

Metaphorical systems from the newspaper page to the EFL classroom

Richard J. HODSON

要 約

文学作品以外で用いられる比喩表現は、外国語教師にとっても学習者にとっても理解が難しい場合がある。本稿は、英語と日本語で書かれた2つの新聞記事を分析したものであるが、そこでは隠喩が多く用いられ、隠喩の中には文脈に依存しているものと、教育的に広く応用できるものがあることがわかった。さらに、句動詞を含むものや、時と場所を表す前置詞を含む隠喩表現は、EFLの教師・学生にとって特に重要であることも明らかになった。本稿では、英語と日本語の新聞記事における隠喩表現の関連性を踏まえ、教材としての隠喩表現の有効性を考察し、教室において比喩表現を使用する能力を身に付けるための方法を提案する。

Abstract

Metaphorical systems in non-literary language present a significant challenge for both teachers and learners of a foreign language. Analysis of two newspaper articles on a related topic – one in English and one in Japanese – reveals a number of metaphors, some of which are dependant on context, and some of which are more widely applicable. Those encompassing phrasal verbs, and prepositions of time and place, are of particular concern to EFL teachers and learners. The relationship between metaphors in the English and Japanese articles is discussed and their potential as pedagogical tools is considered. A number of strategies are suggested by which metaphorical competence can be promoted in the classroom.

1 Introduction

Newspapers and magazines can provide a valuable resource for teachers and learners of a second language. Amongst the linguistic features which they can be used to introduce learners to, is the widespread use of metaphor as an essential element of written and spoken discourse, whether consciously literary or otherwise. As L2 reading texts, newspaper articles are authentic and manageable in size; they contain texts on a wide variety of subjects, using up-to-date language; and they can function both as items of cultural realia, and as topical raw materials for discussion, or other reading, writing or speaking activities. Each of these features may, however, present a challenge as well as an opportunity. Authentic, varied and topical language cannot be as easily tailored to learner needs, abilities, interests and cultural backgrounds as contrived texts. Additionally, discourse conventions covering grammar, lexis and even layout, may make a foreign newspaper a daunting prospect for a learner. Not only, therefore, must teachers consider that newspaper articles can provide access for learners to L2 metaphorical systems; but also that those very metaphorical systems may heighten the difficulty – or the

challenge – that learners are faced with when attempting to read such articles, or other authentic texts.

2 The challenges of metaphor

2.1 Challenges for the learner: metaphor in non-literary discourse

Metaphor is one kind of figurative – that is, non-literal – language, which we commonly associate with literature, but which has been shown by both linguists and philosophers to be an integral part of a much wider range of written and spoken discourse. It is possible to argue that the tendency among native speakers of a language to think of metaphor purely as a literary, even a poetic, device, obscures its potential difficulty for the learner attempting to achieve a mastery of everyday, non-literary language. Ronald Carter (1998: 125), for example, shows how readers of a poem notice the ‘unusual’ nature of the phrase ‘deeply morning’ as a matter of literary stylistics, in comparison to the more usual ‘I slept deeply’; but L2 learners may also need to be made aware of this more commonplace metaphorical use of ‘deeply’ within even a non-literary context. Unlike similes, whose presence is indicated by the use of function words such as ‘like’ and ‘as’, metaphors may be difficult to detect, and therefore present a significant challenge for the learner.

2.2 Challenges for the teacher: metaphor, polysemy and homonymy

As lexical items that convey a meaning in context that differs from the literal meaning of their constituent words, metaphors can be seen to fall within the purview of the polysemy/homonymy debate. Whether they should be considered as one of the multiple senses of a single lexical item (polysemous), or as distinct words that happen to share a form with other lexical items (homonyms, but used figuratively rather than literally), metaphors require pedagogical decision-making from the language teacher. McCarthy (1990: 22-24) describes some of these pedagogical challenges, which include the consideration as to

whether acquisition will be facilitated or hampered by teaching several senses at one go, or vice-versa, dealing with each individual sense as it crops up.

Metaphors, he goes on to explain (1990: 30), have their own distinct difficulties for learners of an L2; but as an instinctual form of meaning processing, towards whose problems of transferability between L1 and L2 ‘language learners are not insensitive’ (McCarthy, 1990: 26), they may also provide teachers with a pedagogical tool.

I will now explore some of these challenges – and opportunities – as they arise from a comparison of the metaphorical structures present in two articles from English and Japanese newspapers.

3 Two newspaper articles

3.1 General description

The articles to be discussed in this essay were published in the English-language *The Japan Times* (referred to hereafter as *JT*), and the Japanese-language *Nishi Nippon Shimbun (NNS)*, published on 8 September, and 7 September 2004, respectively. They deal with the impending possibility of the first ever players’ strike in the history of Japanese baseball, an event which subsequently took place later in the month. Both are front-page news articles, and neither has a by-line. The story printed in *JT* is an Associated Press news agency story. The main headlines of each story are very similar: in *JT*, ‘Japanese ball players set to strike’; and in *NNS*, ‘プロ野球球初のストへ’ (¹[puro] ²[yakyū] ³[hatsu] ⁴[no] ⁵[suto] ⁶[e]), literally ¹[pro] ²[baseball] ³[first] ⁴[*postpositional particle indicating possession*] ⁵[strike] ⁶[*postpositional particle indicating movement towards*].¹ Despite their similarity of content, though, and in spite of their apparent simplicity – of both grammar and lexis – both

headlines display some metaphorical features.

3.2 Headlines

The Japanese postpositional particle ‘へ’ (pronounced [e]) is usually translated into English as ‘to’ or ‘towards’, as in the sentence ‘私は京都へ行きました’ (‘watashi wa kyōto e ikimashita’), meaning ‘I went to Kyoto’. Makino and Tsutsui (1986: 116) define it as ‘a particle that indicates the direction toward which some directional movement or action proceeds’. In the *NNS* headline, it is clearly a spatialization metaphor, rather than a literal, physical movement. The strike is conceptualised as being in a different location towards which professional baseball is now moving. In fact, this is a common feature of Japanese newspaper headlines – a convention of a particular kind of discourse – used to indicate that a decision has been taken, and a certain course of action will now be followed. Quoted below are three headlines appearing on the front pages of different newspapers published on the same day, and all using the ‘へ’ construction.

みずほ FG 農林中金と資本提携へ (*Yomiuri Shimbun*)

mizuho FG nōrin chōkin to shihon teikei e

Mizuho Financial Group to form a capital tie-up with The Norinchukin Bank

台風 18 号九州北部上陸へ (*Mainichi Shimbun*)

taifū jūhachigō kyūshū hokubu jōriku e

Typhoon number 18 to land on northern Kyushu

ロシア、統制を強化へ (*Nishi Nippon Shimbun*)

roshia, tōsei o kyōka e

Russia to strengthen regulations

The corresponding part of the English headline – ‘set to strike’ – shows a similarly complex use of an apparently simple word, in this case the collocational verb ‘set to’. That this is a metaphorical usage is suggested by the definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*: ‘*pass.* To have one's mind or will fixed upon something’ is part of the eighth principle sense of the verb ‘set’, which is ‘To put or come into a settled or rigid position or state’. Although, as we have seen, the distinction between metaphor and polysemy is not always an easy one to make – and questions of etymology may not be foremost amongst the concerns of either teachers or learners – ‘set’ is clearly not a straightforward verb. The potential challenge that it poses for learners can be seen in the fact that the *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (CCED)* – a dictionary based on principles of usage, rather than diachronically like *OED* – gives ‘If something is set to happen, it is about to happen or likely to happen’ as its fourteenth out of twenty-four principle citations for verb and adjective uses of ‘set’.

Despite their brevity, then, a comparison of the two headlines reveals at least three linguistic and contextual features that students need to be aware of to understand their metaphorical systems: the use of the spatial metaphor ‘へ’; the use of a verb, ‘set’, in a non-literal context; and the collocational possibilities and

¹ Subsequent quotations or examples from Japanese will be given in Japanese script first, followed by a romanized transliteration, and then (if necessary), by an English translation or paraphrase.

demands of that verb; and we might perhaps consider that the ‘to’ of the *JT* headline encompasses all three of these features. We may well expect, then, that the bodies of the articles themselves will present a significantly larger range of metaphors. Before examining some examples directly, I will first briefly consider some of the basic similarities and differences between metaphorical systems in English and in Japanese.

3.3 Metaphor in English and Japanese

Although the particular metaphors used, and the circumstances of their use, may not always overlap, the concept of metaphor is widespread in Japanese as it is in English. In some cases, the similarities may belie the very significant historical, etymological, lexical and grammatical differences between the two languages. For example, Lakoff and Johnson (1980 & 2003: 127) argue that the expectation ‘more of form is more of content ... is a very general principle that seems to occur naturally throughout the world’s languages’: Japanese and English differ in their lacking and having plurals, respectively, but both use iteration, for example, to similar effect. Orthographically, of course, the two languages are very different, and to a certain extent, it might seem that the Japanese writing system – in which ideograms of Chinese origin (*kanji*) are combined to form words and phrases whose original semantic components (morphemes) remain visible to give clues to meaning – sets it apart from English; and that this must have significant implications for learners of either language. For example, the word 熱心, (*nesshin*), meaning ‘enthusiasm’, consists of the two components 熱 (*netsu*) meaning ‘heat’ and 心 (*shin*) meaning ‘heart’.² The resulting word is an obviously metaphorical noun, regardless of context. In the *NNS* article, we have an example of this kind of transparent metaphor in the verb, 緩和する, which consists of the two lexical characters 緩, meaning ‘slack’, and 和, meaning ‘harmonious’ or ‘peace’, along with the modal verb する (*suru*), which is here roughly equivalent to ‘do’. The result, in context, is ‘alleviate’. Metaphorical transparency – or the lack of it – is of course more likely to be an issue of concern for learners of a language than for native speakers of it, in figurative and non-literary discourse at least, where the metaphors used are more likely to be conventional, and therefore understood intuitively, rather than noticed and analysed.

However, even though English and Japanese are undoubtedly poles apart orthographically, both languages work by combining morphemes to form lexical units. *Kanji*, in this respect, represent a difference not in kind but of degree. The meaning of the word ‘enthusiasm’ may be more opaque to the learner of L2 English than 熱心 is to the learner of L2 Japanese; but the English phrase ‘hot-headed’, for example, is equally transparent. In such a comparison, we can see the first indications of a potential pedagogic strategy for metaphor: directed noticing, and consciousness-raising, of metaphorical similarities and differences. As a learner of Japanese, I am frequently told by native speakers that ‘*kanji* have meaning’; as a teacher of English, I am keen to show my students that, in fact, ‘English has *kanji* too’. I will now turn to some specific examples from the two newspaper articles.

² Unless otherwise stated, all meanings for Sino-Japanese characters are those given by Halpern, 1999.

4 Metaphors on the newspaper page

4.1 Metaphorical similarities: individual cases

Despite the considerable grammatical and lexical differences between the two languages, some metaphors occur in very similar forms in both the English and the Japanese articles. *JT*, for example, has the players demanding a ‘one-year freeze on the proposed merger’; *NNS* has 球団合併の一年間凍結 (*kyūdan gappei no ichi nen kan tōketsu*), meaning ‘one-year freeze on the baseball team merger’. In these phrases, the metaphorical components, ‘freeze’ and 凍結 are essentially identical. This particular lexical item, in other words, is polysemous/homonymous in both English and Japanese; and McCarthy’s hypothetical teacher (see 2.2 above) might well consider that its translatability will facilitate, rather than hamper the acquisition of multiple senses. In other instances, although the metaphor in question may not actually appear in both articles, it is equally viable in either language. In the phrase,

無期限ストに否定的な立場を取っていた
 mukigen suto ni hiteiteki na tachiba o totte ita
 taking a position against an unlimited strike

the word 立場, whose component characters represent the concepts ‘stand’ and ‘place’ respectively, would be ‘position’, also an ontological metaphor, in English. A number of further examples of close metaphorical similarity can be found. These similarities are not restricted to nouns, but also include verb phrases, as in:

選手会の足並みがそろわなければ、ストを行う意味がない。
 senshukai no ashinami ga sorowanakereba, suto o okonau imi ga nai.

Unless all members of the players’ association fall into step, the strike will be meaningless.

The verb 足並みがそろう – whose component characters mean ‘foot’ and ‘line up’ – corresponds to English metaphors such as ‘fall into line’, ‘keep pace with’ and ‘keep in step’.

Significant, multiple instances of metaphorical similarity may well be helpful for individual, motivated learners of English or Japanese in reading newspaper articles, or other L2 texts. Where metaphors, like other lexical items, are similar in native and target languages, students can be both encouraged in the belief that reading in a second language is an attainable goal, and given some concrete foundations on which to build a gist reading, although, as McCarthy (1990: 86) points out, instances of false similarity exist, and ‘may place difficulties in the way of learning a word’. However, even true similarities, if isolated, are unlikely to satisfy either linguists, or teachers searching for a more comprehensive pedagogical approach to dealing with the problems and challenges of metaphorical systems. Can we, in fact, find correspondences – or indeed systematic differences – not simply between individual metaphors, but also between metaphorical structures and systems?

4.2 Metaphorical similarities: context-dependent systems

‘Argument Is War’, later modified to ‘Argument Is Struggle’, is one of the key metaphorical systems analysed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980 & 2003: 4-6, 265), and it serves to create lexical cohesion throughout both articles. *JT* twice refers to the players ‘refus[ing] to play’ (reiteration), before turning to a more emotive, metaphorical expression in the final paragraph: ‘the players have fiercely battled the proposed merger’. Rather than a simple progression from literal to figurative language, we can in fact see this movement as part of a wider use of the ‘Argument Is War/Struggle’ metaphor that recurs throughout the article: ‘Toyokura also threatened

to file a lawsuit'; 'to seek compensation for damages'; 'spur more mergers'; 'fans also oppose the plan'; and in the noun and verb 'strike' itself. 'Strike' – as well as meaning 'industrial action', 'hit' and 'delete' – is also, of course, a term in baseball. This will undoubtedly be metaphorically resonant for many, although perhaps not all, native speakers of English, even though it remains much less explicit here than it probably would in some less stylistically formal newspapers. 'Strike' does not have such a resonance in Japanese, which adopts the English word to mean both 'industrial action', and a baseball term, but renders the two meanings slightly differently in the katakana syllabary – ストライキ (sutoraiki), sometimes shortened as in the *NNS* headline to スト (suto), and ストライク (sutoraiku), respectively. But a similar triple metaphorical potential can be seen in the sentence,

仮にストに踏み切った場合、球団は大打撃を受ける。

kari ni suto ni fumikitta baai, kyūdan wa daidageki o ukeru.

If the strike is actually carried out, the baseball teams will sustain great damage.

The second character of 大打撃, 打, meaning 'strike', is found throughout a number of expressions relating to baseball in Japanese, such as 打者 (dasha), meaning 'batter' and 打率 (daritsu), meaning 'batting average'.

In fact, metaphors of war and struggle can be found throughout the *NNS* article, in references to both sport and argument. 戦 (sen), a character meaning 'war', occurs a number of times as a synonym for 'match' or 'game', as in 近鉄戦 (Kintetsu sen), 'the game against Kintetsu'; and the 軍 (gun) in 二軍戦 (ni gun sen), meaning 'second team matches', is a character meaning 'army'; a metaphorical usage that does not occur in English. The 'war' character occurs also as part of the verb 戦う (tatakau), meaning 'fight', in the following quotation from a statement by the head of the Japanese professional baseball players' association:

ここで戦わねば、ファンに失望感を与える。

koko de tatakawaneba, fan ni shitsubōkan wo ataeru.

Unless we fight now, we will disappoint our fans.

In this statement, we have precisely the same metaphorical use of the verb 'battle' as that attributed to the players by the writer of the *JT* article.

The 'Argument Is War/Struggle' metaphor system is prominent in both articles because, evidently, it is appropriate to their content, as it would not be if the articles being studied were, for example, film reviews, recipes or health tips. Language teachers can make use of this contextual correspondence to help their students to devise strategies for reading articles whose content is already known, or can be easily anticipated. Students might perhaps be asked to brainstorm vocabulary and idioms associated with a certain topic – in either L1 or L2 – before reading an L2 article related to that topic; and metaphorical structures could be included in this process. Alternatively, students might be asked to read texts in their L1 before, after, or in parallel with target L2 texts on similar topics. However, the first strategy at least would be useless, if the topic were wholly unfamiliar. In such a situation, strategies to deal with similarities and differences between less context-dependent metaphors – both individual cases, and larger systems – are necessary. To what extent can we find evidence for a more general metaphorical correspondence between the English and Japanese articles?

4.3 Metaphorical similarities: wider systems

Two of the main metaphorical concepts outlined by Lakoff and Johnson are spatial and orientational metaphors; and ontological metaphors, in which concepts are viewed as substances or entities, such as containers or people.

Both kinds can be found in both articles, in examples that, we shall see, show considerable broad similarities, while they differ in detail.

We have already seen a shared spatial metaphor in the ‘to’/へ structures used in the headlines of both articles. A similarly systematic conceptualization of what we might call ‘Decisions Are Movement’ appears in the first paragraph of the *JT* article:

Japan’s professional baseball players’ association will go on strike for the first time if owners go ahead with a proposed merger of two teams later this week [my emphasis]

NNS has two expressions for ‘go on strike’ in its first paragraph, both of which use the character 行, whose three current meanings of ‘go’, ‘act’ and ‘line’ are derived from an original meaning ‘crossroads, road’:

... ストライキを行うことを決めた。決行されれば、日本のプロ野球では初のストライキとなる。

... sutoraiki o okonau koto o kimeta. kekko sarereba, nihon no puro yakyū de wa hatsu no sutoraiki to naru.

This metaphorical correspondence between English and Japanese – the ‘go/行’ structure – may be an aid for both learners and teachers, presenting an opportunity for consciousness-raising. It also brings into useful focus an area of potentially greater difficulty. The use of the ‘go/行’ structure in the ‘Decisions Are Movement’ metaphor, I would like to argue, is made not literal, – is ‘metaphorized’, we might say – by means of its collocational potential. English, in the *JT* article, collocates ‘go’ with ‘on’ and with ‘ahead with’. Japanese, in contrast, ‘metaphorizes’ 行 in two ways: by employing it as a morpheme within the compound noun 決行 (kekko), meaning ‘decision’; and by giving it the verb reading ‘行う’ (okonau), meaning ‘implement’, rather than ‘行く’ (iku), meaning ‘go’. Mastery of collocations will be essential to the development of both lexical and grammatical competence for any learner of L2 English, and focusing on their use in metaphors may provide teachers with a starting point for a pedagogic strategy for dealing with them. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address the precise details of such a strategy. However, one possible approach has already been suggested by the analysis of systematic, rather than simply context-specific, metaphors present in the two articles.

‘Decisions Are Movement’, we have seen, is a spatial or orientational metaphor. One of the *JS* citations for this metaphor can also be seen as ontological. In the phrase, ‘go on strike’, the preposition ‘on’ seems to make ‘strike’ a substance, instead of the destination that the ‘Decisions Are Movement’ metaphor might lead us to expect. It is rather difficult to articulate what this ontological metaphor might actually be – is the strike seen as a vehicle, or as a surface on which movement takes place? – and we might therefore expect that learners would find the ‘go on’ collocation challenging. * ‘Go to strike’ would seem to be a more intuitively logical choice, in this and in other more common phrases such as ‘go on holiday’ and ‘go on a tour’. Teaching these two collocations alongside a more intuitively *substantial* occurrence of the metaphor, such as ‘go [somewhere] on foot’, might be one approach to tackling this particular challenge.

In fact, there are examples of systematic ontological and spatial metaphorical similarity – as well as difference – between the two articles. We might note, in particular, English prepositions of time such as ‘in’ (ontological: ‘Time Is A Container’) and ‘between’, (spatial: ‘Times Are Locations’). The extent to which such prepositions are in fact metaphors is perhaps debatable. However, given that ‘we understand time in terms of some basic elements: physical objects, their locations, and their motions’ (Kövecses, 2002: 33), prepositions are clearly important building blocks in the construction of more obviously metaphorical expressions of time;

and, as we shall see, there may in fact be a pedagogical benefit in addressing their metaphorical potential. One notable example of a time preposition metaphor appears twice in close proximity in the *JT* article:

If the players carry out those plans, it would be the first strike in Japanese baseball history and would take place 10 years after U.S. Major League Baseball players went on strike in 1994. [my underlining]

This time preposition metaphor ‘in’ occurs in almost identical form in Japanese, in the character 中, whose original/primary meaning is ‘middle’.³ However, its use in the *NNS* article does not necessarily provide a precise correspondence with that of *JT*. For example, for the English ‘the first strike in Japanese baseball history’, we have (already quoted above):

決行されれば、二本のプロ野球では初のストライキとなる。

kekko sarereba, nihon no puro yakyū de wa hatsu no sutoraiki to naru.

If a decision is reached, it will be the first strike in Japanese baseball [history].

The postpositional particle で (de) – in combination with the topic marker は (pronounced ‘wa’) – has a number of functions: it ‘indicates location’ and ‘indicates the time when [something] terminates or the amount of time a period of activity has taken’ (Makino and Tsutsui, 1986: 105, 109). In this respect, it can be said to approximate the English prepositions ‘in’, ‘at’ and ‘on’; but perhaps not closely enough to enable L2 learners to avoid errors such as *‘at history’, *‘on history’ or perhaps, given some of the other functions of で, *‘of history’ and *‘by history’. Several other similar correspondences are in evidence: 一年間 (ichi nen kan), meaning ‘during one year/in the space of one year’, for example, and 九月中 (kugatsu chu), meaning ‘during September’. This tendency towards to metaphorical correspondence or equivalence – rather than precise duplication – between L1 and L2 in such a major area of concern (namely prepositions of time) for learners, gives teachers a valuable pedagogic opportunity.

5 Metaphorical differences

In addition to these instances of metaphorical similarity – both individual and context-dependent, and structural and context-independent – both articles naturally contain a number of metaphorical expressions that are not so easily transferable. *JT*’s phrase ‘divide up the baseball pie’, for example, is an idiomatic expression that relies on an ontological metaphor, which we might call, say, ‘Money Is Food’. Some of the most common instances of this metaphor may be accessible: *CCED*, for example, includes monetary senses in its definitions of ‘dough’ and ‘bacon’ (under the phrase ‘bring home the bacon’), but ‘pie’ does not receive such a gloss. Learners, we can assume, are unlikely to be able to find extended or less common examples in standard textbooks, and although native speakers may have an instinctive awareness of their validity, they may occur only sporadically in authentic L1 texts.⁴ Even their more obvious analogues may not be translatable: ‘the baseball pie’ may resonate for the L1 English speaker

³ ‘Between’ also appears in the character 間, but it is notable that Halpern (1999: 789) does not specify an ‘original meaning’ for this character, as he does for 中. Indeed, the fact that he has to gloss his two definitions of ‘interval’ as ‘space between’ and ‘time between’, suggests that in both English and Japanese, this particular metaphor exists somewhere on the border between polysemy and homonymy.

⁴ A brief internet search turned up a few examples: ‘Pizza chains seek bigger piece of pie’, the headline of an article in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* (Allomong, 2004), and ‘All we are asking for is a small piece of the gigantic pie’ in a letter (dealing with an unrelated industrial dispute) to the editor of the *Toledo Blade* (Bloom, 2005).

with the image of a pie chart; but for a Japanese speaker, the equivalent term is 円グラフ (*en gurafu*), which means ‘circular graph’, and which therefore lacks any direct or figurative association with food.

Despite its lack of transparency to a learner, though, ‘the baseball pie’ is an isolated example rather than a metaphorical structure. In the classroom or in materials design, teachers might consider (perhaps intuitively) that its low frequency and productiveness/generalizability – terms used by Thornbury (1999) with reference to the teaching of grammar, but equally applicable to lexis – make it an undeserving candidate for either intensive or extensive teaching, and may well choose to deal with it by means of a gloss in the text. It is in the larger categories of discourse specific, and discourse non-specific, structures that more extended teaching and learning can be carried out.

6 Metaphor in the EFL classroom

6.1 Using the English text to raise awareness of metaphor

Infrequent and ungeneralizable as it may be, though, the ‘baseball pie’ is obviously and unmistakably a metaphor. It can serve, therefore, as a gateway for both teachers and learners to the other, less unambiguous metaphors with which, as we have seen, both articles abound; and thence to a range of other potential L2-learning difficulties. As we have seen (in 4.3, above), verb collocations are one such area. Low (1988: 137) summarises one potential objection to the teaching of metaphoric expressions ‘one by one’ thus:

Particles and prepositions are an area of almost universal difficulty among second language learners of English
Much confusion could be removed in many cases by a realization of the metaphoric links between the meanings of terms like ‘up’ or ‘over’.

This might, in fact, be an argument *in favour* of the teaching of metaphor not simply as an end in itself, but as a vehicle for raising learner consciousness of other problematic aspects of English. What we are looking at here, therefore, is as much extended teaching using metaphor, as it is raising awareness of metaphor itself. To Low’s list of the skills that go to make up ‘metaphorical competence’ (1988: 129-135), we can add other skills that either derive from that competence, or which can beneficially be developed alongside it. Five such areas in which learners will need to develop their competence have been touched on above: the conventions of particular genres and types of discourse (3.2), textual coherence at the supra-sentential level (4.2), lexical choice (4.2 – the differing limits on the applicability of ‘battle’ metaphors in talking about sports in English and Japanese might be one example); collocation (4.3); and prepositions of time (4.3). In the next section, I will look at one further area – phrasal verbs – in more detail.

6.2 Teaching phrasal verbs

As perhaps befits a non-literary text from a ‘serious’ newspaper, and one whose readership probably includes a number of non-native speakers of English (although, as noted above, the piece in question is an AP news agency story), the *JT* article seems to contain few obvious figurative or idiomatic expressions, beyond the ‘baseball pie’. However, it also contains a large number of (often phrasal) verbs which function metaphorically rather than literally: ‘go ahead with’, ‘suspend’, ‘raises’, ‘lead to’, ‘carry out’, ‘take place’, ‘held back on’, ‘upheld’, ‘proceed’ and ‘draw large crowds’, for example. Some of these may have Japanese equivalents or near-equivalents (the ‘go/行’ similarity has already been mentioned, see 4.3 above), and some may not. For *JT*’s ‘if their demand is not met’, for example, *NNS* has:

要求を受け入れられない場合

yōkyū ga ukeirerarenai baai

In this case, the two kanji which make up 受け入れる, meaning ‘accept, consent to’, are 受 (receive) and 入 (enter), neither of which has the sense of ‘meet’. Using parallel texts – in this case, giving learners the *NNS* text as well as the *JT* text – may be one way to use metaphorical systems to raise awareness of phrasal verb constructions. Students could be asked to find Japanese equivalents for the English verbs highlighted, or vice versa, and analyse their similarities or differences. Even without reference to students’ L1, or explicit comparison to it, students could be encouraged to read the English metaphors literally before they are asked to work out – or are taught – their meanings in context. In the example above, this might mean asking students to personify ‘demands’ and imagine them being ‘met’ – perhaps verbally, perhaps even visually – before extrapolating further situations and the appropriate expressions for them: ‘meeting challenges’, ‘meeting costs’, ‘meeting needs’.

In 4.2 above, then, it was suggested that students can be prepared to encounter metaphorical systems and structures by a consideration of the contexts in which they may occur, in both L1 and L2. With more frequent, productive and generalizable metaphors, like the phrasal verbs above, we might enlist their literal, out-of-context meanings as vehicles for promoting competence in comprehension and production.

7 Conclusion

Newspaper articles, in that they are samples of genuine language use – authentic written communication – rather than contrived, artificial examples of particular lexical, syntactical or discourse features, present a number of challenges for both teachers and learners; and also a number of opportunities. Their use of non-literary metaphors – not only in the form of easily identifiable single idioms, but also of wider structures both context-specific and context-independent – ranks among them. Rather than being a barrier to understanding and eventual competence, though, such metaphors may in fact be a potential window of understanding to it. In a pedagogical approach that begins with consciousness raising of the similarities and differences between more obvious and transparent metaphors in both L1 and L2, and that then proceeds via a consideration of how less transparent but more frequent and generalizable metaphorical structures operate not only in their target L2, but also in their own L1, teachers can promote competence not just metaphorical, but also in the fields of lexis, syntax and discourse.

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hodson@tc.nagasaki-gaigo.ac.jp