Metaphors Production and Comprehension by Qatari EFL learners: A Cognitive Approach

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Abstract
The present study investigates the problems that face Qatari learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in the production and comprehension of the metaphorical expressions. It aims to reach pedagogical insights related to EFL curriculum design and teaching metaphors. The sample of the study consisted of 40 Qatari students study English courses in the Department of Language and Literature as a requirement for their associate degree at the community college of Qatar. A questionnaire, writing test and interviews were used as instruments of the study. The findings of the study showed that the Qatari learners of EFL encountered difficulties in the comprehension and production of the conceptual metaphors due to their unfamiliarity with the culture of the English Language and their incapability to evaluate whether a statement is meant to be a metaphor or a literal one. Therefore, to raise the EFL learners' awareness of the conceptual metaphors the materials of teaching EFL should focus on the social and cultural dimensions of the language.
  Key words: conceptual metaphor, EFL learning, metaphor awareness, metaphorical mapping

Introduction

The link between foreign-language teaching methodology and theoretical linguistics has always been very close. Danesi (2000) suggests that major shifts in linguistic theory have been regularly reflected in language teaching methodology, which implies that linguistic models have been associated with predominant psychological conceptualization. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have confirmed that metaphor has conceptual cognitive foundations. They demonstrate that human thought processes are fundamentally metaphorical and each language in a given culture uses its own devices to shape concepts. For example, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state that in the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, our knowledge about war is mapped onto the knowledge about arguments. In this conceptual mapping process, the source domain WAR conceptualizes the abstract meaning of ARGUMENT. There are numerous other everyday metaphorical expressions which are derived from such conceptual metaphor, thus, we talk about defending, attacking or giving up a position.

Therefore, the learners of a foreign language should have "the ability to interrelate the underlying structure of concepts to the surface grammar and vocabulary that reflect them" (Danesi 2000, p. 42). They need to undergo a process of conceptual reorganization so that they can better deal with the new language. Thus, according to Danesi (2000) to be conceptually fluent in a language is to know, in large part how that language 'reflects' or encodes concepts on the basis of metaphorical reasoning. Ortony (1988) expresses that metaphor might allow one to express which is difficult to express if one is restricted to literal uses of language. If metaphorical language conveys chunks of information rather than discrete units, it can paint richer and more detailed picture of our subjective experience than might be expressed by literal language.

In fact, anyone teaching a foreign language at advanced level will notice that metaphor has become something of a buzz-word in recent years. Commercial teaching materials incorporate aspects of conceptual metaphor theory as an aid to teachers and learners. Philip (2005) believes that there are good reasons for this. He maintains that learners who can access and make use of their knowledge of metaphorical concepts experience a positive effect on their ability to organize, learn and recall vocabulary, and have greater success in their comprehension of previously unseen expressions.

On the other hand, Nam (2010) believes that learning a new language should not be considered as independent of any conceptual system and thus foreign language learners need to be encouraged to access word meanings through their conceptualization rather than linking translation equivalent. He demonstrates that foreign language learners need to be taught in context in which certain expressions may be used and features of the target language are highlighted. Therefore, the teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) need to provide the learners with different examples clarifying the conceptual metaphor to allow them to internalize these new concepts. More specifically, advanced learners in particular need to develop a 'metaphoric competence' if they are to attain a level of proficiency in their L2 that will equip them for professional lives that require a high level of language awareness.

Universal Metaphorical Concepts

Cognitive linguists claim that certain conceptual metaphors are universal or at least near universal. They attribute the reason behind having such universal conceptual metaphors to the

fact that certain physical principles are invariable with regard to cultural influence. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state that certain concepts do not change from one place to another but are basic and fundamental parts of reality, we can draw a distinction between experiences that are 'more' physical such as standing up and those that are 'more' cultural, such as participating in a wedding ceremony.

Orientation metaphors are referred to by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) as universal concepts that are derived from the fact that human beings are shaped as they are and perceive the world in a similar way, namely by using senses. They suggest that within such group of metaphors, the body itself and our sense of spatial orientation plays an important role. The central concepts emerging from this concern are orientations like UP- DOWN, IN- OUT, FRONT- BACK, and NEAR- FAR expressing either the posture of the body (UP-DOWN) seeing our body as a container (IN-OUT) or correlating the body and the space around us (FRONT – BACK).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) provide another example of universal concepts of metaphor which are the concepts of container. They are grounded on the fact that our body represents a limited physical separated from the surrounding world by our skin. Accordingly, we employ concepts, like IN- OUT based on the image of a container and apply them to certain other concepts, even though those do not show boundaries as clear cut as those of our body. This process is often referred to as embodiment referring to the fact that the properties of our body are projected on to things and ideas around us. The concepts introduced as the more universal ones are understood more directly than others. They can be called 'emergent concepts' as they are based on direct experience that is based on direct interaction with the physical world.

Culturally variable concepts
In order to underline the metaphorical concepts that are culturally different, we shall go back to the orientation concepts. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) demonstrate that the metaphorical concept HAPPY IS UP is rather universal. However, if we take the system RATIONAL-EMOTIONAL, it is not obvious which attribute is assigned to which orientation. They add that the way we understand the concepts is now based on two separate and different experiential bases both referring to the metaphorical concepts of UP-DOWN. To decide whether RATIONAI IS UP or EMOTIONAL IS UP depends on the cultural presupposition of the particular person and the cultural environment. Callis and Zimmerman (2002) comment on such concept stating that "in our western industrial society, the tendency is definitely towards the concept 'RATIONAL IS UP' as these societies need a rational way of thinking and handling our emotions to be successful in our society." (P.98).

Accordingly, one may say that a shift of the more universal concepts towards cultural variability is always noticeable depending on how the concepts are expressed in cultural terms.

Problem of the study
From the researcher's own observation, it is noticed that Qatari students in the Community College of Qatar often employ their first language conceptual metaphors both in interpreting and producing new strings of the English discourse. It seems that their production of English conceptual metaphors is based on the literal translation from their Arabic language metaphorical concepts. It is often the case that conceptual metaphors in their Arabic language are applied to English without reservation. They do not consider it necessary to understand the

underlying concepts, for the exam preparation, but rather, they take a short- cut by memorizing the translation equivalents. The present study attempts to find out problems that arise for Qatari learners of (EFL) in the production and comprehension of the metaphorical expressions in order to reach pedagogical insights related to EFL curriculum design and teaching metaphors.

Research Method
Participants of the Study
The sample of the study consists of 40 Qatari students study English courses in the department of Language and Literature as a requirement for their associate degree at the community college of Qatar. They consist of 27 females and 13 males whose ages range between 19-27 years old. The study was conducted during the fall semester of the academic year 2015/2016.

The Instrument of the Study
The instruments used in the study were a questionnaire, writing test and interviews. The researcher developed a questionnaire in order to examine the EFL participants' comprehension of conceptual metaphor. It consisted of 15 items which included metaphorical expressions from food conceptual metaphor. In order to examine the EFL participants' usage of conceptual metaphor, an English writing test was prepared by the researcher. The participants were asked to write a short essay to comment on the saying "Learning English at the Community College of Qatar is a piece of cake". No special format or expected writing style was advised. Asking the EFL participants to express themselves in English metaphorically is one good way to gain insight into their metaphorical thinking. Their writings may reflect metaphorical usage patterns and what metaphorical categories or domains seem to be most seen in their writing. In order to gain more in depth understanding of the participants' usage and comprehension of metaphors, the researcher conducted interviews , the researcher engaged in a brief conversation with some respondents in order to explore in depth the learner's reactions to the metaphorical usage and the strategies each participant used in ascribing meanings to the questionnaire items.

Limitations of the Study
The study was limited to the undergraduate students in the Department of Language and Literature at the Community College of Qatar.

Findings and Discussion
In order to find out the extent to which the participants understand the meaning of the metaphorical expressions they encountered in the questionnaire items, the percentages of the correct and incorrect responses were calculated. The non-responded items were considered as incorrect. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The Percentages of the Correct and Incorrect Responses to the Questionnaire Items

Item No	Item	Percentage of the Correct answers	Percentages of the Incorrect answers
1.	The grandson is the apple of her eye.	40%	60%

Item No	Item	Percentage of the Correct answers	Percentages of the Incorrect answers
2.	Cynthia is an avid reader, and she often sets aside an hour to devour a book.	65%	35%
3.	Everyone at my office is an apple polisher but me.	5%	95%
4.	Dr. Moreland's lecture was bread for my starving mind.	40%	60%
5.	You cannot talk about Fred and Ted in the same breath, they are apples and oranges.	10%	90%
6.	The whole business about the missing money left a bad taste in my mouth.	20%	80%
7.	We do not need to spoon – feed our students. We seek for the autonomous reader.	45%	55%
8.	Children have an enormous appetite for learning.	70%	30%
9.	This is the meaty part of the paper which needs a great effort to be digested.	80%	20%
10.	I do not prefer this book. It has raw facts.	25%	75%
11.	You can find him in the library, he is a voracious reader.	20.5%	79.5%
12	He is one smart cookie.	10.5%	89.5%
13.	The banks are devouring the public money.	35%	65%
14.	Now you can see how it feels to have someone call you names, you are getting a taste of your own medicine!	25%	75%
15	He has a sour temper.	75%	25%
The mean percentages of the total answers		37.33%	62.27%

The data in Table 1 demonstrate that the mean percentage of the correct responses was 37.33%; whereas the mean percentage of the incorrect responses was 62.27%. Such percentages clearly entail the preponderance of the incorrect responses as compared to the correct ones. The highest percentage of the incorrect responses was 90% for Item 3; "Everyone at my office seems to be an apple polisher but me", while the lowest percentage was 15% for Item 15, "He has a sour temper".

In fact, out of the fifteen-questionnaire items, eleven items scored a higher percentage of the incorrect answers rather than the correct ones which clearly demonstrates that most of the

respondents were unable to recognize the target domains of the metaphorical expressions which were extracted from the food source domain. They only provided a literal explanation for the words in the expression deviating from focusing on the target domains of such metaphor. For example, the first Item in the questionnaire, "The grandson is the apple of her eye" was interpreted by a respondent as "fat as apple". Also, some other respondents interpreted the second Item of the questionnaire' "to devour a book" as to eat a book. However, a significant percentage of the respondents answered item 15 "He has a sour temper" correctly which indicates their familiarity with such expression. Among these correct responses were "moody" and bad tempered. Actually, the respondents were right in equating "sour" with bad" which has been the predominant reply listed. It seems that this metaphorical expression is one of the simplest among the fifteen items of the questionnaire. Only the relatively straightforward word "sour" needs to be analyzed in order to understand the sense of the sentence. Therefore; it seems that the respondent who was unfamiliar with the meaning of the word 'sour' left the item unanswered.

Another interestingly high presence of correct answers to the questionnaire items being interpreted was recorded in item 9; "this is the meaty part of the paper which needs a lot of effort to be digested". The percentage of the correct answers for this item reached up to 80% which clearly demonstrates the ability of those respondents to identify the target domain of the food metaphorical expression "to be digested". Among the appropriate answers for such expression were "to be understood", and "to be comprehended". However, 20% of the respondents explained this expression erroneously. Such wrong interpretations can be exemplified in the respondents' answers: "to be eaten" and "to be swallowed".

In fact, the responses of the questionnaire obtained from the participants clearly reflected the difficulties encountering such participants in understanding and interpreting metaphors. The major difficulty in the comprehension of metaphors seems to lie in the metaphorical expressions that are based on particular aspects of culture. The participants' unfamiliarity with such metaphorical expressions resulted in misunderstanding and flawed answers ranging from small inaccuracies to gross misinterpretation. The preponderance of the incorrect responses of the participants clearly appears in their interpretation of the metaphorical expressions; the apple of her eye, apple polisher and one smart cookie. Apparently, all these expressions which belong to the conceptual metaphor "TEMPERAMENT IS FOOD include certain kind of food namely, "apple" and "cookie" which seem to be more popular in the western culture and thus they are not conceptualized in the Arabic culture. Therefore, the misinterpretation of such metaphors can be due to the use of different cultural referencing when interpreting metaphors.

The Arabs who learn EFL may have difficulty in interpreting such metaphors that pose no problems for native speakers. Confusion is particularly likely to arise when, for cultural reasons, the learners provide different connotations to the source domains. Lantolf (1999) proposes that learning a second language from the perspective of culture entails much more than complying with the behavioral patterns of a host culture. He argues that if learners acquire grammatical and communicative knowledge but fail to develop conceptual knowledge in a new language, their knowledge use will be significantly different from that of native users.

Second language researchers have frequently drawn on schema theories to explain L2 learners' failure to comprehend culture specific information or discourse (Anderson & Peason,

1984; Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977). They conclude that students failed to operate metaphorical thinking in a positive way to assist meaning comprehension because they lack the cultural schemas. A schema is taken to be an abstract representation of a generalized concept or situation and its inherent entities. As an attempt to overcome such cultural-based problems in comprehending the conceptual metaphor, Benda (1981), who asserts that language is an integral part of culture and metaphor is a means of expressing it, suggests that metaphorical expressions should be learned through imitation and direct exposure to the socio – cultural contexts in which they are used.

Another difficulty seems to be encountered by the participants in interpreting metaphorical expressions is the learners' incapability to evaluate whether a statement is meant to be a metaphor or literal one. Therefore, some participants interpreted the metaphorical expressions incorrectly providing a literal explanation for each word in the expression. This problem is also referred to by some of the interviewees in the present study who stated that they are not able to grasp the metaphorical meaning of some of the expressions in the questionnaire and attributed such problem to the nature of their courses which do not tackle such metaphorical concepts at all. Muhlausler (1995) stats that the judgment of being literal or metaphorical may be different between native speakers and L2 learners. In this respect, Stight (1979) demonstrates that the lack of awareness of metaphorical concepts and lexical strategies often lead L2 learners to render a metaphorical expression in the L2 by using an analogous counterpart of their L1. This view was also supported by Fei (2005, p.10) who suggests that "when understanding metaphors in cross cultural communication, people tend to transplant their own cognitive mode of metaphor into another, which becomes the main reason of the misunderstanding in cross cultural communication".

Johnson and Rosano (1993) refer to the reasons behind errors of EFL students in comprehending the conceptual metaphorical expressions. They state that those students treated the idiom as a novel expression while attempting to generate its figurative meaning. They adopted word for word semantic analysis to arrive at its literal meaning in their mother tongue. And then employed metaphorical thinking in the comprehension processes; these students, however, rarely arrived at correct idiomatic or metaphorical meanings.

In fact, learning metaphorical expressions by mechanical memorization and item - by - item rote learning may not help the learners of EFL to build connections between seemingly incompatible conceptual domains and to distinguish between the literal and metaphorical meaning of certain expression. Danesi (2003) attributes L2 learners' deficiency in metaphorical competence to the lack of exposure to the conceptual system of the target language in a systematic manner. He claims that "the absence of teaching metaphoric competence causes the students to learn virtually no new ways of thinking conceptually when confronted with the target language"(P. 12). Therefore, he proposes that teaching should make L2 learners aware of the conceptual system in order to enable them to produce and comprehend metaphors as tools of communication and thought. On the other hand, Nam (2010) suggests that L2 learners need to be taught in context in which certain expressions may be used, what features of the target domain are highlighted by the source and how the expressions can possibly be linguistically and metaphorically extended.

Furthermore, Arabic and English share many linguistic expressions including proverbs, metaphors and idioms, and these are often transferred word – for – word from one language to another. While the existence of such correspondences aids the process of learning EFL, it can also pose a problem for learners making them think that languages are more alike than is in fact the case, and the result is a literal explanation for the expressions and a deviation from the correct mapping between the source and the target domains.

Moreover, the lack of vocabulary knowledge can intensify the problems in comprehending the abstract concepts. Some metaphorical expressions require a straightforward analysis for the words in the expressions to be comprehended such as the "Sour temper" metaphorical expressions. Those learners who are not aware of the meaning of the word "sour" would not be able to comprehend the meaning of the conceptual metaphor "Sour temper". This goes with the responses of the EFL interviewees who justified their misinterpretation of some metaphorical expressions to their unfamiliarity with meaning of some words. Therefore, Shokouhi and Isazadeh (2009) assert that much more attention on the syntax and semantics is needed and more emphasis on practicing grammatical metaphors is required both explicitly and implicitly in order to enhance the learning of the English metaphors.

Concerning the essays written by the participants basically told their personal experiences regarding their studying English courses in the Community College of Qatar. The essays were on average 90 words in length, with 200 words as the longest and 60 words as the shortest. Out of a total of 6643 words used in the entire combined length of all participants' essays, only 6 expressions consisting of two to five words per expression could be considered as metaphor. For example, some respondents used the expressions "spend" and "waste" to refer to time such as in "I spend 3 hours daily studying" and "Some students waste their time in cafeteria". Such expressions represent the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY since time can be spent and wasted as well as money. Another respondent mentioned "I fell into a depression" which represents the conceptual metaphor SAD IS DOWN". Interestingly, one respondent referred to the relation with his professor as a war such as in "some teachers attack us frequently" which is an example of a conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR.

It was apparent in the essays written by the participants that there was a minimal or no use of the English metaphorical expressions. Danesi (1994) states that the absence of metaphor in students' production is considered as a mark of non-native like speech. He claims that the excellent command of a second language is widely considered as a prerequisite before making appropriate use of metaphor in a non – native language. Moreover, the fact that only a few metaphors were employed by the participants in this study may also indicate the lack of exposure to the socio- cultural contexts where metaphorical expressions were used. Li (1982) makes a pedagogical suggestion in response to the empirical question why some culture - specific idioms and metaphors are difficult for ESL learners to acquire. He argues that the implicit instruction that stems from a simple perspective of the acculturation model is not sufficient to help learners to overcome linguistic and cultural difficulties in using metaphorical expressions. Instead, metaphorical expressions should be learned through direct exposure to the socio - cultural context in which they are used.

Among many grammatical difficulties, prepositions have been found to be a major problem complicating the EFL learners' use of metaphorical expression especially in establishing

the CONTAINER metaphor. For example, a participant expressed the difficulty he faces in expressing his ideas in English saying "I cannot express what I think of on sentences" instead of "in sentences". Actually, Jin (1982) tries to draw attention to the fact that the difficulty in using prepositions is an indication of semantic problems. He asserts that L2 learners' difficulty in using prepositions is caused by the differences of semantic English basic concepts. Lakoff (1993) supports this claim demonstrating that basic semantic concepts are important for processing metaphorical expressions because the basic concepts are used to structure more abstract concepts in the language through metaphorical extension. Accordingly, learners of EFL should master such basic semantic concepts in order to be able to use metaphorical expressions correctly.

Pedagogical Implications for Raising the Qatari EFL Learners' Awareness of the Conceptual Metaphor

Figurative language competence has aroused the interest of a number of L2 researchers. Low (1988) argues that the ability to produce and comprehend metaphor is essential in L2 learning as metaphor can be used to aid comprehension, extend thought, compel attention and clarify ideas. Dirven (1985) demonstrates that the use of metaphor also enables L2 learners to express their creativity and originality of thought and opens up new areas of conversation.

The awareness of conceptual metaphor in a foreign language reduces the conceptual interferences. Danesi's (1995, p.14) states that " students speak with the formal structure of the target language, but they think in terms of their native conceptual system: that is, students typically use target language words and structure as 'carrier' of their own native language concepts".

In fact, the L2 learners' deficiency in grasping metaphors is a problem that seems to be natural for learners of a foreign language, and it is one that can be addressed through adequate exposure to these metaphorical expressions and through pedagogical practices that help learners become aware of them as a natural part of the expressions in their target language. This involves understanding the social and environmental context of language and metaphors. Nam (2010) suggests that employing conceptual metaphor in teaching new structures or lexical items is not a far-fetched idea. He adds that L_2 learners need to be taught in the context in which certain expressions may be used, what features of the target domains are highlighted by the source, and how the expressions can possibly be linguistically and metaphorically extended.

Therefore, teachers of EFL need to assist learners with various examples revealing the underlying conceptual metaphors to allow L2 learners to internalize these new concepts. They need to teach EFL in general, and metaphors in particular, explicitly rather than taking it for granted that the learners will come to understand these features of language.

Johnson and Rosono (1993) state that metaphor and idioms should not be ignored by L2 curricula any longer. Such curricula should include different kinds of activities that enhance the learners' awareness of conceptual metaphors. Experts in the field of education can advise techniques, procedures or activities to orient the learners to the metaphors of a language they want to learn. Carter (1997) claims that classroom activities and teaching aid can be developed specially geared to the instruction of metaphor. As metaphors are a critical facet of language, early familiarization with their structure, formation, diversity and use must be emphasized.

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The designers of EFL curricula can benefit from the contrastive studies in the field of conceptual metaphor to acquaint learners with the similarities and differences between English and Arabic in conceptual metaphor. Moreover, using contrastive analysis in the classroom forms a useful technique employing the previous knowledge of the learners, informing them with the similarities and differences between their native language and the foreign languages they are studying and warning them about making false analogy.

Accordingly, to enhance learners' awareness of the use of metaphors in a foreign language, it seems necessary to draw their attention to the metaphors used in their native language before carrying out any activities so that they can grasp the concept of a metaphor. Deignan, Gabrys and Solska (1997) suggest that it is essential to raise students' awareness about both the differences and similarities in the metaphorical systems between the learners' first language and the target language before learning various types of metaphors. This would help learners to discover systematization in metaphors and thus make it easier to understand and use them than if they had to learn metaphors as discrete items.

One method of doing this is to give learners some examples of metaphors in their native language and discuss the concepts. Alternatively, the teachers of EFL can present an article in the native language of the learners, have the learners underline what they regard as metaphors and then discuss the structure and system of metaphors. Then, the learners can be introduced to activities of conceptual metaphors in the foreign language they are studying.

Activities Suggested for Raising EFL Learners' Awareness of the Conceptual Metaphor
In this section, the researcher suggests three activities to raise EFL learners' awareness of metaphors. The first activity attempts to draw the EFL learners' attention to both metaphorical and literal meanings that the English expressions may hold. This activity aims to enhance the EFL learners' awareness of the physical senses applied to the metaphor in the English language. The second activity is to determine the conceptual system of metaphors. The purpose of this activity is to promote the EFL learners' recognition of the structure of a metaphor. The third activity makes the EFL learners recollect the Arabic metaphors that are equivalent to the English examples. The purpose of this activity is to promote the learners' recognition of the correspondences and differences of metaphors between Arabic and English.

Activity (1): Two explanations for each sentence are given below, think which the literal meaning is and which the metaphorical meaning is. Then, look at the expressions categorized as literal and in your group discuss if there are any patterns or something in common among them.

1. ***This part of paper needs a great effort <u>to be digested</u>.***
a. to be converted into simpler chemical compounds that can be absorbed by the body.
b. Understood.
2. ***The carpenter refers to his wife as <u>honey dear</u>.***
a. Very lovely.
b. Sweet and sticky liquid that bees collect from flowers.
3. ***The banks are <u>devouring the public money</u>.***
a. Taking unlawfully.
b. Eating with a strong appetite.
4. ***This is <u>a recipe for a disaster</u>.***

    a.   A piece of writing telling how to cook something.
    b.   To tell ideas or suggestions for doing something.
    5.   ***Bill gave Sue a <u>taste of</u> her own rudeness.***
    a.   To try food or drink.
    b.   To experience.

Activity (2): Match the metaphorical expressions in column (A) with the metaphorical concepts in column (B).

Column A: The Metaphorical Expression	Column B: The Metaphorical Concept
1-This part of paper needs a great effort to be digested.	A-GOING THROUGH AN EXPERIENCE IS TASTING IT
2- The carpenter refers to his wife as honey dear**.**	B-GAINING MONEY UNLAWFULLY IS DEVOURING IT
3-The banks are devouring the public money.	C-TEMPERAMENT IS FOOD
4-This is a recipe for a disaster.	D-OFFERING IDEAS IS COOKING.
5- Bill gave Sue a taste of her own rudeness.	E-UNDERSTANDING IS DIGESTING.

Activity (3): Can you think of any Arabic equivalent or similar expressions to the underlined part of each sentence? If not what expressions do you usually use instead:

    A- This part of paper needs a great effort <u>to be digested</u>.
    B- The carpenter refers to his wife as <u>honey dear.</u>
    C- The banks are <u>devouring the public money</u>.
    D- This is <u>a recipe for a disaster</u>.
    E- Bill gave Sue a taste of her own rudeness.

After completing the above activity, discuss in your group the differences and similarities you found in the use of metaphors between the two languages.

Conclusion

      The Qatari students who learn EFL encounter difficulties in the production and comprehension of the conceptual metaphor. The comprehension difficulties lie on the learners' incapability to evaluate whether a statement is meant to be a metaphor or a literal one, the lack of vocabulary knowledge, and their unfamiliarity with the culture of the English Language. On the other hand, the lack of the production of conceptual metaphors in their writing are resulted from the lack of the mastery of the English language and to the lack of the exposure to the socio-cultural contexts where metaphorical expressions are used. Therefore, the materials of teaching conceptual metaphors for EFL learners should focus on the social and cultural dimensions of the foreign language not only to master the language, but also to avoid making cultural mistakes.

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Appendix A

Community College of Qatar
Department of Language and Literature

Questionnaire

Name:
Gender: Male   Female
Age:
Average:
Mobile Phone:
Email:

　　　Direction: Below is a list of (15) English metaphorical expressions taken from several sources. Please try to explain and elaborate your understanding of the underlined words or expressions using your own words. A phrase or a couple of sentences will be acceptable. An example is presented for your reference.

Example:
Expression: The lecture was **a piece of cake**.
Explanation: The lecture was easy.

1. The grandson is ***the apple of her eye***.

....

2. Cynthia is an avid reader, and she often sets aside an hour to ***devour a book.***

....

3. Everyone at my office seems to be ***an apple polisher*** but me.

....

4. Dr. Moreland's lecture was ***bread for my starving mind.***

....

5. You can not talk about Fred and Ted in the same breath! They are ***apples and oranges***.

....

6. The whole business about the missing money ***left a bad taste in my mouth.***

....

7. We do not need ***to spoon-feed*** our students. We seek for the autonomous reader.

....

8. Children have an enormous ***appetite for learning***.

....

9. This is the meaty part of the paper which needs a lot of effort to be ***digested.***

....

10. I do not prefer this book. It has ***raw facts***.

....

11. A: Where is Tom?

 B: You can find him in the library, he is ***a voracious*** reader.

....

12. He is ***one smart cookie***.

....

13. The banks are ***devouring*** the public money.

....

14. Now you can see how it feels to have someone call you names! You are getting ***a taste of your own medicine***.

....

15. He has a ***sour temper***.

....

Thank You

Appendix B

English Writing Test

   It is said that 'learning English at the Community College of Qatar is a piece of cake'.
Comment on this saying referring to the following concepts:
- Materials you study.
- Your colleagues in the department.
- The character of your professors.

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