'Time is Linear' metaphorical concept. In a narration, attention must be

paid to the chronological sequence of events. If this is not adhered to, the composition will confuse the reader. However, the way in which the chronological sequence of events is understood and referred to (especially in terms of spatial relations) is possible because of the Western metaphor of the operation of time. Informing students of these metaphorical concepts and their relation to rhetorical structures may help students better understand both the concepts and the structures.

Since things written are meant to be read, the idea of an audience should be ever present in the writer's mind and in the work he/she leaves behind. For an ESL student, knowledge regarding his/her audience's values and perceptions of the world is a valuable commodity. An awareness of the linguistic manifestations of the aforementioned values and perceptions can be provided through the study of metaphor.

The last area I wish to address concerns acculturation, a very important part of the ESL experience. The success of ESL students may hinge on how successfully they acculturate. For ESL students, knowledge regarding the values and perceptions of the world of a writer or speaker (if they are reading or listening), their audience (if they are writing), or interlocutor (if they are engaged in conversation) is a valuable commodity. Such an awareness is necessary for the empathy required for successful

acculturation.

Many of the problems encountered in acculturation stem from conflicts between cultural differences regarding what is important and what is not. Since metaphorical concepts reveal basic knowledge of the world and focus on what the culture considers important, instruction in metaphor might prevent cultural misunderstandings by showing non-native speakers what is held as important in English-speaking cultures. An example of a problem caused by cultural differences can be seen in different attitudes toward time. We have already examined the concept 'Time is a Thing.' A subset of this is that time is a valuable thing, or 'Time is Money.' People who come from cultures which do not place such a high value on time often have difficulties understanding why Americans are as concerned about time as they are, specifically in regard to promptness. Many cultures generally do not pay as much attention to promptness as American culture does. These students studying in America have difficulty adjusting to new rules of promptness. It is obviously not a matter of being able to get oneself to class on time that causes problems. Rather the problems come from students not being able to fully understand <u>why</u> it is important to get to class on time. To such inquiries students often receive the following as an explanation: 'Because that's the way we do things here.' Rather than being tautological and alienating, teachers could provide information

which is useful and meaningful to the student through metaphor instruction.

In summary, we can see how metaphorical concepts fit nicely into the interactive comprehension theory prevalent in ESL pedagogy, especially in their relation to schema theory. Instruction in metaphorical concepts could aid the comprehension process by allowing the ESL listener/reader to have the appropriate schemata activated by input information and projected onto the text. The projection of the appropriate schemata facilitates the predicting aspect of the analysis-by-synthesis process, which in turn facilitates comprehension. If the appropriate schemata are not projected onto the text, then comprehension will not occur and miscomprehension is likely. Metaphorical concepts are closely connected to meaning schemata and represent basic understanding and interpretations of the world. Therefore, having the appropriate schemata to correctly comprehend them would be a distinct advantage.

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# CHAPTER IV

## METAPHOR: A SYLLABUS

This chapter contains a four week syllabus for metaphor instruction. The syllabus is designed for use as part of an intensive ESL curriculum (intermediate to advanced levels). It is arranged so that there are fifteen to thirty minutes of metaphor instruction per day for the four weeks. Each week will concentrate on a different metaphorical concept. The exercises are designed to stress integrative applications of the metaphorical concept. Each section will feature the concept to be discussed, related ideas, examples, discussion topics, and exercises. All of the work is intended to facilitate reading and listening comprehension, composition, and acculturation: the language skills discussed in the previous chapter.[1]

The metaphorical concepts used in this syllabus include 'Up is Good; Down is Bad', 'Seeing = Knowing/Understanding', 'Big is Good (better than small)', and 'Time is Linear (and Time is a Thing)'.

The syllabus is arranged in the following manner: first there is the metaphorical concept to be studied, and then there is a skeletal day by day lesson plan. The plan is arranged in such a way that each exercise builds upon what has been examined previously and slowly relinquishes control to the student (i.e., the exercises move from recognition to production). An appendix is provided with exercises and

texts referred to in the lesson plan. For example, if the lesson on week one day two calls for a reading, then the text for the reading will be found in the appendix referred to according to week and day number.

Week 1

Metaphor: 'Happy is Up; Sad is Down.' (A subset of this, 'Health and Life are Up; Sickness and Death are Down,' will also be used.)

Day 1: Briefly introduce and discuss 'language views.'

-- Guided inductive introduction to the metaphor which allows students to derive general ideas based on specific linguistic examples. Sentences placed on the board with the metaphoric words or phrases underlined and students then infer the general concept (to arrive at the phrase written above).

Day 2: Total Physical Response (which entails physically representing the words or phrases being studied) review of ideas and examples. This can be accomplished by standing on the chair and lying on the floor and eliciting appropriate words or phrases connected with the metaphorical concepts.

-- Play the tape, 'Losing A Job.' Discuss the content of the tape. (See the Appendix for scripts and transcripts of all activities cited in this section.)

Day 3: Play the tape again and have the students

write down the metaphoric phrases they hear.
-- Briefly discuss what the phrases mean in this context (how they relate to the story, etc.). Also discuss other contexts in which they might be used. Ask the students if they have heard these phrases before and in what context they appeared.

Day 4: Bring in the reading which employs both the main metaphor and the subset: 'La Traviata.' (They have not seen the subset yet, but they should be able to induce the meaning.) Have the students do a timed reading (adjusted for level of proficiency) to force analysis by synthesis, and answer the inferential questions within the time limit.
-- Discuss the subset and how it overlaps with the main metaphor.
-- Ask students to think about Up/Down relationships in their own languages and see if they have consistent applications which are similar or dissimilar to English. Do this as homework to be discussed the next day.

Day 5: Discussion of the homework assignment. What might this mean about English culture? How might this concept have evolved?

Week 2

Metaphor: 'Big is Good (better than small).'

Day 1: Read the passage, 'My Friend Bob,' which uses

the metaphoric idea aloud to the class. Discuss the reading.

-- Place the metaphoric phrases from the text on the board, and do a guided inductive explanation.

Day 2: Ask students for linguistic examples of the metaphor, to include the ones in the reading from Day 1. Then construct contexts for usage, discussing the appropriateness of various phrases in different contexts.

Day 3: Bring in the passage, 'American Society.' Do a timed reading and have them discuss the passage.

-- Have students mark metaphoric phrases in the passage and rephrase these as homework.

Day 4: Go over the homework, discussing the following: the appropriateness of the rephrasings, the effectiveness of the metaphor and the rephrase (which is more effective and why), and the effects of the metaphor or rephrase, if placed back in the text, on the passage as a whole (cohesion, tone, level of formality,etc.).

-- For homework, have them consider the metaphoric concept in their language (Big/Small).

Day 5: Discuss the metaphoric concept as it functions in their language (if it does). What does this say about English speaking cultures? Is this metaphor consistently applied? How does it overlap with metaphor 1? Where, if at all, is it inconsistent?

Week 3

Metaphor: 'Vision = knowing/thought/understanding.'

Day 1: Read the dialogue, 'Jim's Daughter,' and discuss.

-- Pull metaphoric phrases from the dialogue and attempt to define the concept. (Also show other examples.)

-- Discuss the importance of this idea in English-speaking cultures.

Day 2: Briefly discuss description as a rhetorical mode. Discuss the importance of the visual in this process. Contrast it with other cultures' approaches to description.

-- Give the students a copy of E. B. White's, 'Once More to the Lake,' and assign it for homework.

Day 3: Discuss the essay -- include the visual bias and the role of the other senses. Reconstruct the main idea.

-- Discuss the idea of audience awareness and how knowledge of the Vision equals Knowing concept and the visual bias of the West might benefit the students' compositions.

-- Assign a description paragraph for homework.

Day 4: Finish discussing the White essay, if necessary (it is a long essay and there is a great deal of discussion material in it).

-- Discuss their description paragraphs: what they described and how, problems encountered, etc. Also, discuss whether or not their descriptive passages would be effective for a

Western audience based on the discussion of the previous day.

-- Assign for homework the following: have them think about which sense is considered the most important in their language and the one which is most metaphorized for cognitive processes.

Day 5: Discuss sense equals thought in their languages. Look for overlaps with and divergences from English. What does this mean, if anything, about the different cultures? How might these ideas affect the way one perceives himself as a thinking being?

Week 4

Metaphor: 'Time is Linear; Time is a Thing.'

Day 1: Place examples of this concept on the board, conduct a guided inductive evaluation of the ideas, and discuss.

Day 2: Discuss narration and how the understanding of this metaphorical concept (and the elaborations on this idea) are essential to narration.

-- Read a short narrative passage as an example.

Day 3: Play a tape, 'Work Time,' which includes a dialogue that employs this concept. Discuss the tape and its meaning, and how the metaphor was used.

Day 4: Timed reading, 'Beethoven,' with inferential

questions, which employs all of the metaphorical concepts discussed. Discuss the reading.

-- Again, have them prepare concepts of time in their culture as homework.

Day 5: Discuss the homework assignment. How does this metaphor affect our perception of time? Does language affect perception of reality? Is there an objective reality? The many crosscultural conflicts caused by different views of time could also be used as a discussion topic.

# APPENDIX

Week 1 Day 1: The following can be used to induce the metaphor to be examined: I'm feeling up. My spirits rose. My spirits need a lift. I'm feeling down. He's been down so long that even bottom looks up to him. I fell into a depression.

Week 1 Day 2: Text for the tape, 'Losing A Job.'

Right now, I'm feeling good. My spirits are up. However, about two weeks ago, I was really down. I was depressed because I lost my job. And it wasn't even my fault. Let me start from the beginning.

I had a good job working as an engineer for a small, but seemingly growing, company. My work was interesting and the people were great. In fact, the thought of going to work got me really pumped up each morning, and I would hit the office with energy and enthusiasm.

Then about three months ago, we lost a big client and the boss seemed very concerned about the whole situation. I had no idea how bad the company's financial situation was, or how much we needed that one client's business. I had no idea until the company collapsed. When my boss told us our company was shutting down, I fell into a depression. Then, about four or five days later, I got a call from an old schoolfriend of mine. He'd heard about my company's

slump and he asked me to come to work for him. Not only did he offer me a job, he offered me a a better job doing more interesting work for higher pay. Needless to say, my spirits rose in a hurry and they haven't come down yet. It's funny how quickly things can change. One minute you're on top of the world, the next you're down in the dumps, and the next you're back up there again.

Week 1 Day 4: Timed reading, 'La Traviata.'

Verdi's opera, La Traviata, tells a tragic tale of love, sacrifice and death. Alfredo and Violetta are lovers who live together even though they are not married. Discovering Violetta has been selling her belongings to help pay their expenses, Alfredo leaves for Paris in order to get money.

While he is gone, Alfredo's father implores Violetta to give up the relationship because the scandal threatens to ruin his daughter's engagement. Violetta is persuaded to leave Alfredo who then falls into a deep depression. Not even his father is able to cheer him up.

Alfredo later sees Violetta with another man at a party. In a jealous rage, he hurls the money he made in Paris at her. Alfredo's father reprimands his son for his behavior.

Violetta, whose health has been declining, suddenly falls very ill. Alfredo learns the real reason why she left him and rushes to be with her. Violetta has been sinking quickly, and moments after they reaffirm their love for one another, she dies in his arms.

Questions:

1. Alfredo's behavior at the party was:

A. fair
B. understandable
C. cruel
D. all of the above

2. True or False Violetta's actions proved her love for Alfredo and his family.

3. True or False If Alfredo and Violetta had married, there wouldn't have been any problems.

4. True or False Money was the cause of most of the problems between Violetta and Alfredo.

5. Alfredo rushed to be with Violetta because

A. she had fallen ill

B. he loved her.

C. he discovered the true reason she left him.

D. all of the above.

Week 2 Day 1: Reading passage, 'My Friend Bob.'

I had a friend for years, Bob, who was what I'd call 'a big man.' In fact, he was larger than life. Nothing he did was petty or small. I never heard anyone say of his actions, 'That was small of him, wasn't it?' Rather, people praised him to the skies. [Note the link with metaphor 1.] Bob was head and shoulders above everyone I knew.

Everything he did was big, from his business to his family. He was generous to a fault. I remember one time a friend of ours was having a great deal of financial trouble. Bob sold his car and bought a smaller one. The money he had left over from the deal, he gave to our friend. It wasn't a loan; it was a gift. He was always doing things like that, big things, generous things. The expanse and magnitude of his actions and thoughts always made me feel good about people, and instilled in me a desire to be larger than life, too. I also wanted to tower over others. I think it's wonderful to know people who force you to be bigger and to go beyond your limits. Bob was such a person.

Week 2 Day 3: Timed reading passage, 'American Society.'

It is a general belief in America that as one moves up the social ladder, one gets a larger car, a larger house, more property and more things. Thus, a person's socioeconomic status is reflected by the size of his or her possessions: the larger the house, the higher the status.

The opposite is also true. The lower a person's status, the smaller the person's possessions. The horrible decline of the Smith's standing in society can be seen by comparing the Cadillac they drove last year to the Volkswagen they putt around in today.

Now, however, the perception of 'Bigger is Better' is changing somewhat. The world's economic climate is not as favorable as it once was, and America is as affected by this change as any country. Many Americans have shifted their perspective and purchased smaller and more efficient cars and homes. But old habits are hard to break, and so are old points of view. Even though there has been a shift in some people's attitudes, many still feel that progress can only be measured by the size and number of one's possessions.

Week 3 Day 1: Dialogue to be read or placed on tape, 'Jim's Daughter.'

Bob and Jim are discussing a problem Jim is having with his daughter.

J: You don't understand at all.

B: Yes, I do. I see very clearly what you're talking about.

J: I don't think so. Have you considered my point of view? Ellen is only fifteen years old and she wants to go out on dates.

B: Try to look at it from her perspective, Jim. Do you remember when you were fifteen?

J: I see what you mean. But it still bothers me.

B: I've seen that kind of logic before. It was acceptable for you to go on dates when you were fifteen, but it's not acceptable for your daughter. I understand ... I see.

J: I know this looks bad, but I'm only trying to do what's best for her.

B: Are you? Or are you looking out for your own interests? Why not let her go out? She may not like it. Once she sees it's not such a big deal, she'll lose interest in it.

J: Maybe you're right. A picture is worth a thousand words.

B: I know it's difficult to view things differently, but you have to remember Ellen has opinions, too. You need to respect her ideas just as you expected your parents to respect yours and see your side of things.

J: I guess so. Every time I look at this situation, I'm

<u>blinded</u> by my emotions.

B: I can certainly understand that. I've got two daughters of my own.

Week 4 Day 3: Text for tape, 'Work Time.'

A: How have you been?

B: Fine, but busy. I just don't seem to have any time these days.

A: I know. It's difficult to find the time to do everything one wants to do.

B: I rarely seem to waste time, but it all seems so quickly spent.

A: I've found that with careful planning, I can save a piece here and a piece there, which really adds up. Using time profitably is a wise but difficult thing to do.

B: Working as much as I do costs me a great deal of time. I rarely have any to give to my family. And when I do, it seems so forced that it's hardly worth my while. I feel like I'm losing time when I could be working, and when I'm working I feel like it's time lost to my family.

A: Why do you work so much? Can't you cut back?

B: I would, but the way things are going at work, I feel like I have to put as much as I can into it.

A: That precarious is it?

B: Yes, it's terrible.

A: Well, cheer up. Things will look up further on down the road.

B: I hope so. Sometimes I think I've squandered my life away.

A: Don't worry. Everything will work out fine in the end.

B: I hope so. Thanks for listening to me.

A: Anytime.

Week 4 Day 4: Reading passage with all the metaphors applied, "Beethoven."

Few men loom larger in the history of music than Ludwig van Beethoven. The characteristics of the man, his inherent self, allowed him to overcome life's tragedies and tower over other men. This inner strength manifested itself in his music and is evident to all who listen to his work.

The story of Beethoven's deafness is well known, but what is not so widely considered is the depth of anguish he suffered due to his affliction. In the summer of 1802, after years of poor health and increasing deafness, Beethoven fell into an abyss of despair so deep that death seemed a welcome friend. As the summer gradually moved into autumn, his will and pride broke. It was at this moment that Beethoven discovered his creative genius to be indestructible. It was bigger and greater than life itself. Beethoven saw his creative genius as something separate from himself, a vision only he could truly know.

Thus, from the ruins of his life he built a new view of existence: one which allowed him to be pulled up from despair and take to great heights of ecstacy and insight. And it is no surprise that his later compositions are considered to be his greatest, for they embody and express the spiritual and self knowledge gained from that tortured summer, so far back, of 1802.

## Endnotes

1 In order to avoid any connotations, fears, and apprehensions the word 'metaphor' might conjure up in the minds of ESL students as they look up in a daze from their dictionaries after the teacher has uttered the word, the teacher may want to avoid using the term and substitute 'language views' or 'cultural views' (good metaphorical terms) for the word 'metaphor' when introducing this area of study.

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