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MULTIMODAL METAPHOR IN ELT: COMBINING THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

ABSTRACT

Multimodal metaphor combines elements of various modes (i.e. visual, written or auditory) and constitutes an attractive means of communication. The aim of the paper is to show that knowledge of metaphors should be taught in foreign language (FL) lessons along with the mother tongue. A pilot study on the effectiveness of the adoption of knowledge on metaphors in practical classes was conducted among students of English philology at the University of Białystok. The issue was conducted by means of a specially designed Google survey and evaluation sheets. The paper presents some ways of introducing linguistic knowledge of metaphors to advanced FL learners. Furthermore, some practical class activities concerning metaphor are proposed. Integrating metaphor and practical exercises on metaphor in FL lessons broadens students' linguistic knowledge. Developing metaphoric competence also enhances second language learners' communicative ability, with a special emphasis on their metaphoric competence. Moreover, metaphor-based activities incite students' analytical and critical thinking. Exercises on metaphors facilitate learners using the newly acquired knowledge in practice. Finally, adopting this approach contributes to promoting students' autonomy and self-education.

Key words: multimodal metaphor, metaphoric competence, ELT

ABSTRAKT

METAFORA MULTIMODALNA W NAUCZANIU JĘZYKA OBCEGO: INTEGRACJA WIEDZY TEORETYCZNEJ Z PRAKTYCZNĄ

Metafora multimodalna tworzy znaczenie poprzez integrację elementów różnych systemów semiotycznych (obrazu, tekstu, dźwięku) i stanowi jedną z najatrakcyjniejszych form przekazu. Celem artykułu jest pokazanie, że umiejętność postępowania się przenosią

i jej odczytywania powinna być rozwijana na lekcjach języka obcego. Wśród studentów Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku przeprowadzono badanie pilotażowe dotyczące efektywności propozycji integracji wiedzy o metaforach z praktyczną nauką języka. W celu jej zbadania opracowano ankiety Google i formularze ewaluacyjne. Artykuł postuluje integrację teoretycznej wiedzy o metaforze multimodalnej z kształceniem w zakresie kompetencji językowych na zajęciach z języka obcego. Przedstawiono przykładowe praktyczne rozwiązania w tym zakresie, m.in. propozycje autorskich ćwiczeń, które mogą być wykorzystane w procesie nauczania języka angielskiego jako obcego na poziomie zaawansowanym. Integracja teoretycznej wiedzy z zakresu językoznawstwa z rozwijaniem kompetencji komunikacyjnych skłania uczniów do analitycznego i krytycznego myślenia oraz zwiększa autonomię uczniów i usprawnia ich samokształcenie.

Słowa kluczowe: metafora multimodalna, kompetencja metaforyczna, nauczanie języka obcego

Introduction

In ELT (English Language Teaching), linguistic knowledge promotes a more effective teaching process¹, since theoretical information on particular linguistic phenomena may be successfully combined with developing the four basic language skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading). A great number of linguists have examined the integration of specialized linguistic theories in the ELT environment. For instance, Szerszunowicz² proved that the introduction of information on lacunarity contributes to the development of foreign language learners' dictionary skills. Similarly, Littlemore³ praises the role of the presentation of metaphor in foreign language teaching. In the same vein, Belkhir⁴ enumerates the advantages of implementing MIP (Metaphor Identification Process) in EFL lessons.

The general aim of the paper is to show how the introduction of theoretical knowledge on multimodal metaphor can be combined with the development of students' skills. The specific objective of the article is to discuss how theoretical knowledge can be introduced during an FL class. Several activities specially designed for this purpose are discussed and exemplified. They

¹ J. Corbett, *An intercultural approach to English teaching*, Clevedon 2003, p. 5.

² J. Szerszunowicz, *Lacunarity, Lexicography and beyond: integration of the introduction of a linguo-cultural concept and development of L2 learners' dictionary skills*, "Lexicography" 2015, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 101–118.

³ J. Littlemore, *Metaphoric Competence, Second Language Learning and Communicative Language Ability*, "Applied Linguistics" 2006, no. 27(2), pp. 268–294.

⁴ S. Belkhir, *Does MIP promote EFL learners' cognitive ability to identify metaphors in written discourse?*, [in:] *Cognition and Language Learning*, S. Belkhir (ed.), Newcastle upon Tyne 2020, pp. 43–62.

were verified by means of a pilot study conducted among 10 students of the University of Białystok. On Tuesday, 2nd March 2021, I held 60-minute classes during which I carried out an experiment based on the idea of combining theoretical knowledge on metaphors and multimodal stimuli (visual artefacts) in the FL classroom. The experiment was conducted via the online learning platform *Blackboard Learn*. To evaluate the effectiveness of the proposal and activities, the Google survey and evaluation sheets were prepared. The students were asked to fill in the forms, and the concluding remarks were drawn from the survey and the follow-up discussion.

Background theoretical information on multimodal metaphor

In Aristotelian times, metaphor was seen as a special use of language, which was typically ascribed to poets or artists. Nevertheless, the groundbreaking theory of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) unconditionally refuted the traditional view of special and poetic uses of metaphor held for millennia. Instead, CMT researchers conflated metaphor with everyday communication, as it resides in words, thoughts, actions or feelings. Along the same lines, scholars like Lakoff and Johnson⁵ explained that metaphors help people understand abstract concepts via more tangible and commonplace entities, which fosters communication on intricate social issues, such as politics, the environment or war. The early premises of cognitive metaphor presuppose that metaphorical thinking derives from embodied experience. It means interactions between the human body and the environment (i.e. perceptual, olfactory or haptical experiences) give rise to linguistic concepts and human experiences⁶. Therefore, it is surprising that the cognitive theory of Lakoff and Johnson restricts its scope of research to verbal manifestations of conceptual metaphors.

As metaphorical thinking reaches beyond verbal modalities, the study of metaphors should not be confined to the linguistic field⁷. Instead, researchers should examine metaphors that emerge in different modalities. Cienki⁸, for instance, investigates the role of gestures in communication. On the other hand, there is also a second strand of metaphor analysts, mainly represented

⁵ G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago 1980.

⁶ M. Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination and Reason*, Chicago 1987.

⁷ E. Górska, *Dynamiczne podejście do metafory*, "Prace Filologiczne" 2014, no. 64(2), pp. 109–122.

⁸ A. Cienki, *Image schemas and gesture*, [in:] *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics*, B. Hempe (ed.), Berlin 2005, pp. 421–442.

by Forceville⁹, that turned to the visual aspects of metaphorical manifestations. Visual metaphors constitute a relatively new domain of scientific interest. There are studies devoted to metaphors in various kinds and genres, like cartoons¹⁰ or films¹¹. As has been divulged, non-verbal means of communication appeal to a considerable number of emotions exerting considerably different influence on available ways of conveying information and constructing meaning than verbal communication does. There are two kinds of metaphors: mono- and multimodal metaphors.

To avoid further confusion, it has to be explained that mode is understood in line with Forceville's theory¹², which couples it with basic senses, yielding the visual, spoken, written or gestural modes. In monomodal metaphors both the target and source domains come from the same mode. Correspondingly, multimodal metaphors are those whose target and source domains are cued in a separate set of modes. Then, purely verbal or exclusively pictorial metaphors constitute monomodal subtypes of metaphor. In turn, a creative combination of image and text creates a multimodal metaphor, which may also be defined as a pictorial-verbal metaphor. Pictorial metaphors often evoke a considerable number of modes: for instance, one imagetic metaphor may employ the visual mode (picture), gesture and textual modes at the same time.

Multimodality research deals with meaning expressed in the bulk of modes. In visual metaphors, the target and the source may be rendered *via* available contextual or written cues. Furthermore, the task of deciphering the meaning of multimodal metaphor may also demand some background information and assimilation of social and cultural knowledge, for example in the context of political multimodal metaphors. In visuals the source domain is represented in a picture and it is visible at first glance for an average viewer. In contrast, the target domain has to be deduced from a static picture and its visual context. Then, in the process of deducing the target, all elements of the picture's scenario play an important role and should be mapped onto the emergent metaphor. Next, similarly to the standard version of CMT, the visually available object representing the source is transformed into the second object underlying the rendered target domain.

⁹ C. Forceville, *Multimodal metaphor in ten Dutch TV commercials*, "Public Journal of Semiotics" 2007, no. 1, pp. 19–51.

¹⁰ L. Bounegru, C. Forceville, *Metaphors in editorial cartoons representing the global financial crisis*, "Visual Communication" 2010, no. 10(2), pp. 209–229.

¹¹ C. Forceville, *Visual and multimodal metaphor in film: charting the field*, [in:] *Film, Television and Video Games: Cognitive Approaches*, K. Fahlenbrach (ed.), London 2016, pp. 17–32.

¹² C. Forceville, *Non-verbal and multimodal metaphor in a cognitivist framework: Agendas for research*, [in:] *Multimodal metaphor*, C. Forceville, E. Urios-Aparisi (eds.), Berlin–New York 2009, p. 22.

Metaphor in an EFL classroom

Lakoff and Johnson's claim¹³ about the pervasiveness of metaphors comprises the departure point for this article: I assert that metaphors structure human's reasoning and people use metaphors on a regular basis in normal conversations and prosaic situations. Thus, it can be assumed that learners of English will be exposed to a wide range of metaphorical utterances and sentences. For instance, the saying *Time flies* carries a figurative content. Then, second language students may resort to their knowledge of the act of flying and they can deduce the exact meaning of the given maxim. In a similar fashion, the sentence *He is brave as a lion* also activates learners' prior knowledge (in the vast majority of cases, it is an element of general knowledge about the world acquired in the course of life) and it allows for attaching the feature of being brave to a human being.

Second, language learners do not process non-literal items automatically and subconsciously, as natives do. Therefore, it may be concluded that to have a good command of a second language, learners have to be aware of metaphors. Thus, EFL students should be taught metaphoric competence. Metaphoric competence is understood as the ability to interpret and use metaphors. For example, the *Cambridge Dictionary* contains the idiomatic sentence *I'm busy this week but there might be a window on Friday*, which may represent a problematic situation for second language learners. Then, the teacher should encourage students to guess the meaning of the phrase. Probably, learners would remember the above-mentioned *window* ('opportunity') as a physical object that has well-defined characteristics and functions, and thus they could understand it as a physical escape. Such wild guesses make students conscious of metaphorical thinking and they would develop learner's autonomy and facilitate vocabulary acquisition¹⁴.

At this point it is essential to emphasize that foreign language classes should be intertwined with a plethora of free speaking or writing activities. Teachers should encourage students to transmit their opinions and personal evaluations in the target language. Thus, if FL students experienced the lack of vocabulary, they would be forced to paraphrase the missing words. To do so, second language learners tend to resort to new vocabulary, and most typically new words are examples of creatively-invented words. In some cases, circumlocution fulfils the semantic gaps in the learner's knowledge of the second language. Then,

¹³ G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By...*

¹⁴ J. Littlemore, *Metaphoric Competence...*, pp. 6–8.

the learners make up new parallels or similes to explain what they intend to convey. These examples show how students may exploit metaphoric language strategies to compensate for lexical gaps.

Collectively, the examples above demonstrate that metaphors penetrate learners' daily lives. Suffice it to mention that metaphors are employed in a great number of newspaper headlines, movies, jokes and advertisements. FL learners have to be able to interpret figurative content. Notably, most scholars¹⁵ strongly advise teachers to develop metaphoric competence among FL learners. Here, it should be stressed that metaphoric competence concerns the integration of both sets of skills, i.e. theoretical (knowledge about the concept of metaphor) and practical (exercises promoting the use of metaphors). The implementation of metaphors into the class curriculum facilitates intermediate students incorporating metaphors into their speech.

Recently, the technological revolution has brought sweeping changes in the sphere of communication¹⁶. Contemporary communication is dominated by visual artefacts¹⁷. Visual elements are employed in modern advertisements, political cartoons and memes. Even textbooks are multimodal, as they tend to combine written texts with visual images explaining the written content. Apparently, students acquire information through interaction with a wide range of semiotic modes. By a way of example, Royce¹⁸ holds the idea that multimodality fosters the acquisition of vocabulary. For instance, the image of the word and written definition engage different senses, and this fosters the activity of memorizing new words. Weninger and Kiss¹⁹ concur that pictures cease to fulfil the function of decorative elements of textbooks as they convey meaning and senses. Therefore, literacy should be taught through different modes, for instance visual or auditory.

¹⁵ G.D. Low, *On teaching metaphor*, "Applied Linguistics" 1988, no. 9(2), pp. 125–147; M. Beréndi, S. Csábi, Z. Kövecses, *Using conceptual metaphors and metonymies in vocabulary teaching*, [in:] *Cognitive linguistic approaches to teaching vocabulary and phraseology*, F. Boers, S. Lindstromberg (eds.), Berlin–New York 2006, pp. 65–100.

¹⁶ J. Ostanina-Olszewska, *Modern technology in language learning and teaching*, "Linguodidactica" 2018, vol. XXII, p. 154.

¹⁷ G. Kress, *Multimodality: Challenges to thinking about language*, "TESOL Quarterly" 2000, no. 34, p. 337.

¹⁸ T. Royce, *Multimodality in the TESOL classroom: Exploring visual-verbal synergy*, "TESOL Quarterly" 2002, no. 36(2), p. 200.

¹⁹ C. Weninger, T. Kiss, *Culture in English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks: A semiotic approach*, "TESOL Quarterly" 2013, no. 47(4), p. 704.

Towards practice

Taking into consideration the fact that non-native learners of the given language can benefit from an awareness of metaphorical language and multimodal metaphor, it can be presumed that teachers should include theoretical aspects of that phenomenon in language classes. Advanced FL learners are bound to hear metaphorical language and interpret it while watching YouTube movies or memes, listening to songs or reading comics. Naturally, FL learners are likely to encounter multimodal metaphors while doing their daily activities. That is why the metaphoric subcompetence should be viewed as an important one, and thus it ought to be constantly developed in the process of teaching a foreign language.

Therefore, it is assumed that providing students with some basic theoretical elements of both metaphoricity and multimodality will facilitate students' learning abilities as well as contribute to the development of their general communication skills. Therefore, the inclusion of metaphors in class activities is important. Indeed, as will be shown later, metaphors and multimodal metaphors permit students to conceive of difficult socio-cultural themes and elaborate sophisticated processes of meaning-making.

At this point, it is pertinent to mention that multimodal metaphors allow for the employment of ludic strategies, i.e. "leisure activities" that presuppose joy and fun²⁰. In practice, it means that students learn by exposure to games, music, movies, simulations and conversations. Therefore, multimodal metaphors in the FL classroom enable teachers to improve students' attention span and arouse positive feelings among second language learners. Besides, to comprehend humorous word games of figurative or polysemous sentences or expressions, students have to acquire ludic competence²¹.

When it comes to the introduction of the notion of both metaphors and multimodal metaphors, the focal importance should be placed on the proper explanation of theoretical terminology. Students should be familiarized with the pervasiveness of metaphors in everyday life and in speech. Subsequently, the teacher should give some feedback concerning the phenomenon of multimodal metaphor. There are many ways of introducing the subject-matter, some of which are listed below:

²⁰ T. Siek-Piskozub, *The compatibility of positive psychology and the ludic strategy in foreign language education*, "Glottodidactica" 2016, vol. 43, no. 1, p. 99.

²¹ J. Szerszunowicz, *On phraseological units performing a ludic function from a didactic perspective*, [in:] *Zbornik radova s Međunarodne znanstvene konferencije Slavofraz održane od 19. do 21. Travnja 2018. Slavofraz 2018. Frazeologija, učenje i poučavanje*, S. Jukić, M. Željka, K. Visinko, I. Vodopija-Krstanović, S. Zubčić (eds.), Rijeka 2019, p. 306.

1. As a warm-up activity, the teacher writes the sentences *Metaphors structure our thinking and reasoning*, and *People use the bulk of metaphors while talking*. The teacher asks students to read these examples and ponder their meanings. This task gives students an opportunity to discuss their ideas and share their thoughts on metaphors. This introductory task aims to arouse students' interest and incite metaphorical thinking. The teacher briefly presents Lakoff and Johnson's theory on metaphor. The teacher presents some basic information on metaphors. Suffice it to say that metaphors are present in contemporary public discourse as they allow language users to talk about abstract or difficult concepts.

2. Texts on multimodal metaphor are distributed to students. The teacher divides students into 4 groups. Each of them receives different texts on various aspects of multimodality (group 1 – a text introducing the term semi-otic modes and their interrelatedness, group 2 – a paragraph on multimodal metaphor: definition and main researchers, group 3 – a fragment about visual-verbal metaphor, group 4 – an entry on multimodal metaphor and communication: multimodal metaphor in advertisements and in politics). The teacher asks students to read the texts and memorize the most important points. Afterwards, the students are asked to summarize the given paragraph for the rest of the participants.

3. The teacher prepares a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation introducing a new theme. Subsequently, the teacher asks a set of questions checking comprehension of the subject matter. The teacher prepares some accompanying activity sheets with a True or False exercise and multiple-choice quizzes.

As one can see, the topic of multimodal metaphor can be introduced in various ways. The teacher has to select the method that seems to be suitable for a given FL target group, i.e. taking into consideration its abilities, preferences, etc. This means that the teacher has to consider the skills and age of the learners, their language proficiency, interests and other factors.

The expansion of multimodal metaphor is observed in all kinds, genres and forms of discourse. Most importantly, the majority of specialized lectures or texts and articles directed towards nonexperts retain metaphoric overtones²². Yet, students attend to information through the use of numerous semi-otic modes. For these reasons, Mayer²³ elaborates on the potentiality of multimodal presentation of the lesson topic. The scholar concludes that multimodal

²² L. Cameron, G.D. Low, *Figurative variations in episodes of educational talk and text*, "European Journal of English" 2004, no. 8(3), p. 355.

²³ R.E. Mayer, *Learning and instruction*, Upper Saddle River 2003, p. 307.

information presentation engages students intrinsically and maintains learners' attention span. Thus, in the second stage of the FL lesson, the teacher has to combine textual and visual stimuli which can be implemented in the following manner:

1. The students are given a newspaper headline: *In the fight against climate change, no one can stand on the sidelines* (CNN Business)²⁴. The teacher highlights the phrase *fight against climate change* and asks students to interpret it. Next, the teacher writes *ECOLOGY IS WAR*. This metaphor is given to provoke students to think about climate change in terms of war terminology. It is advisable to ask students about their comprehension of contemporary climate change. The teacher's question leads to a discussion about the current threat of global warming. The students can draw on their personal experience referring to the recent observable temperature changes in Poland. This type of exercise allows for the development of speaking skills.

2. When the teacher has aroused students' interest, new vocabulary is introduced: the lexis which enables students to talk about ecology and climate change. The teacher shows visual pictures with verbal annotations. For instance, an image of Australia's deadly wildfires of 2020 can be employed for this purpose²⁵. The pictorial stimulus may be used to introduce new vocabulary. The image serves as a visual prompt accompanied by the verbal definitions of the following words: *wildfires, ravage, devastate, die, massive blazes* and *natural disaster*. It is assumed that students will engage in the task actively, because the visual material and vocabulary have been excerpted from authentic material. It can be expected that the authenticity of the material will encourage students to memorize words and incorporate them in their vocabulary repertoire. As a complementary exercise, the teacher asks students to match images with the denotation: this activity enables revisiting new words.

The next stage is to show that a multimodal stimulus is the artifact of socio-political culture. The teacher has to demonstrate that multimodal metaphor is interwoven with the ongoing reality. To do so, one has to present verbo-visual material featuring the subject matter to prove that multimodal metaphor reflects contemporary social issues and problems. To briefly preview the implementation of the verbo-visual stimuli in the class, the following ideas can be considered:

²⁴ *Newspaper headline*, [online], <http://edition.cnn.com/2019/11/30/perspectives/climate-change-imf/index.html>, [retrieved: 10.03.2020].

²⁵ *Australia's deadly wildfires of 2020*, [online], <http://archive.attn.com/stories/2276/comic-shuts-down-deniers-global-warming>, [retrieved: 10.03.2020].

1. The students are given a cartoon referring to climate change and asked to interpret the given images²⁶. Then, they have free room for a discussion. The students decide upon the salience of the visual material and the accompanying text, so, as a result, they combine the visual and textual content. The students have a great opportunity to put theoretical aspects of multimodal metaphor in practice. As a cartoon usually contain humorous elements, this task encourages students to think critically and creatively. FL learners are forced to identify humorous clues, and then they have to combine them with pure facts and infer some conclusion. Furthermore, the activity is supposed to increase students' active engagement and autonomy. The task allows students to develop their logical thinking skills. The teacher asks students to discuss their interpretations in groups and, subsequently, the students share their interpretations with the class.

2. The teacher shows students examples of climate change comics²⁷. The teacher asks students to interpret a comic, for instance, asking students to invent a catchy title for the presented comic to exercise their writing skills. Then, learners are invited to create their own short comics featuring climate change. It is an appropriate exercise for students who are shy and do not like sharing their opinions and feelings with other participants of the class. Here, the FL learners may express their feelings in pictures. The teacher may add some follow-up activities to offer extra practice. For example, the students may be asked to write a short one-paragraph press text about the lesson topic, preceded by a catchy newspaper headline.

3. The students listen to a podcast and try to grasp its message²⁸. The podcast concerns the following issues: the consequences of the climate change and possible ways of reducing the effects of climate change. Subsequently, the students are asked to summarize the podcast. To foster reading skills, the teacher might distribute a transcription of the given podcast. Then, in groups, the students discuss their opinions on climate change. Finally, the learners are asked to present their stances in public. The students are supposed to exchange information and their judgements and opinions. It is assumed that the students will have an opportunity to disagree and to defend their arguments. The task generates a natural situation, and it prepares students for conversations in a foreign country.

²⁶ *Climate change cartoon*, [online], <http://www.cartoonmovement.com/collection/16>, [retrieved: 10.03.2020].

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ *Podcast on climate change*, [online], <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0054617>, [retrieved: 10.03.2020].

4. To practice listening and speaking skills, it would be worth combining textual and visual modes with the auditory one. Therefore, the teacher may also implement video material in the school lesson curriculum. In this particular case, the students are given a short movie featuring climate change: what it is and how it destroys our planet²⁹. The teacher prepares some pre-movie activities. Firstly, the teachers should check the student's understanding of climate change. The teacher has to elicit the second language learners' definition of climate change. Subsequently, the students watch the movie and verify their definitions of climate change. As a follow-up exercise, the teacher asks students to ponder other consequences of climate change. This task should lead to an in-class discussion about climate change.

Combining theoretical knowledge on multimodal metaphors in an ELT class: results of the study

The pilot study was conducted among 10 participants of the seminar at the University of Białystok in March 2021. The students were introduced with theoretical information on metaphors and multimodality with a special emphasis on visual metaphor. Then, the teacher showed a newspaper headline on climate change (*In the fight against climate change, no one can stand on the sidelines*) and an image of Australia's deadly wildfires of 2020. The students were asked to comment on the content.

In the second part of the experiment, a pilot study was conducted by means of a specially designed evaluation form. The students were exposed to 3 different stimuli, including 1) Biden's citation (*Climate change is the existential threat to humanity. Unchecked, it is going to actually bake this planet*), 2) image (picture of the ill and melting planet Earth and flames) 3) image with textual information (the same image accompanied by the caption *global warming*). The students were asked to express their opinions on the 3 different stimuli. Next, the students were asked to evaluate the persuasiveness of the verbal and visual stimuli (they could choose from among the following options: very persuasive, persuasive, somewhat persuasive, neutral, somewhat unconvincing, unconvincing, very unconvincing). The final question concerned the understandability of the message conveyed by 3 different stimuli (the options were as follows: I fully understand, I understand, I somewhat understand, I don't understand).

In the third part of the experiment, the teacher and students discussed the citation and images used in the survey. The teacher used 3 various stim-

²⁹ Short movie, *Climate change: Earth's giant game of Tetris*-Joss Fong, [online], <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/climate-change-earth-s-giant-game-of-tetris-joss-fong>, [retrieved: 10.03.2020].

uli to encourage students to express their opinions on the problem of global warming. Then, the teacher introduced the proposal of integrating theoretical knowledge and practical FL classes. Finally, the students were asked to complete the evaluation form. In the first question, the students had to respond whether the combination of linguistic theoretical information enhances second language learning skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing). Answering the second question, the students had to assess whether it is beneficial to introduce theoretical linguistic information in the FL classroom.

The results of the pilot study show that the proposal of the combination of theoretical information and skills development seems to be an effective way of teaching foreign languages. The vast majority, i.e. 9 respondents (90%), replied that the integration of theoretical linguistic information enhances second language learning skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing). Only 1 student (10%) answered that it does not improve their practical abilities. As many as 7 students (70%) expressed a positive opinion on the implementation of theoretical linguistic information in the foreign language classroom. Only 2 students (20%) expressed uncertainty (maybe) and 1 student (10%) expressed a negative opinion about combining linguistic theory with practical skills. Additionally, the surveys revealed that images are the most persuasive means of communication. The text was regarded to be a less persuasive form of communication. Interestingly, it turns out that the image accompanied by textual clues is less persuasive than the image without captions.

In the discussion on the proposal of including metaphors in the education process, students stated that the employment of multimodal educational material (headlines, photos, cartoons) makes lessons more attractive. Such exercises kept learners interested and involved, as well as maintained the student's attention span. The experiment participants admitted that the knowledge of metaphors and multimodal approach improves students' understanding of social and cultural issues. It also made them realize that the acquisition of knowledge on socio-cultural and political issues should not be neglected in the process of learning a foreign language. Most importantly, the students voiced the opinion that the adoption of a multimodal approach encouraged them to freely present their personal views and beliefs. Therefore, speaking and writing competence is exercised in a fairly natural way. Furthermore, the employment of theoretical knowledge on multimodal metaphors while doing practical class activities is likely to increase students' learning autonomy: students have to decode and interpret the message from various semiotic modes (textual, pictorial and auditory), and thus they will be able to work in a similar way on their own, for example dealing with multimodal texts like commercials outside the school environment.

Conclusion

To conclude, it can be assumed that the inclusion of theory on metaphor in ELT classes will contribute to the quality of second language teaching and learning, and thus it will enhance students' linguistic knowledge and develop their metaphoric subcompetence, and, as a result, general language and linguistic competence. Multimodal activities concern all types of learning styles: visual, auditory or kinesthetic learners. Thus, teachers may invent various types of tasks that are suitable for different types of learners. In the presented research study, a pilot study was conducted, and therefore further research is required, preferably on a larger scale. As the conducted experiment concerned visual and textual material, it would be advisable to continue it with auditory exercises.

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