

# Enhancing the Metaphorical Competence of Japanese EFL Learners through Subtitle Translation

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*The use of translation has long been rejected in EFL pedagogy. However, the author believes that translation can contribute to EFL learning if it is used “properly.” One of its benefits is the development of Metaphorical Competence (MC), which is essential for learners to attain native-like fluency in their L2 but hardly dealt with in the classroom. Because metaphors rely heavily on conceptual information, it is difficult for those with little exposure to the target language and culture to comprehend or produce them. However, the unique nature of subtitle translation enables learners to overcome this disadvantage by going beyond the superficial differences between the source text and the target text. In this paper, a theoretical account of the relationship between MC and subtitle translation is presented, followed by the results and findings of the author’s research on the development of Japanese EFL learners’ MC through subtitle translation.*

**Keywords : TILT, subtitle translation, EFL learning, metaphor, metaphorical competence**

## 1. Introduction

Metaphor was traditionally viewed as a figure of speech that contributed to stylistic flair. However, this view has changed radically in recent years, following the publication of *Metaphors We Live By*, in which the authors Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 3) claim that “our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.” Since then, metaphor has received considerable attention within many disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, and so on, so that today the significance and ubiquity of metaphors are widely recognized.

Since metaphor pervades every aspect of our daily lives (Low 1988), metaphorical competence (henceforth, MC) or the ability to interpret metaphor and use it appropriately, is considered crucial for learners of a second language to be able to

communicate with native speakers of that language (Winner 1982). However, many EFL researchers point out that learners generally lack MC because of limited access to English in their daily lives (Azuma 2005; Danesi 1992). In addition, there are rarely opportunities for students to learn metaphors in an EFL classroom situation (Azuma 2005; Littlemore 2010).

The author of this paper has been teaching translation classes at Japanese universities for several years. This experience has led her to believe that translation, and subtitle translation in particular, has huge pedagogical implications for the development of MC in EFL learners. Based on this assumption, she conducted a small-scale research experiment on the students' MC and its development. This paper reports on the results of this experimental project. In order to provide the relevant context for the upcoming arguments, however, we will first consider the relationship between MC development and translation in the context of EFL learning. This is followed by a discussion of subtitles written by a group of students in the author's class. The results of the experiment and the discussion of their meaning and implications are then presented from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Finally, the paper concludes by stating both the limitations and future prospects of this research.

## 2. MC and EFL Learning

Since metaphors permeate our everyday communication,<sup>1)</sup> MC holds an important key to the success of EFL learning. Littlemore and Low (2006) illustrate the relation of MC to each sub-competence in language ability based on Bachman's (1990) model of language competence.<sup>2)</sup> They concluded that MC is essential to empower learners to succeed in communication with native speakers of the target language.

Danesi (1992: 5) describes MC as "a neglected dimension in L2 learning," claiming lack of MC to be characteristic among typical classroom learners, who are unable to achieve a high level of MC until they have knowledge of "how that language 'reflects' or 'encodes' concepts on the basis of metaphorical reasoning." In a later work, Danesi (2003) claims that the primary reason for the conceptual unnaturalness of L2 classroom learners is their insufficient exposure to the relationship between the linguistic and conceptual system of the target language.

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1) According to research by Pollio et al. (1977), speakers of English use on average 3,000 novel metaphors and 7,000 idioms per week.

2) Bachman (1990) refers to metaphorical competence in the model of sociolinguistic competence.

Azuma (2005) also claims that the inadequate MC of EFL learners results from their educational circumstances. Usually, they learn words as one-off experiences, focusing on meaning only at a superficial level and missing opportunities to pay attention to the concepts that lie behind the metaphorical expressions that they encounter.

Kecskes (2000) points out that problems arise when EFL learners rely on the conceptual base of their L1 and map the target language forms onto this L1 conceptualization. He stresses the importance of learning not only the form of a language but also the conceptual structures associated with these forms.

In sum, the significance of MC is recognized by many researchers in the field of EFL pedagogy. They all point out that the general lack of MC among EFL classroom learners can be attributed to their lack of exposure to English in everyday life, which makes it difficult for them to connect English forms and concepts. In order to overcome this disadvantage of institutionalized EFL learning, there is a need for a pedagogical approach that allows EFL learners to access the concept beneath the surface of the language and relate newly acquired L2 words and idioms to their conceptual bases.

### **3. MC, Metaphor, and Translation**

Metaphor is a problem not only for EFL learners, but also for translators, as noted by many researchers in the field of translation studies. Indeed, Toury (1995: 81) claims that metaphor translation is “a kind of ultimate test of any theory of translation,” while Dagut (1987: 77) further states that “metaphor presents a particularly searching test of the translator’s ability.”

One of the main reasons for this is the complex mechanism of meaning construction. Linguistic information is only the tip of the iceberg: in order to understand the meaning of an utterance in its entirety, we must excavate the wealth of conceptual information beneath the linguistic surface (Donoghue 2014; Low 1988). The interpretation of metaphor relies much more on conceptual rather than linguistic information. In monolingual communication, metaphors can be understood without any effort as the speaker and hearer usually share the same conceptual framework. However, in translation, the process changes from one language to another, involving two conceptual systems. As a result, problems most typically occur in the following situations: (1) source language (hereafter SL) metaphors are approached from the target language (TL) cognitive domains and interpreted through the TL filter, or (2) SL metaphors may trigger associations in the translator that differ from those triggered in the ST addressee and

members of the source polysystem (Kurth 1999).

As the author observed in her translation classes, novice translation students tend to be “word bound.” They try to translate the SL literally into the TL, focusing solely on each word, without paying attention to the concepts underlying the linguistic expressions. As a result, they often know all of the words and grammar in the ST, but are still unable to effect an adequate translation. In order to make the translation successful, the translators must have a well-developed MC with which to mediate conceptual gaps between the ST and TT.

From this perspective, novice translators and EFL learners share the same problem in that they tend to focus solely on the surface level of the language without accessing its conceptual bases due to a lack of MC. In order to overcome this problem, as mentioned previously, they need to be able to access the concepts behind the words. For this reason, the author believes that translation is pedagogically beneficial for EFL learners.

#### **4. Process of Translation**

In order to illustrate the above claim in a concrete way, Table 1 shows the translation process, indicating that translation is not simply a replacement of words, but a sense-making process, which must go much deeper if it is to be at all meaningful. In Step 1, the very beginning of the translation process, the translators decode the linguistic information of the ST, but in many cases, there are gaps between what is said and what is meant. Therefore, in Step 2, they try to fill the gap by exploring the conceptual base of the ST. After producing a hypothetical version of the message (what is meant), they try to find conceptual equivalences between the ST and TT. Once they think that an acceptable level of conceptual resemblance has been established in Step 3, they proceed to the final step to encode the message in the TL while making some adjustments for the target audience and culture. Throughout this process, they observe the differences between the conceptual systems of the SL and TL, and consider how to mediate these differences. Thus, translation constantly demands that translators utilize their high MC to stretch the concept beyond the word in order to create an accurate translation. This also provides EFL learners who engage in translation with a much needed opportunity to enhance their MC.

Table 1. The translation process<sup>3)</sup>

	Sub-goal	Strategy	Result
Step 1	Recovery of linguistic meaning	Linguistic decoding of ST	Partial Failure; too many gaps to be meaningful
Step 2	Filling the gaps between “what is said” and “what is meant”	Exploring the conceptual bases of ST to recover “what is meant”	A hypothetical version of the message <sup>4)</sup>
Step 3	Finding conceptual equivalences between ST and TT	Comparing the conceptual spaces of the ST and TT. (If an acceptable level of conceptual resemblance is found, proceed to Step 4.)	More possible versions of the message have been constructed.
Step 4	Encoding the message in the TL	Adjusting the message of the original utterance to the translational norms of the host society	A final version of the TT with a high degree of conceptual resemblance to the ST has been constructed.

## 5. Definition of MC

The process of translation and its relationship with MC will be discussed in more detail in Section 5, but before going into further depth, the author first wishes to revisit the definition of MC here to provide the detail necessary to operationalize it.

Littlemore (2001) argues that metaphorical competence is the learner’s ability to comprehend and use English metaphorical expressions under the following criteria: “(1) originality of metaphor production, (2) fluency of metaphor interpretation, (3) ability to find meaning in metaphor, and (4) speed in finding meaning in metaphor” (Littlemore 2001:460). Following Littlemore’s definition, Azuma (2005:60) redefined MC from the viewpoint of EFL learning, as the learner’s:

- recognition of English metaphorical expressions in the listening and reading materials he or she encounters in and out of EFL classroom,
- use of metaphorical expressions in appropriate ways in writing and speaking, and
- understanding of the concepts of English metaphors and the concepts behind them.

Thus, the definitions of MC differ slightly among researchers, although they all focus

3) In this case, the translation described here is from the L2 to the L1 of the students, namely from English to Japanese.

4) *Message* here refers to the speaker-intended meaning, rather than linguistically encoded, and encodable, meaning.

on these three aspects: identification, comprehension, and production of metaphor.

Considering the process of translation described above, the author has defined MC from the point of view of the translation instructor as involving the following set of abilities in the learner to:

- identify metaphor in the SL,
- interpret metaphor in the SL (and find the conceptual resemblance of the metaphor between the SL and TL)<sup>5)</sup>, and
- reproduce the metaphor in the TL.

## 6. Analysis of Subtitle Translation by Japanese Students

In this section, a detailed analysis of three versions of Japanese students' subtitles translated from the English is presented to illustrate how they developed their MC as the course progressed. There are two major reasons why subtitle translation is particularly effective at enhancing EFL learner's MC. First, there is a constraint of time and space in subtitle translation. Second, a subtitle translator has to deal with information from multiple sources, such as audio and visual images along with spoken dialog. This very unique set of circumstances prevents the students from focusing solely on the words of the original utterance, encouraging them instead to use all of the semiotic resources available to them to interpret the message conceptually in the source language and meaningfully convey it in the target language. The process ultimately leads to the enhancement of their MC. In this paper, however, the author solely focuses on the former; i.e. the time and space constraints of subtitle translation.

The most fundamental and conventional rule for Japanese subtitling is the four-character-per-second rule.<sup>6)</sup> This rule states that if a speaker speaks for one second, the translator can only use four Japanese characters (kanji, hiragana, or katakana)<sup>7)</sup> to convey the meaning of that utterance in Japanese. This constraint makes subtitling in Japanese unique insofar as it prevents the translator (or EFL learners) from relying on word-based translation more than in other genres of translation. It forces the translator to

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5) This conceptual resemblance is based on the definition by Gutt (2000).

6) This is a conventional rule and is applied flexibly depending on the genre of the text and other factors. No theoretical account or scientific evidence has yet been provided to support the rule.

7) *Kanji* refers to Chinese characters used in Japanese writing. *Hiragana* is the most widely used of the two Japanese systems of syllabic writing; the other is *katakana*, which is used especially to write foreign words, onomatopoeic words, and the names of plants and animals in Japanese (Shimura et al. 2008).

access the concept rather than the word in the ST.

The specific examples below were taken from a class given by the author in 2014. The class consisted of 25 English majors in their third year of study. Most of the students had intermediate or upper-intermediate proficiency in English,<sup>8)</sup> and their translation experience varied from student to student. The module stretched over a period of 15 weeks, from April to July 2014.

In this class, students in several groups subtitled *It's a Wonderful Life* (1948) directed by Frank Capra.<sup>9)</sup> At the beginning of the module, they were given an explanation of the basic rules and techniques of subtitling and a theoretical account of the translation process by the instructor (the author), before proceeding to subtitle the film.

During the process of subtitling, students were encouraged to ascertain where the difficulties lay, identify their causes, and seek ways to resolve them autonomously within their respective groups.

### ***6.1. Selected scene and students' subtitles***

Table 2 is a description of the selected scene: Young George Bailey, the main character of the movie, longs to travel the world. However, just when he is about to leave home, his father dies and he takes over his father's company, Building and Loan. George is deeply unhappy with his present situation because he doesn't want to stay in his small, dull hometown. One day, George receives a call from his old friend, Sam, who is a successful businessman in New York. Sam invites George to do business with him. The scene selected for the study ensues after Sam says to George, "George, I have a job for you."

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8) TOEIC 820-510 (Average = 638). This is Class 3 of the following research reported in Section 6.

9) The reason this movie was chosen was twofold: first, it is a public domain movie and students can subtitle it without violation of copyright law; and second, the movie contains many metaphorical expressions.

Table 2. The selected scene

Scene	Speaker	Soundtrack
 <p>George listening to Sam</p>	Sam (on the other side of the line)	That is, unless you're still married to that broken-down Building and Loan.

In this utterance, Sam speaks for slightly over three seconds. That is to say, a subtitle translator can use 13 characters to translate his utterance into Japanese. Since interpreting the figurative use of the word “marry” in this utterance is the key to its effective translation, in Table 3, three versions of Japanese subtitles produced by a group at each different stage of the course are discussed to demonstrate how they identified the translation problems in order to solve them.

Table 3. Japanese subtitles produced by a group of students

	Original	Japanese subtitle (Number of characters)
Version 1	That is, unless you're still married to that broken-down Building and Loan.	今の会社と結婚しないならな (13) Back translation: “Unless you're married to the company you are working for now.”
Version 2	That is, unless you're still married to that broken-down Building and Loan.	今の会社を辞めるのが条件だ (13) Back translation: “[But] it's a pre-requisite that you quit working for your present company.”
Version 3	That is, unless you're still married to that broken-down Building and Loan.	おんぼろ会社に骨を埋めるな (13) Back translation: “Don't bury your bones in that broken-down company.”

## 6.2. Analysis of students' subtitles

Version 1 is typical of a subtitle produced by novice translation students. The core meaning of “marry” is to “form a legal relationship with a person of the opposite sex and become her/his husband or wife” (Sinclair 1987). However, in this sentence, a company, not a person, is the object of marriage. Moreover, the context of this utterance is irrelevant to marriage. Considering these points, it is obvious that the speaker is using the phrase “be married to” figuratively, and is not therefore referring to a literal marriage. However, the students failed to identify this figurative meaning and produced a

“literal” translation focusing solely on the superficial meaning of the word “marry.” The resultant translation, 今の会社と結婚しないならな” (Lit. unless you’re married to the company you are working for now) therefore sounds rather awkward, although it is “formally” equivalent to the original.

Version 2 shows that the students correctly identified the figurative use of “marry” and tried to interpret its meaning in the given sentence. As explained previously, linguistic information is merely the tip of the iceberg: the conceptual information accompanying the text plays a huge role in its interpretation, which is especially true in the interpretation of metaphor. Therefore, in order to translate metaphor, the translator must reach into the conceptual bases of the ST and explore the real message, i.e., what is actually meant, before reproducing this meaning in the target language (see Table 1).

From the preceding scenes, it is clear that Sam feels sorry for George whom he considers to be too talented to be devoting the rest of his life to his deceased father’s company. Sam’s utterance consists of two layers of information. One layer is that Sam is willing to offer George a job if he quits his present company. The other layer is his cynical perspective on George’s situation, which is evident in his use of the expression “be married to.”<sup>10)</sup> The cynicism is evident in his use of a linguistic metaphor based on the conceptual metaphor of “MARRIAGE AS CONTRACT,” which triggers the association of “a lifetime commitment that cannot be broken.” However, the students were unable to find a way to include this second layer of information in their translation, perhaps due to the constraints of the number of characters they were allowed to use, and so they conveyed only the first layer of information. As a result, the metaphoric power of the original utterance was completely lost in their translation.

In the final phase of translation, in Version 3, the students demonstrated that they not only identified the metaphor and interpreted it correctly but also translated the original metaphor in the SL using a metaphor in the TL. Although this differs in form, it produces a similar cognitive effect on the TT audience.

As stated previously, underlying concepts or conceptual frameworks may be shared between different languages to some extent, but often they are not (Azuma 2005). Some SL metaphors can be seamlessly understood by the target audience, if there is a shared conceptual base between the SL and TL. However, if this conceptual base is not shared, the metaphor sounds inauthentic or cannot be understood in the target language culture. The students considered this to be the case with the phrase “be married to” and tried to find an alternative that was a better fit for the Japanese audience, insofar as it

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10) According to an English native informant, in almost 100% of cases, “be married to” is used in a negative context if it takes an inanimate object.

communicated similar conceptual information to that of the original utterance. The alternative metaphor they came up with was the expression “bury one’s bones.”<sup>11)</sup> In fact, many figurative uses of “bone” can be found in Japanese. It is most often used to signify effort, too much commitment, or lifelong dedication in a more or less negative context.

The students believed that the metaphorical meaning transmitted by the phrase “骨を埋める” (bury one’s bones) was nearly equivalent to that of the phrase “be married to” in this particular scene.

Table 4 shows which MC abilities the author thinks were displayed in each version based on the students’ final product (= subtitle) and translation process (= discussion), with reference to the definition of MC provided in the previous section.

Table 4. Evaluation of students’ MC

	MC abilities	Version 1	Version 2	Version 3
1	The ability to identify the metaphor in the SL	X	○	○
2	The ability to interpret the metaphor	X	○	○
3	The ability to find the conceptual resemblance between the ST and TT and reproduce it in the TL	X	X	○

Version 1 demonstrates that the students had not yet acquired the most basic ability to identify the metaphor. In both Versions 2 and 3, they were able to identify the metaphor and interpret the metaphorical meaning of “marry.” However, while in Version 2, they could find no other option than to choose to eliminate the conceptual information conveyed by the metaphor due to the constraint on the number of characters, in Version 3, they tried to include the information in the ST by translating the SL metaphor into a different metaphorical expression in Japanese with a high conceptual resemblance. As far as the author was able to observe, the students generally try to translate ST literally at the beginning of the course. However, as it progressed, they developed the ability to produce an interpretive subtitle to convey the message in the original utterance as shown in Version 2, finally coming up with a subtitle with a high conceptual resemblance between the ST and TT, as in Version 3. These three versions produced by the group show the most successful and ideal pattern of MC development. Of course, not every student achieves the same result at the same pace. However, the

11) In Japanese, bone can be used figuratively in many ways. It signifies spirit, effort, pain, core, etc. For example, 骨のない男 (literal translation = a man with no backbone → meaning translation = wimp, poor-spirited); 骨抜きにする (literal translation = pull out the bone → meaning translation = water down); 骨折損 (literal translation = bone-breaking and lost, with exhaustion → meaning translation = lots of pain and no gain).

aim of this class was not to produce a single “correct subtitle.” Rather, it was to provide the students with the opportunity to raise their awareness of language and communication and to enable them to solve the type of problem that they will face in interlingual communication. These examples show that translation can be a very effective pedagogical tool to teach students how our language conceptualizes the world through the deliberate comparison of the similarities and differences between the ST and TT, and how to overcome the difficulties caused by these differences in order to make translational communication successful.

## 7. Empirical Study

To empirically prove the claim that subtitle translation enhances the MC of EFL learners, the author conducted a small-scale quantitative study on the MC development of the students in her class based on the experimental framework of Azuma (2005). For the current study, Azuma’s metaphor competence receptive and productive tests were used (MC-RT and MC-PT, respectively) but adjusted to the current experimental conditions.<sup>12)</sup> In this paper, only the results of the MC-RT are discussed, since the scores of the MC-PT were too low to be meaningful for the statistical analysis.

### 7.1. Research questions

The research questions for the current study were as follows:

RQ1. Does translation education (L2→L1) contribute to the development of MC in Japanese EFL learners?

RQ2. Does explicit teaching on metaphor and metaphorical expressions contribute to the development of MC in Japanese EFL learners?

RQ3. How does subtitle translation help Japanese EFL learners to develop their MC?

### 7.2. Participants

The participants were second and third year students majoring in English at a

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12) MC-RT is a test to measure the ability to comprehend metaphor and metaphorical expression in English. MC-PT is a test to measure the ability to produce metaphor and metaphorical expressions in English.

Japanese university (N = 66), who were enrolled in three classes (Table 5). None of them were enrolled in two or more classes at the same time.

Table 5. Description of participant groups (Classes 1 to 3)

	Course title	Source material	No. of students	Instructor
Class 1*	Theory & Technique of Translation A	Non-fictional texts such as travel guides, news articles, etc.	N = 21 (control group)	Colleague, an experienced translator
Class 2**	Theory & Technique of Translation B	Same as Class 1	N = 20	This author
Class 3***	Subtitle Translation	Clips from Movies	N = 25	This author

Notes: \* TOEIC = 940–640 (Average = 724); \*\* TOEIC = 720–550 (Average = 598); \*\*\* TOEIC = 820–510(Average = 638)

### 7.3. Procedure

In the second week of the semester starting April 2014, all of the students were given the pre-MC-RT.<sup>13)</sup> After 12 class sessions (90 min. session/week), they were given the post-MC-RT.

#### 7.3.1. MC-RT

The MC-RT was designed to measure the receptive ability of the students' MC, that is, the ability to identify and interpret metaphor or metaphorical expressions. It consists of five questions in which some phrases are used either figuratively or literally. The students are asked to write their interpretation of each underlined phrase in either English or Japanese. In order to counterbalance the possible order effect, two different versions of the test (version A and B) were prepared and they were given in a different order to each group.<sup>14)</sup>

#### 7.3.2. Test Criteria

Test results were scored by two markers, one of whom was the author, in accordance with the criteria designed by Azuma (2005) (Table 6). The MC-RT was consisted of

13) Due to limited time, only five questions were asked. Therefore, the validity of this test needs to be examined further in future research.

14) Regarding the two versions, please refer to Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

five questions. The total score ranges from 1-15.

Table 6. Evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria for MC-RT	Score
The meaning of the target expression is interpreted correctly.	3
The interpretation of the target expression can be judged as correct, but the answer includes some ambiguity in interpretation and/or is lacking detail or precision.	2
The answer is too brief to be judged as precisely correct or incorrect, an incomplete interpretation.	1
An incorrect answer or no answer written.	0

#### 7.4. Treatment

After the pre-test, each of the three classes took 12 weekly sessions. Class 1, the control group in this research, was taught by a teacher who is an experienced translator and co-worker of the author. She conducted her own class in the conventional way, focusing on the technical side of translation. Class 2 and Class 3 were taught by the author. In these two classes, the students were initially given some idea of what conceptual and linguistic metaphors are and how they can generate innumerable meanings. With regard to Class 2, however, the author had no say in deciding the curriculum and the teaching material chosen by her colleague. Therefore, the amount of treatment was rather limited, just including explicit explanation on metaphor and metaphorical expressions along with the concepts underlying them when they happened to appear in the text during translation.

On the other hand, Class 3 was a subtitle translation class in which the author had a great deal of latitude in many respects. She used video clips containing metaphors as teaching materials and asked the students to render them into Japanese subtitles. In this class, although there was explicit teaching, the author tried to keep her instruction to a minimum to promote deductive learning by the students, as explained later. The students were given more opportunity throughout the course to explore the gaps between what is said and what is meant in order to ascertain how metaphorical expressions affect their interpretation.

#### 7.5. Results of the MC-RTs

In order to statistically analyze the effect of the treatments on the students' MC, a paired t-test was performed. Tables 7 to 9 show the results of the pre- and

post-MC-RTs, and Table 10 shows the results of the t-tests performed on these test results. Table 11 shows the effect size of the t-tests.

Table 7. Class 1 statistics

	Mean score	N	SD	Mean of Std. Error
Pre-MC-RT	4.33	21	2.106	.459
Post-MC-RT	4.71	21	2.217	.484

Table 8. Class 2 statistics

	Mean score	N	SD	Mean of Std. Error
Pre-MC-RT	3.05	20	2.235	.500
Post-MC-RT	3.85	20	2.681	.599

Table 9. Class 3 statistics

	Mean score	N	SD	Mean of Std. Error
Pre-MC-RT	3.60	25	1.936	.387
Post-MC-RT	5.24	25	2.570	.514

Table 10. Results of the t-test between pre- and post-MC-RT for Classes 1 to 3

	Paired differences					t	df	p	Sig.
	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Mean of SD Error	95% Confidence Interval					
				Lower	Upper				
Class 1	-.381	2.539	.554	-1.537	.775	-.688	20	.500	ns
Class 2	-.800	2.308	.516	-1.880	.280	-1.550	19	.138	ns
Class 3	-1.640	2.252	.450	-2.570	-.710	-3.641	24	.001	**

\*\* Statistically significant at  $p < .001$ .

Table 11. Effect sizes of each paired t-test<sup>15)</sup>

Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
.15	.34	.60

## 7.6. Discussion

We will now revisit the research questions in light of these findings.

15) Cohen's (1988) range of effect size: Small: 0.02-0.49, Medium: 0.56-0.79, Large: 0.8, and above.

The first question we posed was: Does translation education (L2→L1) contribute to the development of MC in Japanese EFL Learners? (RQ1). The results of the paired t-test of Class 1 did not demonstrate any statistically significant difference that proved the efficacy of translation education, and Class 2 also demonstrated only slightly better results in the paired t-test. On the other hand, the results of the paired t-test for Class 3 were found to be significant at  $p < .001$ . These results suggest that not every translation class contributes unconditionally to the enhancement of MC. As will be explained later in further detail, it is also crucial to select the material and design a curriculum appropriate to the level of the students and the education goals of the class in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

The second question was: Does explicit teaching on metaphor and metaphorical expressions contribute to the development of MC in Japanese EFL learners? (RQ2). Both Classes 2 and 3 demonstrated an increase in their receptive ability, although the former did not reveal any statistically significant results. On the other hand, the mean scores of Class 1 between the two tests did not increase in any significant way. Since Class 1 and Class 2 used the same teaching material, this difference could be attributed to the explicit teaching on metaphor in Class 2. Class 2 and Class 3 were given guidance on metaphorical concepts by the same instructor while Class 1 did not receive any explicit instruction. Considering these facts, it may be concluded that explicit teaching on metaphor and metaphorical expressions is conducive to the enhancement of EFL students' MC.

With regard to the third question: How does subtitle translation help Japanese EFL learners to develop their MC? (RQ3). EFL learners tend to be “word-bound” due to their lack of MC, i.e., they tend to focus solely on words. However, as discussed previously, subtitle translation with its time and space constraints facilitates translators (or EFL learners) going beyond superficial differences to establish the conceptual resemblance between the ST and TT. As to the second factor, the author tried to allocate more time for feedback and revision of the students' translation. Having provided some explicit teaching on the metaphorical nature of the target text and its relationship with translation, she encouraged the students to identify and discuss the translation problems and solve them autonomously. This in effect created more opportunities for the students to actively engage themselves in the situation described by the ST and go through a process of trial and error.

The above two factors, i.e., the use of subtitle translation, and the promotion of deductive learning, as well as the subtitling process itself, promoted the students' MC by effectively compensating the disadvantage of lacking exposure to English in their everyday lives.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper has discussed the relationship between MC and translation, followed by the presentation of the results of the small-scale classroom research conducted by the author on the assumption that subtitle translation is beneficial for the development of the MC of Japanese EFL learners. Statistically meaningful results were obtained only in the MC-RT, which partially confirms this assumption. The findings supported that translation is beneficial for the development of receptive MC by Japanese EFL learners, but in order to achieve the desired goal, the appropriate selection of teaching material and methodologies is crucial. It was also found that a well-balanced combination of explicit teaching and deductive learning is the key to enhancing receptive MC.

In the MC-PT, which was conducted the same time as the MC-RT, on the other hand, no significant results were obtained. The only finding in this regard was that the productive MC of the Japanese EFL learners was much lower compared to their receptive MC, which reconfirmed the findings of Azuma and other researchers. The reason for this should be examined further and discussed in future research.

Although research on this topic has just begun, the results so far look promising. Translation has been criticized for more than 100 years in foreign language pedagogy without a legitimate reason (Cook 2010). However, if conducted properly, there is huge pedagogical potential to compensate for the disadvantage of EFL learners in conventional classroom learning (Zojer 2009). With further research, we will be able to see the effects of MC education on students in a variety of classroom situations. The author looks forward to seeing more in-depth research and empirical data on the MC of EFL learners, on the basis of which it will be possible to find new ways to help students improve their language ability in the future.

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## Appendix 1. MC-RT (Version A)

学籍番号 \_\_\_\_\_ 名前 \_\_\_\_\_  
(Student ID) (Name)

Interpret the meaning of the underlined expressions embedded in the following passages and explain them either in Japanese or in English.

下線部の表現を解釈し、その意味を英語あるいは日本語で書きなさい。

- (1) She had had a lot on her mind lately. Especially at home, and school only made things worse. He knew he had offended her but desperately needed to speak to her. His friend advised him saying, "Wake not a sleeping lion."

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (2) The four men stood huddled together talking quietly.  
"There is a rat in the system somewhere."  
"Private information is being leaked to other companies."  
"I don't trust the boss myself. He may not be involved, but he is a part of the problem."  
"Fish begins to stink at the head."

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (3) Sally and Tom had a beautiful garden. At the bottom of the garden, there was an apple tree. On Sunday afternoon, they picked all the apples and put them in a box. However, a rotten apple had been put in by mistake and it turned all the others bad. When Sally realized this, she said, "The rotten apple injures its neighbors."

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (4) "I told Jane everything," Mickey said. "I told you she can't keep a secret," Ruth said, "She always lets the cat out of the bag."

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (5) Bob and James were discussing Johnny's birthday plans. "So, we'll do a pub crawl then. How many pubs are there in London?" said Bob. "Too many to count," replied James. "Oh well, the main thing Johnny wants for this birthday is to be off his head."

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix 2. MC-RT (Version B)

学籍番号 \_\_\_\_\_ 名前 \_\_\_\_\_  
(Student ID) (Name)

Interpret the meaning of the underlined expressions embedded in the following passages and explain them either in Japanese or in English.

下線のついた表現を解釈し、その意味を英語あるいは日本語で書きなさい。

- (1) She had had a lot on her mind lately. Especially at home, and school only made things worse.

He knew he had offended her but desperately needed to speak to her. His friend advised him saying, "Wake not a sleeping lion."

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (2) "Somerville used to be such a nice area," said Anne.

"Yes," agreed Cheryl, "but once a few bad families started to move in, the area got a really bad reputation."

"The problem is that the rotten apple injures its neighbors." replied Anne.

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (3) One of our teachers cannot even speak English, so that, as we don't grasp any of the main ideas, getting the essay done is such a pain in the neck, since we have no notes.

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (4) The mayor was preparing his campaign speech for the forthcoming election.

He was running against his rival Mr. Thompson, who stood in his way on the road to reelection because he was becoming more popular by the second since proposing to clean up the city.

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (5) The head chef and assistant were in the kitchen with the boss's daughter. She was only five years old.

She wanted to be a chef when she was older. She was about to grab a pot from the cooker, when the chef exclaimed, "A little pot is soon hot."

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This paper was received on 21 February 2016; received in revised form on 13 May 2016; and accepted on 20 May 2016.

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*About the author*

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