

ON METAPHORICAL FEATURES OF TEACHERS' DIRECTIVES IN COLLEGE EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

The development of metaphoric competence in EFL teaching and learning has recently aroused great attention in China. As for how to improve the metaphoric competence of L2 learners, researches home and abroad have been conducted on the theoretical guidance and application value of metaphor in teacher talk. As an influential part of teacher talk, teachers' directives have been probed in terms of pragmatics, speech functions, etc. However, few researches have been conducted on the metaphorical features of teachers' directives in a cognitive way. Thus, from the perspective of metaphor cognition, this study first aims at clarifying the metaphorical features of teachers' directives, then the functions in the development of learners' metaphoric competence. In this study, a role model of teachers' directives with metaphorical features in college EFL classrooms was proposed according to findings of influential researches on metaphor cognition and application. To prove its validity, a case study was conducted with instruments like classroom observation and video recordings. Discourse analysis and Flanders' Interaction Analysis System were adopted in data analysis. The findings indicated that metaphorical features of teachers' directives are highly relevant to the classroom context in EFL classrooms, where conscious or unconscious input through metaphorical directives are significant in cultivating L2 learners' metaphoric competence.

1 Introduction

The book *Metaphors We Live By* by Lakoff and Johnson, a landmark, initiated the conceptual metaphor theory and the modern studies on metaphor. Traditional linguistics regards metaphor as an instrument of verbal embellishment whereas the modern research on metaphor holds the view that metaphor is not only a rhetoric tool, but the foundation of human cognition, thought, language and behavior (Jiang, 2003). Influenced by the modern studies on metaphor, researchers in the field of EFL began to set their focus on the effects of metaphor in the field of foreign language teaching since 1980s. Such a shift indicates the tendency that researchers have been aware of the central position of metaphor in language and thought (Jiang & Zhang, 2003). The development of such a central position is facilitated by the studies on metaphor from the perspectives of constructivism and cognition. According to constructive and cognitive viewpoints, metaphor is a way to construct language and thought, while metaphoric competence refers to identifying, understanding, creating and applying given metaphors in communication process, which is closely related to the linguistic competence and communicative competence of language learners (Li, 2007).

In the past 15 (2000-2014) years, the cultivation of metaphoric competence in EFL teaching and learning has aroused great attention in China. Domestic researchers in this field advocated that linguistic competence, communicative competence and metaphoric competence of students should be trained and cultivated as a whole, and meanwhile they proposed several ways to improve students' metaphoric competence in the EFL classroom environment (Wang, 2004). As the classroom by itself is a unique social environment with its own human activities and its own conventions governing these activities (Cullen, 1998), both the teacher and students play a cooperative role in enriching the classroom teaching and learning context, where both of them are possible to apply certain metaphorical language in the classroom activities. That is why teacher talk and student talk have always been the major focus in studies of interactive EFL classroom teaching and learning process. Teacher talk, according to Cook (1996, p. 119), "refers to the amount of speech supplied by the teacher rather than the students in L2/FL classroom". Based on the previous studies on teacher talk (Flanders, 1960; Allwright, 1984; Chaudron, 1988, etc.), Ellis (1991) divided those studies into two kinds: investigating the type of language that teachers use in language classrooms and the type of language they use in subject lessons (e.g. science) involving L2 learners, which proves that a teacher's language in the classroom is a significant part in initiating students to be involved in the classroom interaction. Directives are one type of language used in teacher-fronted exchanges of talk, which requires responses from students and thus to achieve better interactions in the classroom context.

Researchers home and abroad have done academic studies on teachers' directives from different perspectives, such as pragmatics and functional linguistics. At the theoretical level, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) further classified the goals of teachers' directives into four types according to the communicative objectives in the classroom context, namely demanding actions, providing goods, giving permission and sharing information, which is consistent with Halliday's categorization of four primary speech functions in interpersonal communication: Give, Demand, Information, Goods /Services. At the practical level, Dalton-Puffer and Nikula (2006) conducted an experimental research in terms of pragmatics, examining how directives are performed by teachers and students, interpreting how interpersonal aspects of communication get realized in the performance of directives, and analyzing how contextual factors (such as the goals of directives and the type of classroom register—instructional/regulative) affect speakers' directness choices in Finnish and Austrian CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) classrooms. Their findings showed that contextual factors interact systematically through speakers' choice of directives. In addition, Chinese researchers such as Guo Linhua (2005) also carried out an experimental research, aiming at analyzing the forms and distributional features of English teachers' directives. The results indicated that teachers' applicable and sufficient directives could stimulate students to actively involve themselves in the classroom activities, which could help improve the effectiveness of EFL classroom interaction. However, up until now, quite few researches have been done on metaphorical features of teachers' directives. This study is therefore focused on the metaphorical features of teachers' directives, aiming to interpret its effects in the development of comprehensible input and thus promoting classroom interaction and students' metaphoric competence under the theoretical guidance of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Input Hypothesis.

2 Conceptual metaphor theory and teachers' directives in college EFL classrooms

2.1 Conceptual metaphor

Conceptual metaphor (CM), according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), is “a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system”. That is to say, metaphor is a way to understand one conceptual domain in terms of another. For instance, a man talks, interprets and construes the concept of TIME in terms of “money”, THEORIES in terms of “buildings”, RELATIONSHIP in terms of “journey”, and so on. It can be seen that the essence of metaphor is to experience and perceive one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5). Take the conceptual metaphor (CM) TIME IS MONEY for example, “TIME” belongs to abstract target domain while MONEY, the concrete source domain. Various interpretations in human language can be derived from this conceptual metaphor, such as “You are wasting my time”, “Time is limited and you need to cherish it”, “I spent all my time in this job” and so on. All these are specific metaphorical interpretations in terms of the concrete source domain MONEY. Therefore, metaphor is not just a linguistic phenomenon, but conceptual in nature and pervasive in human language. In other words, metaphor is first a matter of human thought and an indispensable cognitive tool, and then a matter of language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

2.2 Classification of conceptual metaphor

According to different source domains, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) further classified conceptual metaphors into orientational metaphors, structural metaphors and ontological metaphors. The orientational metaphor has to do with spatial orientation: up-down, in-out, front-back and so on. For instance, the metaphor MORE IS UP gives QUANTITY a vertical orientation. The structural metaphor helps a man to understand a relatively abstract or inherently unstructured subject matter in terms of a more concrete or more highly structured subject matter. For instance, in the metaphor TIME IS MONEY, the TIME is not a concept well defined and structured, but MONEY can be easily described. The ontological metaphor makes a man to view events, activities, emotions, etc. as entities and substances. For instance in the metaphor RUNNING IS A CONTAINER, one of the linguistic realizations of this metaphor “*There are many good races in the running*” enables a man to conceptualize the action “running” as a container and what a man sees as being in it (Evans & Green, 2006). All in all, based on these interpretations, it can be inferred that metaphors are conceptual in nature and pervasive in human language. Such metaphorical expressions are the linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphor.

2.3 The linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphor

Cognitive linguistics believes that metaphor is conceptual in nature, and the metaphorical interpretations a man usually employs are the linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors. Kovecses (2002) argued that these linguistic realizations make conceptual metaphors explicit and thus to manifest ideas contained in conceptual metaphors in a specific way. Based on the previous studies, Gao Youmei (2010) summarized various linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors in a hierarchy structure (Fig. 1). In this structure, there exist two levels of metaphor in human language: conceptual level and linguistic level. According to this structure, metaphors at conceptual level can be realized through different forms of metaphors at linguistic level such as lexical metaphors, verb-particle structures, idioms and proverbs.

Conceptual level: Conceptual metaphor (e.g. AN ARGUMENT IS WAR/TIME IS MONEY/LIFE IS A JOURNEY)			
Linguistic level: (lexical metaphors/VP structures/idioms/proverbs)			
Lexical metaphors	Verb-particle structures	Idiomatic expressions	Proverbial expressions
a. Your argument doesn't have much content. b. Your argument has holes in it. c. I am tired of empty argument	a. Did you let out our secret to all our friends? b. Did you let out your anger by yelling at the child? c. Tell me your story and don't leave out any details.	a. hit the ceiling b. lose your cool c. foam at mouth d. spill the beans e. Make one's blood boil f. blow one's cover	a. We will cross that bridge when we come to it. b. Rolling stones gathers no moss. c. Don't pull all your eggs into one basket.

Fig. 1. The hierarchical structure of conceptual metaphor and its linguistic realizations (Gao, 2010)

2.4 The working mechanism of conceptual metaphor

Based on the description of conceptual metaphor and its linguistic realizations, the working mechanism of conceptual metaphor is thus needed to be explained for the better interpretation of metaphor and its role in L2 acquisition. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the basic working mechanism of metaphor at the conceptual level is the systematic mapping between the source domain and the target domain. The mapping is systematic in that there is a fixed set of correspondences between the structure of the target domain and the source domain. However, the mapping is not arbitrary because it is constrained by the Invariance Principle (Lakoff, 1993, p. 215). So, to some extent, the different interpretations of the target domain should be determined by that of the source domain. For instance, in the case of conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY, the linguistic correspondence such as “waste”, “cherish” and “spend” in the source domain MONEY are all systematically mapped onto the target domain TIME. Because of this systematic mapping, the correspondence between the target domain and source domain is the key to interpret the target domain in terms of the source domain. However, when it comes to metaphor in use, in order to understand the metaphor correctly, more factors needs to be taken into consideration. According to Wang Yin (2003), the interpretation of metaphor in human language is also constrained by the context, the shared socio-cultural background and the cognitive capacity of the two parts in the communication. Wang Yin summarized the working mechanism of metaphor in human communication in the following Figure 2.

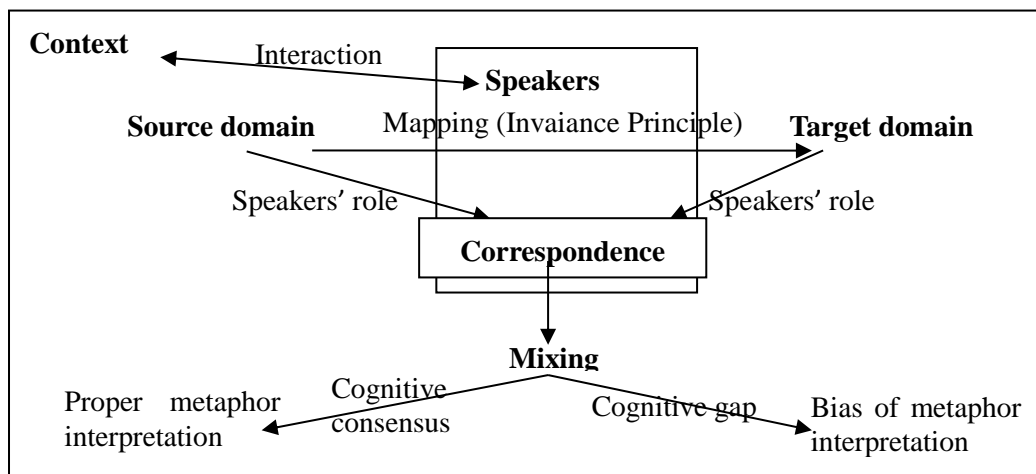


Fig. 2. The working mechanism of metaphor in language in use (Wang, 2003)

The above figure shows that in a certain communication context, through the systematical mapping, the two parts of communication still needs to take advantage of their background knowledge and cognitive capacity to find the correspondence between the two domains under the influence of communication context to achieve an ideal mixing effect (Wang, 2004). When there is no gap existing between the speakers' cognitive background, the metaphor can be properly interpreted without bias. Therefore, such working mechanism of metaphor can also be applied in the interpretation of metaphor in teachers' directives.

2.5 Teachers' directives in college EFL classrooms

In the field of pragmatics, Searle defines directives as imposing some kind of actions on the hearer, which includes commands, orders, questions, advice, requests, and warnings (Searle 1969). Under the influence of behaviorist, Flanders (1960) identified seven categories of teachers' behaviors based on his study of classroom discourse. The seven categories are: (1) accepting feeling; (2) praising or encouraging; (3) accepting or using ideas of pupils; (4) asking questions; (5) lecturing; (6) giving directions; (7) criticizing or justifying authority. According to Flanders (1970), the major feature of this category system lies in the analysis of initiation and response between the teacher and students in the classroom interaction. In addition, Ellis (1992), in terms of classroom language teaching and learning, believes that directives are "attempts on the part of the speaker to get the hearer to perform some kind of action or cessation of action". Therefore, as one type of language used in teacher-fronted exchanges of talk in the EFL classroom teaching and learning activities, teachers' directives could be thus redefined as the initiation given by teachers mainly referring to asking questions, giving lectures and offering directions for the purpose of getting responses from the students during the process of classroom interaction.

2.6 The relationship between conceptual metaphor and teachers' directives in college EFL classrooms

Because of the pervasiveness of metaphor and the cognitive essence of metaphor, this study has the rationality to suppose that teachers' directives in college EFL classrooms have the metaphorical features. Based on the previous discussion of teachers' directives in college EFL classrooms, conceptual metaphors and its linguistic realizations in human language, this study

intends to identify the metaphorical features of teachers' directives in college EFL classroom interaction.

In terms of the working mechanism of metaphor, the interpretation of metaphorical features of teachers' directives is also affected by the communication context which includes the shared socio-cultural background and the cognitive capacity of the teacher and students in the classroom interaction. According to Liu Feng (2009), context by itself is not static, but dynamic, which is composed of internal context and external context. The internal context refers to the language knowledge such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and etc.. The external context refers to the students' knowledge of the world and their cognitive systems. So, under the mutual influence of contextual factors, the speakers and listeners can communicate successfully through the shared background knowledge on a certain topic. However, when there is a gap in the knowledge background between the two speakers, a failure in the communication may occur. Therefore, the process of meaning construal in the classroom interaction is also affected by establishment of proper communicative context. The linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors in the classroom discourse contribute to the internal context of classroom interaction, while the socio-cultural background and cognitive capacity of teachers and students is the external context of classroom interaction. Both the internal and external parts play an important role in the construction of the classroom context, where the metaphorical features of teachers' directives can be interpreted and analyzed.

Moreover, according to Input Hypothesis brought up by Krashen, the comprehensible input provided via teacher talk in the classroom should be a little beyond the current level of students language competence (i.e. the $i+1$ level) (Krashen, 1986). And at the same time, the comprehensible input should be closely related to students' life experience so as to arouse their learning interests (Fan, 2004). Similarly, from the working mechanism of metaphor, when students are faced with certain inputs in the classroom context, the metaphorical features of teachers' directives could guide the students to find the correspondence between the source domain and target domain on the basis of their personal life experience, i.e. their knowledge background. In other words, in this process, it is the systematic mapping that enables the students to understand the target domain in terms of the source domain. In this way, the metaphorical features of teachers' directives, to a certain extent, could help make the classroom inputs become more comprehensible. Accordingly, these features might exert certain influence on improving students' language competence during the classroom interaction.

Based on the findings of current studies on metaphor, it is discovered that the ability to understand and apply metaphor in communication is the key to learn and use language. Therefore, the development of students' metaphoric competence began to arouse great attention in metaphor research. As one of the experts in metaphor study, Littlemore (2001) has claimed that metaphoric competence is as crucial as the linguistic and communicative competences. According to Littlemore, metaphoric competence mainly involves four aspects: a) originality of metaphor production, b) fluency of metaphor interpretation, c) ability to find meaning in metaphor, and d) speed in finding meaning in metaphor. In China, Yan Shiqing (2001), Wang Yin (2004) and Hou Yisong (2009) also give the similar interpretation to the metaphoric competence based on their researches focusing on metaphor use in foreign language teaching. For instance, Hou Yisong (2009) pointed out that applying metaphor in English (L2) teaching is influential to the development of students' metaphoric competence.

Therefore, according to Krashen’s input hypothesis and the research findings on metaphor and metaphoric competence in the field of language teaching home and abroad, it can be inferred that the metaphorical features of teachers’ directives in the college EFL classroom context may promote the development of students’ metaphoric competence by making the classroom input more comprehensible.

2.7 The role model of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives in EFL classrooms

In summary, it is the combination of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives available to students in EFL classrooms and the influence on classroom context that make the metaphorical features of teachers’ directives exert some influences on students’ metaphoric competence. Based on the previous discussion of the relationship between conceptual metaphor and teachers’ directives, a role model of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives in college EFL classrooms is thus developed.

According to this model (Fig. 3), this study mainly deals with two levels of metaphor research identified by Lynne Cameron (2001): one is the theory level which concerns metaphor identification, categorization of metaphor and notification of metaphor in discourse as processing tasks; the other is the processing level which includes the activation of concepts, the construction of conceptual domains, the interpretation of metaphor and the application of a particular metaphor. From Figure 3, it can be seen that, the identification of the metaphorical teachers’ directives in classroom discourse belongs to the theory level. Meanwhile, the processing level concentrates on a dynamic process of how the metaphorical features of teachers’ directives can be interpreted by students through the classroom interaction, how the metaphorical features of teachers’ directives facilitate the classroom input to be more comprehensible and how these features help stimulate the students’ metaphorical output and promote the students’ metaphoric competence.

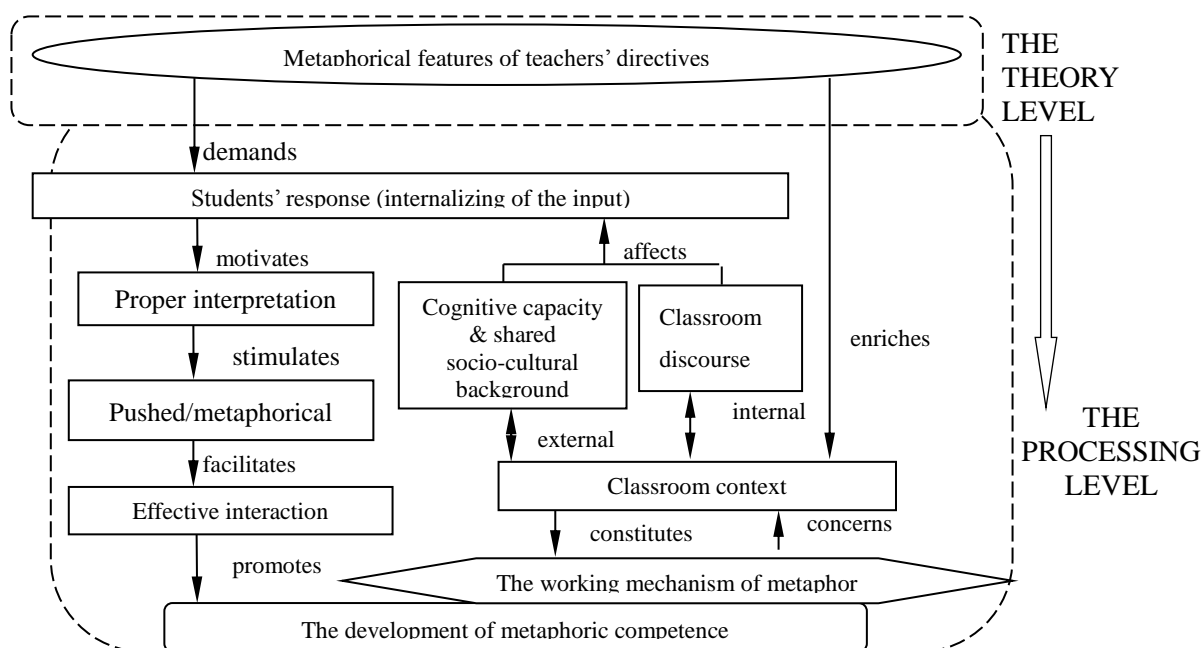


Fig. 3. The role model of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives in college EFL classroom

Based on this role model, the metaphorical features of teachers' directives have the potential to make classroom input become more comprehensible for the students. Therefore, under the influence of classroom context, which is an indispensable factor in the working mechanism of metaphor, the students are helped to internalize the classroom input. Once the proper interpretation of the metaphorical features of teachers' directives is achieved, the students will be able to respond metaphorically. In this way, the effective classroom interaction will occur, which could provide more opportunities for the students to develop their metaphoric competence. Meanwhile, the metaphorical features of teachers' directives will also contribute to the classroom context by enriching the linguistic contents of classroom discourse and the socio-cultural background of the individuals.

A case study is done with concrete data in the next section in order to further prove whether or not the metaphorical features of teachers' directives can facilitate the students' metaphoric competence and to explain the process of how metaphorical features of teachers' directives promote students' metaphoric competence.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research questions

This study is focused on the exploration of metaphorical features of teachers' directives and the functions in the development of students' metaphoric competence in the context of college EFL classroom teaching. It aims to answer the following questions: (1) Does teachers' directives in college EFL classrooms have metaphorical features? If have, what are the representations of those metaphorical features? (2) Based on the positive answer of question 1, how can those metaphorical features of teachers' directive contribute to the college EFL classroom context? (3) Under the influence of classroom context, how can metaphorical features of teachers' directives affect the classroom interaction and the development of students' metaphoric competence?

3.2 Research participants

The research subjects for this study are the teachers and students from the school of foreign languages in one of the national key universities located in the northwestern part of China. The teacher participates in this research is a female teacher who teaches the Intensive Reading for junior English majors with an experience of English teaching for more than twenty years. The students participated in the research are juniors of English majors. The average age of them is 20 years old, and their native language is Chinese. Ninety-five percentage of them have passed the TEM-4 (a widely acknowledged test to examine the language proficiency of English majors in China). So, this study assumes that all the students have already obtained the same level of English language proficiency, including the ability to write, comprehend and communicate in English.

3.3 Research data collection: Classroom observation with video recordings

The speech acts (classroom behaviors) of teachers and students are collected through long-term classroom observation with video recordings. During observations, the students were not informed of the research purposes so that they would behave as usual. Data recorded

by the video tapes were mainly concerned with the verbal behaviors of the teachers and students, and were transcribed according to well-accepted conventions for the subsequent discourse analysis, from which, the metaphorical features of teachers' directives could be identified.

3.4 Research instruments for data analysis

In the process of data analysis, two research instruments were adopted. They are discourse analysis and Flanders' Interaction Analysis System.

3.4.1 Flanders' interaction analysis system (FIAS)

The Flanders' Interaction Analysis System caters to this research in three aspects: 1) The classroom verbal behaviors are classified into ten categories, helping in clarifying the operational definition of teachers' directives and providing the basis for the encoding of data on classroom discourse. 2) Based on the coding system, the Flanders' interaction analysis matrix was generated, from which the proportion of time spent in one or more categories can be calculated, and the sequential events happened in the classroom be inferred. 3) Flanders' interaction analysis curve was also generated to locate objectively the most interactive parts of a class for the discourse analysis. The matrix and curve of the sample class chosen for this study will be explained in detail to explore the metaphorical features of teachers' directives in the data analysis part.

3.4.2 Discourse analysis

In addition to the classroom behavior analysis, the classroom discourse analysis is another way to conduct researches on EFL classroom interaction. According to Allwright (1984), discourse analysis treats classroom interaction as "animated interpersonal communication" in terms of sociology. Both teachers and students are the participants in the classroom interaction. Each move made by the participants can achieve one type of teaching function and is constrained by certain principles. Researchers in this field have developed various classroom discourse systems. For instance, Bellack et al. (1966) classified the classroom discourse into four moves in terms of teaching function: (1) structuring, indicating the starting or ending of certain classroom task or activity; (2) soliciting, assigning specific tasks, asking questions and giving demands so as to initiate the responding move; (3) responding, corresponding to the soliciting move; (4) reacting, modifying or assessing the former move. Based on this, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) developed the rank-scale system for classroom discourse, which contains "lesson + transaction + exchange (structured by initiative move, responsive move and follow-up move) +move +act". They discovered that the "teaching exchange" is the key to the system. The initiation move and feedback move are mostly realized through teachers, while the responsive move through the students. In this essential teaching exchange, the teacher makes an initiative move (I) at the first turn of talk, a student makes a responsive move (R) at the second turn and the teacher evaluates (E) with a follow-up move (F) at a third turn. Researchers refer to this three-part exchange as IRF (initiation-response-feedback) circle.

Therefore, the IRF pattern is adopted in the discourse analysis of this study. According to the definition given to teachers' directives in the previous discussion and the three-phrase

teaching exchange, the discourse analysis in this study only concentrates on the initiative move and the responsive move with the purpose of discovering the role of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives in the college EFL classroom interaction.

4 The role of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives in college EFL classrooms

4.1 The identification of metaphorical features in teachers’ directives

In order to prove the existence of metaphorical features in teachers’ directives in college EFL classrooms, one video recording of the Intensive Reading class was selected, which lasts about 45 minutes. The verbal behaviors of teachers and students are transcribed. Based on the scripts, the teacher’s directives with metaphorical features in the sample class are identified and summarized in the following Table 1 and Table 2 with concrete data and typical examples.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of teacher’s directives with metaphorical features in the sample class

Items	Intensive Reading Class
Numbers of TD	127
Frequency of TD with metaphorical features	21
Proportion of TD with metaphorical features	16.54%

(Note: “TD” refers to teacher’s directives)

Table 2. Examples of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives in the sample class

Teachers’ directives	Metaphorical directives(linguistic level)	Conceptual level
Example 1	<i>What's the function of paradoxes and can you offer some examples?</i>	EXAMPLES ARE BELONGINGS
Example 2	<i>So in your life, have you ever been in such kind of situation?</i>	SITUATION IS A CONTAINER
Example 3	<i>自相矛盾。OK, then, anyone has some kind of addition, something to add up?</i>	MORE IS UP

The descriptive statistics and typical examples of metaphorical teachers’ directives in the above table 1 and table 2 show teachers’ directives in college EFL classrooms do have metaphorical features, which are represented by the linguistic realizations of different conceptual metaphors at the theory level. In terms of the working mechanism of metaphor discussed before, the conceptual metaphors function as an organizer to group verb phrases, prepositional phrases and verb particles, etc. through the systematic mapping between the source domains and target domains. Therefore, it can be inferred that at the processing level, metaphorical features of teachers’ directives could exert certain influences on the students’ way of thinking and talking in the classroom context. The follow-up discourse analysis is

conducted to prove the role of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives under the influence of classroom context.

4.2 The role of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives in college EFL classrooms

This section addresses the second and third research questions by analyzing how metaphorical features of teachers’ directives exert influence on the classroom interaction and the development of students’ metaphoric competence. The results and findings are presented in the following sections. First, the overall pictures of the sample class are presented with FIAS, and thus the general situation of interaction between teacher and student can be revealed. Second, excerpts with regard to roles of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives in college EFL classrooms are illustrated.

4.2.1 The general situation of interaction between teacher and student

With analyzing the matrixes and curve line graphs gained through the FIAS software program, the general situation of interaction between teacher and student can be achieved. Below is the matrix generated from the sample intensive reading class.

Table 3. FIAS matrix for the sample intensive reading class

	Teacher talk							Student talk		silence	
Categories	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totality
1	1	1		1	1						3
2		6	3	11	5			5	1	1	32
3		4	20	7	5	1		10		3	50
4	1	6	1	60	9	8		38	2	18	143
5		2	1	30	291	4		2		2	332
6	1			5		2		7		2	17
7											
8	1	9	25	17	15	1		75		4	147
9		1		3					1		5
10		3		9	5	2		10	1	23	53
Totality	3	32	50	143	331	18		147	5	53	782
	73.8%							19.4%		6.8%	

In Table 3, vertical columns and horizontal columns from 1 to 7 stand for different categories of teacher talk, while vertical columns and horizontal columns 8-9 represent student talk. Vertical column and horizontal column 10—code for the silence—also take up some of the class time. Based on the pervasiveness of metaphor and the definition of teachers’ directives, teachers’ directives may frequently occur when categories 4-7 of teacher talk are performed. Therefore, in accordance with the detailed analysis of teacher talk in FIAS, the metaphorical features of teachers’ directives can be identified mostly in the initiative moves of teacher talk. Based on Flanders’ classification of teachers’ behaviors, category7, which means criticizing and justifying the teacher’s authority, usually occurs in the primary level of language teaching

and learning, not the high levels such as in college EFL classrooms. Therefore, this category is neglected in the discourse analysis. From the matrix, it is inferred that when three kinds of communicative situation happen in cells such as (4, 8), (5, 8) and (9, 4), the metaphorical features of teachers' directives may influence the classroom interaction. Take the cell (4, 8) for example (which is darkened in the matrix), it can be interpreted as the fact that the teacher employs directives as a question and hope to receive response from the students. During the process of questioning, the metaphorical directives uttered by the teacher initiate the students to respond and thus to make the classroom interaction happen. According to FIAS, other cells can be interpreted in a similar way. Therefore, the role of metaphorical features of teachers' directives is very likely to be shown in the process where both the teacher and students are actively involved in the classroom interaction.

In addition, from the matrix, some key index figures can be calculated to get a clear picture of the structure, the style and the interactional pattern of the sample class. In this sample:

- 1) The percent teacher talk (TT) = 73.8 % (norm: 68%)
- 2) The percent student talk (ST) = 19.4% (norm: 20%)
- 3) The percent silence = 6.8 % (norm: 11%/12%)
- 4) The teacher response ratio (TRR) =82.2% (norm: 42%)
- 5) The teacher question ratio (TQR) =30.1% (norm: 26%)
- 6) Steady state ratio (SSR) =54.8 % (norm: 55%)

Those figures reflect a basic structure of a 45-minute class, in which teacher talk accounts for most of the time in class. Though TT (teacher talk) percentage (73.8%) seems to be very high, the high teacher response ratio (82.2%) indicates that the teacher takes advantage of the students' talk to produce more initiative moves, which provides more chances for students to be involved in the classroom interaction. The near-to-norm TQR (30.1%) indicates that the teacher employs appropriate amount of questions, which are regarded as directives in this study, to stimulate students' responses. For the percentage of ST (student talk)19.4%, it nearly reaches the normal level 20%, which indicates the students take good advantage of teachers' questions. The near-to-norm SSR (54.8 %) reveals that the exchange of IRF structure is somewhat stable, which indicates that the teacher and the students keep inquiring into a topic for a sustained time to reach an ideal effect. So, on the whole, the interactive pattern of the sample class is relatively good.

Since the matrix cannot show exactly where the role of metaphorical features of teachers' directives can be manifested, this study tends to the FIAS curve for help. In the following Figure 4, it can be seen that when the student talk achieved the first peak (2-4min) with a percentage of 70%, the percentage for teacher talk is 30%. For the second peak(10-12min), the percentage is 40 % (ST) and 60% (TT); for the third peak (21-23min) and fourth peak (26-28min), the percentages are the same with 45%(ST), 50% (TT), and 5% for silence; for the fifth peak(32-34min), the percentage is 42%(ST), 38% (TT), 20% for silence.

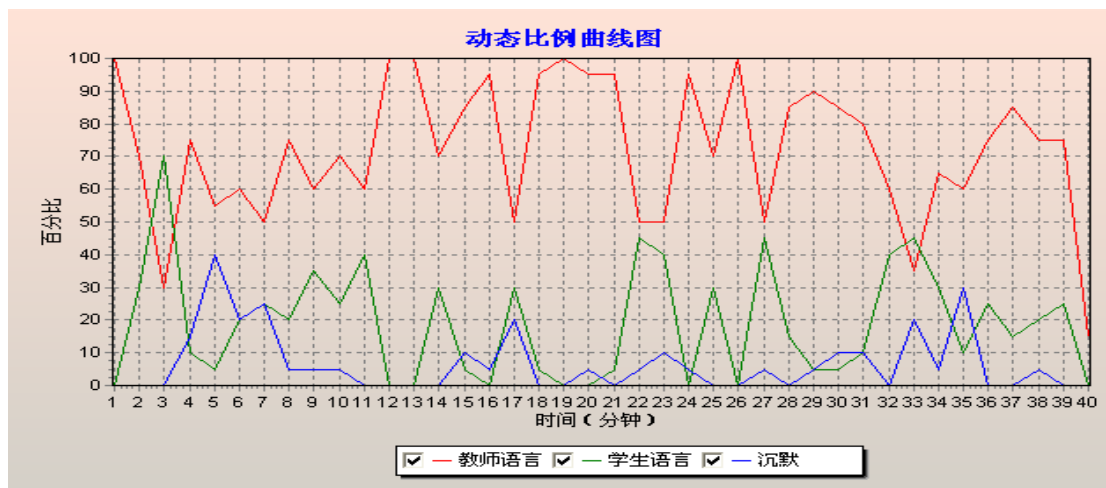


Fig. 4. FIAS matrix for the sample intensive reading class

Since the role of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives is very likely to be shown in the most active part of classroom interaction, three peaks of interaction among the five interactive ones are chosen in time order to conduct the discourse analysis for the purpose of proving the validity of the model developed in this study.

4.2.2 The role of metaphorical features of teachers’ directives in college EFL classrooms

Three excerpts from the sample class are analyzed in this section. Discourse analysis of these three excerpts is concentrated on exploring the functions of metaphorical features in teachers’ directives under the influence of classroom context. Considering the fact that language levels of participants in the college EFL classroom context are relatively high, the gap in knowledge background between the teacher and the students’ is ignored in the discourse analysis of this study.

Table 4. Excerpt one

Transcribed text	Moves	Teacher’s directive with metaphorical features
T: <i>So, based on your personal research, <u>what is the function of paradoxes, or definition and can you offer some examples?</u> So, anyone? Paradox, S1, see you are finding your notes, ok?(With encouraging smile)</i>	I	1
S1: <i>Paradox is apparently self-contradictory statement..</i>	R1	0
T: <i>Ok, would you be loudly? Be louder.</i>	F&I	0
S1: <i>Paradox is apparently self-contradictory statement</i>	R1	0
T: <i>Ok, it’s a kind of self-contradictory statement.</i>	F	0
S1: <i>The underlying meaning is revealed only by careful scrutiny</i>	R2	0
T: <i>Scrutiny. <u>Ok, through the careful scrutinizing, and you could get underlying meaning.</u> Ok, so it’s in <unint>, ok.</i>	F	1

S1: <i>The purpose of it is to arrest attention and provoke fresh thought.</i>	R3	0
T: <i>Ok, the purpose is what?</i>	F&I	0
S1: <i>is to get attention.</i>	R4	0
T: <i>get attention.</i>	F	0

In this excerpt (Table 4), the topic of classroom discussion is focused on paradox, in which teachers' directives with metaphorical features appear twice (which are underlined). The metaphorical feature of the first teacher's directive is represented by the linguistic realization (*what is the function of paradoxes, or definition and can you offer some examples?*) of the conceptual metaphor EXAMPLES ARE BELONGINGS (structural metaphor). In this conceptual metaphor, the target domain "EXAMPLES OF PARADOX" is understood in terms of the source domain "STUDENTS' BELONGINGS THAT CAN BE OFFERED", which means that the semantic meaning centering around the verb "offer" is mapped onto the target domain and thus to reconstruct the interpretation of "EXAMPLES OF PARADOX" in terms of "STUDENTS' BELONGINGS THAT CAN BE OFFERED" more specifically in the classroom context. In this way, S1 is motivated to understand the concept of paradox under the guidance of her background knowledge about paradox (external context) which has been conceptualized as her personal belongings. Being initiated metaphorically (internal context), S1 responds with "*paradox is apparently self-contradictory statement*" and "*the underlying meaning is revealed only by careful scrutiny*" through her attempts of internalizing of the classroom input. The teacher accepts her idea and further initiates S1 by the second directive "*through the careful scrutinizing, and you could get underlying meaning*".

Similarly, this directive given by the teacher in the follow-up move and the initiative move is the linguistic realization of the conceptual metaphor MEANING OF PARADOX IS AN OBJECT THAT CAN BE HIDDEN AND FOUND (structural metaphor), which endows this directive with metaphorical features. In this conceptual metaphor, target domain "MEANING OF PARADOX" is restructured concretely and systematically in terms of source domain "AN OBJECT THAT CAN BE HIDDEN AND FOUND", which means that the semantic meaning centering around the verb "get" is mapped onto the target domain and thus to reconstruct the interpretation of "MEANING OF PARADOX" in terms of "AN CONCRETE OBJECT THAT CAN BE GOT" more specifically in the classroom context. In this way, S1 is further inspired to interpret the process of grasping the meaning of paradox under the guidance of her background knowledge and personal experience (external context) which has been conceptualized as the activities of finding something concrete that have been hidden behind. Being initiated metaphorically again (internal context), S1 responds with "*the purpose of it is to arrest attention and provoke fresh thought*" based on her attempts of internalizing of the classroom input. It can be seen that the pushed output given by S1 in this responsive move is also a linguistic realization of a new conceptual metaphor ATTENTION IS OBJECT / PERSON THAT CAN BE CAUGHT / ARRESTED. The production of this metaphor at the linguistic level is induced by the former conceptual metaphor MEANING IS AN OBJECT THAT CAN BE HIDDEN AND FOUND contained in the teacher's directive "*through the careful scrutinizing, and you could get underlying meaning*", which is an indication of the achievement of effective classroom interaction and the development of S1's metaphoric competence.

Therefore, based on the discussion, it is safe to say that the metaphorical features of the teacher’s directives could help S1 to internalize the concept of paradox step by step through enriching the content of classroom discourse (internal context), motivating students’ cognitive capacity (external context), and making S1 to discover the correspondence between the concept of paradox and her knowledge background (combination of internal context and external context=classroom context). In other words, the two directives carrying with metaphorical features could make the classroom input become more comprehensible for S1, and thus to motivate S1 to interpret classroom input properly and to stimulate S1 to respond metaphorically in the classroom context. In return, the classroom context is also enriched by the linguistic content of classroom discourse and the knowledge background of individuals. As a result, the meaningful classroom interaction under the IRF pattern is achieved and the metaphoric competence of S1 is promoted and developed.

Table 5. Excerpt two

Transcribed text	Moves	Teacher’s directive with metaphorical features
T: <u>Less is more. Yeah, that’s really a good example. Now, think about it. Less is more. To get less means to get more. Use your imagination to think about it! So in your life, have you been ever in such kind of situation?</u>	I	2
T: <u>Have you been ever in such kind of situation?</u> Now, er... S4.	I	1
S4: <i>I think this situation depends on different subjects. Such as, if you have less desire, you may have more happiness.</i>	R1	0
T: <i>If you have less desire in your life, if you do not desire so much, you would be happy. You are satisfied with your present situation. That might be a good interpretation. (Feedback) Any other one?</i>	F&I	0

In this excerpt (Table 5), the topic of classroom interaction is focused on the further interpretation of one specific example of paradox “less is more”, in which the teacher’s directives with metaphorical features appear three times (which are underlined). The metaphorical feature of the first directive “*use your imagination to think about it*” in the initiative move is represented by the linguistic realization of conceptual metaphor “IMAGINATION IS AN TOOL THAT CAN BE USED” (structural metaphor). In this conceptual metaphor, the target domain “IMAGINATION” is understood in terms of the source domain “TOOL”, which means that the students’ imagination is restructured or conceptualized as a concrete tool that can be used or employed to achieve certain purposes through the systematic mapping in the working mechanism of metaphor. In this way, S4 is motivated to discover the correspondence between her imagination and a concrete tool, so as to interpret the meaning of “less is more” by making full use of her imagination, i.e. her cognitive capacity (external context) and internalizing the classroom input (internal context) in the classroom context.

What’s more, the following two directives further inspire S4 to internalize the classroom input properly. The metaphorical feature of the second directive (also in the initiative move) “so in your life, have you ever been in such kind of situation” and the third one “have you ever been

in such kind of situation” (which is a reinforcement of the second directive) are represented by the same linguistic realization of conceptual metaphor SITUATION IS A CONTAINER (ontological metaphor). In this conceptual metaphor, the target domain “SITUATION” is understood in terms of the source domain “CONTAINER”, which means that the specific meaning of a container is mapped onto the abstract concept “SITUATION”. In other words, S4 is inspired to recall her personal experience (external context) which is conceptualized as a specific container where she could locate herself in it and see the meaning of “less is more” through her own life experience. In this way, S4 is stimulated to find the correlation between her life experience and the specific interpretation of “less is more” under the guidance of the systematic mapping and the three directives carrying metaphorical features (internal context).

Motivated by the metaphorical features of the three directives, S4 responds with “*if you have less desire, you may have more happiness*” in the responsive move. This pushed output produced by S4 indicates that she has succeeded in mapping the abstract meaning of “less is more” to her specific life experience on the basis of the correspondence between the two aspects. By making use of her imagination and locating herself in her specific life experience, S4 reconstruct the meaning of “less is more” concretely by discovering the similar relationship between “desire” and “happiness” in human life experience. In addition, S4’s response (metaphorical output) also contains a conceptual metaphor DESIRE/HAPPINESS IS AMOUNT THAT CAN BE MEASURED, which is an indication of the meaningful or effective classroom interaction and the metaphoric competence of S4.

From this it can be seen that the metaphorical features of the three directives in the classroom context could contribute to the linguistic content of the classroom input (internal context). Meanwhile, these features could also motivate S4 to internalize the classroom input gradually through relating the classroom input to her life experience and socio-cultural background (external context). Therefore, the classroom input could be more comprehensible for S4, so as to motivate proper interpretation of classroom input, to arouse metaphorical output, to facilitate effective classroom interaction and to promote the development of S4’s metaphoric competence in the classroom context.

Table 6. Excerpt three

Transcribed text	Moves	Teacher’s directive with metaphorical features
T: <i>Now here I would like to offer you more examples. Now, this is a proverb, I am sure you are very familiar with this proverb. Ok, more haste, less speed. <u>What does it mean in Chinese?</u></i>	I	1
All Students: <i>欲速则不达。</i>	R	0
T: <i>欲速则不达。 What does that mean? Have you ever thought about it? <u>You are so familiar with this proverb. What’s the connotation?</u></i>	F&I	1
S8: <i>I Er...</i>	R	0
T: <i>Student8 (called the name of a student with encouraging smile)</i>	I	0

S8: <i>I suppose this sentence can, you can treat as a motto to people, to tell others, although the things before you is very urgent, you should slow down and make the every step very clear in your mind.</i>	R	0
T: <i>Ok. <u>So it means haste may not mean you're saving the time, sometimes you are wasting the time.</u> ...</i>	F&I	1

In this excerpt (Table 6), the topic of classroom interaction is focused on the interpretation of another specific example of paradox “more haste, less speed”, in which the teacher’s directives with metaphorical features appear three times. The metaphorical feature of the first teacher’s directive “*what does it mean in Chinese*” in the initiative move is represented by the linguistic realization of the ontological metaphor LANGUAGE IS A CONTAINER, which means that the target domain “CHINESE LANGUAGE” is conceptualized and understood in terms of a specific container: the source domain. This directive could motivate all the students to discover what they can see the meaning of “more haste, less speed” as being in the Chinese language under the guidance of the systematic mapping between the source domain and target domain in the classroom context. Therefore, all the students respond with the proper Chinese interpretation of “more haste, less speed”. This kind of metaphorical feature in the teacher’s directive is easily to be neglected because of the pervasiveness of metaphor in human language. However, in this study, this metaphorical feature is observed and discussed.

After the students get a proper understanding of the proverb in terms of their mother tongue, in the second turn of initiation, the teacher continues to ask questions so as to make students aware of the abstract meaning contained in the proverb “more haste, less speed” specifically. The metaphorical feature of the second teacher’s directive “*You are so familiar with this proverb. What’s the connotation?*” is represented by the linguistic realization of the structural metaphor THE MEANING OF THE PROVERB IS THE PERSON YOU HAVE KNOWN. In this conceptual metaphor, the target domain “MEANING OF THE PROVERB” is understood and conceptualized as the “THE PERSON YOU HAVE KNOWN”, which means that the interpretation of this proverb is mapped onto the person’s way of doing things. In this way, S8 is motivated to internalize the classroom input (internal context) under the guidance of the correlation between the meaning of a proverb and the principles of doing things in human society (external context). The short pause (around 3 seconds) before S8’s response indicates her effort to relate the meaning of the proverb to the conventions in human society, which could be an indispensable part in classroom interaction.

Motivated by the teacher’s initiation, S8 responds with the pushed output “*although the things before you is very urgent, you should slow down and make the every step very clear in your mind*”, which could be regarded as one principle for a person to manage things. It can be inferred that S8 has internalized the classroom input and reached one of the proper interpretations of the abstract concept “more haste, less speed” under the influence of the systematic mapping and classroom context. Meanwhile, S8’s interpretation “*although the things before you is very urgent, you should slow down and make the every step very clear in your mind*” is the linguistic realization of another structural metaphor DOING THINGS IS STARTING A JORNEY WITH FIXED STEPS, which indicates that the classroom interaction following the IRF pattern has become meaningful and S8’s metaphoric competence has been promoted.

Therefore, it could be demonstrated that the metaphorical features of the teacher's directives could help the classroom input become more comprehensible for S8 through enriching the linguistic content of classroom content (internal context), stimulating S8's knowledge background about human society (external context), triggering metaphorical output, facilitating effective classroom interaction and promoting S8's metaphoric competence. Similarly, the third teacher's directive "*so it means haste may not mean you're saving the time, sometimes you are wasting the time*" in the follow-up and initiative move also contains the common conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY. Based on the previous discussion, this directive with metaphorical features will also help to make the classroom input become more comprehensible for the students in the next turn of initiation and thus to further promote students' metaphoric competence through classroom interaction.

In summary, the three research questions proposed previously can be answered with the help of classroom observation and discourse analysis. As for the first research question, the analysis reveals that metaphorical features of the teachers' directives do exist in college EFL classrooms, and are represented by the different linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors. In terms of the second question, the research shows that metaphorical features of teachers' directives and the EFL college classroom context exert mutual influence on both sides by enriching the linguistic content of the classroom discourse and affecting teachers' and students' way of thinking and talking. What's more, the third question is answered by way of demonstrating the role model of metaphorical features of teachers' directives, which proves that the metaphorical features of teachers' directives could make the classroom input become more comprehensible and motivate the students' to internalize the classroom input step by step, so as to stimulate the students to apply metaphor in classroom interaction properly. Thus, the effective classroom interaction could be successfully sustained and the students' metaphoric competence could be developed.

5 Conclusion

On the basis of the current studies on metaphor and the teachers' directives in EFL classrooms, a role model of metaphorical features of teachers' directives in college EFL classrooms is proposed in this study. In order to prove the validity of the role model, a case study was conducted with instruments such as classroom observation and video recordings. In addition, Flanders' Interaction Analysis System and conversational analysis were adopted in data analysis. After the overall analysis of the sample class, this study came to the following conclusions based on the validity of the role model, which are significant to advocate EFL teachers and researchers to carry out studies on teachers' directives in a cognitive way so as to improve EFL teaching and to develop L2 learners' metaphoric competence.

First, metaphorical features of teachers' directives are not only the facilitator in providing more comprehensible input for L2 learners in college EFL classroom context, but also contribute to the classroom context by enriching the linguistic content of classroom discourse and motivating the knowledge background of L2 learners. Moreover, the research findings in this study also show that the classroom context and the metaphorical features of teachers' directives exert mutual influence on each other during the process of classroom interaction. Second, the metaphorical features of teachers' directives in college EFL classrooms stimulate the students to think and talk metaphorically under the influence of the working mechanism of metaphor and the classroom context. In this way, the students are motivated to respond

metaphorically on the basis of their socio-cultural background and to produce pushed output. As a result, the classroom interaction could be effective and the students' metaphoric competence could be promoted properly. Third, based on this study, in college EFL classrooms, the metaphorical features of teachers' directives are manifested by the linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors, which may indicate that if the linguistic manifestations of metaphorical features in teachers' directives can be more diversified, the metaphoric competence of college students will be developed more significantly. Therefore, the findings of this study show that the students' metaphoric competence need to be consciously cultivated in college EFL classrooms and the important role of EFL teachers' directives with metaphorical features should not be ignored.

According to the findings of this research, the theoretical and practical implications of this research are introduced. For the theoretical implication, this research clarifies the metaphorical features of teachers' directives in college EFL classrooms in a cognitive way and the role model of metaphorical features in teachers' directives can effectively show how the metaphorical features in teachers' directives influence the classroom input and L2 learners' output under the classroom context. For the practical implication, the role model of metaphorical features of teachers' directives offers scientific guidance for EFL teachers to consciously produce more diversified linguistic realizations of metaphors in their directives in the classroom context. In this way, the classroom input could be more comprehensible for L2 learners and thus to motivate L2 learners to be involved in the classroom interaction and to make L2 learners' metaphoric competence developed.

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