

Language Metaphoricity: Its Implications in SLA

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Lopez, Beatriz Vera. 2001. Language Metaphoricity: Its Implications in SLA. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 10(1), 135-155. Metaphoricity is discussed as a main feature of language processing that must be taken into account to assess: (i) Psycholinguistic trends intending to explain SLA, mainly that of connectionism or Parallel Distributed Processing, and Kellerman's theory of prototypicality in SLA transference. (ii) Cognitive and metacognitive processes in learning. (iii) Ways to enhance learner autonomy. A methodology for language and literature teaching is proposed, taking metaphors as minimal triggers of autonomous learning. Metaphors are considered in their heuristic and pragmatic dimension.

Key words: connectionism, SLA transference, metacognitive processes, learner autonomy

1. Introduction

Much of what we normally see as literal thought or literal language is itself constituted by the fundamental processes of figuration. Psycholinguistic research in metaphorical language (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Carroll and Mack, 1985) has shown that human cognition is fundamentally shaped by various poetic or figurative processes underlying the basic schemes by which people construct their experience of the world. Experimentally and theoretically, there is no clear-cut difference between literal and figurative meaning (both seem to merge in a figurative continuum). Thus, people of all ages, from about seven years old and on (Cacciari and Levorato, 1989) resort to common metaphorical knowledge to use and understand ordinary and literary language, as well as for encoding and retrieving information (Anderson

and Ortony, 1975).

Metaphors, however, do not have only a psycholinguistic interest. They have a pragmatic dimension as well to *make* things happen with words. Depending on their efficacy, they can invoke a myriad of possible worlds with plausible addressers and addressees. In fact, the realization that language acquisition starts with discourse that gradually becomes articulate has reshaped the research agenda of linguistics during the last quarter of the century. Similarly, the awareness that there is no such a thing as *literary* language but a cline of different degrees of *literariness* has attracted the attention of pragmatists and discourse analysts to literary texts (mainly dramatic ones) in order to look for clues of how language creates action and to what extent attention to form is pervasive though in a wide range of levels.

Learning any field of knowledge implies the experience of how to learn, what it feels to learn, what it means to learn in that particular field and, by extension, in any other. How to advance from one order of reality to another with an ample margin of uncertainty presupposes figuring out fuzzy hypotheses and drawing inferences based on limited evidence. It involves being the participant and the self-observer simultaneously in a mirror-like image, going back and forth from the picture in one's mind eye to the words that anchor it in a known world or, even better, in a world to-be-known.

This paper is organized in three parts. In the first part, two psycholinguistic issues are discussed under the light of language metaphoricality and SLA: connectionism and prototypicality in linguistic transference. This discussion has a twofold goal: to revise them critically and to take their enquiries further. The second part deals with learning and learning-to-learn. Its purpose is to highlight the value of metaphors in a self-managed learning process of critical and creative reading and writing. The last part deals with the use of literary texts in Second Language Teaching (SLT). Its purpose is to discuss the pragmatic value of literary texts as well as their authenticity and desirability.

2. Language Processing

2.1. Connectionism or Parallel Distributed Processing (PDP)

From a connectionist perspective, metaphorical language processing can yield interesting insights about brain, language, and learning. Connectionism purports parallel processing on different levels, a feature shared by metaphors, which work simultaneously at different levels of meaning and form.

An integration of connectionist and symbolic approaches, like in the assessment of connectionist sentence processing from the point of view of the symbolic cognitive science tradition, is still arguable. However, interaction seems inevitable even from the most orthodox connectionist (i.e. bottom-up) view. For example, an intriguing theoretical claim is that a critical mass of verbs input is needed before a change from rote-learning (memorization) to system-building (rule-like generalization behaviour) can occur. There is yet little known about a critical speed of processing related to the same change. Critical mass and critical speed may give account of an unitary configuration which can take place only as an emergent property of the network, at a higher level of processing.

When considering metaphors, there is a clear distinction between local properties and emergent-network properties that orchestrate choices at other levels (phonological, morphological, syntactical, lexical-semantic and pragmatic). Consequently, the efficacy and the aesthetic value of a metaphor depends on network properties simultaneously active at diverse levels of processing.

2.2. Psychotypology, Prototypicality, Transferability

A significant development for theories of lexical semantics is the recognition that polysemy and synonymy are mainly motivated by our metaphorical structuring of experience (Gibbs, 1994, pp. 8-11). Accordingly, the constraints on how we speak and write are not imposed by the limits of language but by the ways we actually think of

our ordinary experiences. This interaction between language and perceived experience has important consequences in SLA in the following headings:

- *Psychotypology*, i.e. the learners' perceptions regarding the distance between their L1 and the L2 they are trying to learn.
- *Prototypicality*, i.e. learners' perceptions regarding the structure of their own language, and
- *Transferability*, which will depend on the two previous ones because they lead the learner to treat some structures as transferable and others as non-transferable (Kellerman, 1977, 1978, 1979 cited by Ellis, 1994).

Kellerman states that learners' psychotypology is not fixed. Rather, it is revised as they obtain more information about the target language. By contrast, he considered that prototypicality does not appear to change with developing proficiency in L2. Prototypicality, according to him, determines what learners are prepared to risk transferring from L1 to L2.

The fixedness of prototypicality seems debatable, though. The perceived distance between a linguistic item and another is a variable that tends to reduce its rate of changes due to a number of factors, like attention span and sensitivity to pattern recognition but which, in principle, cannot be a constant value since the very nature of perception is the change, i.e. only relative changes are perceivable.

Moreover, the linguistic items considered can belong to the same or to different codes. Prototypicality can be considered, then, *interlinguistic* when the learners' intuitions of coreness affect their perceptions of in-group and out-group of semantic fields from their native language to their second language, and vice versa when knowledge of the target language induces a perceived transparency in some aspect of the mother tongue which otherwise had remained opaque (L1-L2, L2-L1). Prototypicality can be seen as well as *intra-linguistic* (L2-L2, L1-L1) since the perceived shared coreness between items can change with

enriched experience not only within the target language but in the semantic network of the mother tongue as well. The coreness in learners' perceptions will depend to a great extent on the linguistic permeability they can process, which is closely related with metaphoric language processing. This insight seems to be supported by Lakoff and Johnson:

Concepts are defined by prototypes and by types of relations to prototypes. Rather than being rigidly defined, concepts arising from our experience are open-ended. Metaphors and hedges are systematic devices for further defining a concept and for changing its range of applicability (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 125)

Apparently, Kellerman did not consider language metaphoricity in his conclusions about transferability in SLA. Much less could he take into account the learners' variability in metaphoric proficiency nor a possible interventionist study that could modify the learners' perceptions of semantic fields in L1-L2 (for interventionist studies on metaphorical awareness, see Jullian, 2000 and Deignan *et al*, 1997).

2.3. Synonymy, Polysemy and Metaphoricity

Meaning has two complementary directions: *onomasiological*, or the field of designations, and *semasiological*, or the field of significations (Baldinger, 1980, pp. 304-309).

The semasiological direction is from the word towards different fields of reality. That is, starting from one significant (acoustic image) a whole series of meanings leads to a whole series of representations or mental objects, which make up the field of significations or semasiological field.

The onomasiological direction starts from a mental object to examine all the forms of significant (designations) that express it. The onomasiological structure is based on **synonymy**, whereas the

semasiological structure is based on **polysemy**. Onomasiology approaches problems from the viewpoint of the speaker, who has to choose between different means of expression. Semasiology approaches problems from the viewpoint of the listener, who has to determine the meaning of the word he hears, from all the possible meanings.

In addition, language meaning offers different orders of reality depending on the perspective chosen. The semasiological perspective offers the panorama of the phenomic: repetitions, contradictions, omissions, overlaps. By contrast, onomasiology is referred to an ideal network of designations that support a conceptual system.

Both polysemy and synonymy are closely linked with metaphoric language processing since the boundaries of a core concept should be permeable enough to diverge into different meanings in the former, and to fuse with another in the latter. Metaphoric awareness proficiency is a variable capacity that allows different degrees of semantic patterns recognition and production which can serve to manipulate either the concept to be conveyed through available resources, or the language in order to articulate an original intention.

Deignan *et al* (1997) propose some strategies for comprehending and generating metaphors in L2 based on cross-linguistic comparisons. They deal with highlighting the following correspondences: the same conceptual metaphor and an equivalent linguistic expression in L1 and L2, the same conceptual metaphor but different linguistic expression, different conceptual metaphors used, words and expressions with similar literal meanings but different metaphorical meanings.

In a comparable study (Jullian, 2000) the goal is to 'create the concept' for new words (i.e. concepts inexistent or conveyable only by paraphrases in L1) in order to 'create the need' for a specific term in a particular context. The author proposes five stages to attain this: collecting lexical sets, classification, word mapping (i.e. semantic network around the leading word to show different categories), collocation, and the use of the new words both in normal and in deviant combinations.

The last stage implies the concept of acquisition through production,

i.e. by using metaphors experimentally the learner can widen his awareness of semasiological and onomasiological fields in both L1 and L2.

3. Language Learning

3.1. The Nature of Learning

PDP views knowledge in terms of the microstructure rather than macrostructure of cognition, i.e. as connection strength rather than as generalized patterns or rules. Therefore, in connectionism, learning is a by-product of information processing (Ellis, 1994, pp. 408). It is a matter of discovering the right connection strengths from the input in a self-organizing system, so learning is achieved by modifying the weights on the connections (Ney and Pearson, 1990, pp. 474). Connectionist nets typically learn from experience, rather than being fully pre-specified by a designer. By contrast, according to Christiansen and Chater (1999, pp. 420), "symbolic models of language processing are typically fully pre-specified and do not learn".

Perhaps there are two debatable issues here: the nature of learning and the "impossibility" of symbolic, top-down models, to learn.

There is a bias in what educators generally understand as "learning": it is usually linked to what they intend to teach. However, the constraints on teachability are so many that any learning limited to its boundaries would have to be shallow and plain: quite similar to the one so far achieved by the so-called intelligent machines. The limits for learning (be it with a teacher, without a teacher, or in spite of the teacher), though, are far beyond that: whereas teaching requires clarity and generality to work, learning implies dealing with uncertainty and uniqueness. Therefore, the fact that the symbolic models so far developed are unable to learn is only a symptom of their incipency.

Carroll and Mack (1985, p. 47) have found that metaphors, due to their open-ended nature and heuristic force, can help learners to draw

inferences on basis of very limited information. That is: from a "top" construct (namely, a metaphor) the learner works out the metaphor's similarities, dissimilarities, and omissions, between the known and the to-be-known in order to evolve his understanding of the new domain of knowledge.

Understanding the pragmatics of a learning situation, implies taking into consideration the needs and goals of the learner. The learning efficacy of a metaphor is a matter of an intricate balancing of correspondence, non-correspondence, and indeterminate correspondence:

The relation between the learner and this intricate balancing is one of 'transactions', not a simple mapping *in toto*. Relations between the metaphor source and the target are brought into correspondence through the course of a process of thought [·] Depending upon the learner's goals and expectations, this [·] mapping [·] might encourage further mapping or further metaphors. (Carroll and Mack, 1985, p. 51)

Metaphorical processing, then, offers important clues for understanding and promoting learner's autonomy. An autonomous learner, in this light, would be one capable of generating metaphors and effectively working out their implications in order to manage not only his grasping of new knowledge, but his own learning process as well.

3.2. Learner Autonomy and Knowledge

Learning and learning-to-learn are inextricable parts of the same process to the extent to which the learner assumes responsibility of himself qua learner. Responsibility and self-direction are frequently associated with adult learning. However, autonomy is not a feature necessarily attached to a certain age.

Autonomous learners value their own experience as a resource for further learning, they get involved in developing learning objectives for themselves reacting to experience as they perceive it, not as the teacher

presents it. Autonomous learners are more concerned with whether they are changing in the direction of their own idealized self-concept than whether they are meeting standards and objectives set for them by others. The autonomous learner eventually gains expertise, which may not mean mastering what the 'experts' know but to manage to go on when he does not know.

Knowledge means, in traditional contexts, mastering performance of specialised behaviours. In industrialised societies, mainstream education knowledge has meant transmission of information along with codes with which process it. Knowledge as well can mean *comprehension*, which implies being aware of codes, data and paradigms, *and* being able to use them in order to explore and make the field advance. Quite literally, a knowledgeable person is a fluent and creative user of the living language of a field, i.e. the language through which a field of knowledge is expressed and transformed.

The teaching of any subject can be linked mainly with one of these meanings of knowledge. Teaching itself has evolved in relation with the kind of knowledge borne in mind, and so does the meaning of learning.

Learning knowledge in the modality of comprehension implies a high degree of autonomy. Accordingly, learning any kind of knowledge, e.g. literary knowledge, requires self-direction in the process of responding creatively to literary texts. It means to be a user of the literary language, i.e. able to understand and to produce (Powell, 1968). In this sense, learning encompasses what happens inside and outside the classroom and relies on the learners' awareness of their own experience of life. Accordingly, there is no such a thing as first class knowledge and knowledge for schools.

Henry Widdowson distinguishes between a discipline and a subject in the following way: a *discipline* is a set of abilities, concepts, ways of thinking, associated with a particular area of human enquiry defined in terms of theoretical requirements, whereas *subjects* must be defined at different educational levels in terms of pedagogic objectives, (Widdowson, 1975). Consequently, he widens three discontinuities: first between knowledge in school and outside it, then between educational

knowledge as a corpus of information and knowledge as a theoretical endeavour. The last discontinuity, by default, is that between knowledge *about* a field as a theoretical concern, and knowledge *of* the living guts of the field, since he does not spare a word for literature knowledge as the craftsmanship of literary works. Optimistically, he adds a note in the hope of filling the gap between subject and discipline:

Obviously the higher the educational level the more the subject which is studied approximates to the discipline whose acquisition represents the ultimate academic terminal behaviour of the learner. But the majority of learners will, of course, never reach this point. (Widdowson, 1975, p. 10)

However, it is perfectly possible to study a field of knowledge so far away from comprehension as to drift always away from acquiring it.

Educational enterprises have overused the meaning of knowledge as specialised performances and as information corpus. However, knowledge as comprehension is seldom present in the syllabi, mainly due to the difficulty that implies leading and assessing the unexpected, the not yet known.

Mastering the living language of any field of knowledge means to be able to go from meaning to code (deciphering the underlying combinatory rules by observation, exploration and hypothesising) as freely as from code to meaning (creating new but intelligible entities that may widen the code itself).

Mastering the living language of literature means, therefore, reading and writing creatively, learning the craftsmanship of the writer. Reading alone, in the hope of getting somewhere just through the consumers pleasure or the theoretician's aloofness, means falling short of literature comprehension.

3.3. Self-direction: From Asking Questions to Metaphor Creation

One of the main concerns in asking questions is whether they are

pertinent or not to the core of a text. This preoccupation arises both when asking somebody else or when wondering in a personal interaction with the text. Pertinence is a yardstick of comprehension, it is the value that expresses one's grip on the interconnection, relative weight and position of the constituents in a piece of discourse. However, there may be questions that seem no pertinent for the text at hand but that eventually turn out to reveal a wider scope in which they are totally pertinent.

These are some guidelines for self-directing questions:

- There are ideas whose main function is to generate other ideas, rather than describe any reference to the world.
- They are open-ended, with evocative and cohesive power.
- The core of any piece of discourse is made up with this kind of generative ideas.
- They generate both factual and potential features of a given text.
- These ideas are metaphors.

Taking into account this view of *coreness* in any piece of discourse, we can distinguish a new kind of opposition between questions: **concentric** questions versus **eccentric** questions. The former share the same generative metaphor of a given piece of discourse and they take the discourse further by exploring its possibilities. The latter derive from a different cohesive and generative idea either because the questioner is still unaware of the core at hand or because he wants to search for a more comprehensive metaphor.

Learners can become aware of these principles, as well as stretch their metaphorical thinking reading all sorts of texts of outstanding literariness like, for example, literary texts. Taking these principles into account, they might be able to direct and self-assess their own creative-critical reading. When reading literary texts, however, some of the metaphors that put in motion the unit form-and-meaning are quite predictable like, for example:

- *Structure as a cue*: the lay out, the poetic forms of literary tradition are cues for expected meaning and pertinent questions.
- *Binary oppositions*: there is a metaphor of balance underlying, so for any "minus" or "close" the learner can expect a "plus" or "open".
- *Wordplay as cue*: here the metaphor is the rupture of the expectancies, which nevertheless can be expected.
- *Scanning for patterns*: parallelisms at all possible levels: form, sound, meaning. It is a Hermetic metaphor: as it is above, it is below.
- *Title as cue*: the title can play a number of roles but the learner can be sure that it gives cues sometimes they are deliberately misleading.

We propose to call metaphors "*minimal triggers of self-direction*" in a learner-centred syllabus design aimed at teaching language and literature in an FLT setting. That is, metaphors generating ideas cohesively in a given piece of discourse.

They are "minimal" because they behave as a leading theme that is repeated and expanded at different levels of meaning and form. They perform as "triggers" because they give origin to different perspectives and possibilities, not all of which actualised in a text but still open to the perspicacity of the reader aware of them.

They are priceless devices of self-direction because, once discovered, they offer perspective and a sense of unity that invites to experiment with them. Also, there are hidden aspects of a text that can only be guessed with the aid of a metaphor. The learner can count on them as frames to self-assess his own queries that can eventually lead him to the comprehension of whatever piece of discourse, not only literary.

4. The use of literary texts in SLT

4.1. Pragmatics in the ESL Classroom/Materials

Interlanguage pragmatics --i.e. the performance and acquisition of speech acts by L2 learners-- has received the greatest attention in SLA research. However, I would like to discuss a broader sense of pragmatics, which includes not only interactional acts but as well the heuristic value of language to create shared, interpersonal worlds (Bruner, 1986) which, as in literary texts, deviate from the more conventional ones.

The relevance of discussing the value of literary texts for pragmalinguistic teaching purposes is to take advantage of the fact that they combine the richness of both the spoken *and* the written discourse. Literary texts are the finest expression of language performative functions since they create entities and interpersonal relations by language alone.

Pragmatics in a process-oriented learning setting (Nunan, 1994) implies much more than consciousness raising activities about illocutionary acts (Levinson, 1983) in the target language. It's the management of impression, conversational power, and face-threatening events in class that can take to the fore ethnic, cultural or gender identity issues (Ellis, 1994, p. 184). It is always an option for the learner to appear 'learner-like', declining the native speaker pragmalinguistic model as a goal. However, the teacher has the responsibility to support informed choices, and so help the students to manage creatively their identity as successful learners.

Nowadays, there are but a few teaching materials that are designed to help students deal with pragmatics. However, it is not obvious that the intuitions of even an experienced ELT native speaker are reliable with respect to speech acts (Olshtain and Cohen, 1991, p. 155). The very fact of the goal itself, i.e. designing teaching resources, predisposes the writers to oversimplify or over-generalise in order to produce 'teachable' materials, giving a wrong emphasis to explicit knowledge rather than tacit knowledge of how indeed language is spoken. Boxer and Pickering (1995), for example, have pointed out two important problems when designing ELT materials with pragmatic content: (1) intuition about speech realisation differs greatly, and (2) important

information on underlying social strategies of speech acts are often overlooked entirely.

Why should speech acts be *conventional* utterances, but not atypical, creative findings that all the same accomplish their goal of getting things done? How can be illocutionary *written* acts described in order to gain a wider perspective that encompasses both spoken and written discourse? Regarding this last question, there is research available on readers' inferences about characters' speech acts in drama plays (Beach, 1989) as well as proposals about the imaginative use of literary texts in ELT so that the learner experiences first, and then analyses -- among many more things -- speech acts (McCarthy, 1996, for drama texts; Gerber, 1996, for novels; McRae, 1998, for poetry).

Speech acts can be based on constructions other than explicit performative verbs. There is no direct, predictable link between a specific type of linguistic construction and a specific speech act (Short, 1996, pp. 203-204). And it is because of this lack of specificity that we cannot see the pertinence, the validity or the productiveness of making any difference between speech acts and interactional acts (Ellis, 1994, p. 159). The performative dimension of language is overarching: it does not only encompass straightforward actions that after all can be accomplished otherwise, nonverbally, in different cultures. It covers the self-regulatory performance of language in the stream of speech or discourse, no less than the heuristic possibilities of using metaphors in order to make sense of reality in such a way that a string of implicature can be followed 'between the lines' of the speech or the written discourse.

Virtually all phenomena studied by pragmatics, such as deixis, conversational implicature and presupposition, illocutionary acts, conversational structure or repair have a place in literary texts. The key word in using them is *poetic* imagination in the use, procedures and task design. Literary texts alone can only feed the same old mills of inertia.

4.2. Literary Texts: Authenticity and Desirability in the SL Classroom

There are at least as many reasons to say that literary texts are inauthentic as there are to declare the opposite.

Supposedly, a material is inauthentic when it does not include the linguistic and interactive modifications that natural language contains. A scripted dialogue or especially written teaching texts, for example, would be "highly idealised" language samples that lack the discourse features of genuine texts, which equals to their being fundamentally non-communicative, "since they were written essentially to present language data rather than to convey information" (Swan, 1990, p. 95).

Literary texts, generally speaking, are not written to serve as SL classroom materials, though there is a lot to learn about language from them. They are addressed to proficient language users, as genuine texts, but they are works of art whose expressive medium is language, so they are simultaneously highly idealised *and* highly *concrete*, in the same way that music and painting are concrete: they mean in their being. Supposedly, again, the touchstone to authenticity is meaning, not code. However, be they "easy" or "difficult", literary texts appeal to the *code sensitivity* of the reader/hearer.

A transactional view of the reading process, according to Protherough (1986, p. 41), assumes that close attention will be paid *both* to the words on the page *and* to the response of readers to those words: the interactive modifications between the text and the reader are conspicuously present. However, in order to spot the interactive quality of literary texts, the focus was shifted from the text to the reader. This major move provoked lively debates during the last decade of the past century as to whether the authenticity is in the text or in the reader or both (Kramsch and Kramsch, 2000, p. 568).

In a parallel movement but in ELT, specifically in the ESP field, a primary emphasis was placed on the student processes of learning, thus de-emphasising course materials as a product to be mastered (Lynch and Hudson, 1991, p. 218). So a new definition for authenticity arose, "a definition which considers the authenticity of strategies and activities instead of the authenticity of discourse" (Johns, 1991, p. 75).

All in all, "authenticity" seems a narrow term to be successfully

applied to literary texts, and not precisely due to their oddity, but because the concept was conceived from a short-sighted view: it ignored a whole dimension of language (namely, its poetic function), and then, naively, it was deemed to describe some "objective" attribute of the text, regardless of the subject (call it learner, reader or hearer) in an interactional reality.

Provided a number of pre-conditions like time, motivation, perceived relevance, teacher's skills and knowledge, and so on, we consider *desirable* the use of literary texts in the SL classroom, for theoretical, empirical, and experiential reasons.

Theoretically, literary texts can offer a privileged convergence of language, literacy, and culture. Besides the existential and aesthetic value of literature, *literariness* has proved to be an intrinsic dimension of language itself, currently searched by psycholinguistics and cognitive sciences. Metaphor not only plays an outstanding role in the development of language and thought, but also in language learning (Cook, 1998). Interpreting a poem is a complex and refined demand performable at various degrees of expertise (Peskin, 1998). Also, the open-ended nature of literary (or poetic) texts makes them especially suitable for interactional acts to negotiate tentative meanings in a collaborative interplay between the readers and the text (Abbs, 1981). Finally, literary texts convey a rich oral textuality, significant to raise one's awareness of speech diversity.

Empirically, language teachers who actually have used literary texts agree on the richness of learning that it entails (Abbs, 1989; Protherough, 1986; Stern, 1991) that goes far beyond language itself. Kramersch and Kramersch (2000) document the changing role that literature has played in foreign language teaching for almost a century (1916-1999).

However, SL teachers who do not use literary texts outnumber those who do. In the already cited article, Kramersch and Kramersch point out at the ideological, political, economical, and epistemological reasons for it. The scattered presence of literary texts has been so notorious since the end of WWII, that some methodologists, and even major ELT trends

like the communicative approach, are hardly aware of them and of *literariness*, so their generalizations about language and learning tend to be, in the best of the cases, only incomplete.

Literary texts can provide a worthwhile source of depth in the ELT profession. Since the audiolingual method full swing in the years after WWII, concerns about the humanistic content of foreign language teaching have arisen. Peter Abbs (1981, p. 123) writes about this emptiness of content:

as the word "communication" fell like lead from the lips of a million teachers, so there seemed less and less to say [...] Without any sense of depth or inner mystery, "communication" was destined to become confined to surfaces, growing ever thinner, ever more transparent until there was nothing left to say, except words.

Besides, literary texts in the ELT classroom since they can become priceless aids to relate reading to the students' experience. Literature is interactional not only between the reader and the text, but as well to the extent that readers gradually become members of a critical audience no less than potential writers themselves. As teachers using literary texts, we cannot offer short-cuts or pre-packaged meaning to spare the students their own experiencing in reading and writing.

Reading and writing go head and tails because understanding involves criticism, and criticism is the record of what happens when people read *and write* (Protherough, 1986, p. 40). As Vogel says, "the mind of the creative writer operates precisely like the mind of the creative reader" (Vogel, 1981, p. 5).

There is still much to do in the ELT classroom regarding the value of literature, which encompasses both creative reading and creative writing. However, it could mean the beginning of a major revision of both the principles and the goals of language teaching.

5. Conclusion

The study of metaphoric language reveals a number of clines where otherwise there would be oppositions. The ones mentioned here were: the interaction between symbolic and bottom-up connectionist models of language processing, a cline of literariness throughout language both to make sense of experience and to encode-decode language, and a continuum of self-direction along the development of the unit made up by learning for comprehension and learning-to-learn skills.

The desirability of using literary texts for educational purposes transcends the language classroom. Because of their outstanding metaphoric quality, they are priceless resources for cognitive development. Metaphoric language and metaphoric thinking play an outstanding role in creative and critical thinking. Moreover, literary texts offer multiple possibilities for researching and teaching the pragmatic dimension of language. The complexity of literary texts might be overwhelming. However, learning is complex and *needs* complexity to occur. Learners need to see and interact with complex relationships between form, meaning and pragmatic use, since they do not learn perfectly one thing at a time but numerous things simultaneously and imperfectly (Nunan, 1998, p. 102). Otherwise, 'easy' tasks may become unnecessarily difficult due to their artificiality.

The awareness of metaphoric language processing and the poetic dimension of language (in the pragmatic sense that language creates relationships and entities) may reschedule the research agenda of SLA and the current FL teaching practice. They should deal with "the way language students become aware of the representational nature of language, the poetics of language use, and the role that they themselves play as nonnative readers in the symbolic construction of foreign literary texts" (Kramsch and Kramsch, 2000, p. 569). In short, a metaphor-literariness informed curriculum transcends language or literature and aims at the creative and critical thinking of the learner *qua* human.

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