

The Comprehension of Metaphorical Expressions by Jordanian EFL Learners

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Abstract

This study explores the ability of Jordanian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) to comprehend metaphorical expressions in English and investigates whether the use of their first language (L1) conceptual and linguistic knowledge may facilitate the comprehension of these expressions. For this purpose, the study adopts a contrastive model developed by Charteris-Black, which consists of six types of metaphor to compare and contrast in both English and Arabic. On the basis of this model, the researcher designed a multiple-choice test to assess the participants' recognition of English metaphorical expressions. The results reveal that the participants' receptive knowledge of metaphors varied on the basis of the six types of metaphor. The study provides evidence of the possibility that EFL learners display general conceptualizing capacity regardless of their language, which hints, possibly, at the potential universality of conceptual metaphor. It also proposes some pedagogical implications that may assist EFL learners in acquiring metaphorical expressions in English.

Keywords

metaphor, second language acquisition, cognitive semantics, Jordanian EFL learners, teaching metaphors in L2

Introduction

Due to their pervasiveness in everyday interaction, metaphorical expressions have begun to draw considerable attention in recent years. Many scholars have investigated various types of figurative language expressions in different languages based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Boers, 2000 [Dutch and French]; Cameron & Deignan, 2006; Charteris-Black, 2001 [Spanish], 2002 [Malay]; Deignan, Gabrys, & Solska, 1997 [Polish]; El Refaie, 2015; Gibbs & Matlock, 2008; Kövecses & Szabó, 1996 [Hungarian]; Yu, 1995, 2015 [Chinese], Zibin & Hamdan, 2014, etc.). The importance of mastering the use of metaphors by learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) stems from their significant role in communicative interactions (Littlemore & Low, 2006). However, their acquisition has always been seen as a stumbling block for EFL learners around the world. Most importantly, EFL learners may fail to realize where first language (L1) and second language (L2) meet and where they diverge. Charteris-Black (2002) stated that conceptual fluency could be defined as the means by which the concepts of a language are metaphorically coded. Thus, conceptual transfer from the L1 to the target language can be a source of error facing many EFL learners. This study aims to (a) investigate Jordanian EFL learners' ability to comprehend metaphorical expressions in English and whether using their conceptual and linguistic knowledge of their L1 (i.e., Jordanian Spoken Arabic [JSA]) would assist them in comprehending

metaphorical expressions in English, and (b) illustrate the similarities and differences between English and Arabic in terms of conceptual and linguistic metaphors.

Theoretical Framework

The nature of metaphor assumes a distinction between literal and figurative language (Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Thus, senses of words that are thought to be different from their primary and basic senses can be used to refer to figurative language use (Charteris-Black, 2002). In contrast, literal language is concerned with the basic word meaning that is related to physical experiences in the world. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argued that metaphors are devices that are omnipresent in all walks of life. They indicated that, basically, the ordinary conceptual system of humans is metaphorically structured and for this reason, it is not possible for us to live without metaphor. Lakoff (cited in Deignan et al., 1997) proposed that the term *conceptual metaphor* is used to refer to a connection between “two semantic areas at the

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level of thought such as the metaphorical connection between anger and fire for speakers of many languages” (p. 352). This type of metaphor can be represented as follows: CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (A) IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (B). This means that Domain (A) is comprehended through Domain (B). This comprehension is based on a set of mappings (i.e., systematic correspondences) that exist between elements of A and elements of B (Kövecses, 2002). When written, in the relevant literature, conceptual metaphors are designated, using upper case such as ANGER IS FIRE. Spoken or written realizations of conceptual metaphors are referred to as linguistic metaphors, such that, examples of linguistic realizations of the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS FIRE could be seen below as described by Lakoff (1987):

- Those are *inflammatory* remarks.
- He was *breathing fire*. (p. 388)

In Lakoff and Johnson’s view, metaphors are seen as a matter of cognition; they can be understood as mappings between two conceptual domains: the “source” domain and the “target” domain (Lakoff, 1993, p. 1; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 252). For instance, we usually conceive of LOVE as a JOURNEY where JOURNEY is the source domain and LOVE is the target domain. Thus, when we hear a couple describing their relationship as traveling on a *bumpy road*, we understand that they are not talking about the physical obstacles on the way but about the difficulties they experience in their relationship (Kövecses, 2002). Charteris-Black (2002) posited that words in source domains have normal or unmarked senses, whereas words in target domains have less usual or marked senses. Source domains are the objects from which some features are borrowed, to be ascribed to the object being referred to (i.e., target domains). An important feature of the mappings between source and target domains is the fact that they are only partial, not complete. In other words, “only a part of concept B is mapped onto target A and only a part of target A is involved in the mappings from B” (Kövecses, 2002, p. 79). According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), metaphors “provide coherent structure, highlighting some things and hiding others” (p. 139). If a concept possesses several aspects, the metaphor emphasizes one or maybe two or three aspects; the other aspects will be hidden. For instance, in THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS, the metaphor focuses on the aspects of the construction of the theory and its strength. Other aspects of buildings, such as their architectural style, their location, whether they are occupied or not, and so forth, remain hidden or unutilized (Kövecses, 2002).

Concerning the cognitive processing of L2 metaphors, Littlemore (2003) argued that when L2 learners encounter gaps in their target language lexis, they usually employ certain strategies to process metaphors in the target language.

For instance, L2 learners may compare the target item with another object in an analogical (using *like*) or a metaphorical way (not using *like*). The former type of comparison is original; however, in conventional comparison, EFL learners utilize their knowledge of L1 or L2 to find a similarity between the target item and another item they already know (Littlemore, 2003). This type of comparison is considered metaphorical, rather than literal, as the two items under scrutiny do not belong to the same semantic domain. Non-metaphorical or literal comparison is employed when the two items belong to the same semantic domain (Littlemore, 2003).

Similarly, Cooper (1999) suggested that research on L2 comprehension of idioms showed that L2 learners used their knowledge of L1 to process idioms in L2. Specifically, the idioms that are identical in both languages were the easiest to comprehend and produce, whereas those idioms that are different in both languages (i.e., English and Spanish) produced a high number of incorrect answers (Irujo, 1986). In the current study, the researcher argues that L2 learners may transfer their conceptual and linguistic knowledge of L1 into L2; the transfer is positive if the two languages share the same conceptual and linguistic metaphors, whereas the transfer is negative when the conceptual and linguistic metaphors are not shared in both languages. The current study focuses on the use of L1 conceptual and linguistic knowledge to comprehend metaphors in L2. The next section provides an overview of some empirical studies on the acquisition of metaphor.

Empirical Studies

Boers (2000) argued that many figurative language expressions that are used in daily speech can be traced back to a common source domain. For instance, *to let off steam, she was fuming, he got all steamed up, she erupted*, and so forth reflect the metaphorical theme ANGER IS HEAT. Boers discussed three EFL experiments, indicating that if a lexical field is identified along these domains, it would make it easier for EFL learners to learn unfamiliar figurative expressions and maximize their retention. For example, the metaphorical expressions derived from the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEAT may be more obvious than the expression, *to sell someone down the river*. This can be due to the fact that the latter metaphor does not belong to a set of expressions that reflect a metaphorical theme. Thus, the metaphors whose source domains belong to the same field are easier to learn. The students who participated in the experiments were intermediate learners of English, whose L1 was either Dutch or French. The results reveal that enhanced metaphor awareness greatly develops language learners’ lexical resources. Hence, the students exhibited superior retention. Based on the results of the study, Boers (2000) encouraged classroom activities that attempt to improve students’ knowledge of metaphorical expressions. Such activities should focus on the following:

- i. Recognition of metaphor as a common ingredient of everyday language.
- ii. Recognition of metaphorical themes behind many figurative expressions.
- iii. Recognition of the non-arbitrary nature of many figurative expressions.
- iv. Recognition of many possible cross-cultural differences in metaphorical themes.
- v. Recognition of crosslinguistic variety in figurative expressions.

According to Al-Jumah (2007), researchers have started to show keen interest in the study of conceptual metaphors recently. In his study, Al-Jumah compared conceptual and linguistic metaphor in English and Arabic. He focused on the similarities and differences of Arab learners of English as a second language (ESL) responses when asked to interpret metaphors in both Arabic and English in business discourse, bearing in mind the cultural differences between the two languages. Al-Jumah adopted a holistic approach that consisted of textual analysis, conversation meetings, students' writings, and questionnaires. His study, however, focused on metaphorical expressions that are concerned with the theme of business only. In particular, it aims at enhancing Arab ESL learners' comprehension of business-related metaphors. The study paid special attention to Arab ESL learners who were studying in the United States at the time of the study. In contrast, the study reported here does not focus on one theme only. It deals with different types of conceptual and linguistic metaphors, belonging to different themes (see conceptual metaphors in Appendices A-F). The current study delves deeper into the conceptual knowledge of the two languages, attempting to show the similarities and differences; hence, it sheds light on the universality of conceptual metaphors.

Objectives of the Study

Generally, the current study tests the commonly-held belief that learners demonstrate general conceptualizing capacity even though they have different languages (Charteris-Black, 2002). It is based on the belief that comparing the similarities and differences of metaphorical expressions between two different languages may provide an important glimpse into the conceptual and linguistic knowledge of these languages. In addition, it provides some pedagogical implications for teaching metaphorical expressions to EFL learners. The study seeks answers to the following research questions:

Research Question 1: To what extent do Jordanian EFL learners comprehend metaphors in English?

Research Question 2: To what extent do they access L1 metaphorical knowledge in their comprehension of L2 metaphorical language?

Research Question 3: Do Jordanian EFL learners encounter problems with certain types of metaphor

compared with others or not? If they do, what are these types and why are they particularly difficult?

Method

Sample

One hundred advanced Jordanian EFL learners, fourth-year students majoring in English language and literature at the University of Jordan, participated in the study. Their mean age was 22 years. All were native speakers of JSA, who had a working knowledge of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). It should be noted that the participants were mostly female (85 females and 15 males); the majority of students who specialize in English language and literature at the University of Jordan are females, at least at the time of the study. The researcher did not consider gender as an independent variable in the current study as the sample of male participants is non-representative. The selection of this group of advanced EFL learners was based on the researcher's belief that at this age and proficiency level in English, the students would be equipped with the metalanguage necessary for the multiple-choice test that is going to be administered as this type of test is intellectually demanding. Students of low or intermediate level of proficiency may not be suitable for this study. At the time of data collection (i.e., the second semester of the academic year 2012-2013), the participants had completed at least 80 to 90 credit hours of advanced English courses such as Novel, Drama, Poetry, Translation, Shakespeare, Syntax, Poetry, and Linguistics.

Data Collection

Twenty-four English metaphorical expressions were selected from *McGraw-Hill's American Idioms Dictionary* (Spears, 2007) and 24 Arabic metaphorical expressions were collected from *A Comprehensive Dictionary of English Idioms: English-Arabic* (Adel, 1997). The selection of items was based on the correspondence or the lack of correspondence of both (a) the *conceptual* metaphors and (b) the *linguistic* expressions of JSA and English metaphorical expressions (see Appendices A-F). The conceptual metaphor is identified on the basis of the linguistic expression. For instance, there is a proof of the conceptual metaphor: IDEAS ARE FOOD in English expressions such as "there are too many facts here for me to *digest* them all, I just can't *swallow* that claim, that argument *smells fishy*, etc." (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 47). The same conceptual metaphor also exists in JSA, as in

1. *hakyu maa ?ilu ta?im*

talk-his no has taste

Lit. his speech is tasteless

"His speech is meaningless"

The underlying conceptual metaphor (i.e., IDEAS ARE FOOD) explains the relatedness of the linguistic expressions in both languages. The selected metaphors in English were then checked with reference to a corpus to ascertain their occurrence and frequency in contemporary speech. The English metaphors were checked in *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA; n.d.). With regard to the Arabic metaphors, the researcher conducted a pilot study in which 12 native speakers of JSA were asked to provide the meaning of the JSA metaphorical expressions used in this study. The purpose of this procedure was to ascertain the occurrence of these metaphorical expressions in contemporary JSA speech. The researcher included in the final version of the test only those metaphorical expressions that received similar answers from 80% and above of the JSA native speakers. In addition, to ensure the validity of the test, an earlier version of it was given to 10 native speakers of English (American, British, and Australian) before the test took place. The researcher included in the final version of the test the sentences that received similar responses from 80% and above of the English native speakers. No minimum frequency level for English metaphorical expressions in COCA (n.d.) was set. However, the frequency is taken into account in the discussion of the results.

The metaphorical expressions were then analyzed and compared according to the similarity and the difference between the conceptual metaphors and linguistic expressions in both English and JSA. This comparison aims at anticipating the participants' responses in the test based on their metaphorical knowledge of L1.

Test

A 24-item multiple-choice test, containing short contexts, taken with minor modifications from COCA (n.d.), was administered to test the participants' ability to recognize metaphorical expressions in English (see Appendix G). The test consisted of four instances of each type of metaphorical expressions. The participants were asked to choose the answer that gives the correct meaning of the *metaphorical* expression. The multiple-choice options that followed each test item were designed (with some modifications) following the model originally proposed by Charteris-Black (2002) as follows: one correct answer, a primary distracter (that hinted at the literal meaning of the metaphorical expression), a secondary distracter (which was either an antonym of the metaphorical expression or had something to do with the context), and one *I don't know* option. The last option is used to reduce the influence of chance, because "it would introduce a random probability factor that would be too high given that there would be a 25 per cent probability of selecting the correct item by chance" (Charteris-Black, 2002, p. 119). The six types of metaphorical expressions are explained below:

Type 1. This type deals with metaphorical expressions that have an equivalent conceptual basis (i.e., metaphor) and equivalent linguistic expression in both English and JSA (see Appendix A). For instance, it is expected that as JSA has an equivalent conceptual metaphor and an equivalent linguistic expression of the English metaphorical expression an *iron fist*, the participants would be able to access L1 conceptual knowledge to process this L2 metaphorical expression. They could even resort to the literal translation of this L2 metaphorical expression.

Type 2. In this type, metaphorical expressions have equivalent conceptual basis and similar linguistic expression in both English and JSA (see Appendix B). It is worth noting that "similar" means that part of the expression is equivalent in both languages while other parts are not. As a result, if the participants used literal translation of the metaphorical expression, they would partially arrive at the correct meaning. The participants would have to change a word or more to arrive at the correct English metaphorical expression with an equivalent sense. Therefore, it is expected that Type 2 would be easy to figure out by the participants as they can use partial literal translation to arrive at the correct meaning but not as easy as Type 1.

Type 3. Type 3 metaphorical expressions are those that have completely different conceptual basis in both English and JSA but similar linguistic expression (see Appendix C). It is assumed that the participants may encounter difficulties with Type 3, because the similarity of the linguistic expression between the two languages may encourage negative transfer of L1 meaning. This may be due to the fact that L1 metaphorical knowledge can be used in understanding L2 metaphorical expressions. Therefore, at least one of the two distracters for this type is more related to the Arabic meaning, rather than to the English meaning. The reason for this proximity is to introduce the possibility of transfer from L1.

Type 4. Type 4 deals with metaphorical expressions that have equivalent conceptual basis in English and JSA but completely different linguistic expressions in both languages (see Appendix D). In this type, literal translation of the metaphorical expression is not an option as the linguistic expressions are completely different. However, if L1 metaphorical knowledge is employed in comprehending L2 meaning, then it can be argued that this type would be easier than Type 3. Nevertheless, learners may not be able to access L1 conceptual basis as the linguistic expressions in both languages are different unless the differences were explained to them. In this type of metaphor, learners should be assisted to encourage positive transfer from L1 conceptual knowledge.

Type 5. Type 5 metaphorical expressions are those that have completely different conceptual basis and completely

different linguistic expression in English and JSA. Nonetheless, the metaphorical expressions may be transparent because they are readily accessible on the basis of knowledge that is culturally neutral (see Appendix E). It is suggested, however, that students should be made aware of this type of metaphorical expressions before these units can become transparent to them.

Type 6. Type 6 metaphorical expressions are those that have completely different conceptual basis and completely different linguistic expression in English and JSA. Moreover, the metaphorical expressions are opaque as the conceptual basis reflects the encoding of a culture-specific meaning (see Appendix F). It can be argued that Type 6 may pose problems to the participants as the conceptual bases and the linguistic expressions are completely different in both languages. In addition, the metaphorical expressions reflect culture-specific senses.

Statistical Analysis

To establish whether there were any statistically significant differences in the scores concerning the six different types of metaphorical expressions used in the test, one-way ANOVA (SPSS Version 18) was used to compare the means of the six different types. ANOVA was chosen as a statistical test, because it makes it possible “to compare whether or not the variation *between* the scores for different types of figurative units (i.e., Types 1-6) is significantly different from that of items *within* each of these types” (Charteris-Black, 2002, p. 121). The researcher then used post hoc Tukey test to see between which types the significant differences existed via analyzing the participants’ scores on the items *within* the six different types.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents a summary of percentages, means, and standard deviations of accurate responses on the six types of metaphorical expression on the test:

Table 1. Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations of Accurate Responses on the Six Types of Metaphorical Expression on the Test.

Type	% of accurate answers	M	SD
1	94	3.74	0.61
2	85	3.38	1.03
3	44	1.74	1.30
4	81	3.23	1.03
5	71	2.84	1.23
6	52	2.09	1.26
Average	71	2.84	1.31

A thorough examination of Table 1 shows differences in the percentages, means, and standard deviations of accurate responses on each of the six types of metaphorical expression on the test. To establish whether there are statistically significant differences *between* the six types of metaphorical expression on the test, I used one-way ANOVA followed by a post hoc Tukey. Table 2 shows the results of the ANOVA followed by Table 3, which reports the results of the post hoc Tukey:

Table 2. One-Way ANOVA: Comparison of the Six Types of Metaphorical Expression on the Test.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
Between groups	302.613	5	60.523	49.698	.000
Within groups	723.380	594	1.218		
Total	1,025.993	599			

Table 3. Post Hoc Tukey.

Type	1 (94%)	2 (85%)	3 (44%)	4 (81%)	5 (71%)	6 (52%)
1	—					
2	0.360	—				
3	2.000*	1.640*	—			
4	0.510*	0.150	-1.490*	—		
5	0.900*	0.540*	-1.100*	0.390	—	
6	1.650*	1.290*	-.350	1.140*	0.750*	—

*p < .05.

An examination of Table 2 shows that there are statistically significant differences *between* the six types of metaphorical expressions on the test ($p < .05$). The post hoc Tukey displayed in Table 3 was conducted to see between which types the significant differences existed via analyzing the participants’ scores on the items *within* the six different types. Based on Table 1, it may be seen that there are three levels of difficulty, starting from the least difficult to the most difficult as follows:

1. Type 1 (94%) and Type 2 (85%).
2. Type 4 (81%) and Type 5 (71%).
3. Type 3 (44%) and Type 6 (52%).

Type 1

Table 4 below presents the participants’ overall outstanding achievement (94%). The highest percentage of correct responses was 95%, while the lowest was 91%. The ease

Table 4. Type 1: Correct Responses on Each Test Item on the Test.

Metaphorical expression	% of correct responses
Iron fist/hand	95
Madly in love	95
Blood boil	93
Put your finger on	91
Average	94

with which the participants were able to choose the correct meaning of the English metaphorical expressions of this type may be due to the equivalence of the conceptual basis and the linguistic expression in both languages (see Appendix A).

Even if the participants had translated the metaphorical expression literally from JSA, they would still have arrived at the correct meaning. It may be seen that positive transfer here had a big role to play in the participants' correct answers. One may argue that the participants found Type 1 easy to answer because the conceptual bases and linguistic expressions are equivalent in both L1 and L2. Thus, it may be claimed that they are equally transparent in both languages. In fact, Deignan (2003) argued that some shared conceptual metaphors across languages may draw on the same source domain. For instance, the conceptual basis of the metaphorical expression *blood boil* is ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER (Boers, 2000). The source domain (i.e., A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER) exists in Arabic, English, and other languages (i.e., it has a tendency towards universality) although some details pertinent to this domain may differ culturally. Hence, it may be claimed that this source domain is equally unmarked in both English and JSA. As a result, the participants faced no difficulty in activating an already existing conceptual knowledge and related linguistic expressions to recognize the correct meaning.

The fact that the two metaphorical expressions *iron hand* (95%) and *put your finger on* (91%) involve embodiment, "uses of the human body and closely associated experience and behaviour" may have actually assisted the participants in recognizing the meaning of the metaphorical expressions with ease (Littlemore & Low, 2006, p. 284). The reason behind this may be that these expressions are based on somewhat universal or unmarked bodily concepts that exist in many languages (Boers, 2003). *Iron hand* is based on the conceptual metaphor CONTROL IS HOLDING SOMETHING IN THE HAND and *put your finger on* is based on the conceptual metaphor TO TOUCH IS TO LOCATE. These two metaphorical expressions are based on human physical experience in the world. Therefore, the participants recognized them with no trouble. Furthermore, both *madly in love* and *majnuun fiha* lit., "mad in her," are based on the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS MADNESS. Hence, one may argue that the source domain (i.e., MADNESS) on

Table 5. Type 2: Correct Responses on Each Test Item on the Test.

Metaphorical expression	% of correct responses
My heart skipped a beat	88
Fight tooth and nail	90
Fan the flames	88
At a snail's pace	72
Average	85

which the conceptual metaphor is based is unmarked as it exists in both languages and other languages as well. Thus, 95% of the participants were able to recognize it on the test.

It may be inferred that students need to be encouraged to use L1 as a resource to comprehend L2 metaphorical expressions when the conceptual bases in both languages are equivalent. For example, students may be encouraged to group metaphorical expressions under a particular conceptual basis that is equivalent in both languages to help them relate the metaphorical expressions to the conceptual basis and thus remember these expressions. It was suggested by Boers (2000) that metaphorical expressions that belong to a particular conceptual basis (i.e., "metaphorical theme") tend to be more transparent than the "isolated" ones (p. 563). Thus, if L2 teachers made students aware of these conceptual bases and the metaphorical expressions related to them, the comprehension of these metaphorical expressions may become easier.

Type 2

Table 5 below clearly indicates that the percentage of correct answers was high (85%). The highest score was 90% for *fight tooth and nail* while the lowest was 72% for *at a snail's pace*. These high scores may be attributed to the equivalence of conceptual bases and the similarity of linguistic expressions of the metaphorical expressions in both English and JSA (see Appendix B).

For instance, the metaphorical expression *my heart skipped a beat* and its similar counterpart in JSA, *ʔalbi nxadd* lit., "my heart shook violently," are based on the conceptual metaphor THE STATE OF THE FEELINGS IS THE MATERIAL STATE OF A VITAL ORGAN (Charteris-Black, 2002, p. 129). One may argue that most humans, regardless of their culture or language, associate emotions with the heart (Deignan, 2003). Thus, expressions such as "a broken heart" emerge based on this *embodied* universally shared experience (Kövecses, 2005, p. 3). It may be argued that correct answers to this item (88%) rest on the participants' familiarity with this unmarked bodily experience. Moreover, as the conceptual metaphor exists in both English and JSA, one may suggest that the participants used their L1 conceptual knowledge to reason about the English metaphorical, hence, their remarkable achievement.

Encyclopedic knowledge of the world and the creatures that live within it may account for the participants' correct responses to the two metaphorical expressions, *fight tooth and nail for* (90%) and *at a snail's pace* (72%). These two metaphorical expressions are based on the conceptual metaphor HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOR (Kövecses, 2002). One may suggest that the participants exuded confidence in their recognition of these two metaphorical expressions based on two pieces of information. First, they know that predatory animals usually attack enemies or defend themselves using their teeth and claws. Second, they perceive that snails move slowly. Added to that is their awareness that humans' BEHAVIOR may be compared with animals' BEHAVIOR on different occasions and to describe common characteristics between them. These pieces of information possibly made it less difficult for the participants to recognize the correct meanings of the two metaphorical expressions. Once again, it may be seen that the source domain of the conceptual metaphors of this type, for example, ANIMAL BEHAVIOR is unmarked in the sense that it exists in both languages and probably other languages as well. In addition, the linguistic expressions in both languages are similar. Hence, the participants were able to recognize the metaphorical expressions on the test with ease.

In addition, 88% correct answers were received for the metaphorical expression, *fan the flames*, which is based on the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEAT. It may be argued that the general theme on which the metaphorical expressions in both languages are based is unmarked, which may have facilitated the comprehension of the metaphorical expression, *fan the flames*.

The participants' ability to recognize metaphorical expressions of this type on the test (85%) may indicate that they had no trouble with conceptual knowledge. However, it may suggest that more focus needs to be given by L2 teachers to the linguistic expression and vocabulary with respect to this type as they are not totally the same in both languages. Also, it may be argued that at least the conceptual metaphors that are based on universal bodily experience and emotions may be near-universal or potentially universal (cf. Boers, 2003).

Type 3

Table 6 below shows that the participants faced considerable difficulty with Type 3 (44%). The highest score on this type was 57% for *break a leg*, while the lowest score was 34% for *pulling my leg*. The similarity of linguistic expressions in English and JSA may have encouraged the participants to transfer L1 conceptual knowledge along with them, and thus supply wrong answers.

As the conceptual bases are different in both languages, it may be argued that literal translation of the similar metaphorical expressions may have tempted the participants to transfer L1 conceptual bases so that they arrived at the wrong answer. In fact, the researcher anticipated that the participants would choose the answer that is more related to the

Table 6. Type 3: Correct Responses on Each Test Item on the Test.

Metaphorical expression	% of correct responses
Break a leg	57
In the black	36
Pulling my leg	34
Cold feet	47
Average	44

JSA meaning. Thus, the researcher designed the distracters for this type in a way that at least one of them was related to the meaning of the metaphorical expression in JSA to determine whether the participants would choose it or not.

While 57% selected the correct answer for *break a leg*, 43% circled a wrong answer. Nineteen percent of the participants chose option (b), forbid someone from going to a certain place. This distracter represents the meaning of the JSA metaphorical expression, *ʔataʔit rijlu ʔan makaan muʔayyan* lit., "I cut his leg from going to a certain place." One may suggest that negative transfer played a big role in the participants' incorrect answers on this item. In addition, 17% of the participants, who chose a wrong answer on the test, opted for option (a), fall on stage (see Appendix G, Item 9), as it is pertinent to the context provided for this item on the test, namely, a group of actors calling out "*break a leg*" to their colleagues who are going onto the stage to perform.

In addition, 36% recognized the correct meaning of the item *in the black*, while 64% chose a wrong answer. A total of 26% opted for option (a), heading toward bankruptcy, which is the exact opposite of the correct meaning of the metaphorical expression *in the black*. Option (a) hints at the negative connotation associated with the color black in JSA, that instead of succeeding in business, it is losing and heading toward bankruptcy.

According to Table 6, 34% of the participants circled the correct answer of the metaphorical expression, *pulling my leg*, whereas 66% chose a wrong answer. Thirty-five percent of the participants who circled the wrong answer picked option (b), tricking somebody to talk about something he or she would have rather kept secret. This option represents the meaning of the JSA metaphorical expression, *sahab rijluu* lit., "he pulled his leg."

Finally, 47% of the participants circled the correct answer of the metaphorical expression *cold feet*, while 53% selected a wrong answer. Twenty-nine percent of those who circled the wrong answer on the test opted for option (a), relaxed and calm, which, again, represents the meaning of the JSA metaphorical expression, *haatit rijle:h bmay baardih* lit., "he put his feet in cold water" (i.e., "he is relaxed"). This figure may imply that negative transfer from JSA had a significant role in the participants' erroneous answers on this type. In light of these results, L2 teachers need to bring students' attention to the differences of conceptual bases between L1 and L2 in the hope of reducing the risk of negative transfer.

Table 7. Type 4: Correct Responses on Each Test Item on Test.

Metaphorical expression	% of correct responses
Gold-digger	84
Add insult to injury	90
The cold shoulder	76
Head over heels	73
Average	81

Type 4

As illustrated in Table 7 below, type 4 elicited a high percentage of correct answers (81%). In fact, the participants' score on Type 4 was the third highest after Type 1 (94%) and Type 2 (85%), respectively (see Table 1). The highest score on Type 4 was 90% for *add insult to injury*, whereas the lowest score was 73% for *head over heels*. This result was anticipated as the metaphorical expressions of this type share the same conceptual bases in English and JSA. Thus, the similarity between the two languages may have contributed positively to the participants' high performance on the test.

Add insult to injury and its JSA counterpart, *zaad ttiin bal-lih* lit., "add more water to the mud," are based on the conceptual metaphor BEHAVIORAL ATTRIBUTES ARE EQUAL TO MATERIAL ATTRIBUTES. Thus, 90% of the participants chose the correct answer. A *gold-digger* is a woman who uses her sexual attractions to get money; it is based on the conceptual metaphor WEALTH IS A HIDDEN OBJECT. The literal meaning of the expression *gold-digger* is a person who seeks or digs for gold. In addition, it is well-known in JSA that a person who looks for gold may not necessarily mean that he is looking for gold as such; it may also mean that he is seeking money. Thus, one may argue that 84% of the participants were able to recognize the correct meaning of the metaphorical expression based on this piece of information as the metaphorical expression *gold-digger*, which hints at a woman in particular who is greedy for money, is not used in JSA. One of the distracters, namely, option (a) for *gold-digger* was a literal translation of it (i.e., go to the mines and look for gold). However, only 9% selected it compared with 84% who got it right. The high correct score may suggest that the participants activated their conceptual knowledge as well as their imagination while dealing with this item.

Furthermore, the *cold shoulder* and its JSA counterpart *kaanat tSaamilni min wara dahirha* lit., "she was treating me from behind her back," are based on the conceptual metaphor REJECTING IS AVOIDING EYE CONTACT. Despite the difference of linguistic expressions between the two languages, 76% of the participants were able to recognize the correct meaning of this metaphorical expression on the test as the conceptual metaphors are similar in both languages. Having access to L1 conceptual knowledge may be useful for students to comprehend L2 metaphors when the conceptual metaphors in the two languages are similar (cf. Ellis, 1986).

Table 8. Type 5: Correct Responses on Each Test Item on the Test.

Metaphorical expression	% of correct responses
Keep your head above water	86
In the fast lane	62
Keep his nose clean	73
Tip of the iceberg	63
Average	71

Another reason that may account for the participants' good performance is the high frequency of some of these expressions in the English language. For instance, *head over heels* occurs 45 times every 100 million words in the COCA (n.d.). Hence, 73% of the participants were able to circle the correct answer.

Type 5

Table 8 below indicates that the participants did well on the test (71%). The highest score was 86% for *keep your head above water*, whereas the lowest score was 62% for *in the fast lane*. Despite the fact that this type deals with metaphorical expressions that have completely different conceptual bases and linguistic expressions in English and JSA, most of the participants were able to recognize the correct meaning of the English metaphorical expressions. This may be accounted for by the fact that these metaphorical expressions are based on cultural neutral knowledge that may be inferred by the participants in context (see Appendix E).

Keep your head above water is based on general knowledge of the position of body parts. Regardless of culture, keeping the *head above water* implies an act of survival in some way. It is culturally-neutral knowledge that may be used to guess the meaning of metaphorical expression (cf. Boers, 2003). Hence, 86% of the participants were able to circle the correct answer. Seventy-three percent of the participants were able to circle the correct meaning of *keep his nose clean*. Keeping one's nose clean indicates that one should stay out of trouble with the law. In JSA, keeping one's nose out of people's business indicates that one should not interfere in what is none of his or her business. Thus, the participants found the metaphorical expression *keep his nose clean* easy to comprehend.

Moreover, 63% of the participants were able to recognize the correct meaning of *tip of the iceberg*. This metaphorical expression is based on the encyclopedic knowledge that the shape of the underwater portion of the iceberg can be difficult to judge by looking at the portion above the surface. Although this expression does not exist in JSA, many of the participants answered it correctly. Still another reason may be that *tip of the iceberg* occurs 91 times every 100 million words in (COCA, n.d.).

Type 6

Table 9 below shows that only 52% of the participants were able to choose the correct answers of Type 6. The highest

Table 9. Type 6: Correct Responses on Each Test Item on the Test.

Metaphorical expression	% of correct responses
Blue blood	70
Achilles' heel	63
Off the hook	45
White-collar	31
Average	52

score was 70% for *blue blood*, while the lowest score was 31% for *white-collar*. In fact, Type 6 was the second most difficult type after Type 3 (44%). Type 6 deals with metaphorical expressions that have completely different linguistic expressions in both languages. One may argue that Type 6 was difficult to the participants because these expressions reflect culture-specific or marked knowledge that does not exist in JSA (see Appendix F).

This markedness may have contributed to the participants' wrong answers. Eckman (1985) suggested that L2 more marked areas will be difficult. For instance, only 31% of the participants were able to recognize the correct meaning of *white-collar*. This metaphorical expression is based on the conceptual metaphor COLOR OF CLOTHES FOR STATUS. Historically, workers, who had the higher paying and salaried positions, used to wear *white* shirts, whereas manual laborers who were paid per hour usually wore *blue* shirts. The connotations associated with the color of clothes (i.e., *white*) are culture specific. The poor performance of many students with regard to this item may suggest that it is alien to them. Thus, one may argue that the fact that this conceptual metaphor conveys marked connotations contributed to the participants' wrong answers (cf. Altakhaineh & Zibin, 2014).

Even though *off the hook* occurs 244 times every 100 million words in (COCA, n.d.), only 45% of the participants recognized it. It can be argued that the participants may not have come by this metaphorical expression in their studies.¹ The purpose behind the inclusion of culture-specific metaphorical expressions in the test was to determine whether cultural differences play a role in the participants' ability to recognize the correct meaning of these metaphorical expressions. The metaphorical expression *off the hook* is based on knowledge pertinent to fishing. It is well-known that when a fish flips out of the hook, it goes back into the water. However, the geography of Jordan does not permit fishing except in one city (i.e., Aqaba), which may have contributed to the participants' inability to relate the metaphorical expression *off the hook* to fishing (cf. Emanatian, 1995). Kövecses (2010) posited that regional dimensions may give rise to variation in metaphorical conceptualization across cultures.

In light of these results, L2 teachers need to concentrate more on the cultural differences when dealing with metaphorical expressions of this type.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

The results provide evidence that the participants' receptive knowledge of metaphorical expressions in English varies based on the type of metaphor. Type 1 (94%) and Type 2 (85%) were the easiest to recognize by the participants on the test. This result was expected as Type 1 metaphorical expressions have the same conceptual bases and linguistic expressions in English and JSA. In addition, Type 2 metaphorical expressions have the same conceptual bases and similar linguistic expressions in both languages. Type 3 was the most difficult for the participants. It was suggested that the similarity of linguistic expression between the two languages may have encouraged the participants to transfer their L1 conceptual knowledge while answering this type. Type 4 was also easy to answer by the participants (81%). This is possibly due to the equivalence of conceptual bases in English and JSA, which may have played a positive role in the participants' correct answers. Type 5 elicited a good number of correct answers (71%). Even though this type deals with metaphorical expressions that have different conceptual bases and linguistic expressions in English and JSA, the conceptual bases are culturally neutral. This may have made it easier for the participants to recognize the correct meaning of these expressions. Type 6 elicited significantly low number of correct answers (52%). These low results may be attributable to the fact that this type deals with metaphorical expressions that are totally different conceptually and linguistically in the two languages. Based on the data analysis, the researcher suggests some pedagogical implications to L2 teachers:

1. L2 teachers need to explain that metaphors are not mere rhetoric devices used exclusively by poets and writers to enhance the quality of literary texts. Students need to be aware that metaphors are devices used in all walks of life by everyone.
2. L2 teachers need to encourage students to use L1 as a resource to comprehend L2 metaphorical expressions when the two languages have equivalent conceptual bases (i.e., Types 1, 2, and 4). These similarities would make it easier for EFL learners to read and understand metaphorical expressions in English (Charteris-Black, 2001; Deignan et al., 1997).
3. Raising students' awareness of the differences of conceptual metaphors between L2 and L1 may be very beneficial to facilitate their comprehension of L2 conceptual metaphors. In addition, students should be made aware of the differences in expressing conceptual metaphors between L1 and L2 (i.e., Types 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) to reduce the risk of negative transfer. These differences should be taken into consideration as they may contribute to the production of marked and non-native expressions by L2 learners and translators (Charteris-Black, 2001). In addition, more attention needs to be given by L2 teachers to the differences in linguistic expressions

- in L1 and L2, especially when the conceptual bases are the same in both languages (e.g., Types 1, 2, and 4).
4. Teaching students to group metaphorical expressions under a particular metaphorical conceptual basis or theme may also be helpful as it may “provide a framework for lexical organization” (Boers, 2000, p. 563). Teachers could devise special exercises for this purpose.
 5. L2 teachers need to give more attention to collocations in English and give students exercises that could assist them in understanding the way they are used in English.
 6. It could be also useful to encourage students to produce their own metaphors to enhance their ability to recognize and translate metaphors in L2.

7. It may be beneficial to raise students’ cultural awareness of L2 metaphorical expressions as it may contribute considerably to the development of their communicative competence in L2.

In sum, the study provides evidence of the possibility that students display general conceptualizing capacity regardless of their language. Moreover, it supports the claim that comparing and contrasting metaphorical expressions between two different languages may provide an important glimpse into the conceptual and linguistic knowledge of these languages. Thus, further large-scale exploration of the correspondences and the differences of conceptual metaphors and linguistic expressions in other languages is an area worthy of further investigation.

Appendix A

Type 1.

No.	Linguistic expression		Figurative meaning (equivalent)	Conceptual basis (equivalent)	Frequency in (COCA)
	English	Arabic			
1.	He is <i>madly in love</i> with her	<i>majnuun fiha</i> lit., he is mad in her	He loves her so much	LOVE IS MADNESS + STATES ARE LOCATIONS	0.58 per million
2.	She rules the office with an <i>iron fist/hand</i>	<i>haakmih ?il maktab bi?abda hadiidiyyih</i> lit., she rules the office with an iron fist	To rule using rigorous or ruthless control	CONTROL IS HOLDING	0.43 per million
3.	He is making my <i>blood boil</i> with his indifference	<i>fawwar dammi</i> lit., he made my blood boil	To be very angry	ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER + THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR THE EMOTIONS	0.13 per million
4.	You have certainly <i>put your finger on</i> the problem	<i>bitta?kiid hatte:t ?isba?ak ?ala lmu?kilih</i> lit., you have certainly <i>put your finger on</i> the problem	To identify and state the essence of something	TO TOUCH IS TO LOCATE	0.30 per million

Note. COCA = Corpus of Contemporary American English.

Appendix B

Type 2.

No.	Linguistic expression		Figurative meaning (similar)	Conceptual basis (similar)	Frequency in (COCA)
	English	Arabic			
1.	My <i>heart skipped a beat</i> when I saw him	<i>?albi nxadd lamma ?uftu</i> lit., my heart shook violently when I saw him	When one is startled or excited from surprise, joy, or fright	THE STATE OF THE FEELINGS IS THE MATERIAL STATE OF A VITAL ORGAN	0.17 per million
2.	He <i>fought for her tooth and nail</i>	<i>qaatluuhum bisnaanku w?a?daafirku</i> lit. fight them with your teeth and nails	To use a lot of effort to achieve something	HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOR	0.36 per million
3.	He warned that this will <i>fan the flames</i> of racism	<i>maa kaan laazim y?a? ?ill ywalli? ?il mu?kilih</i> lit., he should not have made the fire blaze	Make the situation worse	ANGER IS HEAT + MAINTAINING INTENSITY OF CONFLICT IS MAINTAINING HEAT (OF FIRE)	0.12 per million
4.	I am moving <i>at a snail's pace</i> in my proposal	<i>laylaa btim ?i bsur ?it issulhafa</i> lit., Layla walks at a turtle's pace	To move very slowly	SPEED OF ACTION IS SPEED OF MOVEMENT + HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOR	0.18 per million

Note. COCA = Corpus of Contemporary American English.

Appendix C

Type 3.

No.	Linguistic expression		Figurative meaning	Figurative meaning	Conceptual basis (different)	Frequency in (COCA)
	English	Arabic				
1.	<i>Break a leg!</i> The other actors called out when she walked down the corridor onto the stage	<i>ʔataʕit rijilha ʕan be:t ʔim ʕali</i> lit., I cut her leg from Ali's mother house	It doesn't mean that you wish someone harm, it simply means good luck	I forbade her from going to a certain place.	English: Superstition (if the "good luck" causes bad, then probably the perceived bad luck of breaking one's leg causes good). Arabic: FOOT STANDS FOR THE PERSON	0.25 per million
2.	Our business is really improving. We've been <i>in the black</i> all year	<i>ʔalbat ʕiiʕtu so:da</i> lit., she turned his life black	On the credit side of a ledger; prosperous	A living hell, sad and gloomy (negative connotation)	English: Encyclopedic knowledge that positive numbers appear in black while negative numbers appear in red. Arabic: Knowledge: Black is associated with misfortune	4.44 per million
3.	Is he really angry with me or is he just <i>pulling my leg?</i>	<i>sahaab rijlu wʔaxad ʔilli biddu iyyaah</i> lit., he pulled his leg and took what he wanted	To tell someone something untrue as a joke to shock them temporarily and amuse them when they find out later that it was a joke	Tricking someone into talking about something he or she would have rather kept secret	English: BEHAVIORAL ATTRIBUTES ARE MATERIAL ATTRIBUTES Arabic: LOSING PHYSICAL BALANCE IS LOSING CONTROL OVER SPEECH	0.09 per million
4.	He had <i>cold feet</i> before his wedding	<i>qays haatit rijle:h bmay baardih</i> lit., Qais put his feet in cold water	To be scared	To be totally relaxed	English: FEAR IS FEELING COLD Arabic: FEELING COLD IS BEING RELAXED	0.47 per million

Note. COCA = Corpus of Contemporary American English.

Appendix D

Type 4.

No.	Linguistic expression		Figurative meaning	Conceptual basis (equivalent)	Frequency in (COCA)
	English	Arabic			
1.	She is a <i>gold-digger</i>	<i>bturkud waraa lifluus</i> lit., she runs after money	A woman who uses her sexual attractions to accumulate gifts	WEALTH IS A HIDDEN OBJECT	0.22 per million
2.	I got fired today and to <i>add insult to injury</i> , I fell down the stairs and broke my arm	<i>wʔifit saaʕa ʔastanna sayyara biduun faaydih willi zaad ttiin ballih ʔinha balla,ʕat tumtur</i> lit., I waited 1 hr for a car with no use and what <i>added more water to the mud</i> is that it started raining	To make a bad situation worse	BEHAVIORAL ATTRIBUTES ARE EQUAL TO MATERIAL ATTRIBUTES	0.24 per million
3.	She gave me <i>the cold shoulder</i> all night long	<i>kaanat tʕaamilni min wara dahirha tuul ilyo:m</i> lit., she was treating me <i>from behind her back</i> all day long	Treat someone with indifference	REJECTING IS AVOIDING EYE CONTACT + INDIFFERENCE IS COLDNESS	0.21 per million
4.	He fell <i>head over heels</i> for her	<i>gharʔaan fiha la,ʕuu,ʕtu</i> lit., he drowned in her up to his ears	To be completely in love	FALLING IN LOVE IS PHYSICAL FALLING	0.45 per million

Note. COCA = Corpus of Contemporary American English.

Appendix E

Type 5.

No.	Linguistic expression		Figurative meaning	Figurative meaning	Conceptual basis (different)	Frequency in (COCA)
	English	Arabic				
1.	Keep your head above water	<i>Siinu zaaygha</i> lit., his eye roves	You just have to manage, especially when facing financial problems	A womanizer; a guy who pursues women all the time	English: Breathing is surviving + HEAD STANDS FOR THE PERSON Arabic: EYE MOVEMENT IS INDICATIVE OF AN ATTRIBUTE OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR	0.16 per million
2.	She is still adapting to life in the fast lane	<i>ʔiid wahdih maa bitzaʔʔif</i> lit., one hand cannot clap by itself	In a very active or possible risky manner	Collaborative work is better than working alone	English: SPEED OF ACTION IS SPEED OF MOTION. Arabic: MANY IS POWER	0.35 per million
3.	I'm trying to keep my nose clean by staying away from bad people	<i>idin min tiin wiʔidin min ʔajjin</i> lit., one ear is from mud and the other ear is from dough	To keep out of trouble, especially trouble with the law	Not being able to understand anything	English: Keeping the nose clean indicates staying away from trouble with the law+ NOSE STANDS FOR THE PERSON Arabic: LISTENING IS UNDERSTANDING	0.08 per million
4.	The fact that Carrie is dating a member of the mafia is just the tip of the iceberg	<i>halwalad maʔtuuʔ min ʔajara</i> lit., this kid is cut off from a tree	A small evident part or aspect of something largely hidden	To have no family	English: Encyclopedic knowledge: The shape of the underwater portion of the iceberg can be difficult to judge by looking at the portion above the surface Arabic: A FAMILY IS A TREE.	0.91 per million

Note. COCA = Corpus of Contemporary American English.

Appendix F

Type 6.

No.	Linguistic expression		Figurative meaning	Figurative meaning	Conceptual basis (different)	Frequency in (COCA)
	English	Arabic				
1.	Princess Diana had blue blood	<i>dammu xafif</i> lit., his blood is light	She is of a noble family; aristocratic ancestry	He has a sense of humor	English: BLOOD FOR STATUS Arabic: BLOOD FOR PERSONALITY	0.14 per million
2.	He was very brave but fear of spiders was his Achilles' heel	<i>buʔtul ʔil ʔatiil wbiimʔii fi janaaztuh</i> lit., he kills the man and then walks in his funeral	A weak point or fault in someone or something otherwise perfect	To harm somebody or cause trouble for him then offer to help him	English: HEEL FOR THE PERSON + story of Achilles Arabic: BEHAVIORAL ATTRIBUTES ARE MATERIAL ATTRIBUTES	0.32 per million
3.	Let me off the hook with a mild reprimand	<i>rijilha xaaffih halʔayyam</i> lit., her foot is light these days	Freed, as from blame or a vexatious obligation	She doesn't come to a certain place as often as she used to	English: Knowledge: When a fish flips out of the hook, it goes back in the water Arabic: FOOT STANDS FOR THE PERSON	2.44 per million
4.	His parents were both white-collar employees and had good paying jobs	<i>zay ʔil ʔatraʔ fizzaaffih</i> lit., like a deaf person in a wedding	Of or relating to workers whose work usually does not involve manual labor and who are often expected to dress with a degree of formality	Unable to understand anything	English: COLOR OF CLOTHES FOR STATUS Arabic: LISTENING IS UNDERSTANDING	0.78 per million

Note. COCA = Corpus of Contemporary American English.

Appendix G

Multiple-Choice Test

Q1. Cromwell returned victorious to England and a few years later took over complete power as lord protector, becoming a virtual dictator. He went on to rule the country with *an iron fist* for some 5 years until he died in 1658.

An iron fist means:

- (a) in strong control
- (b) wearing an iron glove
- (c) using a fist
- (d) I don't know

Q2. She was *madly in love* with him and followed him about everywhere.

Madly in love means:

- (a) angry about something
- (b) deeply in love
- (c) mentally ill
- (d) I don't know

Q3. For a few minutes, Lexi couldn't believe what had just happened. He'd dumped her! He'd just left her here to spend the night alone in a dark classroom. Lexi felt her *blood boil* and a sudden urge to strangle someone.

Blood boil means:

- (a) very angry
- (b) lose a lot of blood
- (c) kill someone
- (d) I don't know

Q4. "You get a bad feeling when something just doesn't seem right," Smith said. "You won't be able to *put your finger on* it, but it's just a feeling that something is unusual."

Put your finger on means:

- (a) point your finger in one direction
- (b) use your fingers to do something
- (c) identify the essence of something
- (d) I don't know

Q5. The first time I saw her, my *heart skipped a beat*. That's how I knew she was the one for me.

My heart skipped a beat means:

- (a) have a heart failure
- (b) suddenly surprised or excited
- (c) be sad
- (d) I don't know

Q6. Lissa always said you were the most important relationship in my life, and it used to piss me off when she said it. I *fought her tooth and nail* on it. She didn't even say it to be cruel; she just said it because it was true. She was right, and I realize that now.

Fought tooth and nail means:

- (a) with every available resource
- (b) lost his teeth

(c) broke his nails

(d) I don't know

Q7. I know that invasion of Iraq without a clear rationale and without strong international support will only *fan the flames* of the Middle East, and encourage the worst, rather than the best impulses of the Arab world. I am not opposed to all wars. I'm opposed to dumb wars!

Fan the flames means:

- (a) light a fire
- (b) put out a fire
- (c) make the situation worse
- (d) I don't know

Q8. If she could ever manage to find a parking space! She'd already reached the end of the first row of parked cars with no luck. She started down the next row *at a snail's pace*. Thank goodness, she had plenty of time today!

At a snail's pace means:

- (a) move very fast
- (b) move very slowly
- (c) look for snails
- (d) I don't know

Q9. "*Break a leg!*" the other actors called out as she walked down the corridor onto the stage.

Break a leg means:

- (a) fall on stage
- (b) forbid someone from going to a certain place
- (c) wish someone good luck
- (d) I don't know

Q10. After 5 years of losing, the industry is *in the black* this year, and the stocks are soaring. UAL Corporation stocks rose 5% in 3 days last week.

In the black means:

- (a) heading toward bankruptcy
- (b) profitable and prosperous
- (c) going to the black market
- (d) I don't know

Q11. He says, "she was murdered on a commercial airliner! No one knew she was dead until after the plane was empty and the flight attendant tried to rouse her." I stare at him, certain he's *pulling my leg*. "Murder at thirty thousand feet? Is that a joke, sir?"

Pulling my leg means:

- (a) fooling or kidding somebody
- (b) tricking somebody to talk about something he or she would have rather kept secret
- (c) tripping somebody by pulling his or her leg
- (d) I don't know

Q12. He did love her, and wanted no one else . . . maybe, at this crucial juncture, he just had *cold feet*.

Cold feet means:

- (a) relaxed and calm
- (b) felt his toes are freezing
- (c) scared and uncertain
- (d) I don't know

Q13. Jen described how her affair went from love to a sadistic nightmare. At the end, George called her fat, ugly, and a *gold-digger*!

Gold-digger means:

- (a) go to the mines and look for gold
- (b) a woman who seeks money
- (c) a woman who works in gold mines
- (d) I don't know

Q14. Jenna fell down a flight of stairs at a restaurant in New York City and broke her back in four places. "And to *add insult to injury*, I ended up throwing my own drink in my face. It was awful," she said.

Add insult to injury means:

- (a) make a bad situation worse
- (b) fall and injure yourself
- (c) insult someone
- (d) I don't know

Q15. Nikki waited until Thompson was out of earshot before she touched Jessica's arm. "What's with *the cold shoulder* to Edith? She was nice enough to you."

The cold shoulder means:

- (a) bumped into someone's shoulder
- (b) had a cold heart
- (c) treated someone with indifference
- (d) I don't know

Q16. Despite the fact that Sam was getting married in just 3 weeks time, it was obvious that he'd tumbled *head over heels* for Amanda the minute he saw her.

Head over heels means:

- (a) cheat on your partner
- (b) love someone very much
- (c) arrogant
- (d) I don't know

Q17. I just need an opportunity! Honestly, because there are no jobs out there for electricians. So, I'm just looking to keep my *head above water*, I guess, keep going in the right direction.

Keep my head above water means:

- (a) swim on your back
- (b) survive financially
- (c) wait for a boat
- (d) I don't know

Q18. He liked to go to parties. Life *in the fast lane*, that was his aspiration. That's what he wanted out of life.

In the fast lane means:

- (a) drive very fast
- (b) go to a lot of parties
- (c) in a very active or possible risky manner
- (d) I don't know

Q19. Though Mitch didn't especially trust politicians, Merritt, who had still been a lawyer at the firm when Mitch first worked there, was someone who had managed to *keep his nose clean*.

Keep his nose clean means:

- (a) always cleaning and blowing his nose
- (b) be a good lawyer
- (c) stay out of trouble
- (d) I don't know

Q20. "We believe these numbers of sexual harassment are the *tip of the iceberg*, Ms. Nazer says." There may be thousands or millions of incidents that go unreported. Some estimates suggest that only 5% to 15% of those who feel they experienced sexual harassment file complaints.

Tip of the iceberg means:

- (a) a small evident aspect of something largely hidden
- (b) a problem that has no solution
- (c) go to the authorities and report sexual harassment
- (d) I don't know

Q21. She was nearly perfect, from his point of view, if only she weren't a Boston *blue blood*—from a family that represented everything he detested.

Blue blood means:

- (a) from a noble and aristocratic family
- (b) have bad blood
- (c) have no relatives
- (d) I don't know

Q22. You know, I have a 22-year-old girl, and I have a 15-year-old boy. Everybody has his or her *Achilles' heel*! I've often said if something happens to one of my children, you just have to take me to the dump.

Achilles' heel means:

- (a) have a strong heart
- (b) a weak point
- (c) have a lot of children
- (d) I don't know

Q23. Neil, who's married with two children, has had to fire staff and cut his own salary by 40%. Mr. Willenson said, "People suffering, I can experience that. But it doesn't get us *off the hook* from still being engaged and still caring."

Off the hook means:

- (a) help people financially
- (b) freed from blame or obligation
- (c) stay away from trouble
- (d) I don't know

Q24. There's a firm in Minneapolis that doesn't fire its workers during a recession but instead cuts back everybody's hours, including *white-collar* workers.

White-collar means:

- (a) a class of workers that does not do manual labor and dress formally
- (b) a class of workers that does the manual labor and dress informally
- (c) poor workers
- (d) I don't know

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Note

1. Even though the participants have been exposed to metaphorical expressions in the target language explicitly, the kind of instruction students usually have in literature courses (especially poetry) does not introduce metaphors as conceptual tools used by all speakers of a language to talk about their daily-life experiences, their culture, and the world they live in. Students perceive of metaphors as mere rhetoric devices used to enhance the quality of literary texts.

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