Strengths and Weaknesses of the Available Theoretical Models Regarding Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Javier Julian Enriquez

Department of Applied Linguistics, Universitat Politècnica de València, València, Spain

Email address:

963375372@telefonica.net

Abstract: Conceptual metaphors underlie significant aspects of language, thought, culture, and expressive action in SLA, but there are still many unanswered questions. We believe that there is still a lack of research for this view, even though empirical evidence from Cognitive Linguistics and related disciplines has emerged in this field currently. Especially, a study of empirical evidence that might provide us with a very innovative, epistemological, and theoretical framework for further research, which would explore new approaches within existing frameworks of practice and thinking to put to work in the classroom setting. We are intent in this paper, then, on delving into directly related corpus-based research, on the one hand, which concerns uptake of English metaphors by SLA learners. On the other, our study focuses on the indirect research, both corpus-driven and based, which deals with evaluation of students, teachers, and by learners and educators, which in turn affects the learning progress. Our approach will be discourse analysis and we will employ methods that provide insight into the interpretation and empirical analysis of the literature in this area of study as well as an attempt to provide an explanation and context.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Second Language Acquisition, Cognitive Linguistics, Discourse Analysis

1. Introduction

There has emerged quite recently from cognitive linguistics a lot of research on the conceptual theory of metaphor, both directly and indirectly related. The directly related research is corpus-based and led by some authors and other associates and collaborators, and concerns uptake of English metaphors by SLA learners [1]. The indirect research, both corpus-driven and based, deals with evaluation students, teachers, and by learners and educators, which in turn affects the learning development. Such a trend is led by other authors and many others [2-7]. As far as this brief review is concerned, there is as well another related research such as that carried out by further authors to be analyzed [8-13].

2. Literature Review Analysis

2.1. Directly Related Corpus-Based Research

By examining teachers' metaphors in Second Language Teaching, several researchers refer to this topic [2, 14]. Narrative case studies from various literature reviews on language learning experiences generated their results (in the form of a typology of metaphor usage) and analysis of metaphor usage. This typology covers four perspectives of teaching [2, 14]. The first one is about social order: a teacher can be both a manufacturer and a competitor. The second one highlights cultural transmission, such as a teacher being a conduit or a repeater. The third point implies growth that is focused on the learner: a teacher can be a nurturer, a lover, a scaffolder, or an entertainer; and the fourth proposal proposes social reform, for example, having teachers act as acceptors and partners in learning. These authors' study, which explores the use of metaphors to express different perspectives about the concept of the teacher, deserves special mention, based on the reasoning behind the metaphors in narratives, interviews, articles, and texts written by students and teachers, as well as by education theorists and methodologists [2, 14]. Through their research, they reveal different, often contradictory metaphors about teachers, categorize them based on four

major philosophical viewpoints, and demonstrate how language-teaching methods relate to these metaphors. Thus, the metaphors that teachers, students, and education experts use to describe teachers and teaching in classrooms, with a special emphasis on language classrooms.

Personal perspectives are frequently expressed in narrative form in research on instruction, as in other fields of the behavioral and social sciences and are understood to reproduce the voices of individuals, who often speak in metaphorical terms [2]. One's viewpoints may not be shared by others. The awareness that perspectives held by individuals or groups may be justifiably different from one's own is known as perspective-consciousness. Metaphors convey a variety of meanings from experience; they are used to arrange systematic concepts in teachers' cultural-cognitive learning styles. The narrative case-study approach, using personal stories, has been the most successful way to reveal teaching-related metaphors [15-18]. Contrary to the other researchers, there is a study of a four-part framework that is based on different views of language as an object of study, language as skill, and strategy-development, language as expression, and language as social construct[19]. In this sense, a review has been carried out on the brain-as-muscle metaphor advocated by the traditional Grammar-Translation Method theorists underpinned by a complementary approach for searching educational metaphors, which study theory-driven metaphors found in language teaching methodologies [20]. Starting from the assumption that a good classroom framework is necessary for the evaluation of metaphor by both teachers and learners, a balance between teacher-centered and learner-centered control is supposed to operate for the sake of classroom effectiveness [21, 22]. In second language classrooms, there are some misconceptions about the concept of control, especially when it comes to learner-centered language tasks, because there is some form of teacher control. Teachers should implement the best perspective when dealing with clashing metaphors to elucidate misconceptions in the language classroom, which is a relationship between theory and practice in education [2]. Our suggestion is to use the *metaphor of reflection* as a better solution and tool for discovering direction, which enables teachers to increase their perspective-consciousness about classroom events, style conflicts, and instructional methods by meeting students' needs [23].

We believe that such premises, in that case, may bring about one of the frameworks in a classroom setting for teaching Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) in SLA by using these theoretical language research trends. We would then be able to add further potential models that fit specific methodologies within any given conceptual frameworks by evaluating first-rate criteria-referenced tools of very definite views on important proposals. They would consist of a standard procedure, strategy, and methodology for including CMT in a language syllabus designed to increase proficiency in a second language.

2.2. Corpus-Driven and Based Indirect Research

Several researchers examine the data related to asking questions, since they consider that the practices and beliefs about classroom questioning are crucial for constructing learning interactively to develop the link between images of learning and classroom interaction [3]. They acknowledge that a culture of learning shapes what teachers and students expect to happen in classroom processes and language. As part of language socialization at home and in early schooling, they state that metaphors for learning can be verbalized to enable learners to internalize the concepts of learning and how it should be achieved in a socially constructed educational discourse system. By studying connected systems of conventional metaphors as instantiations of basic conceptual metaphors, their approach takes account of cognitive approaches to metaphor, but their focus is on classroom educational expectations, not the underlying cognitive systems [24, 25]. In the field of cognitive linguistics, metaphor is no longer seen as a mere decoration of language, but rather as a cognitive tool; it pervades people's everyday language [14]. Language and thought are correlated and indispensable. The fundamental metaphorical nature of language makes the conceptual system that governs people's everyday talk, thought, and even action also metaphorical [14]. Metaphor is regarded as a way of thinking about or conceptualizing the world. From a cognitive standpoint, metaphors act as a bridge for people to gain better understanding and cognition of new, abstract, and not well-defined concepts. [14].

The implementation of teaching methods, materials, and classroom activities related to CMT cannot be overlooked in this literature review and theoretical framework. Language pedagogy should have an enlightened eclecticism instead of a specific method of instruction, as suggested by some authors [4]. They recommend adopting a hybrid approach in which the teacher's job is to provide learners with the required knowledge and skills, in addition to developing their creativity and an expanded epistemological awareness. Correspondingly, they give useful guidelines for further research [4]:

Future studies on student-generated metaphors in the context of language pedagogy could explore the influence of learners' motivation on their metaphor production. Another interesting approach could be investigating whether instructors' gender affects the learners' perceptions of their teachers and shapes their views on the teacher-student interaction.

Our belief is that the teacher-student interaction is an efficient way to teach metaphors in language and enhance cultural and linguistic knowledge, as well as a communicative language use.

This field is also the focus of other researchers, and they have produced some intriguing findings, which reveal discrepancies between student and teacher interpretations of teacher roles, as well as between student groups at different levels of English proficiency [5]. Their demonstration shows that metaphors are a powerful cognitive tool in gaining insight into the beliefs of students and teachers. Furthermore, they show that engaging in an interaction that involves 'teacher' metaphors between students and teachers is effective in resolving belief conflicts between these two groups, thus, the

majority of teachers are open to modifying their teaching methods [5].

Adopting communicative teaching methods in college English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms instead of teacher-centered teaching methods is crucial; as we insist on the last aspect, which facilitates students' development of skills for the challenges of using English in academic courses and professional life [26]. In English Language Teaching (ELT), these approaches are essential in reducing anxiety levels and creating a low-anxiety classroom, similarly to pair work, group work, role-play, and other methods that can be used to decrease anxiety [26]. Nonetheless, it is possible to develop new hypotheses that point to other areas that may be interesting for our research.

2.2.1. Metaphor as Transmission of Knowledge

The focus is on two main issues: (i) the way metaphor (CM) is applied to understand foreign language teaching and learning in teaching philosophy statements (TPSs), and (ii) measuring the correlation of these metaphors with the concepts of teacher-centeredness, student-centeredness, and learning-centeredness in the philosophy of education, using a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) [6]. This study's findings shed light on significant issues in the context of teaching and learning as a transmission of knowledge, as TPSs are tools that can be used by others to evaluate how teachers conceptualize their teaching [6]. Based on this knowledge transfer, it could be inferred that recognizing the underlying concept that governs its mapping is necessary for working out a metaphor, and make a conceptual leap from the linguistic material on the surface of discourse [6].

2.2.2. The Crucial Role of Metaphors in Educational Thinking

A significant analysis on metaphorical conceptions of learning was generated by the reflections of 50 experienced teachers in an evening course on instructional psychology [7]. Collaboration in small groups resulted in the creation of the metaphors. The co-reflection of group members was a great way to encourage metaphorical reconstructions of teachers' implicit theories about learning. According to the findings, the majority of teachers use traditional metaphors to depict teaching and learning as the transfer of knowledge, with only a small percentage expressing constructivist metaphors [7]. Teaching and learning are only seen as a social process by a small group of people. These metaphors can serve as stepping stones for broader and more profound conceptions of the nature of teaching and learning in further collaborations. The question is not about a particular theory about the connection between metaphors and thought, but to elaborate on different metaphorical perspectives to clarify the crucial role of metaphors in educational thinking [7]. Teachers will have a better understanding of what it means to learn when they use metaphors of learning as blueprints of thought, but prospective educators may face limitations in their thoughts, attitudes, and actions due to these same tools of thinking.

2.2.3. The Contribution of Perceptual Elements in Thinking

Teachers are advised to reflect not only on the metaphorical basis of their own thinking, but put a lot of thought into the quality of the metaphors they use in their classrooms [7]. While describing the progression of Peirce's theory of abductive reasoning and the significance of abduction in generating hypotheses, the use of perceptual elements in thinking aids in bridging the gap between the available and less complex knowledge [7]. The new and more complicated knowledge can be acquired by employing a' metaphorical leap' or a metaphorical projection. These considerations are particularly important due to two specific aspects of this line of argumentation. Firstly, the stage model of abduction applied to learning suggests that there are complementarities between individual and social learning [27]. Secondly, our sensorimotor experiences are the primary way knowledge is structured, not just propositions [27]. In neuroscience, many scientists have reported on the importance of 'gestalts of experience' [28]. For instance, sensory motor images, which include visual, auditory, and muscular images, were the core content of their initial thoughts, as revealed by Einstein, Feynman, and Mandelbrot [28]. Students' understanding of a new phenomenon can be facilitated by abduction, which is a metaphorical process that suggests that a metaphor related to the phenomenon provides valid explanations.

Following these premises, we would like to go on to discussion centered on such a contribution that needs deeper analysis in the following methodological framework that follows.

3. Empirical Research Used to Develop the Conceptual Metaphor Theory for Similar Areas of Knowledge

3.1. Theory-Driven Hypothesis Testing

As we can notice, this paper emphasizes the importance of providing a useful starting point for further discussion, using rigorous philosophical and empirical approaches, and new research essential in developing Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), while theory-driven hypothesis testing, which relies on corpora and experimental settings, is highly necessary [9]. Not only are metaphors unique communication devices, but they are also a crucial component of everyday cognition as 'conceptual metaphors' [12]. Then, cognitive linguistics and related disciplines have produced an enormous body of empirical evidence that reveals how conceptual metaphors underlie significant aspects of language, thought, cultural, and expressive action.

Now then, the following questions could be asked regarding what we have been analyzing so far: what are the pros and cons of the current theoretical models that focus on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) in the context of Second Language Acquisition (SLA)? Is it necessary to conduct new empirical research as their approaches are only considered as a theoretical construct that other users may not be able to use to

verify hypotheses and validate them? Is it possible for researchers to add more prospective models that fit specific methodologies within the given conceptual frameworks by evaluating first-rate criteria-referenced tools that have very specific views on CMT?

In Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive theory of metaphor [24], does the framework emphasize the importance of the concept over the linguistic and poetic one? Is our everyday, conventional system of metaphorical thought extended by both the conceptual and linguistic frameworks, as well as the poetic framework?

The development of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory for similar areas of knowledge is the result of empirical research in this section's methodology. The study is founded on the belief that it is essential to examine teachers' metaphors for themselves and their work, as well as students' metaphors for teachers. Furthermore, it is essential to bring these individual cases closer to the metaphorical statements in educational theory and methods, and vice versa, so that we can create a more complete picture in the SLA setting.

3.2. Methods Dealing with Figurative Language

In terms of empirical and experimental research, the focus on this field of study is a significant milestone in the Applied Linguistics context, the lexical vs. the corpus-based method in the study of metaphors. The purpose of assessment is to conduct a relevant foregrounding and comparison of the lexical approach with the corpus-linguistic one by utilizing the emotion concept of s*urprise*. It makes sense to suggest that combining lexical and corpus-linguistic approaches can produce the best results in identifying metaphors for s*urprise* [10]. Some of the weaknesses of the corpus-linguistic approach can be overcome by using the lexical approach: we can obtain a schematic prototype of the category, as well as synonyms that can be used as metaphors; it is capable of identifying idiomatic expressions that do not include the word *surprise*, and it can assist us in revealing the major concept-specific as well as some schematic metaphors of *surprise* [10]. The schematic and concept-specific metaphors of *surprise* can be identified using the corpus-linguistic approach, the complete selection of both conventionalized and non-conventional metaphorical expressions, as well as the varieties and symbols of figurative expressions linked to surprise [10].

We believe that this original approach may be connected to several other interesting methods of dealing with figurative language. An effective lexical approach is emphasized in the first approach as part of a significant holistic communicative methodology in that it relies on the ability of learners to abstract from the language to which they are exposed in order to recreate a picture of the target language [29]. The learner is presented with a series of linguistic items by almost all course books, which rely on a linguistic syllabus. The second one presents an innovative and unified cognitive theory of metaphor that is based on philosophical arguments that are based on evidence from psychological experiments and theories [8]. In the process of developing the theory, it

establishes crucial links between theories of metaphor and more orthodox analytic philosophy of meaning, including discussion of speech acts and fuzzy set logic. This semantic explanation theory is demonstrated to be compatible with contemporary psychological theories about memory. The third one examines key concerns related to the significance of conceptual metaphors in language, thought, culture, and expressive action [12]. The creativity of gifted speakers and writers, who can think about ideas in new ways and conveying these thoughts through vivid and poetic forms, is something we find admirable. The use of metaphors is not restricted to special communication devices; they can also be a fundamental part of everyday cognition, especially in the form of conceptual metaphors.

Fittingly, from a cognitive perspective [25], the following question is asked: what are the generalizations governing the linguistic expressions referred to classically as "poetic metaphors?" The classical theory is false when this question is answered rigorously. As a result, the generalizations governing poetic metaphorical expressions are not in language, but in thought, conceptual domains are represented by general mappings [25]. Furthermore, these general principles, which are conceptual domains, are applicable not just to novel poetic expressions, but also to everyday language [25].

That is why, "poetic metaphor is, for the most part, an extension of our everyday, conventional system of metaphorical thought [25]." Thus, in studying a wide variety of poems about death in English, we found that, for example, death is conceptualized in a relatively significant number of ways. In that regard, we believe that there is a significant study, which keeps being considered as one of the most relevant to the present day [13]. It is about a groundbreaking piece of research that delves into the metaphors for time, life, and death in Shakespeare's Sonnets, which bring out into the open these poetic metaphors belong to the conventional metaphorical system we all share. For example, in these Sonnets by Shakespeare, a further conceptualization of death as a conqueror is highlighted, our bodies are "death's conquest" and "the coward conquest of a wretch's knife" [13]. In other words, DEATH IS A CONQUEROR.

3.3. Exploring Metaphor in the Field of Second Language Learning, Teaching, and Testing

If we highlight conceptual metaphor as something structured, analyzable and closely connected with culture and everyday reasoning, in the same way other highly relevant research into metaphor in the field of second language learning, teaching and testing, based on the contribution of metaphor to all areas of communicative competence, is carried out. Especially, as to both conceptual and linguistic metaphor is concerned. The significance of linguistic metaphor lies in the fact that the words themselves are important: selecting 'level' over 'flat' or 'best', or the fact that the three words often refer to the same thing, even when multiple instances are involved [1]. When using a linguistic metaphor, it is important to consider the meanings of specific words and the

morphological, syntactic, and collocation characteristics of the expression [1]. The importance of conceptual metaphors is not in the words used, but rather in the abstract underlying relationship(s) between two concepts or entities [1]. The conceptual perspective has been particularly effective in identifying metaphors that underlie abstractions in both basic vocabulary and everyday thinking [1].

In line with the above, therefore, lots of evidence supports these assumptions that metaphoric competence has an important role to play in all areas of communicative competence that can contribute centrally to grammatical competence, textual competence, illocutionary competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence [1]. For this reason, Metaphor is highly relevant to second language learning, teaching, and testing, from the earliest to the most advanced stages of learning [1].

LANGUAGE COMPETENCE			
Organizational competence Pragmatic competence			
Grammatical Competence	Textual Competence	Illocutionary competence	Sociolinguistic competence
Vocabulary Morphology Syntax Phonology/graphology	Cohesion Rhetorical organization	Ideational functions Manipulative functions Heuristic functions Imaginative functions	Sensitivity to dialect or variety Sensitivity to register Sensitivity to naturalness Ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech (*Role for Metaphor*)

Figure 1. The components of language competence, Bachman 1990, based on Littlemore and Low's study, 2006.

Progressing in the exposed sense, a certain methodological perspective about grammar teaching must be considered as well [30]. It is considered an element of metalinguistic activity and communicative objective, which is intertwined with linguistic activity. Hence, there are two general principles [30] that should govern the "grammatical" activities in the language classroom: a) they should deal with all aspects of communication, taking into account the context of situation, text, and statement. b) They should be varied in comparison with traditional, morphological, or syntactic analysis, merely classifying. This way, it draws attention to the activities of comparison, substitution, elaboration, and transformation of statements that should be alternated with certain conditions; that is, activities, which have to do with production and not only with classification [30]. It, then, underlines how the text, as an act of complete communication, must function as an integrating element of reflection, in other aspects, since its construction involves situational and linguistic-grammatical factors. The fragmentation of grammatical reflection on the different components is sometimes inevitable and necessary, but it is interesting to maintain certain integration. Thus, for example, an enunciation mark [30] –a personal pronoun, a deictic adverb– or certain lexical choices have to do with the situation, with the text and with the statement; within it, formal and functional issues are also very united. Accordingly, its focal point underscores the importance of activities that can be planned in two major groups: those relating to context and text, on the one hand, and those relating to text and statement, on the other.

In the same way, in such a context, teaching renewals for literary training have remained anchored in traditional assumptions, especially in those of a historicist order, around which some contributions of structuralism have been linked and little else [31]. This persistence is due to the chronological content sequencing, to the required classifications in literary genres and to the increasing study of authors, works and styles; on this type of sequencing the activities of encyclopedic knowledge and of the commentary / analysis of texts and, more recently, activities of «creation / manipulation / production» of literary texts have been embedded. From the projection of the historicist framework, literary works in the educational system have appeared as brief references of titles, related to data on the argumentative synthesis with the subsequent enumeration of abstract descriptive features of the style and with succinct allusions to the evaluation that the author and his/her work have deserved in the cultural system setting. In this sense, the question of validity of historicist and formalist orientations in the "teaching" of literature has been qualified. Criticisms of traditional-historicist and formal / structural approaches should be understood as demonstrations that show their limitations -in terms of the exclusivity with which they are used-, rather than their validity. Like this manner, the teacher's role in the literary training and content has, largely, the personal characteristics such as instructor, motivating and encouraging of readers and as a literary critic [31]. The literature teacher arouses students' learning by making them notice the specific features, the stimulus put forward by the target text and its cultural effects that motivate readers. That is to say, his or her function of motivating agent is the one that allows approximating the diverting and aesthetic function of literary works to the suitable degree of analytical knowledge that anticipates the curricular projection and directing it towards the facet of the literary education.
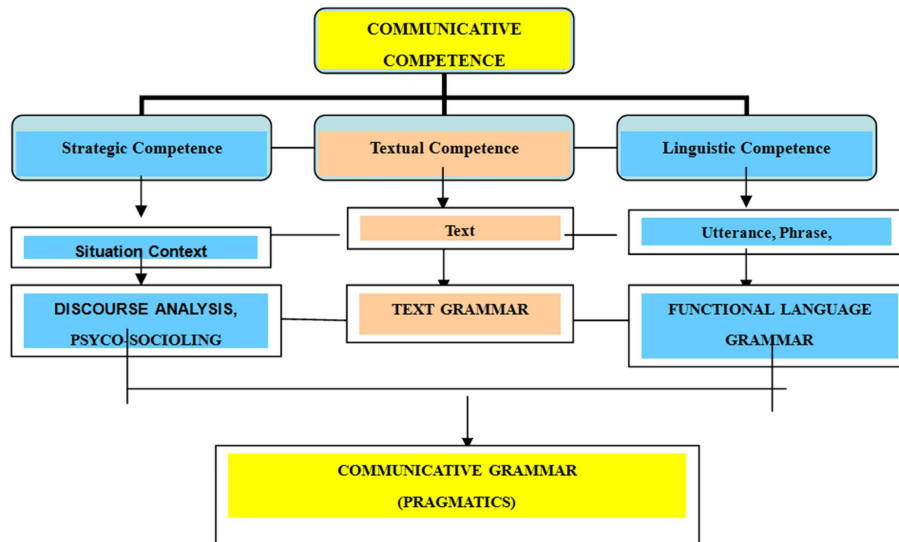
Figure 2. *The components of Pedagogical Grammar. based on Gonzalez Nieto's study, 2001.*
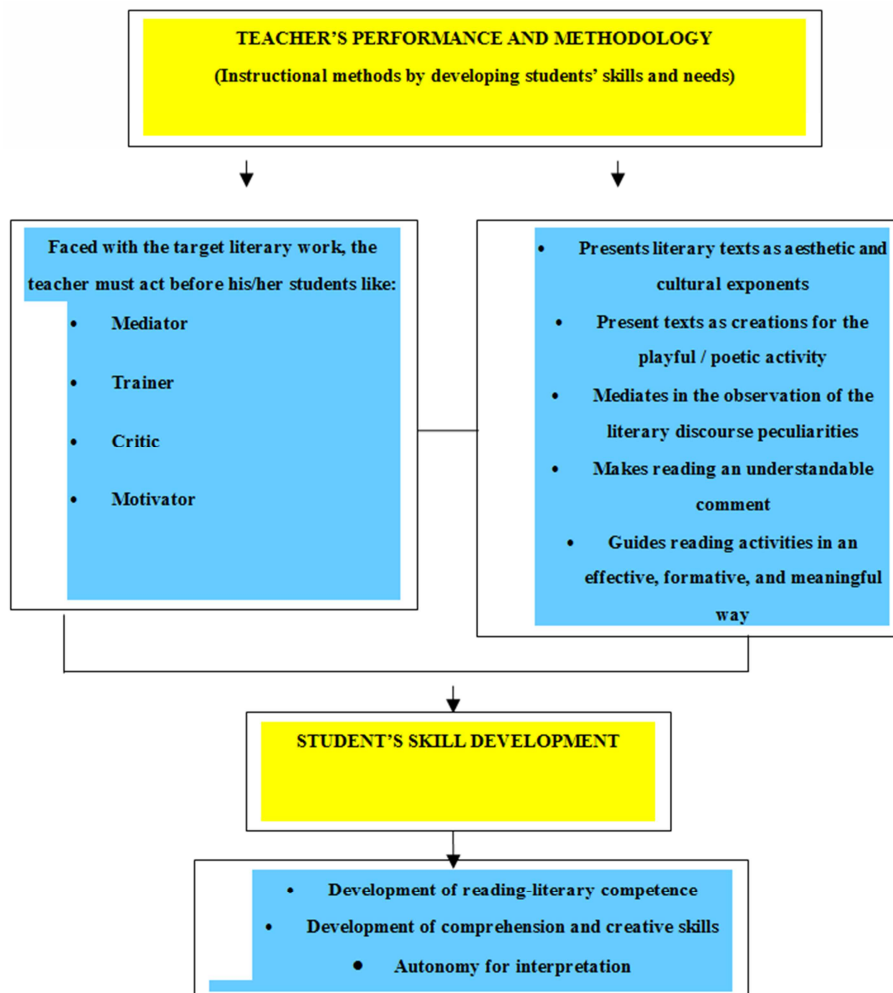

Figure 3. *Metaphor of reflection and transmission of knowledge, based on Mendoza Fillola's study, 2008.*

In accordance with the above and in this setting, we could consider the metaphor of reflection and transmission of knowledge to be well suited to promote metaphorical reconstructions of both learners and teachers' tacit theories about learning.

4. Conclusion

Throughout this paper, we brought out that in the research methodology of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), it is

required to resort to scientific facts validated internally and externally, which would be based on the so-called "Theoretical, Scientific, and Conceptual Framework" or "Scientific Background" to support a hypothesis in response to a scientific problem posed in an interrogative manner." Likewise, we highlighted that such a "Scientific Background", for example, may provide us with a useful starting point for rigorous philosophical, empirical, and experimental research that are all-essential in developing Conceptual Metaphor Theory, while more theory-driven hypothesis testing, relying on corpora and experimental settings, is strongly needed. For this to be achieved, we believe that we would need a well-defined and specific research question like this one, which is more likely to help guide us in making decisions about this study design and subsequently to determine what data would be collected and analyzed to accomplishing validated hypotheses in the Second Language Acquisition setting (SLA).

This being said, we posed these challenging questions: what are the relative strengths and weaknesses of the available theoretical models relating to Conceptual Metaphor Theory in the context of SLA? Is new empirical research needed as their approaches are only considered as a theoretical construct that other users may not get it as a verification of hypotheses to validate? Would researchers be able to add further prospective models fitting into specific methodologies within given conceptual frameworks by evaluating first-rate criteria-referenced tools of very definite views on CMT valid to put work in the classroom setting? To this end, we pointed out that the metaphor of reflection and transmission of knowledge was well suited to promote metaphorical reconstructions of both learners and teachers' tacit theories about learning. Accordingly, we could state, for example, that teacher's function of motivating agent in the classroom setting is the one that allows approximating the diverting and aesthetic function of Conceptual Metaphor Theory in the context of SLA works to the suitable degree of analytical knowledge that anticipates the curricular projection and directing it towards the facet of the target education. However, this field of study still requires more research and analysis.

Acknowledgments

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