The Poetic Metaphor Interpretation Processes of L1 and L2 Readers from a

Relevance Theory Perspective.

by

FEHMI KHELIL

B.A Manouba University, Tunis 1998

M.A Manouba University, Tunis, 2003

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE

Department of English Studies

First supervisor: Dr. Elspeth Jajdelska   Second supervisor: Dr. Habib Abdesslem

2013

Abstract

This study is undertaken to provide a better understanding of the process of poetic metaphor interpretation with a view to enhancing EFL poetry teaching. The study is conducted on twenty postgraduate British and Tunisian students. In this study, I adopted Relevance Theory as a theoretical framework. Relevance Theory (Wilson and Sperber, 2004) views literal and figurative utterances as forming two ends of the same continuum. According to Relevance Theory, conventional metaphors make manifest strong contextual assumptions, which help the reader derive strong contextual implicatures for a minimum amount of cognitive effort. By contrast, creative metaphors make manifest only weak contextual assumptions, which compel the reader to exercise a greater amount of cognitive effort, hence deriving a wide range of weak implicatures. Referring to Relevance Theory, I predicted that the L1 and L2 participants would infer a wider range of implicatures for creative than for conventional metaphors. I also anticipated that the L1 participants would infer fewer implicatures for conventional metaphors and a wider range of implicatures for creative metaphors than the L2 participants. I made use of the think-aloud technique to collect data on the online metaphor interpretation processes. The findings show that the participants looked for general metaphorical frames, against which they interpreted metaphors. They also integrated information from different parts of the text to interpret the metaphors they identified. However, the L1 and L2 participants did not seem motivated to infer rich interpretations for creative metaphors. Though they expended more cognitive effort on the processing of creative metaphors than on conventional metaphors, they basically sought single interpretations. As a whole, the L1 participants inferred more implicatures than the L2 participants, which seems to be attributable to the wider range of literary and symbolic associations they retrieved. Most significantly, the L1 participants seemed to be more efficient than the L2 participants in the interpretation of conventional metaphors, as they showed fewer cases of a literal processing stage than the L2 participants. This seems to be attributed to their greater awareness of underlying conventional conceptual metaphors than the L2 participants. Overall, the findings provide strong support to relevance theory in so far as conventional poetic metaphor interpretation is concerned, as the L1 participants are found to invest less time and to infer stronger implicatures than the L2 participants for these metaphors. By contrast, the findings contradict the relevance theory account of creative poetic metaphor interpretation as the L1 and L2 participants are found not to be motivated to invest sufficient cognitive effort and to derive rich interpretations for creative metaphors.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Theoretical Approaches to Metaphorical Language Interpretation

Chapter Two: Empirical studies on metaphor interpretation processes

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Chapter Four: Major metaphor interpretative processes across the L1 and L2 participants

Chapter Five: Major Differences between the L1 and L2 metaphor interpretation processes

Chapter six: Conclusions and Implications

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

Acknowledgements

Introduction

The aim of this study is to improve our understanding of how EFL learners interpret metaphors while reading poetic texts. Metaphorical language is pervasive in all contexts of language use and represents a basic sub-component of the native speaker's linguistic and communicative competence (Littlemore & Low, 2006). Indeed, for some metaphor is a basic mode of thought rather than a mere figure of decoration (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Turner, 1989), contributing to the structuring of the overall conceptual system governing language, perception and action (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3).

Against this background, Low (1988) states that developing metaphorical competence is of a major importance to EFL learners as it helps them to develop a number of linguistic, cognitive, and communicative skills. Similarly, Littlemore and Low (2006) state that metaphorical competence can contribute centrally to the development of many aspects of L2 learner competence, involving grammatical competence, textual competence, illocutionary competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. In the same vein, Boers (2000) argues that engagement with creative metaphors provides L2 learners with opportunities to engage actively with the language and to reflect on it, which improves their vocabulary learning skills. Engagement with poetic metaphor is also credited with the enhancement of the L2 learners' cultural awareness (Hiraga, 1991; Deignan, Gabrys, & Solska, 1997). Metaphor is, therefore, a major skill that EFL learners need to master in order to enhance their linguistic and communicative skills in the second language context.

In the L1 context, metaphorical competence is stated to develop naturally as part of the linguistic and communicative competence of the native speaker and does not

require extra learning effort. However, L2 learners do not seem to develop their metaphor interpretation skills as easily in the L2 context. Although such a system may have universal features, it is also highly culture-specific and reflects the way a specific community conceptualizes and perceives the world around it (Kovecses, 2005; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Quinn, 1991). Hence, Lakoff (1993) states that "Metaphor mappings vary in universality; some seem to be universal, others are widespread, and some seem to be culture specific" (p.245). This means that while native speakers may develop their metaphorical competence alongside their linguistic and communicative competence, L2 learners are unlikely to acquire and process metaphors with equal success in the L2 context (Picken, 2007, p.60). Hence, Noveck, Bianco, & Castry (2001) state that the comprehension of metaphors by L2 learners "should not be confounded with an expectation that it prompts no extra effort" (p.109).

Existing evidence on L2 learners' processing of metaphorical language shows that they face various kinds of difficulties when dealing with metaphorical expressions. Picken (2007) reports a number of studies conducted within the framework of the conceptual metaphor theory, focusing on the L2 learners' identification and interpretation of metaphors by reference to conceptual metaphors. Picken (2007) found that L2 learners mostly missed potentially metaphorical expressions, treating them at a literal level instead. This was attributed to the L2 learners' ignorance of the underlying conceptual metaphors. Although the research points to the role of conceptual metaphor awareness in aiding the process of metaphor identification and interpretation, existing research shows that awareness of underlying conceptual metaphors is not sufficient to guarantee successful metaphor interpretation (Picken, 2007).

Deignan, Gabrys, and Solska (1997, p.355) report that Polish L2 learners failed to identify metaphors in a translation task, hence translating English metaphorical

expressions literally. Picken (2007, p.75) reported similar findings, showing that L2 readers failed to identify metaphors in the absence of an overt linguistic clue. A follow-up study revealed that advanced L2 learners managed to identify more metaphors than less-advanced learners but still processed many other metaphorical expressions at a literal level. Cieslicka (2006) derived a similar conclusion from a metaphor interpretation study conducted on L2 learners, stating that literal meanings were salient for L2 learners, which caused the L2 learners to miss invisible metaphors.

Metaphor interpretation poses other difficulties to L2 readers besides problems of identification. These difficulties seem to derive basically from the cultural features of the metaphorical expressions. MacArthur (2001) reported that her Spanish learners associated positive qualities such as 'loyalty' to the concept of DOG when interpreting Spanish idiomatic expressions containing the concept DOG. However, these positive connotations were not reflected in the uses of *dog* in Spanish, which suggests that L2 learners' cultural background knowledge may interfere with their processing of target language metaphors. Zapata (2005) found that American L2 learners of Spanish managed to infer similar meanings to their Argentinean counterparts as they interpreted metaphors in Spanish. Nevertheless, they missed out some notions which were only inferred by the Argentinean participants. Littlemore and Low (2006, p. 52) found that Japanese learners derived wrong interpretations for dead metaphorical expressions, such as "The cream of ", taking the expression to denote "a short-lived" notion. Littlemore (2003) reported that although L2 Bangladeshi students were successful in identifying some of the metaphors used by their lecturer, they attributed the wrong connotations to some of the metaphorical expressions employed during the lecture, which seriously affected their comprehension of the material.

Poetry is a widely taught literary genre in relation to which L2 learners can potentially develop a number of skills, including their figurative inferential and interpretative skills (Littlemore & Low, 2006; Lazar, 1993). Widdowson (1983) states that in literary texts readers need to pay closer attention to language than they do in other types of language, thus stating,

> When we read other types of text, we bring some background knowledge to bear on the text and so we don't focus on language closely; however, when we read literary texts we do not have any previous background knowledge and, therefore, we need to pay close attention to the text. (p.30)

Poetic texts ensure a high level of involvement on the part of the reader. In fact, poetry addresses universal themes related to common issues and experiences. Consequently, poetry can serve as a stimulus for engaging the reader's personal feelings and opinions, hence enhancing their critical thinking skills (Picken, 2007; Spack, 1985; Lazar, 1993). Thus, Lazar (1993) states,

> Literature is a useful tool for encouraging students to draw on their own personal experiences, feelings and opinions. It helps students to become more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally in learning English, and hence aids acquisition. (p.24)

More than any other genre, poetry makes a great use of ambiguous, elusive language, which usually takes the shape of creative figurative language. Such creativity creates gaps in the readers' renderings of the text, hence motivating them to engage in inferencing processes to make sense of the text (Lazar, 1993, p.19). Inferential skills employed in response to poetic texts can potentially be transferred to other types of discourse. In fact, normal communicative uses of language always require the derivation of context-based inferences to achieve a full understanding of the communicated message (Lazar, 1993, p.19), and these inferencing skills are mostly triggered by poetic texts. In this regard, Lazar (1993) states,

> It has been argued that literature is a particularly good source for developing students' abilities to infer meaning and to make interpretations … This is because

literary texts are often rich in multiple levels of meaning, and demand that the reader/learner is actively involved in 'teasing out' the unstated implications and assumptions of the text. In a poem, for example, a word may take on a powerful figurative meaning beyond its fixed dictionary definition. Trying to ascertain this significance provides an excellent opportunity for students to discuss their own interpretations, based on the evidence in the text. Thus, by encouraging our students to grapple with the multiple ambiguities of the literary text, we are helping to develop their overall capacity to infer meaning. This very useful skill can then be transferred to other situations where students need to make an interpretation based on implicit or unstated evidence. (p.19)

Widdowson (1979, p. 157) emphasizes the same point in commenting on the role of poetic texts in developing readers' interpretative processes. The same thinking skills can be transferred to other non-literary discourses. Thus he states,

The obvious lack of correspondence between what words mean as lexical elements of the language code, their signification, and what they are required to mean in the context, their value, obliges the reader to engage in what Garfinkel calls 'practical reasoning'. Furthermore, the problematic nature of the task draws the reader's attention to the procedures he must employ. Let me say again that it seems to me that these procedures can essentially be no different from those we employ in the understanding of any use of language, though in poetry more demands tend to be made of them. (p.157)

Poetry reading is also believed to provide opportunities for developing intercultural understanding (Picken, 2007, p.12; Lazar, 1993). In fact, literature exposes the L2 learner to new ways in which common themes and concerns are dealt with in the target culture, thus helping them to enhance their cultural awareness. In this regard, Lazar (1993) states,

Although students may find it easier to respond personally to a text from within their own culture, there is a strong argument for saying that exposing students to literature from other cultures is an enriching and exciting way of increasing their awareness of different values, beliefs, social structures and so on. (p.62)

Despite its potential benefits for the enhancement of L2 learners' inferential and figurative interpretative skills, L2 learners are reported to face many difficulties in interpreting poetic metaphors, thus producing incorrect metaphor interpretations. In fact, failure to interpret metaphorical language is even more apparent and more

detrimental to L2 learners' interpretation of poetry. In this respect, Brindley (1980) states, "Poems often deal with geographical or social settings alien to the students' experience. Perhaps the greatest barrier to understanding poetry, however, is its elliptical, metaphorical, and highly allusive language" (p.01). In the same line, Lazar (1993) states that "Another difficulty students often have with poetry is understanding the multiple ambiguities of metaphorical language - and many poems are rich in metaphors or other figurative uses of language" (p.104). More specifically, Lazar (1993) points to the potential difficulties cultural differences may pose to the L2 reader. Thus she states,

> Another problem that can arise is that readers interpret metaphors by drawing on their own individual associations. To some extent these associations will be determined by the customs and conventions of their society. A red rose in British society, for example, generally signifies love, romance, passion. But we may find that students from other societies have different cultural associations when interpreting this metaphor. (p.106)

Research on the L2 learners' metaphor interpretation processes in poetic texts is very rare, but existing studies reveal some aspects of their interpretative tendencies and unfold some of their processing difficulties. Cardoso and Vieira (1995) reports that high school Brazilian learners faced difficulties in deciding on a figurative or literal interpretation of a surface level linguistic metaphor encountered in a lyrical song. Learners' confusion was traced back to their ignorance of a crucial lexical item which was judged to be indispensable for the identification of metaphorical meaning. However, the study also reported that L2 learners failed to identify metaphors even when glosses were provided for difficult words in the poem. Chang (2002) found that advanced-level MA Chinese students faced difficulties even with the initial stage of inferring the metaphor topic. Only with the help of the researcher, who pointed out

some clues to the learners, were the participants able to notice metaphors and come to plausible interpretations.

The above interpretation mistakes can be attributed to inadequate literary teaching approaches, which provide little guidance to L2 learners to develop a number of poetry interpretation skills, including metaphor interpretation. Lazar (1993) provides a critical review of major literature teaching procedures, highlighting their inefficiency in developing the learners' literary interpretation skills. One of the traditional teaching approaches assessed by Lazar (1993) expects the reader to respond personally to the text by relying on their own intuitions, overlooking the role of the reader's cultural background in the interpretative process. No guidance is provided to the learners as to how the interpretation task can be conducted. Thus Lazar (1993) states,

> In the teaching of literature, traditional practical criticism has relied on the intuitions of the reader to form critical judgements. Students are presented with a text and expected to arrive spontaneously at an appreciation of its literary qualities, without any explicit guidance as to how this is to be done. The difficulty with this approach is that the language learners' intuitions about the language may be quite different from those of the native speaker, since their linguistic, cultural and literary backgrounds are likely to be different… Being expected to appreciate a text, therefore, without being given a clear strategy for doing so, might only make students feel bored, mystified or demotivated. (p. 31)

Stylistic analysis is another approach that has been employed in the literature classroom with a view to enabling learners to produce sound literary interpretations which are justified by textual evidence. While this approach can guide learners to derive less idiosyncratic and more accurate and plausible interpretations, exclusive reliance on stylistic analysis may impede the development of critical thinking and inferential skills. In fact, this approach may reduce the interpretative task to a mechanical surface level endeavour, which prevents the learner from responding personally to the text and from venturing their personal opinions and views. This approach may also deny the reader access to background information that learners may

find helpful in interpreting poetic texts and included metaphorical language. Thus Lazar

(1993) states,

> While stylistic analysis can provide the learners with a procedure for interpreting
> literary texts, it cannot actually interpret the text for them …Stylistic analysis, if
> applied too rigidly, treats the text as a self-contained entity with little reference to the
> social, cultural or historical background in which it is grounded. By concentrating on
> the language of the text in isolation teachers may neglect to provide students with
> important background information which could be required to make sense of the text
> …Stylistic analysis is a rather mechanical approach to studying literature - it deadens
> the students' emotional response to what they are reading.(P. 35)

Literature teaching is also conducted through a content-based approach, which

consists of providing learners with lots of background knowledge about a poet or poetic

period. Although this approach provides ample historical and cultural knowledge to the

readers, it does not help learners to respond personally to the text nor does it help them

to exploit textual information adequately to provide text-based interpretations. Hence

Lazar (1993) states,

> The literature as content approach does not help learners develop a response to poetic
> texts on the basis of the linguistic intricacies of the text, nor does it encourage
> learners to contribute their personal view and feelings, expecting an interpretation
> from the teacher most of the time. Although this approach provides them with the
> necessary social, political, and historical background of the text, which represent the
> cultural information needed for the interpretation of the text, it still ignores the
> linguistic level and minimizes the reader's personal interaction. (pp. 23-25)

Lazar (1993) also points to the fact that learners are not always willing to respond

personally to the literary text and to fully exploit the meaning potential of literary texts.

This she attributes to specific teaching approaches which do not prepare learners to

seek rich interpretations for literary texts. Thus she states that "there may be all sorts of

reasons why students are unwilling to give their personal opinions or reactions in the

classroom. Perhaps their traditional mode of education has stressed rote learning and a

rather authoritarian role for the teacher" (p. 42). She also surmises that "students may

lack confidence in doing so; they may lack appropriate strategies for making interpretations; or the notion of playing with different interpretations may quite simply be culturally alien to them" (p.101).

The major poetry teaching methods do not seem to follow a skills-based approach to poetry interpretation. In other words, teaching methods seem to pay no systematic attention to such literary interpretation skills as the interpretation of figurative language, assuming that L2 learners can identify metaphors as easily as L1 learners and can activate the relevant background knowledge for their interpretation. In addition, current teaching practice shows no evidence of raising the L2 learners' awareness of the distinction between universal and culture-specific metaphors, assuming that L2 learners are as successful as L1 learners in noticing the distinction and in adjusting their interpretative effort accordingly. Another assumption which is apparently held by current teaching approaches is that L2 learners are motivated to respond personally to metaphorical language and to seek rich interpretations for metaphorical ambiguity.

These different teaching shortcomings can be attributed to a lack of a sound theoretical framework for the teaching of poetry. Thus teachers remain in the dark as to the causes underlying their learners' interpretation mistakes and ways to develop their literary interpretation skills. In fact, existing research studies have left a number of important issues unexplored in relation to the L2 learners' metaphor interpretation skills. There is still inconclusive evidence on whether L2 learners can identify metaphors easily as they engage with poetic metaphors with different levels of explicitness and creativity. In addition, research findings provide little information on whether L2 learners can distinguish between creative and conventional metaphors and can adjust their interpretative effort accordingly. Regarding creative metaphors, research studies conducted so far do not determine the extent to which L2 learners are

motivated to engage with creative metaphors and to seek a wide range of interpretations for them. A major gap in research findings on L2 learners' poetic metaphor interpretation relates to the sources of knowledge L2 learners draw on in interpreting creative poetic metaphors and whether they make efficient use of these knowledge resources. Most of all, research on L2 learners' poetic metaphor interpretation has paid limited attention to the cognitive processes underlying poetic metaphor interpretation.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the construction of a sound theoretical framework which can be reliably drawn on in the EFL poetry classroom. Such a theoretical framework would be of greater reliability if it is supported by empirical data on L2 learners' metaphor interpretation processes. In fact, empirical information on cognitive processes underlying metaphor interpretation can draw links between poetic metaphor interpretation products and the cognitive processes underlying them. Thus, process data can reveal successful metaphor interpretation processes, which can be modelled to less successful learners. Process data can also pinpoint interpretation deficiencies or knowledge gaps, which can account for metaphor interpretation mistakes. Consequently, such information could render teacher intervention more efficient for enhancing their learners' creative metaphor interpretation skills. Thus teachers would be able to decide what meta-linguistic awareness should be provided to the learners, what specific skills should be modelled, what sources of knowledge learners may need to be equipped with or encouraged to access, and the processing effort they need to expend on different types of metaphors.

To fill in the gap in the research on poetic metaphor interpretation, I elected to conduct an empirical study focusing on the poetic interpretations processes of two groups of L1 and L2 learners. More specifically, I opted for a think-aloud technique to collect data on L1 and L2 learners' cognitive processes. I selected this tool among other

data collection tools as found it to be useful for yielding reliable process data, on the basis of which valid insights into cognitive processes underlying metaphor interpretation could be derived. I also found this tool suitable for the participants taking part in the present study as well as for the inferential activities which the metaphor interpretation task is bound to engage the participants in (See Chapter three, section 3.5.4 below for a detailed discussion of this data collection tool).

For an insightful examination of the readers' metaphor interpretation processes, I framed my study within a plausible cognitive pragmatic theory, namely Relevance Theory. I selected Relevance theory as a framework for my study as it offers general communicative and cognitive principles which could potentially account for the interpretation of all types of metaphorical language, creative and conventional as well as implicit and explicit. In addition, the theory could potentially account for variations as well as similarities in metaphor interpretations across different readers. Thus the theory offers a stronger explanatory power and generalizability potential than other pragmatic theories. At a practical level, the theory lends itself to operationalization and is, therefore, amenable to empirical testing. Thus the theory offers a reliable framework for conducting a well-informed investigation of the metaphor interpretation process (See Chapter One, section 1.4.4.3 for a discussion of the main tenets of Relevance theory). However, I take Relevance theory as a starting point for conducting a focused empirical study with a view to reaching a more precise understanding of the process of poetic metaphor interpretation rather than as an attempt to validate or disconfirm the relevance theory heuristic as a whole.

This thesis has two objectives:

1. Advance our understanding of the metaphor interpretation processes used by L1 and L2 participants and determine whether L1 and L2 participants use different or similar interpretative processes.

2. Investigate aspects of relevance theory empirically, and especially:

   a. How far metaphor identification is a one stage process

   b. Whether the L1 and L2 participants are motivated to seek a wide range of implicatures for creative metaphors.

   c. Whether the L1 and L2 participants readers manage to infer a wide range of implicatures when investing sustained cognitive effort on creative metaphors.

   d. Whether L1 and L2 participants rely on the same sources of knowledge when interpreting creative and conventional metaphors

These objectives are pursued through the following research questions:

1- What processing strategies do the L1 and L2 participants make use of while interpreting poetic metaphors? Do they use the same processing strategies?

2- Will the L1 and L2 participants identify more metaphors in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" than in the poem "Crossing the Bar"?

3- Will the L1 participants identify fewer conventional metaphors and more creative metaphors than the L2 participants ?

4- Will the L1 and L2 participants identify and interpret metaphors directly or will they consider literal readings first? Are the L2 participants as efficient as the L1 participants in the identification and interpretation of metaphors, both creative and conventional?

5- Do the L1 and L2 participants limit their interpretative effort to the immediate boundaries of the metaphorical expression or do they process a wider discourse context?

6- What knowledge resources do the L1 and L2 participants draw on in inferring metaphorical interpretations? Do they use the same knowledge resources?

7- Are the L1 and L2 participants motivated to seek rich ranges of implicatures for the creative metaphorical expressions they identify?

8- Will the L1 and L2 participants invest more effort on the interpretation of creative metaphors than on the interpretation of conventional metaphors? Will the L1 and L2 participants invest a similar amount of time on the processing of conventional and creative metaphors?

9- Do the L1 and L2 participants infer more implicatures for those metaphors they invest more processing effort on?

10- Will the L1 and L2 participants infer the same number of implicatures for conventional and creative metaphors?

11- Will the L1 and L2 participants derive similar interpretations for conventional and creative metaphors?

Chapter One establishes a theoretical framework for the study, surveying a number of theoretical accounts of metaphor and testing them against three criteria: cognitive efficiency; range of metaphors explained by the theory; and richness and plausibility of metaphor implicatures derived. I conclude that Relevance theory provides a more plausible account of the metaphorical interpretative process than other metaphor theories based on these criteria.

In Chapter Two, I review a number of metaphor interpretation studies conducted in the L1 and L2 context. The review is meant to reveal the main findings on the process

of metaphor interpretation as conducted by L1 and L2 readers and to identify the research gaps to be redressed. The review concludes that little research has been conducted on the process of metaphor interpretation, thus leaving a number of questions unexplored. It is not known to what extent L1 and L2 readers are willing to engage in creative inferential processes in dealing with creative poetic metaphors, whether they invest sufficient effort interpreting poetic metaphors, and what knowledge resources they draw on while interpreting metaphors. In addition, it is not well established whether the L2 readers use the same metaphor processing strategies as the L1 participants, access the same knowledge resources as the L1 participants, and whether they are as efficient as the L1 participants in interpreting both conventional and creative metaphors.

I devote Chapter Three to the outlining of the research methodology I make use of to address these research gaps. I reinstate the research objectives, and list the research questions and the research hypotheses underlying the present study. Then I outline the research methodology procedure, discussing the rationale for the selection of a qualitative approach and the case study method as a general research paradigm. Next I describe the participants' profiles and the poems chosen for the study. Then I describe the data collection tool employed in this study, namely the think-aloud technique, emphasizing its suitability for the present study's objectives. Last I describe the data analysis procedure, based on qualitative and quantitative tools.

Chapters Four and Five are concerned with the analysis of the L1 and L2 participants' poetic metaphor interpretation processes. Chapter Four shows that both the L1 and L2 participants share two major metaphor interpretation processes and implicature generation tendencies. Thus most participants in both groups tended to look for central metaphors or general themes within the poems to facilitate the process of

metaphor interpretation. When such a strategy fails, the participants opted for a more text-based analytic process, integrating information and interpreting metaphors against each other. A minority group in each language group showed exclusive reliance on the central metaphor/idea strategy, showing little integrative and analytical effort. The chapter also shows that the majority of the participants were mostly inclined to seek single interpretations for creative as well as conventional metaphors, rarely seeking more than one possible interpretation. However, a small group of participants in both language groups showed a greater tendency than the remaining participants to seek multiple interpretations for some metaphors. The findings show that contrary to expectations, the participants inferred more implicatures in the poem where conventional metaphors prevailed, namely the poem "Crossing the Bar", than in the other two poems where more creative metaphors prevailed. The findings suggest that participants may look for rich interpretations when concepts making up the metaphorical expressions make accessible familiar literary, symbolic associations but are less willing to infer rich interpretations for concepts evoking no conventional or symbolic associations. The chapter also shows that the participants did not infer more interpretations for the poem they invested more time on, namely the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", suggesting that extended effort on creative metaphors does not result in richer interpretations being inferred. However, individual cases show that refocusing on metaphorical expressions more than once gave the reader a better chance to enrich the metaphorical meanings inferred.

Chapter Five focuses on the main differences between the L1 and L2 participants. The chapter shows that the L1 participants identified more metaphors than the L2 participants. A major difference is that the L1 participants identified more conventional metaphors than the L2 participants. This finding was attributed to the fact that the L1

participants identified the conventional conceptual metaphors against which the poem "Crossing the Bar" could potentially be interpreted, which might have brought some conventional metaphors to the foreground. By contrast, only a few L2 participants showed evidence of conventional conceptual metaphors in their process data. Hence, they missed some of the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar". No clear pattern emerged in the identification of creative metaphors, as the L1 participants identified more metaphors in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" while the L2 participants identified more metaphors in the poem "Snow". The chapter also shows that the participants mostly relied on a one-stage interpretative process. Nevertheless, the L2 participants showed significantly more cases of a two-stage interpretative process than the L1 participants. This was mostly noted in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar", where conventional metaphors prevail. The finding suggests that awareness of conventional metaphors facilitated the process of metaphor identification and interpretation for the L1 participants, especially when conventional metaphors are concerned. The chapter also reveals the types of contextual assumptions the L1 and L2 participants made use of in interpreting metaphors. The findings show that the participants in both groups mostly used assumptions from their knowledge of the world. However, the L1 participants made greater use of symbolic, literary, and lexical assumptions than the L2 participants. The findings suggest that the L1 participants have a wider range of intuitions about the connotations of some words and concepts than the L2 participants. Differences were also noted in connection with the processing effort and range of implicatures the L1 and L2 participants inferred for conventional and creative metaphors. As a whole, the L1 participants invested less time on the interpretation of the three poems than the L2 participants. However, this difference was particularly noted in connection with the poem "Crossing the Bar". At the same time,

the L1 participants inferred more implicatures than the L2 participants in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar". This finding suggests that the L1 participants are more efficient in the interpretation of conventional metaphors than the L2 participants, spending less time and inferring more implicatures. Although both groups of participants showed more converging implicatures in relation to the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than in the other two poems, the L1 participants still showed more convergence than the L2 participants. This can be attributed to the fact that most L1 participants identified one or more of the conventional conceptual metaphors underlying the poem "Crossing the Bar", while only three L2 participants interpreted the metaphorical expressions in the poem "Crossing the Bar" against a relevant conventional conceptual metaphor. No major convergence cases were noted in relation to the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow", although there were many cases of similar interpretations both within and across participant groups.

Chapter Six discusses how the present study's findings affect the debate over metaphor and derives a set of pedagogical implications that can be applied to EFL teaching.

Chapter One

Theoretical Approaches to Metaphorical Language

Interpretation

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical background for the thesis. It is designed to establish a plausible theoretical account of metaphor interpretation, which will be used as the theoretical framework for the empirical investigation of L1 and L2 learners' poetic metaphor interpretative processes. By referring to a plausible metaphor theory, I aim to provide a persuasive account of the poetic metaphor interpretation processes used by L1 and L2 learners. The empirical investigation of such a theory can help advance our understanding of the cognitive nature of poetic metaphor interpretation. Together with the empirical findings on the L1 and L2 learners' poetic metaphor processes, such a theoretical framework can help EFL teachers devise more effective metaphor interpretation procedures. In this respect, I consider that a poetic metaphor interpretation theory will be most effective if it can provide a plausible account for the way metaphorical interpretation is actually carried out by real readers. Thus a sound metaphor interpretation theory would be valid if it can

    (i)   provide a basis for the inferring of rich and contextually plausible metaphor interpretations and can account for diversity of metaphor interpretations across different readers.

    (ii)   provide an efficient account of cognitive processing effort, and

(iii)   has the potential to account for the interpretation of all instances of

metaphorical expressions; that is, all types of metaphorical language

ranging from conventional to creative metaphors.

The present chapter is structured as follows: the first section introduces and defines

metaphor and explains the relevant criteria for an appropriate theory of metaphor for

the purposes of this thesis. The second section reviews and discusses the main tenets of

a set of major metaphor theories. The review covers the comparison theory (Ortony,

1993), the interactive theory (Black, 1993), the conceptual mapping theory (Lakoff &

Johnson, 1980), the domain-interaction theory (Tourangeau & Sternberg, 1981), the

structure mapping theory, the class-inclusion theory (Gentner, 1983), Grice's standard

pragmatic theory (1975), the graded-salience theory (Giora, 1997), and finally

relevance theory (Wilson & Sperber, 2004). The review demonstrates the shift in

metaphor theory from exclusively semantic and conceptual accounts of metaphorical

language interpretation, to pragmatic theories which focus on the cognitive and

pragmatic principles underlying metaphor interpretation. The last section sums up the

main shortcomings of the decontextualized metaphor theories and concludes that

relevance theory (Wilson & Sperber, 2004) provides a more persuasive account of

metaphor interpretation than previous metaphor theories, which can guide the empirical

investigation of readers' poetic metaphor interpretative processes.

1.2 Definition of Terms

A general view held by a range of scholars from different disciplines (e.g., Lakoff

& Johnson 1980; Gibbs, 1994; Gentner 1983) is that metaphor consists in the mapping

of properties of a particular concept from one conceptual domain, commonly referred to

as the source domain, onto another concept belonging to a different conceptual domain,

known as the target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) put it: "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p.5). Thus in the sentence "The camel is the ship of the desert", the source domain belongs to the conceptual domain of ships while the target domain belongs to the conceptual domain of animals. On the basis of the terminology used by Richards (1936) the concept being used metaphorically is referred to as the vehicle, represented in the last example by the concept SHIP, while the concept on which the vehicle is mapped is referred to as the tenor, for which the concept CAMEL stands. The relationship between the tenor and vehicle is referred to as the ground. The ground refers to the characteristics mapped from the vehicle concept onto the tenor concept.

1.2.1 Scale of Metaphor Creativity

Another major factor which affects metaphor interpretation relates to the degree of originality of metaphors. Traditionally, a clear-cut distinction was drawn between two types of metaphor, namely dead metaphors and live metaphors (Searle, 1993; Fraser 1993; MacCormac, 1985). Dead metaphors are traditionally used to refer to metaphorical expressions, the figurative aspect of which is no longer present to the consciousness of the native speaker. The meanings of dead metaphors are retrieved automatically as would be a literal utterance. Fraser (1993) defines a dead metaphor as "simply an idiom, which was once a live metaphor, but which is now to be treated as a conventionalized form in the language" (p. 330). Following this definition, the following examples can be regarded as dead metaphors:

1- He is at the peak of his career now,

2- I have reached the conclusion that we need to go our separate ways, and

3- I invested a lot of time in this project.

In the previous examples, the phrases "peak of his career", "reached the conclusion", and "invested a lot of time" are likely to be interpreted effortlessly as literal utterances as the figurative force of the vehicle terms is no longer active.

On the other hand, live metaphors, also referred to as creative or novel metaphors (Gibbs, 1994; Steen, 1994) refer to unconventional, original metaphorical expressions created by individual speakers. Creative metaphors do not yield definite meanings and, therefore, require the presence of context and an inferencing effort on the part of the reader to be interpreted adequately. Example (4) below presents a case of a creative metaphor:

4- We are about to witness a high rising tower in the landscape of reform.

Unlike dead metaphors, this creative metaphor draws the readers' attention to its original creative vehicle "high rising tower".

Other metaphor scholars introduced a third category in between the traditional categories, which they referred to as conventional (Steen, 1994) or familiar metaphors (Giora & Fein, 1999).

Conventional metaphors refer to metaphorical expressions the figurative meanings of which are still consciously available to the hearer together with their potential literal meanings. Examples (5) and (6) below show instances of conventional metaphors:

5- He wants to build a brilliant career before his last sleep.

6- If you don't argue strongly, he will wipe you out.

In both sentences, the expressions "his last sleep" and "wipe you out" are likely to strike the interpreter as metaphorical expressions in contrast to the metaphorical expressions "brilliant career" and "argue strongly", which are likely to go unnoticed as dead metaphors. Nevertheless, both expressions differ from dead metaphors in that they still maintain their figurative force alongside their literal meanings. Like creative

metaphors, conventional metaphors strike the audience as figurative utterances. However, unlike creative metaphors, they offer immediate unequivocal meanings for the addressee while creative metaphors engage the addressee in an extended inferential process to realize their intended meanings.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) refer to conventional metaphors as live metaphors and they refer to creative metaphors as novel metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) propose a conceptual account of their categorization. According to their conceptual metaphor theory, conventional or live metaphors are surface level metaphorical expressions which can be traced back to underlying conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphors are complex metaphoric concepts which consist of the mapping of one conceptual domain onto another. Thus, the metaphorical expressions "build a career" and "last sleep" in example (5) above can be traced back to the conceptual metaphors CAREERS ARE BUILDINGS and DEATH IS SLEEP respectively, while the metaphorical expression "wipe you out" in example (6) above can be traced back to the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR. Thus, the native English speaker and probably other speakers from other cultural communities who are familiar with these conventional conceptual metaphors can draw definite interpretations for these metaphorical expressions and similar ones.

A major shortcoming of these distinctions is the presumption that metaphorical expressions can be easily fitted into clear-cut categories of metaphors. In actual fact, metaphorical expressions show an indefinite range of creativity and, therefore, resist clear-cut categorization. This property is plausibly addressed by Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 2004), which views metaphorical language as extending along a continuum, which ranges from dead metaphors at one end of the continuum to creative metaphors at the other end.

Thus, I shall use the labels dead, conventional, and creative metaphors to refer to metaphors as being located close to the conventional or creative end of the continuum rather than as clear-cut metaphor tokens. Such a categorization offers a more accurate account of metaphor interpretation than purely formal accounts of metaphor as it does not restrict the interpretative context to the decontextualized formal features of explicit metaphorical expressions but takes into account the role of the reader's background knowledge and his/her interaction with the discourse context in treating a particular stretch of language as metaphorical and in determining the range of interpretations that can be inferred.

1.2.2 Topic versus vehicle

The dichotomy most commonly used in the identification of a metaphorical expression involves a distinction between a topic and a vehicle concept (Richards, 1936). On this account, an explicit metaphor would involve explicit topic and vehicle concepts at the surface level of the text. According to Furniss and Bath (2007), the topic and vehicle concepts must share the same part of speech to count as such. The following example illustrates this type of explicit metaphor:

7- Her sons are the flowers of her life

In example (7) "Her sons" and "the flowers of her life" are both noun phrases and so share the same grammatical category. In this example, "her sons" functions as an explicit Topic, while 'The flowers of her life' functions as an explicit vehicle term.

This topic-vehicle dichotomy is not, however, useful for identifying explicit metaphors, the non-literal component of which does not function as a vehicle. In these cases, the non-literal word does not share the same grammatical category with

the literal words with which it comprises the metaphorical expression and therefore does not establish a co-referential relationship with the topic concept. Another dichotomy is proposed to account for the latter type of distinction.

1.2.3 Frame versus Focus

Black (1993, p.27) proposes another dichotomy which deals with a different distinction between figurative and literal meanings. The dichotomy is comprised of the concepts Frame and Focus. This dichotomy treats the non-literal component as the Focus of the metaphorical expression and considers the literal background against which the Focus stands as the Frame. The following example illustrates the latter type of distinction:

8- The great bay-window was Spawning snow and pink roses against it

Elaborating on Black's Focus-Frame dichotomy, Steen (1999, p. 86) defines Frame as "the next grammatical category up in the linguistic structure of the sentence". This suggests that the focus and frame are to be identified at the phrase level or clause level at the furthest. In example (8) above, the non-literal verb "Spawning" is predicated of the argument noun phrase "The great bay-window". As the non-literal word does not share the same part of speech as the literal word, then it does not metaphorically refer to the same idea or concept being referred to by the Topic word and, therefore, does not count as a vehicle. Instead, "spawning" functions as the Focus of the metaphorical expression, while the rest of the clause forms the literal Frame. Using Black's model, the Frame in the present example will be represented as "the great bay-window X snow and pink roses against it".

1.2.4 Implicit versus explicit metaphors

Explicit metaphors refer to metaphorical expressions in which both the topic and vehicle concepts are overtly mentioned. By contrast, implicit metaphorical expressions refer to two types of metaphors, which Steen (1999, p.86) categorizes into co-textual and contextual implicit metaphors. The first type involves metaphorical expressions the literal and non-literal components of which are located across clause boundaries. Example (10) below illustrates this type of co-textual implicit metaphors:

(9) The A B C of being

   The ruddy temper, the hammer
   Of red and blue, the hard sound—
   Steel against intimation—the sharp flesh,
   The vital, arrogant, fatal, dominant X.

In the example above, the topic of the metaphor, "the ABC of being", is elaborated in terms of a series of vehicle terms in the next stanza.

The second type of implicit metaphors involves the literal referents of which do not feature at all in the co-text but are to be derived from the situation model constructed through the text (Steen, 1999, p. 86). The following example from Tennyson's "Crossing the bar" illustrates a contextual implicit metaphor:

10- And may there be no sadness of farewell,

    When I embark

In this example, the term "embark" may be interpreted non-literally as referring to the "immediate moments following death". This literal referent does not,

however, feature anywhere in the poem but is to be inferred from the situation model constructed from within the text.

1.4 Metaphor Theories

In this section I show that theories of metaphor in the 20th century have moved from purely referentialist and semantic accounts of metaphor interpretation to conceptual accounts and finally to more pragmatic accounts. The different theories are evaluated against the criteria set above (see Introduction above). Indeed, a theoretical account meeting these criteria carries the promise of providing a plausible explanation of the process of metaphor interpretation. Throughout I argue that the shift in metaphor theory has culminated in more powerful pragmatic theories of metaphor interpretation. I conclude the chapter with an explanation for the selection of Relevance theory, which seems to provide a more persuasive account of the process of poetic metaphor interpretation than other existing metaphor theories. Relevance theory is then chosen as the most suitable framework for my empirical work.

1.4.1 Referentialist and Descriptive Metaphor Theories

This section provides a discussion of a number of major metaphor theories which can be described as referentialist and descriptivist theories of metaphor (Leezenberg, 2001). The theories reviewed below provide different aspects of the information properties and knowledge structures which are likely to be mapped from the vehicle onto the tenor concept.

1.4.1.1 Comparison theory

Leezenberg (2001) views comparison theory as adopting a referentialist account of metaphor interpretation (Leezenberg, 2001, p.71). According to the comparison theory; Miller 1993; Ortony 1993), a metaphor is generated by a set of features shared by the

referents making up the metaphorical expression. For instance, stating that,

11-   His father is a king at home.

encourages the reader to transfer features from the denoted referent of king to the denoted referent of father.

Comparison theory has been criticized on a number of levels. In fact, Black (1955) argues that similarities can be identified liberally between any two objects, yet not all similarities are seen as metaphorical. Moreover, not all similarities are considered in metaphor interpretation and only a subset of similarities is observed in a specific context. Comparison theory does not, however, state how specific similarities or shared features are selected rather than others. Moreover, comparison theory implies that metaphors cannot create similarities whereas in actual fact, many metaphorical expressions do create ad hoc similarities between the compared objects (Tendahl, 2009, p. 1).

Ortony (1993, p.350), a proponent of comparison theory, responds to the criticism leveled against the comparison theory by stating that only salient features are selected from the vehicle concept and attributed to less-salient features in the tenor. Thus in dealing with the metaphorical expression "His father is a king at home", the reader would select among other salient features such features as authoritarian, self-indulgent, and ordering people around. Again, Ortony's (1993) defence of comparison theory does not state how specific features come to be perceived as salient. While the saliency principle can help account for conventional metaphors in the following examples,

12- He is a lion.
13- His house is a pigsty.
14- She is a rose.

The comparison theory is not effective in accounting for creative metaphors or even creative uses of conventional metaphors. In the previous examples, the features of bravery, dirtiness, and beauty may be conventionally transferred from the referents denoted by the words lion, pigsty and rose to their corresponding tenor referents. In these cases, the comparison theory can help narrow down the range of most relevant features being communicated, thus making efficient use of cognitive effort and yielding relevant interpretations. However, taking a creative metaphor such as,

15- My brother is a bear.

it is not clear which high-salient features in the vehicle referent are mostly relevant to the communicator's intended message. In fact, the denoted referent bear can yield a wide array of features, which involve strength, greed, hairiness, sleepiness, fish eating, etc. In this case, the range of potential similarities is left rather open-ended and comparison theory offers no principled way to infer plausible interpretations that may becoherent with the overall discourse context. Similarly, stating that she is my rose may refer to beauty in some contexts, but it may also refer to an ephemeral, fleeting passion in another context. In this case, the features of beauty or delicacy, which can be conventionally transferred from the referent rose, are demoted while the less salient feature of a short life span is foregrounded.

The referentialist account underlying the comparison theory comes up against another major difficulty. Indeed, Tourangeau and Sternberg (1982) argue that the properties which are assumed to be shared by the vehicle and tenor referents may not be literally true of the vehicle referent but are rather figuratively inferred. The following example illustrates the above process:

16- My friend is a one-way road.

In the example above, the properties of obstinacy, single-mindedness, intolerance, or determination, which the metaphor may encourage the reader to consider as possible attributes of the referent my friend are not literally true of the vehicle referent one-way road. The principle of similarity posited by comparison theory does not, however, explain how such attributes can be possibly inferred. Moreover, Leezenberg (2001, p. 74) argues that many metaphorical expressions do not involve the perception of actual referential properties shared by the metaphor referents but, instead, involve the activation of stereotypical properties conventionally associated with one of the component referents of the metaphor. One such metaphor is exemplified by the following example,

17- How would you like me to enjoy an owl? Of course I did not enjoy the concert.

In this example, "owl" can be used to denote a horrific singer sound. The horrific sound property may not, however, be an actual property of the owl's sound but is rather a stereotypical feature associated with the owl in some cultures. In this respect, Black (1962, p. 37) argues that metaphorical language does not so much involve the perception of preexisting referential properties as the creation of new similarities. Similarly, Searle (1993, p.102) argues that many metaphorical expressions involve the activation of cultural stereotypes rather than the mere consideration of referents and their properties. This point is discussed more thoroughly in the next section on the interactive theory of metaphor and later in dealing with Grice's standard model.

The discussion so far shows that the comparison theory can help explain the interpretation of a limited range of metaphors involving clear perceptual similarities or

metaphors used in a conventional sense. With these metaphors, the principle of relevance seems to offer an efficient interpretative account. However, the theory is less effective in dealing with creative metaphors showing no obvious similarities or involving stereotypical features rather than actual properties of the referents. In the former case, the theory seems to over-generalize the range of possible interpretations while in the latter it seems inefficient in narrowing down on the most relevant interpretations. Moreover, the theory gives no explanation as to how certain features not literally true of the vehicle referent come to be attributed to the tenor referent. The comparison theory seems to limit the interpretative process to the local boundaries of the metaphorical expressions, and more particularly to the extensional properties of its component referents but acknowledges no role for the context of utterance, both linguistic and extralinguistic, in determining the interpretative process. Denial of the wider context would deny the reader access to relevant information that would help generate plausible interpretations for the metaphorical expression at hand.

1.4.1.2 Interaction theory

The interaction theory represents an advance over the comparison theory (Ortony, 1993; Black, 1993). Leezenberg (2001, p. 78) views the interactive theory as a descriptive theory of metaphor, which holds the view that metaphor interpretation is not based on the words' referential meanings but rather on the sense or intension of the words making up the metaphor. Leezenberg (2001) refers to this level of word meaning as,

> The descriptive information associated with it [which] may, but need not be, part of the meaning of an expression in the stricter sense of the word. It may also be more loosely associated with it, and constitute its connotation rather than its denotation. (p. 78)

Black (1993) refers to this type of information as the "system of associated

commonplaces" (p. 28) related to a word. According to proponents of the interaction theory (Black, 1993, Ortony, 1993; McGlone & Manfredi, 2001), metaphor creates similarities between the tenor and vehicle concepts rather than records pre-existing shared properties (Black, 1993, p. 35). In this respect, Black (1993) states that "it would be more illuminating ... to say that the metaphor creates the similarity than to say that it formulates some similarity antecedently existing" (p. 35). On the interaction theory account, the referential meaning of the word does not determine its metaphorical meaning; rather the word used metaphorically acquires a new meaning in the new metaphorical context in which it is used (Leezenberg, 2001, p. 78).

While the referentialist theories (see section 1.4.1.1 on Comparison Theory above for a discussion of referentialist theories) emphasize similarity at the referential level as a means for the identification and interpretation of metaphor, descriptivist theories, such as the interaction theory, emphasize the notion of dissimilarity as a main factor guiding the recognition and interpretation of metaphors. The reader identifies a "'logical opposition' or 'semantic clash' between the words that warrants the *recognition* of a metaphor" (Leezenberg, 2001, p. 79). The recognition of the semantic or logical anomaly at the surface linguistic level results in the rejection of the literal sense of the word and the search for a new sense for the vehicle term, which Beardsley (1962) refers to as the "metaphorical twist" (p. 294). On this account metaphor interpretation consists of transferring aspects of the vehicle word's meaning to the tenor word to derive a metaphorical sense (Leezenberg, 2001, p. 79).

Interaction theory marks an advance over the comparison theory as it gives an attempt at describing the process of metaphor interpretation (Gibbs, 1992, p. 587). According to the interaction theory, the tenor word constrains the derivation of a set of implications associated with the vehicle word, which in turn shapes the perception of

the tenor word (Black, 1993, p. 28). Considering the following example from the perspective of the interaction theory,

18- The Bible was her shield.

The tenor term Bible constrains the reader to activate a set of implications relating to the vehicle term shield, which could be applied to the term bible. Implications associated with the vehicle word shield would involve such implications as resistance to attacks and providing protection. These are mapped onto a corresponding set of implications related to the word bible. These would involve implications such as moral protection against temptation and evil-doing, psychological satisfaction and comfort, resistance to life difficulties and ordeals, protection against unwelcome company, etc.

Interaction theory offers a more plausible account of how creative metaphors are interpreted than the comparison theory as it emphasizes the construction of a metaphor interpretation during the interpretative process rather than the selection of preexisting shared features between the tenor and vehicle referents. A major shortcoming of the interaction theory relates to its assumption that metaphor identification proceeds through an initial literal interpretation phase. In this regard, Leezenberg (2001) states that "a logical clash, category mistake, or semantic anomaly is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for a sentence or statement being a metaphor" (p. 79). In fact, an utterance may show no semantic anomaly and yet can be interpreted metaphorically given a specific context. In addition, utterances apparently showing semantic anomaly may admit literal interpretations in some possible context. In such cases, the principle of semantic anomaly posited by the interaction theory does not provide an efficient account of cognitive processing effort as it presumes that the reader would engage in an unnecessary processing stage prior to the identification of a metaphor.

However, like the comparison theory, the interaction theory does not support a

fully inferential interpretative process and still endorses a local approach to metaphor interpretation. On the one hand, the interaction theory as discussed by Black (1993) emphasizes the notions of commonplaces and associated implications linked to both the tenor and vehicle words. Both sources of knowledge suggest that metaphor is interpreted in a purely conventional way and, therefore, conveys no new ideas or meanings besides those allowed by the set of associated implications. While this claim may hold for conventional metaphors, it does not apply equally well to creative metaphors, which are usually created to convey new insights or new meanings (Leezenberg, 2001, p. 82). In addition, Leezenberg (2001) points out another major problem with the interactive theory, which is already faced by the comparison theory, namely that of "cross-categorial metaphors" (p.83). Indeed, the interactive theory offers no explanation as to how commonplaces or implications associated with the vehicle word in one domain are transferred to the tenor word in a disparate domain. Thus in example (18) above and (19) below,

    19- She has always been his solitary jail.

It is not clear how the commonplaces associated with the words "shield" and "jail" are transferred to the tenor words bible and She respectively. Actually, interaction theory confines the process of implication derivation to the local context of the vehicle and tenor concepts. This local interpretative process is ineffective in dealing with poetic creative metaphors as it constrains the reader to the immediate boundaries of the metaphorical expression. The reader is then left with a vast range of implications potentially applicable to the tenor concept though not necessarily intended by the speaker. At the same time, the reader misses relevant information from the wider context which would help to propose further possible implications applicable to the overall poem's context. Encountering metaphors (18) and (19) above in different

contexts would in fact lead to the consideration of different implications. Thus encountering metaphor (18) in the context of a firmly religious person would point out a set of relevant implications, which would involve such implications as "moral protection against temptation and evil-doing", "the rejection of non-Biblical secular practices or views". In a different context, the metaphor could generate negative connotations such as "intellectual stagnation", "obstinacy", "intolerance", "isolation from the external world", etc. Similarly, metaphor (19) can evoke pleasant or distressing implications depending on the nature of relationship holding between both partners. The relevance of these and other implications can only be established through reference to the wider pragmatic context on the basis of which the reader's communicative intentions can be derived. In this sense the interaction theory is cognitively inefficient as it places undue cognitive effort on the reader without ensuring coherent or plausible metaphor interpretations. Moreover, the Interaction theory is ineffective in dealing with conventional metaphors. Exploring the vehicle concept of a conventional metaphor for potential relevant implications would stretch the metaphorical expression beyond the meanings which it is intended to communicate and would only engage the reader in wasteful interpretative effort.

The interaction theory limits its focus to the stage at which the literal meaning is cancelled to give way to a metaphorical interpretation. Although the theory accounts for the process of metaphor interpretation in basically semantic terms, it still claims that the literal meaning is ruled out in favour of the more plausible metaphorical meaning. It is not, however, clear how the metaphorical meaning can be arrived at on purely semantic grounds while the theory maintains the cancellation of the literal meanings of the words comprising the metaphor (Leezenberg, 2001, p. 81).

1.4.1.3 Class inclusion theory

The class inclusion theory has introduced a more flexible view of metaphor interpretation than the earlier theories (Glucksberg & Keysar, 1990). Whereas earlier theories viewed metaphor interpretation as involving the selection and mapping of features from the vehicle term onto the tenor term, the class inclusion theory views metaphor interpretation as involving the creation of a new super-ordinate category, which encompasses both the vehicle and tenor concepts. The vehicle concept serves as a prototypical member of the newly created superordinate category, which is then attributed to the tenor concept. In the following example,

20- He is a shuttle when it comes to Mathematics.

The concept SHUTTLE, which can be viewed as a prototypical member of fast moving spaceships, is transferred into a prototypical member of a newly created superordinate category, SHUTTLE*, which encompasses both "fast physical movement and fast intellectual activity".

The notion of prototypicality is cognitively efficient, particularly with respect to metaphors preserving the prototypical connotations of the vehicle concept. In this case, prototypicality helps to narrow down on the range of features intended to be communicated by the vehicle concept. In the previous example, the Class inclusion theory provides an adequate interpretation of the metaphor, as the vehicle concept SHUTTLE preserves its prototypical connotation of "speed". However, the theory is less applicable to creative metaphors involving vehicle concepts with no evident prototypicality connotations or whose prototypicality is not maintained. In this case, the notion of prototypicality may represent an obstacle to understanding rather than an aid, particularly when accessed in a top-down processing mode which is not checked against contextual information. In the following sentence, "He is a shuttle when it

comes to Mathematics; he needs a lot of effort, exercise, and help to move ahead", the

concept SHUTTLE is used creatively to construct a superordinate category

SHUTTLE** which denotes, "effortful, slow, and energy consuming academic

progress or intellectual endeavor". In this case, sticking to the prototypical features

associated with the concept SHUTTLE would distract the reader from checking

contextual information while highlighting irrelevant features for interpretation.

Like the notion of schema, prototypicality is also highly culture-specific. Thus

cross-cultural differences in prototypicality may result in misinterpretations of

metaphorical expressions when the non-native reader relies on his/her own cultural

prototypicality connotations without paying thorough attention to broader contextual

information. Thus the class-inclusion theory may not work equally effectively with

respect to creative or culture-specific metaphors.

1.4.2 Conceptual Metaphor Theories

This section provides a discussion of the conceptual metaphor theory as presented

by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and the related cognitive theories, namely the domain

interaction theory and the structure mapping theory.

1.4.2.1 Conceptual metaphor theory

Conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) proposes a cognitive

account of metaphor interpretation, which attributes a conceptual dimension to

metaphorical language. Whereas earlier metaphor theories dealt with metaphorical

expressions at a basically linguistic level and treated metaphorical expressions as

deviant forms of language, Conceptual metaphor theory views metaphor as a

conceptual device which contributes to the structuring of our thoughts, conceptual

systems, and action and to influence even our perception. According to this view, a

subcomponent of our general conceptual system is structured by means of conceptual

metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3). Conceptual metaphors stand for conceptual mappings which structure one conceptual domain in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For instance, the conceptual domain of TIME is metaphorically structured by the conceptual domain of MONEY, yielding the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 8). This view suggests that surface level metaphors, referred to as linguistic metaphors, can be traced back to underlying conceptual metaphors. I illustrate these points in the following examples,

    21- He is borrowing time to finish his work.

    22- I have invested too much time in this fruitless relationship.

    23- Repairing the washing machine cost us a whole day.

In the above examples, the metaphorical expressions "invested", "borrowing", and "cost" are all based on the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY. A basic assumption of the Conceptual metaphor theory is that conceptual metaphors are largely innate and therefore universal (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The universality of these metaphors stems from shared human experiences, both physical and psychological, in which they are rooted. For instance, universal metaphors involve orientational metaphors, such as MORE/SUCCESSFUL/ALIVE IS UP (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 254-255).

This cognitive view provides a plausible account into how everyday common metaphors may be identified and interpreted and how a large number of metaphors are understood cross-culturally. Moreover, the universal view of conceptual metaphors, to which Lakoff and Johnson (1980) subscribe, would predict that conceptual metaphors can facilitate the interpretation of creative metaphors. This view is supported by empirical research showing that readers' awareness of conceptual metaphors improves their identification and interpretation of creative poetic metaphors (Thibodeau & Durgin, 2008; Gibbs, 1994). In this respect, Gibbs (1992) states,

Unlike many theories of metaphor, particularly the anomaly and speech-act views, the conceptual-structure view provides an explanation for so many metaphors being understood effortlessly, without conscious reflection. Very rarely do those who understand a metaphor experience any phenomenological sense that some abuse of language has occurred. Most metaphorical expressions are direct linguistic instantiations of preexisting mappings between conceptual domains and may thus be understood quite easily during the earliest moments of pro-cessing. Metaphor understanding is not generally different from the comprehension of literal language precisely because our conceptual system is structured via metaphorical mappings. (p. 597)

Thus, conceptual metaphor theory provides a cognitively efficient approach to metaphor interpretation as it saves the reader the gratuitous effort of inducing metaphorical mappings anew. However, conceptual metaphors are not automatically activated in interpreting all types of metaphorical expressions (Gibbs, 1992, p. 598). In fact, creative metaphors tend to divert from conventional conceptual metaphors and, therefore, are likely to require a greater inferential effort than conventional linguistic metaphors (Gibbs, 1992, p. 598). Moreover, some conceptual metaphors are culture-specific and may not be equally obvious to native and non-native speakers (Kovecses, 2005). A major shortcoming that has been pointed out with respect to the conceptual metaphor theory is that it does not provide an explanatory model of metaphor processing (Tendahl, 2009, p. 3). Translated into a theoretical processing model, conceptual metaphor theory basically promotes a top-down view of metaphor processing, without specifying how conceptual metaphors are instantiated in actual contexts of language use. In other words, the conceptual metaphor view lacks the support of a bottom-level interpretative process, which would be needed to ensure rich and contextually relevant interpretations of metaphors. In other words, the activation of conceptual metaphors does not suffice to infer rich and relevant interpretations of creative poetic metaphors. In fact, many a creative poetic metaphor cannot be easily traced to underlying conceptual metaphors as these either involve very original

realizations of underlying conceptual metaphors or realize completely original

conceptual metaphors. In both cases, the reader needs to explore the surrounding

context thoroughly so that s/he can instantiate and enrich the relevant conceptual

metaphor in a contextually coherent way or alternatively infer the conceptual mapping

being originally created by the poet. Example (24) below illustrates this point:

24- Under the rain of missiles fired by the opposition, the minister decided not to
go through with his controversial tax raising plans.

With respect to example (24) above, the theory would predict that the conceptual

metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is likely to be activated by the reader as a general

conceptual framework. Although such a general conceptual metaphor can facilitate the

identification and understanding of the metaphorical expression "rain of missiles", it is

yet not sufficient to narrow down on the nature of criticism leveled against the minister,

and reference to the wider context is needed to establish it more accurately. Thus in a

context where the minister is criticized by fellow ministers, the criticism is likely to

evoke a "formal debate", characterized by targeted and "rational argumentation" while

in less formal situations, such as a confrontation with angry rioters, the criticism is

likely to involve "disorderly conversations" and "acrimonious words".

So far, the review shows that the Comparison theory can account for conventional

metaphor interpretation but is not effective in dealing with creative metaphors. The

Interaction theory can partly account for the interpretation of creative metaphors but

does not apply to the interpretation of conventional metaphors. Conceptual metaphor

theory offers a top-down approach to metaphor interpretation, which is effective in

dealing with common everyday metaphors and which can aid interpretation of creative

metaphors. Nevertheless, such an approach would be ineffective and cognitively

inefficient when applied to the interpretation of creative metaphors as it lacks

sensitivity to the discourse context in which the metaphorical expression is used and therefore does not guarantee the generation of contextually plausible interpretations.

1.4.2.2 Domain interaction theory

According to the Domain interaction theory (Tourangeau & Sternberg, 1982), metaphor interpretation consists of mapping a relational structure holding between the vehicle concept and other concepts in the vehicle's conceptual domain onto a relational structure holding between the tenor concept and other concepts in the tenor's conceptual domain. Example (25) below illustrates this theoretical view:

25- The coach is a real dictator.

In the example above, the value attributed to the vehicle concept DICTATOR is derived from its relation to other types of political leaders within the conceptual domain of POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. This domain internal conceptual relation is mapped onto a corresponding relational structure holding between the tenor concept COACH and other types of coaches. While the conceptual metaphor theory would address this metaphor in terms of the general conceptual metaphor TEAM MANAGEMENT IS GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, the Domain-interaction theory provides a more specific relational paradigmatic dimension along which relevant features can be delineated. This process works well for metaphors preserving conventional connotations associated with the vehicle concept. Hence, encountering the previous utterance in a context where the team boss blames the coach for not consulting with his assistants, the metaphor is likely to activate such conventional features as "despotic", "intolerant", "self-interested", "obstinate", "rude", etc. In this context, the negative connotations conventionally associated with the vehicle concept DICTATOR are maintained, which set it in contrast with democratic leaders, who may be characterized as "democratic", "tolerant", "open-minded", etc.

However, the Domain interaction theory does not provide stable conceptual relations that would ascribe systematic values to its concept-members. In fact, the relations holding between the different concepts comprising a conceptual domain are continuously reshuffled by the pragmatic context in which the metaphor is used. Addressing the previous utterance in a context where the team boss expresses his satisfaction with the unprecedented discipline among the players and the positive results the team is achieving, the concept DICTATOR would be adjusted to connote such positive features as "discipline", "rigor", "confidence in one's tactics", "strong personality", "resistance to external influence", etc. This would set DICTATOR in opposition to "lazy", "passive", "permissive", or "weak" leaders rather than with "democratic", "tolerant", "open-minded" leaders. Such variation in the features activated for the interpretation of the same metaphor suggests that reference to the pragmatic context is necessary to bring to the fore the most relevant features for the interpretation of a metaphorical expression used creatively. It follows from the previous discussion that the Domain interaction theory proposes a local decontextualized approach which applies basically to metaphors preserving conventional connotations related to the vehicle concept. Moreover, Gibbs (1992) and Gentner and Clement (1988) argue that the domain interaction theory faces problems in accounting for the interpretation of metaphors, whose vehicle and topic domains do not yield comparable internal structures or dimensions (Gibbs, 1992, p. 590). In addition, the domain interaction theory is less effective in dealing with creative metaphors foregrounding less typical features of the vehicle concept, which are to be inferred by reference to the wider discourse context. Limiting the interpretative process to decontextualized paradigmatic relations is also cognitively inefficient as it would engage the reader in the unnecessary effort of activating relational features not warranted by the surrounding

context.

1.4.2.3 Structure mapping theory

According to the Structure mapping theory, metaphor interpretation is an analogical process based on the mapping of a structural relation from one conceptual domain onto another (Gentner, 1983). Gentner's (1983) Structure-mapping theory is based on Schema theory (Rumelhart, 1980; Carrell, 1987). The concept of schema refers to background knowledge structures stored in long-term memory (Carrell, 1987). Rumelhart (1980, p. 34) describes schemata as "a data structure for representing the generic concepts stored in memory," and states that "there are schemata representing our knowledge about all concepts: those underlying objects, situations, events, sequences of events, actions and sequences of actions". As an example, we have schemas for "attending a marriage party", "camping", or "visiting the dentist", etc.

Gentner (1983) describes a conceptual domain as a type of schema and domain relations as schematic relations. This is to say that a conceptual domain consists of concepts and their attributes and relations holding between concepts and their attributes. I illustrate this theoretical view in example (26) below:

26- Yesterday the stadium was a real battlefield.

The concept BATTLEFIELD would activate a "battlefield schematic structure". Such schema would involve an objective, which is to win the war; participants, involving soldiers and higher-ranked officers; weapons; and attack and defence tactics. This war schematic structure is analogically mapped onto a schematic structure pertaining to a football match, which involves winning the game as an objective, players as soldiers, energy and skills as weapons, and attacking and defending tactics as war attack and defense tactics, etc.

The Structure-mapping theory proposes a process of background knowledge

activation which is cognitively efficient. In fact, the notion of schema makes available fairly elaborate conceptual networks, which saves the reader the gratuitous effort of having to construct events and situations anew. However, schemata are not stable and fully detailed conceptual representations but are rather general abstract structures which need to be instantiated with specific pragmatic information. For instance, in the previous example, the vehicle concept BATTLEFIELD could instantiate a "crucial battle schema" involving "enthusiastic", "determined" and "disciplined", soldiers, which is mapped onto a corresponding "crucial football match schema", involving "enthusiastic", "determined" and "disciplined" players. Alternatively, it could refer to "an unfair game schema" involving much "tension", "aggression" and "provocation" on both sides of the game, matching a similar brutal war schema, or else it could refer to a highly tactical game schema perceived along a highly strategic war schema.

Making use of schematic knowledge in a rather top-down manner and without paying close attention to bottom-level contextual information can, therefore, be misleading to the reader as s/he may fail to establish the specific schematic instantiation intended by the speaker. In other words, activated schemata needs to be processed against further co-textual information so as to ensure a rich and relevant instantiation of schematic frames and to avoid the mapping of irrelevant features from the schematic frame of the vehicle concept to the schematic frame of the tenor concept. Moreover, poetic discourse usually violates and alters established schematic frames (Cook, 1994). Thus activation of ready schematic frames may be misleading if not checked against contextual information.

In addition, schemata are largely culture-specific (Carrell, 1987) and, therefore, a top-down deductive process does not provide any support to metaphor interpretation involving activation of culture-specific schematic features. In such a situation,

processing contextual information in a thorough bottom-up manner is of crucial importance either to make up for the lack of relevant schemata or to avoid the interference of the native readers' cultural schemata with the target language schemata.

1.4.3 Conclusion

The metaphor theories reviewed so far focus primarily on the product of metaphor interpretation, and only provide tentative clues as to the processes possibly underlying metaphor interpretation (Gibbs, 1992, p. 593). These theories offer insightful information into the structures of knowledge that can be transferred from the vehicle to the tenor concept. The theoretical accounts proposed by these metaphor theories maintain a degree of effectiveness when applied to the interpretation of conventional metaphors as they make use of conventional frames of information which provide a sufficient store of information for the derivation of relevant interpretations. These include conventional similarities, implications associated with the tenor and vehicle concepts, domain-internal conceptual relations, conventional schematic structures, culture-specific prototypicality features, and conventional conceptual metaphors. These frames of reference ensure efficient interpretations of conventional metaphors as they save the reader the gratuitous effort of engaging in unnecessary inferential processes.

Nevertheless, the previous metaphor theories are less effective and efficient in dealing with increasingly creative metaphors as they do not reckon the role the discourse context in the interpretation of the metaphorical expression. Unlike conventional metaphors, highly creative metaphors do not reveal obvious similarities between the tenor and vehicle concepts. In addition, their meaning potential cannot be inferred by exclusive reference to encoded conceptual relations, fixed schematic structures, prototypicality connotations, or conventional conceptual mappings nor can it be exhausted by a set of implications limited to the tenor and vehicle concepts.

Therefore, creative metaphors require engagement in a creative inferential process, which integrates information from the reader's background knowledge and the wider discourse context so that the reader can infer rich and significant interpretations of the metaphorical expression. Limiting the interpretative process to the boundaries of the metaphorical expression would obstruct the inferencing of rich metaphor interpretations, typically generated by creative metaphors. In addition, creative metaphors are highly specific to the discourse context in which they are produced. Therefore, the reader needs to engage in a discourse-level interpretative process so as to ensure the derivation of plausible interpretations coherent with the overall context of the poem. Activation of background knowledge frames in a rather top-down fashion does not guarantee the derivation of relevant interpretations if it is not thoroughly checked against discourse information. In addition, such a top-down approach engages the reader in an inefficient interpretative process as s/he would be considering potential interpretations not necessarily relevant to the specific discourse context in which the metaphor is used.

1.4.4 Pragmatic Theories of Metaphor

The present section discusses the main tenets of pragmatically-oriented metaphor theories, which, unlike the previous structural and cognitive theories, address the process of metaphor interpretation within authentic contexts of language use. These involve Grice's Standard pragmatic theory, the Graded-saliency Hypothesis, and Relevance theory.

1.4.4.1 Grice's standard pragmatic theory

The previous theories of metaphor interpretation have addressed metaphorical language interpretation in a rather local decontextualized way, which does not provide a plausible account to metaphor interpretation. This decontextualized approach maintains

some degree of effectiveness and efficiency when applied to conventional metaphors; however it is less effective and efficient in deriving rich and relevant metaphor interpretations for creative metaphors.

Grice (1975) proposes an alternative pragmatic approach to metaphor interpretation. His pragmatic approach, commonly referred to as the Standard Pragmatic Theory (Grice, 1975, Searle, 1993), places metaphor interpretation within a wider communicative framework and, therefore, provides a stronger basis for the derivation of relevant interpretations. According to Grice (1975), metaphorical language interpretation is continuous with the interpretation of other forms of non-literal language. According to the Standard Pragmatic Theory, non-literal utterances manifest a literal falsity within the discourse context in which they are used and are, therefore, interpreted at a pragmatic inferential level. Example (27) below illustrates the literal processing view endorsed by the standard pragmatic theory:

27- Her children are her flowers.

The use of the word *flowers* violates the maxim of quality at the literal level of the utterance and, therefore, incites the reader to shift to a second-stage inferential process. This implicated meaning is derived from the wider communicative context in which the utterance is encountered and not exclusively from the literal meanings of the words comprising the metaphor. In this way, the Standard Pragmatic Theory provides a persuasive explanation of why a particular metaphor can be ascribed different interpretations in different contexts and can, therefore, account for the interpretation of a wider scope of metaphors than earlier non-pragmatic theories. The communicative basis of the Standard Pragmatic Theory helps to infer only those implicatures that are mostly relevant to the overall communicative context. In this sense, Grice's Standard Pragmatic Theory is cognitively more efficient than the previous theories as it saves the

reader the gratuitous effort of exploring a wide range of potential interpretations.

However, Grice's Standard pragmatic theory does not offer a persuasive pragmatic account into how creative poetic metaphors are interpreted. The theory assumes that like other non-literal utterances, metaphorical utterances are to be normalized by inferring definite implicatures from the context (Mackenzie, 2002, p. 25). This view is clearly reflected in the following statement by Grice (1975),

> A meant something by x is (roughly) equivalent to A intended the utterance of x to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention; and we may add that to ask what A meant is to ask for a specification of the intended effect. (p. 220)

Although this process may work for literal utterances and for conventional metaphors it does not seem to apply equally well to creative poetic metaphors, which can by no means reduced to a definite intended meaning. Thus the theory falls short of providing a plausible explanation of how creative poetic metaphors are interpreted.

Another shortcoming of Grice's Standard Pragmatic Theory relates to the assumption that utterance interpretation is guided by a default expectation of literalness. This assumption implies that the reader expects utterances to make sense at a literal level and, therefore, opts for a literal interpretation as an initial indispensable stage. This view is phrased by Searle (1993) as follows, "Where the utterance is defective if taken literally, look for an utterance meaning that differs from sentence meaning" (p. 103).

This two-stage interpretative process seems to be implausible and cognitively demanding. In fact, this process is particularly implausible for the interpretation of dead and conventional metaphors, the figurative meanings of which are no longer consciously available to the native speaker or hearer. In addition, the two-stage process contradicts with the cognitive view of metaphor introduced by the Conceptual metaphor

theory (see section 1.4.2.1, above for a discussion of the Conceptual metaphor theory), which shows that metaphor is a basic mode of thought rather than a surface level deviant form of language.

The two-stage processing view held by Grice has been challenged by proponents of the Graded-salience Hypothesis (Giora, 1997) and proponents of Relevance theory (Gibbs, 1994, Wilson & Sperber, 2004). Most of all, Relevance theory offers a plausible account into the creative inferential process underlying poetic metaphor interpretation.

1.4.4.2 The graded salience hypothesis

The Graded-salience hypothesis (Giora, 1997; Giora & Fein, 1999) represents an attempt to reconcile contradictory empirical findings giving support to both the one-stage and the two-stage metaphor interpretative process. According to the Graded-salience hypothesis, an utterance has one or more salient meanings which are activated first regardless of the context in which the utterance is involved (Giora, 1997). In addition, an utterance has less salient meanings, which can be activated after the more salient meanings have been activated and found inconsistent with the context. Giora and Fein (1999) define saliency as follows, "A linguistic expression is considered salient when its interpretation can be computed directly from the lexical meanings automatically associated with entries, before any extra inferences based on contextual assumptions have been derived" (p. 1602).

The Graded-salience hypothesis predicts that the reader would activate the salient meanings irrespective of the context orientation. Thus the reader would only activate the figurative meaning when dealing with a dead metaphor, which is the meaning immediately retrieved from the utterance. This view is illustrated in example (28) below:

28- Albert is the head of the department.

The dead metaphor "head" will only activate the figurative meaning of the word "head" rather than the literal meaning. With familiar conventional metaphors, such as "His room is a pigsty", the reader would activate both the literal and figurative meanings of the word "pigsty", as the figurative meaning associated with the word "pigsty" still strikes the hearer as metaphorical and so both the literal and figurative meanings are equally salient for the interpretation of the metaphorical expression. In dealing with a novel metaphor, the reader will access the literal meaning first and then opt for a figurative interpretation if the literal meaning is found to be incoherent with a figurative context (Giora & Fein, 1999, p.1601-1603). This is exemplified in example (29) below:

29- You will see what fire he can produce, if you fan him a little bit.

The Graded-salience hypothesis represents a partial improvement over Grice's Standard Pragmatic Theory as it proposes a one-stage approach to conventional metaphor interpretation. In this respect, it offers a more efficient approach to conventional metaphor interpretation than earlier theories. However, the theory still proposes a cognitively implausible bottom-up approach to the processing of familiar and creative metaphors as it still assumes that the utterance literal meaning is activated regardless of whether the context is figuratively biased or not. This approach is cognitively demanding and counterintuitive as it engages the reader in the gratuitous effort of considering an unwarranted literal interpretation in parallel with or before opting for the more relevant metaphorical interpretation. This bottom-up approach ignores the role of the global communicative context in constraining the interpretation of bottom-level textual units, including metaphorical expressions. The theory says nothing about the interpretative process and is basically limited to the metaphor

identification stage.

A more persuasive approach, which proposes an efficient approach to metaphor interpretation and which guarantees the derivation of rich and contextually relevant poetic metaphor interpretations, is proposed by Relevance theory.

1.4.4.3 Relevance theory

The present section provides the main tenets of Relevance theory, which, I conclude below, is the most effective theory of metaphor interpretation according to the criteria stated above (See Introduction above). The review emphasizes the inferential pragmatic approach underlying Relevance theory, which distinguishes it from earlier decontextualized and pragmatic theories. The review shows that Relevance theory provides persuasive principles for the derivation of rich and contextually plausible interpretations, which I hold to be the main objective underlying engagement with poetic metaphors. In this respect, Relevance theory can account for the impact of the reader's cultural background knowledge on the poetic interpretative process. In addition, Relevance theory ensures efficient use of processing cognitive effort as it guarantees that the reader derives richer and more relevant interpretations as a function of the cognitive effort s/he expends on the interpretative process. Moreover, Relevance theory offers a comprehensive approach to metaphor interpretation, which applies to the interpretation of all metaphor types.

1.4.4.3.1 The one-stage view of metaphor interpretation

Relevance theory supports Grice's view (Grice, 1975) that utterance interpretation is an inferential process which involves a search for the speaker's intentions (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 607). However, Relevance theorists (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 619; Pilkington, 2000) disagree with Grice's (1975) and Searle' s (1993) view that metaphor interpretation involves a two-stage process. Instead, Relevance theory proposes a one-

stage approach to the interpretation of all utterance types, which is based on general communicative and cognitive principles of relevance.

According to the communicative principle of relevance, an utterance is an ostensive act of communication, which makes manifest the speaker's informative intention. As an ostensive act of communication, an utterance conveys a presumption of its relevance as it makes manifest its design to communicate relevant information to the audience, hence claiming their attention (Sperber & Wilson, 1987; Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 612). This principle implies that communication is not governed by a default norm of literalness but by the concern with relevance (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 619; Carston, 2002, p. 332). This principle implies that literal and metaphorical utterances represent alternative communicative options which speakers select from as best suits their communicative goals. According to this principle, when the reader encounters a creative metaphorical utterance in a figuratively biased context, the search for relevance would guide him/her to a metaphorical interpretation right from the start instead of going through a default literal interpretation, as he judges the figurative interpretation to be potentially more relevant than a literal interpretation. Thus Relevance theory provides a principle by which the range of produced interpretations can be contextually justified.

The expectation of relevance is also motivated by a cognitive principle of relevance. According to the cognitive principle of relevance, human cognition tends to maximize relevance while minimizing cognitive effort (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 610). This is to say that the reader will seek to derive the highest amount of cognitive effects for the least amount of cognitive effort. This implies that the reader expends as much cognitive effort as is needed to satisfy his/her expectations of relevance rather than explores the full potentiality of an utterance in an open-ended way. Thus

Relevance theory offers a cognitively more efficient approach to metaphor interpretations than earlier theories as it posits that the reader will stop looking for potential interpretations as soon as s/he arrives at a relevant interpretation.

According to Relevance theory, the cognitive principle of relevance applies to the interpretation of all utterance types. In fact, Relevance theorists view literal and metaphorical utterances as being located on a common meaning continuum, which ranges from strictly literal utterances on the one end of the continuum, through to loose types of talk, such as approximations and hyperboles, to creative metaphors on the other end of the continuum (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 620). No clear-cut boundaries separate these different types of language use, which suggests that metaphor interpretation is not qualitatively distinct from the interpretation of other utterance types. Nevertheless, metaphor interpretation differs from literal utterance interpretation in the amount of cognitive effort expended and the strength of implications derived. The difference is, however, a matter of degree rather quality. In this respect, relevance theory marks an advance over Grice's standard pragmatic theory as it offers a more flexible account of creative metaphor interpretation and allows for "indeterminacy in intended interpretations" (Mackanzie, 2002, p. 25).

1.4.4.3.2 Context construction and implicature derivation

Utterance interpretation involves the inferencing on the part of the reader of a set of contextual implications that would satisfy his/her expectations of relevance. This inferential process involves accessing the encyclopaedic entries of the vehicle and tenor concepts to derive a set of contextual assumptions that would lead to the derivation of relevant interpretations. Carston (2002) describes the encyclopaedic entry as comprising,

A wide array of different kinds of knowledge, including commonplace assumptions, scientific information, culture-specific beliefs and personal, idiosyncratic observations and experiences. Some of this information may be stored as discrete propositional representations, some of it may be in the form of integrated scripts or scenarios, and some may be represented in an analogue format, perhaps as mental images of some sort. (p. 321)

The search for relevance motivates the derivation of contextual assumptions so that the reader attends only to those assumptions which s/he deems potentially useful for the derivation of relevant implicatures. Thus, unlike earlier theories, which provided no efficient way for the activation of specific contexts for metaphor interpretation, Relevance theory provides a principle for the selection of specific assumptions rather than others. The amount of cognitive effort expended on the derivation of relevant cognitive effects depends on the strength of assumptions available. The stronger the contextual assumptions the reader can access, the stronger the contextual implications derived, and the sooner the reader's expectations of relevance are satisfied. This pattern applies particularly to utterances close to the literal end of the continuum. The following example (30) illustrates this point:

30-   A- Do you think Gavin has read this famous book?

       B- Gavin is a bookworm.

B's utterance, "Gavin is a bookworm", makes available strong contextual assumptions, such as "a bookworm reads a lot of books", "a famous book rarely escapes a bookworm". Hearing the utterance in the conversation above makes it possible for speaker A to infer the strong implication "Gavin must have read the book", which satisfies speaker A's expectations of relevance.

On the other hand, the closer the utterance is to the creative end of the continuum, the weaker the contextual assumptions accessed and the weaker the implicatures

derived. This is illustrated by the following example:

    31-   A- Do you think we should tell Gavin?

                B- Gavin is a graveyard.

B's utterance "Gavin is a graveyard" in the conversation above makes available only weak contextual assumptions about the graveyard concept, such that it is "frightening", "dark", "silent", "lifeless", which would analogically prompt such weak contextual assumptions regarding Gavin, such as he is "cold, "unsociable", "frightening', "unresponsive", "indifferent", "inconsiderate", "unhelpful", "unfriendly", "rude" etc. These assumptions do not help speaker A derive strong contextual implications and therefore his expectations of relevance remain unfulfilled. This presents a motivation for speaker A to access further contextual assumptions with a view to deriving further implications that would satisfy his expectations of relevance. A further utterance by speaker B, such as " Gavin is a graveyard; we can trust him", would then help to narrow down the range of associations related to the concept GRAVEYARD to the now stronger contextual assumptions "A graveyard is silent", "A graveyard never lets out a buried body", which analogically help derive the strong contextual assumption "Gavin is not talkative", "He is trustworthy", "He never discloses a secret", leading to the strong contextual implication "We can tell him". However, the hearer can still infer, on his own responsibility, a wide range of other weak implicatures, which are warranted by the use of the metaphor. These would require further cognitive effort but would in turn provide further satisfaction for an inquisitive hearer willing to carry on the conversation.

The latter interpretative process is typical of creative poetic metaphors (Pilkington, 2000). In fact, creative poetic metaphors make available only weak contextual assumptions, which do not help to infer strong contextual implicatures. The search for

relevance, would, however, drive the reader to explore the wider poetic context for further contextual assumptions. However, the reader only ends up accessing further weak contextual assumptions, on the basis of which s/he can only infer a wide range of weak implicatures. The richness of weak implications derived by the reader would satisfy his/her expectations of relevance and so compensate for the extra amount of cognitive effort s/he has expended. Pilkington (2000) states that the successful interpretation of a poetic metaphor depends on the derivation of a wide range of relevant contextual assumptions from the surrounding poetic context of the metaphorical expression. Hence he states,

> Contextual assumptions made accessible prior to the metaphorical utterance itself help direct the search for relevant contextual assumptions from the encyclopaedic entries of the concepts brought together in the metaphorical phrase or utterance. In this way, a good poem by activating a wide network of contextual assumptions prior to the interpretation of the metaphorical utterance itself may give greater direction to the interpretation of metaphors enabling them to be read in a richer, more creative way than would otherwise be possible. The success of a poetic metaphor depends not only (if at all) on its originality, but in the creation of a context which encourages and guides the exploration of the encyclopaedic entries of the concepts involved. (p.103)

In this respect, Pilkington (2000) highlights the advantage of the relevance theory account of metaphor interpretation compared to earlier pragmatic theories. Hence he states,

> One further advantage that relevance theory has over other pragmatic accounts of metaphor is that it is able to provide a characterisation of creative or poetic metaphor. It can also account for relative creativity and the relative success of metaphors intended to be poetic. In this sense the relevance theory account of metaphor is able to show greater sensitivity to the range of stylistic effects that metaphors can achieve (p.100).

1.4.4.3.3 Ad hoc concept construction

According to Relevance theorists, utterance processing, including metaphorical utterances, involves the construction of an ad hoc concept at the level of utterance

explicature. Carston, (2002) defines ad hoc concepts as,

> Concepts that are constructed pragmatically by a hearer in the process of utterance comprehension … The description of such concepts as "ad hoc" reflects the fact that they are not linguistically given, but are constructed online in response to specific expectations of relevance raised in specific contexts. (p.322)

Ad hoc concepts are distinct from lexicalized concepts in that the latter are retrieved effortlessly through an automatic decoding process while ad hoc concepts are constructed through pragmatic inferencing processes by adjusting them to the specific pragmatic context in which they are encountered (Carston, 2002, p. 322). The ad hoc concept construction is warranted by the fact that the lexicalized encoded concept falls short of communicating the specific thought that the speaker intends to communicate on a specific occasion. The presumption of relevance and the tendency to maximize cognitive effects drive the adjustment of the encoded concept and the derivation of a context-appropriate ad hoc concept (Carston, 2002, p. 322).

The construction of the ad hoc concept is conducted through pragmatic processes of narrowing, also referred to as enrichment or strengthening, and a process of broadening, alternatively referred to as loosening or weakening (Carston, 2002). Lexical broadening is defined as "the use of a word to convey a more general sense than the encoded one, with a consequent expansion of the linguistically-specified denotation" (Wilson & Carston, 2007, p. 8). In the case of broadening, "a logical or defining feature of the lexically encoded concept is dropped in the process of arriving at the intended interpretation" (Carston, 2002, p. 329). Ad hoc concept construction can also be conducted through a simultaneous process of narrowing and broadening. Metaphor is treated as a loose kind of talk, the interpretation of which is carried out through a process of broadening or through a simultaneous process of narrowing and broadening (Carston, 2002, p. 329). However, the metaphorically communicated ad hoc

concept shows a wider departure from the linguistically encoded meaning than other types of loose talk (Wilson & Carston, 2007, p. 10). The following examples illustrate the process of broadening as well as the simultaneous process of broadening and narrowing involved in metaphorical ad hoc concept construction:

32- His colleagues' harsh criticism turned him into a camel.

33- He is a real soldier at work, an example to follow.

In example (32), the lexical concept CAMEL has been broadened to yield the ad hoc concept CAMEL*. The latter involves both camels and people whose anger drives them to overreact to bad treatment in a violent way. In example (33), the literal concept SOLDIER has been broadened to involve both disciplined soldiers and disciplined people who do their jobs honestly. At the same time, the lexicalized concept SOLDIER has been narrowed to denote only the subset of disciplined soldiers rather than reluctant, non-disciplined, or fighting soldiers. Both processes yield the ad hoc concept SOLDIER*.

Carston (2002) and Wilson and Carston (2007, p. 10) argue that in many cases of metaphorical use, the construction of a metaphorically communicated ad hoc concept cannot be accounted for in terms of narrowing and broadening, as the metaphor seems to involve the derivation of emergent properties not already stored in the encyclopaedic entry of the vehicle concept. The following example illustrates the above process,

34- He is starving for this article. He has been looking for it everywhere, but in vain.

The ad hoc concept STARVE* involves the derivation of emergent features which are not literally true of the lexicalized concept STARVATION. These involve "psychological lack of intellectual information", "strong need for the article", "frustration for not being able to access the article", etc. In this case, certain contextual

assumptions associated with the vehicle concept are highlighted with reference to the surrounding discourse context and are in turn metaphorically transferred to the metaphor tenor so as to construct the ad hoc concept. In the previous example, "lack of intellectual information" emerges as a form of starvation and "acute need for information" emerges as excessive need for food. The more creative the metaphor, the more inferential effort the reader needs to expend to derive the newly communicated features forming the metaphorical ad hoc concept.

The construction of the ad hoc concept involves accessing varied types of information attached to the encoded concept (Carston, 2002). These involve logical rules, which would generate inferences such as AN ORANGE IS A FRUIT, lexical knowledge, which relates to the phonetic and grammatical features of the lexicalized concept, and an encyclopaedic entry, which involves a wide array of world knowledge relating to both the tenor and vehicle concepts (see section 1.4.4.3.2 above for a definition of encyclopaedic entry).

This view implies that the construction of an ad hoc concept relating to a creative metaphorical expression would require a thorough investigation of the discourse context in which the metaphor is embedded as the encyclopaedic entry of the vehicle concept is unlikely to make accessible a set of strong contextual assumptions. Rather the reader has to infer a wide range of weak implicatures from consideration of the whole discourse context where further contextual assumptions can be accessed.

The metaphorical ad hoc concept represents a source of contextual assumptions which, together with other contextual assumptions, can help derive further implicatures. However, the metaphorical ad hoc concept cannot be constructed prior to the derivation of implicatures but is adjusted in parallel with the derivation of implicatures. In this way, contextual assumptions from the tenor and vehicle concepts and from the wider

discourse context are used to generate implicatures about the metaphorical expression and spontaneously to construct the target ad hoc concept. In turn, the constructed ad hoc concept serves to generate further implicatures. This suggests that the reader would identify the vehicle as a potential ad hoc concept, which s/he needs to construct in such a way as to render it a contextually relevant concept.

The previous discussion shows that Relevance theory offers a more persuasive approach to metaphor interpretation than earlier theories as it provides a basis for drawing rich and contextually plausible implicatures, makes efficient use of cognitive effort, and applies to the interpretation of all metaphorical utterances. Nevertheless, relevance theory has been criticised on a number of grounds, a point which I turn to in the next section.

1.4.4.3.4 Criticisms of Relevance theory

The relevance theoretic account of metaphor interpretation has been criticised on a number of grounds (Leezenberg, 2001; Goatly, 1994,1997; Clark, 1987). A major shortcoming which Clark (1987) pointed out in relation to relevance theory is that it does not specify the context for relevance. Thus he writes, "So what Sperber and Wilson leave us with is a peculiarly empty notion of relevance" (p. 715). Sperber and Wilson (1987) acknowledged this shortcoming in relation to their theory of relevance and stated that "One reason we did not set out to define relevance to a purpose, goal is that. We could not define them, we could not say how they were selected or constructed and we could not say how once selected they affected comprehension. (p. 742).

In the same vein, Leezenberg (2001) argues that although relevance theory acknowledges that the reader needs to construct a context and to engage in an inferential interpretative process, the theory does not specifically describe how the context is constructed. Hence they state that "Sperber & Wilson's account might thus

be baptized a "pragmatic conceptualist" view: most of the work in the interpretation of metaphor is done at the level of thought" (p. 112). Moreover, Leezenberg (2001) points out that the notions of context and relevance are defined reciprocally and therefore show an unresolved circularity, hence he states that "the crucial concepts of relevance and context seem to be defined in terms of each other, and thus face the threat of circularity" (p. 113).

Levinson (1989, p. 463) mounts a similar criticism against relevance theory, stating that Sperber and Wilson (1986) presented inconsistent accounts about how relevance was to be computed. On one account, relevance is viewed as a predetermined value, which necessitates the expansion of the context to the point where that value is attained. On another account, relevance is seen as matter of competing interpretations, with the best interpretation being selected. On still another account, relevance is described as the selection of the first contextual assumption that yields any contextual effects (Levinson, 1989, p. 463).

Goatly (1994,1997) advances the argument that relevance theory needs to be complemented with a theory of context to make up for its limited account of the process of context construction. In this respect, Goatly (1994) argues that, "we might wish to take the physical and sociocultural context as primary and as constraining the possibilities of meaning for the utterance rather than working backwards, as Wilson and Sperber seem to do" (p. 147). Thus, Goatly (1994, p. 149) argues that relevance theory can benefit from genre or register theory. In fact, Goatly (1994) proposes that the notion of relevance can be accounted for more systematically when the notion of genre is taken into consideration. In response to the shortcomings raised by Levinson (1989), Goatly (1994) states that the apparently inconsistent accounts of relevance as proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986) can be viewed as systematic when considered against a

genre background. Thus the first and second accounts of relevance seem to apply to written genres, which allow the audience time to process context. Goatly (1994) specifies that the first type of relevance computation is typical of non-literary texts, which communicate rather referential messages. For these genres, relevance is achieved once the presumed messages are grasped. The second type of relevance processing applies to literary texts, which are meant to be read and reread, with more interpretations inferred after every new reading. In the latter case, the reader will entertain a multitude of possible interpretations or will weigh up interpretations against each other. The third account of relevance seems to be typical of spoken conversations, where little time is available to the hearer and where the interlocutors make strongly manifest, and so first available, those assumptions which are crucial for immediate understanding (Goatly, 1994, p. 149).

Goatly (1994;1997) proposes Halliday and Hasan's (1985, pp. 38-39) frame of field, tenor, and mode as a possible framework for complementing relevance theory. Halliday and Hasan's (1985) framework specifies a particular genre in terms of its social and communicative function, the interlocutors' statuses and their relationship, and the rhetorical function of the language (pp. 38-39). Goatly (1994, p. 161), states that awareness of the field which the text instantiates would aid in the identification of metaphorical expressions. In this respect Goatly (1994) states,

> One could suggest that such is the strength of the influence of field that problems of disambiguation would hardly arise, and, taking a top-down approach, the choice of the metaphorical meaning would be automatic. In other words it will accord with the meaning potential associated with the social context. (pp. 161-162)

Goatly (1994, p. 162) states that the genre of poetry is associated with generic purposes which are inherent in the dimensions of field and tenor. Awareness of field

heightens awareness of metaphors and guides the search for interpretations. Applying

the notion of field to modern lyrical poetry, Goatly (1994), emphasizes that,

> it is important to include in one's specification for the field of modern lyric poems the phrase *reflection on individual experience as a means of exploring themes of universal significance …* Therefore, if we are to make the events described in the poem achieve the purpose of the field of literature, i.e. exploring themes of universal significance, we are forced to treat the whole poem as one kind of metaphor. (p. 166)

Goatly (1997) argues that relevance adequacy is also specified by the genre to

which the text belongs (p. 306). While some genres, such as puzzles and jokes or news

articles predetermine the value of relevance in terms of definite contextual implications

to be inferred, he states that

> In some genres, like poetry, we will set the predetermined value almost infinitely high, so that we can go on processing live metaphors and generating multiple meanings for as long as we wish. In this case we can have extra or secondary interpretations… a second way of computing relevance will be to see it as a comparative measure so that the best of the competing interpretations are selected. (pp. 306-307)

Goatly (1994) also argues that purpose awareness, which is inherent in field and

tenor, helps to determine the kind of implicated assumptions to be inferred (p. 166):

> By contrast, short lyric poetry, besides recreating emotional response to individual experience as a reflection of self-disclosure tenor, has inherent in its field the recreation of an individual experience so that it is aesthetically pleasing. We can therefore expect that many of the metaphors would be designed to describe vividly and exactly the physical properties of the experience, in addition to presenting aesthetically pleasing images, and evoking strong emotion. (p. 170)

Time of processing, which Goatly (1994) treats as "one element of the dimension of

mode" (p. 174), differs across genres and determines the degree of processing effort

required to achieve relevance. In turn, length of processing time "determines the

possible kinds of metaphoric effects, and correlates with the kinds of purpose to which

metaphors are put in different registers" (Goatly, 1997, p. 309). Mode represents the

function the language plays with respect to the field and tenor purposes. In this regard, Goatly (1997) draws a distinction between constitutive and ancillary uses of language. He states that "in the constitutive Modes, discoursal acts constitute the Field, whereas in the ancillary the language activity is less central, a by-product of the main activity" (p. 286). He adds that "Literature is at the constitutive end of the spectrum, not typically related to any social activity beyond itself" (p. 286). This view implies that the constitutive, non-referential mode of the literary text would require the reader to invest some length of time on the processing of contextual information in order to derive relevant interpretations that meet the purpose inherent in the field and tenor. Goatly (1997) describes the effect of mode on the processing time and effort in poetry reading as follows:

> Poetry is the most time consuming, both from the production and processing standpoints. Much of the work of recognizing the metaphor and hypothesizing topics and grounds will therefore be left to the reader. The poet makes little allowance for a superficial reader and assumes the poem will be reread and lived with over a period of years, perhaps a time span even longer than its slow composition. (p. 319)

Awareness of purposes inherent in the field and tenor related to a particular genre helps to identify metaphors and provides a strong basis for determining the value of relevance to be sought and the kind of contextual implications to be inferred. Similarly, mode specifies the time available for the reader and the processing effort required from him/her. Goatly (1994), however, states that the role that genre awareness plays in helping determine the value of relevance still needs to be ascertained through empirical research. Hence he states, "Clearly more rigorous research needs to be carried out into the normal patterns of reading metaphors within the general discussion in order to

confirm variations in the computation of relevance according to register or genre" (p. 177).

The criticism levelled at relevance theory highlights important shortcomings in the theory. Nevertheless, relevance theory, through its postulation of the communicative principle of relevance, seems to presuppose the reader's awareness of the discourse context in which communication takes place and, therefore, can accommodate the genre-related variables in its theoretical framework. In other words, relevance theory offers a cognitive account of language processing, which involves awareness of the pragmatic context elements, including text genre awareness.

Genre and register theories can help complement the relevance theoretic account of the process of metaphor interpretation. More specifically, genre and register theory may provide a more focussed account of the process of relevance determination while interpreting poetic metaphors. Investigating the account of relevance theory in relation to process data on poetic metaphor interpretation can help verify the accuracy of the relevance theoretic account on metaphor interpretation and tap the effect of the poetic genre on the determination of relevance, processing effort, and inferred implicatures.

1.5 Conclusion

This section sums up the main tenets of the major metaphor theories reviewed in this chapter. The structural and cognitive theories, reviewed in section IV.2.1 above, offer basically structural descriptions of the information properties and knowledge structures that are likely to be transferred from the vehicle to the tenor concepts. The exclusively cognitive accounts provided by these metaphor theories do not propose a plausible account into how metaphorical expressions, particularly creative metaphors, are processed in actual contexts of language use as they address the process of metaphorical interpretation irrespective of the discourse context in which they feature.

Thus, Comparison theory applies basically to conventional metaphors, while it is ineffective in dealing with creative metaphors. The Interaction theory offers an inferential approach to metaphor interpretation, but still limits the set of potential implications to associations related to the tenor and vehicle concepts. This approach is ineffective in dealing adequately with creative metaphors. Moreover this approach is ineffective in dealing with conventional metaphors, the interpretation of which requires no inferential effort on the part of the reader. The Domain mapping theory, the Structure mapping theory, the Class inclusion theory, and the Conceptual metaphor theory propose a top-down approach to metaphor interpretation. All four metaphor theories provide general knowledge structures which can facilitate the interpretation of relatively creative metaphors, which do not deviate radically from prototypicality connotations, or culture-specific schematic frames, or conventional conceptual metaphors. These background knowledge structures are cognitively efficient as they save the reader the effort of inducing relevant information anew and provide a basis for generating hypotheses about the metaphorical utterance. However, the four metaphor theories are less effective in dealing with highly creative metaphors, which deviate radically from culture-specific prototypicality connotations, schematic structures, or conventional conceptual metaphors. In addition, all four metaphor theories are inefficient in dealing with creative metaphors as they still engage the reader in unwarranted cognitive processing effort.

Grice's Standard Pragmatic Theory and the Graded salience hypothesis provide a contextualized approach to metaphor interpretation, which places the interpretative process within an authentic pragmatic context. This communicative approach helps to generate relevant interpretations of metaphorical utterances at an implicational level. Thus, Grice's pragmatic theory provides a persuasive explanation of why a particular

metaphorical expression can be ascribed different interpretations in different contexts. The theory works well for metaphorical expressions supported by abundant contextual information, which can help infer definite implicatures for the metaphor. However, Grice's Standard Pragmatic Theory does not provide a plausible account of how creative metaphors are interpreted. In fact, creative poetic metaphors cannot be reduced to a definite interpretation as would be literal utterances or conventional metaphors. Rather creative poetic metaphors generate a wide range of potential interpretations, which Grice's Standard pragmatic theory does not account for.

In addition, Grice's Standard pragmatic theory is cognitively inefficient as it assumes that metaphor interpretation goes through an initial literal processing stage before shifting to a figurative inferential phase. This stage is gratuitous and cognitively demanding particularly for the interpretation of conventional metaphors, the literal meanings of which are no longer present to consciousness. In addition it is unlikely to be involved in creative metaphor processing as there seems to be no plausible communicative motivation for such a gratuitous stage. The Graded salience hypothesis offers a cognitively more efficient approach to the interpretation of dead metaphors. However, the theory still offers a cognitively inefficient approach in dealing with familiar and creative metaphors. In fact, the theory maintains that the literal meaning is accessed in parallel with the metaphorical meaning in interpreting familiar metaphors and is accessed prior to the metaphorical meaning when interpreting creative metaphors. Both theories adopt a bottom-up approach to metaphor interpretation as they give priority to utterance-internal meaning and relegate context to a checking framework rather than a meaning generating framework.

Relevance theory offers a more persuasive inferential account of metaphor interpretation than earlier decontextualized and pragmatic theories. While Grice's

pragmatic theory offers the prospect of more relevant interpretations than decontextualized metaphor theories, it fails to account for the richness of interpretations generated by creative poetic metaphors and still imposes undue cognitive demands on the reader. Relevance theory proposes that relevance is the main expectation underlying utterance production and interpretation. Thus it offers a basis for inferring more relevant and plausible interpretations. In addition, relevance theory offers a cognitive principle of relevance which can account for the richness of interpretations likely to be generated by creative metaphors such as poetic metaphors. Relevance theory also proposes a cognitively more efficient interpretative process as it saves the reader the superfluous stage of going through an initial literal interpretation or exploring potentially possible but irrelevant implicatures. Moreover, the Relevance-theoretic approach seems to have a wider applicability than previous theories as it can account for the interpretation of all utterance types, ranging from literal to metaphorical utterances, using the same communicative and cognitive principles of relevance.

Relevance theory will be used as the theoretical background for the investigation of the L1 and EFL learners' metaphor interpretation processes. Focus will be placed on the extent to which the learners engage in creative inferential processes while interpreting poetic metaphors and whether they engage in a discourse-level interpretative process when constructing context. Attention will also be paid to the role of the learners' cultural background knowledge in providing relevant pragmatic knowledge while constructing context and inferring implicatures.

Chapter Two

Empirical Studies on Metaphor Interpretation

2.1 Introduction

The present chapter provides a review of a number of empirical studies conducted on metaphor interpretation in the first and second language leaning contexts. The review focuses on the major factors which seem to affect the process of metaphor identification and interpretation. Some studies have focused on the metaphor interpretative process to determine the stages through which metaphor interpretation is conducted. Other studies have focused on the impact of a number of variables on metaphor identification and interpretation, which include metaphor explicitness, the text genre in which the metaphor is processed and degree of metaphor creativity. Focus has, however, been placed on the metaphor identification phase or on the time length spent on the interpretation of metaphors under these different variables. No special attention has been paid to the creative inferential process underlying poetic metaphor interpretation and the diversity of interpretations which it generates. In addition, available research has been mostly conducted on L1 readers while very limited research has targeted L2 learners.

2.2 Research on Metaphor Processing Stages

Some studies conducted on metaphor interpretation were designed to determine whether metaphor interpretation is conducted directly and "understood quite easily during the earliest moments of processing" (Gibbs, 1994, p. 251), or through a two-stage process; that is, until the reader has noticed that an "utterance is obviously defective if taken literally" (Searle, 1993, p. 112). This claim was proposed by Grice's (1989) Standard Pragmatic Model (see chapter One, section 1.4.4.1, above for a discussion of Grice's two-stage processing model). However, this claim has not been

consistently supported by subsequent research studies. Gibbs (1994, pp.99-106) reported a number of studies which were conducted to investigate whether metaphor interpretation was conducted through a one-sage process or whether it involved a two-stage process. Gibbs' studies found that L1 readers did not spend more time interpreting metaphorical expressions than interpreting literal expressions when metaphorical expressions were supported by sufficient contextual information. The studies' findings suggest that the L1 readers did not go through an initial literal processing stage when interpreting metaphorical expressions but accessed the figurative meaning immediately. However, the studies Gibbs based his observations on were conducted on conventional metaphors, the metaphorical origin of which readers were no longer aware of, or on original metaphors with artificially redundant supportive context. Moreover, the focus was limited to the recognition phase and the time taken to reach an interpretation, while no direct focus was placed on the underlying interpretive process. Thus there was no direct evidence as whether the participants went through a literal processing stage or processed the metaphors in a direct way right from the start.

Giora (2003) investigated the metaphor interpretation process from a Graded Salience theoretical view. The study she conducted on L1 Hebrew participants shows that expressions with equally salient literal and conventional metaphorical meanings were interpreted at the same speed in their respective literally biasing and metaphorically biasing contexts (p.107). In contrast, significant differences were found when novel metaphors were interpreted in both contexts. In fact, the novel metaphors "took longer to read in the metaphorically than in the literally biasing contexts" (Giora, 2003, p.108). This finding was interpreted as evidence that the salient literal meaning would be accessed irrespective of contextual information before a figurative interpretation was considered. In reaction to this study, Picken (2007, p.63) pointed out

that the literally biasing context was considerably more helpful than the figuratively biasing context and, therefore, the study's findings did not provide conclusive evidence that metaphor interpretation was conducted through a two-stage process. In addition, the study did not directly investigate the online interpretative process but only relied on a time measure as evidence. However, the time measure cannot be taken as conclusive evidence that readers went through an initial literal processing mode as the learners might have identified the metaphorical expression immediately but might have invested more time in interpreting the metaphorical expression.

2.3 Impact of genre on metaphor interpretation

The process of metaphor interpretation has also been explored by reference to specific discourse genres. Gentner (1982) explored the impact of text genre on the evaluation of metaphorical expressions by a group of L1 readers. In this respect, Gentner (1982) investigated the participants' reactions to metaphorical expressions in scientific writing and literature. Gentner formulated her predictions about the likely responses of the participants as follows, "In expressive analogy, a rich collection of associations is valued; while in explanatory analogy, an abstract, well-clarified, coherent system of relations is valued" (1982, p. 123).

The study's findings validated Gentner's predictions regarding the way the participants would react to metaphors in literary texts. In fact, the participants attributed greater value to literary metaphorical expressions, which they saw high in aesthetic richness and considered poor literary metaphors those which were low in richness (p.124). The study's findings suggest that the significance of literary metaphors stem from their rich meaning potential. Nevertheless, the study did not involve the readers in an inferential process to determine the extent they were willing to engage in such an interpretive process but only recorded their responses to varied types of metaphors.

Along the same line, Steen (1994, 2004) investigated the effect of text genre on the identification and interpretation of metaphorical expressions. Steen compared responses to metaphors featuring in an excerpt from a Dutch novel and an excerpt in a newspaper article. Using a think-aloud design, Steen (1994, p. 136) asked 37 Dutch academics to read both texts and verbalize their thoughts spontaneously. Steen found that the metaphorical expressions were interpreted differently, depending on the text genre in which they were processed. At the level of identification, his participants explicitly identified metaphors as metaphors with significantly higher frequency when they were told that a text was literary. At the level of interpretation, Steen was interested in the difference between simply explaining what a metaphor stood for, that is online recognition of the metaphor topic, and processing a metaphor in greater detail by means of analogy. He found significantly higher levels of the former process when readers had been told that a text was literary. However, he admitted that it was difficult to identify the latter kind of analogical processing in a reliable way. Steen (1994) also found significantly higher levels of explicit evaluation of metaphors in texts identified as literary. In fact, literary metaphors were considered richer and aesthetically more impressive than journalistic metaphors (p. 207). The respondents also described the literary metaphors as more difficult than the journalistic metaphors. The study shows that the way readers engaged with literary metaphors was different from the way they engaged with non-literary metaphors, though it did not record the online interpretative processes conducted in both interpretation conditions. In addition, the study suggests that readers positively evaluated richness of meaning in relation to literary metaphors, though it provided no evidence on how readers would go about exploiting the richness potential of literary metaphors.

Schumacher (1997) conducted a study on poetic metaphor processing to determine the nature of the poetic reading process, with a view to determining the difference in metaphor interpretation between poetic metaphors and conventional metaphors. Schumacher distinguished between a superficial kind of metaphor comprehension and a deeper kind of analogical processing or interpretation. His prediction was that poetic metaphors would be as easy to comprehend as non-metaphorical statements and conventional metaphors. However, he expected to find differences in the time required to interpret metaphors when different levels of comprehension were prompted. He used a corpus of 27 poetic metaphors from German anthologies and constructed a range of non-metaphorical or conventionally metaphorical statements to compare them with. He asked native-speaker university students to read the metaphorical, non-metaphorical, and conventional metaphorical statements under different reading conditions: reading only, reading aimed at a minimal level of understanding, and reading aimed at a satisfactory level of understanding. Schumacher found that the students read the poetic metaphors as well as the non-metaphorical and conventional metaphorical statements at the same speed when they were only instructed to read the creative metaphors, the conventional metaphors, and the literal statements. However, they read the poetic metaphors more slowly when they were instructed to aim at a minimal or an adequate level of understanding. This finding suggests that poetic metaphor interpretation requires more interpretative effort than literal or conventional metaphors, even when a minimal level of comprehension is targeted. Nevertheless, the study was conducted on metaphors out of context, and, therefore, did not provide an accurate description of how poetic metaphors would be interpreted in authentic contexts.

Gibbs and Boers (2001) reported a classroom observation of L1 students' poetry reading processes, with special focus on metaphor interpretation. The study was

conducted on the poem "Diving into the wreck" by Adrienne Rich. The poem describes a literal diving experience of a scuba diver who sinks into the sea to explore a sunken ship (p. 13). While the poem could potentially be read at a metaphorical level, none of the graduate psychology students managed to read the poem allegorically. The students even resisted such allegorical reading when the researcher proposed such possible reading. In a follow-up study, Gibbs and Boers (2001) exposed L1 American undergraduate psychology students to two poems showing no explicit metaphorical utterances with a view to determining whether the readers would adopt a metaphorical stance to both poems. The participants were made to read the poem in segments, commenting on every segment separately. Next the participants were instructed to comment on the whole poem, keeping in mind "The idea that poets often have broader themes in mind when they create poems, sometimes referring to ideas and concepts that are not explicitly mentioned in the poem" (p.16). The study showed that although the readers did show many cases of literal interpretations of the poem, they all showed more cases of a metaphorical processing of the poems. The results were taken to suggest that even non-specialized L1 readers were capable of adopting an allegorical reading of poems showing no explicit metaphors. However, the study seems to have involved some interference with the actual interpretative processes of the participants as it made them aware of the possibility of hidden meanings to be unearthed beneath the surface meanings. Thus it is not certain whether the readers would have adopted such allegorical interpretation without the researcher's intervention.

2.6 Conceptual metaphor research

A number of studies have been conducted within the framework of conceptual theory, with a view to determining whether metaphor interpretation is conducted by reference to underlying conventional conceptual metaphors. In this vein, Lakoff and

Turner (1989, pp. 67-69) and Gibbs (1994) reported empirical evidence giving support

to the role of conceptual metaphor awareness in the interpretation of poetic metaphors,

demonstrating that creative linguistic metaphors occurring in literary texts are

instantiations of underlying conceptual metaphors. In this respect, Picken (2007)

reported a series of studies conducted on L1 learners within the framework of

conceptual metaphor theory, which examined the role of conceptual metaphors in

metaphor interpretation. The studies he conducted provided ample evidence that L1

learners were greatly aided by activation of conceptual metaphors. Likewise, Gibbs and

Nascimento (1996, p.304) showed that American college students interpreting

metaphorical expressions while reading fragments from different poems relating to the

concept of LOVE were found to express ideas which were not explicitly stated but

which could be seen as entailments of underlying conceptual metaphors about love.

    The previous research on metaphor interpretation by L1 participants suggests that

L1 readers make use of relatively efficient processes when interpreting different kinds

of metaphors, especially conventional metaphors. The research suggests that L1 readers

activate conceptual metaphors when interpreting metaphors. They also attribute a

special value to literary metaphors and seem prepared to spend more interpretative

effort on creative literary metaphors than conventional ones. Nevertheless, the research

conducted so far does not provide sufficient information on the extent to which the L1

readers are prepared to invest an adequate level of interpretative effort on the

processing of creative metaphors and whether they would engage in such a creative

interpretative process that adequately exploits the meaning potential of creative poetic

metaphors. The studies have basically been limited to the initial stage of creative

metaphor interpretation and the length of time spent on metaphor interpretation. Thus

little is known about the inferential processes that the L1 readers may employ when

required to interpret creative poetic metaphors and the knowledge sources they draw on during this process. Information on the L2 readers' metaphor interpretation processes is even scarcer, though some attention has started to be placed on the L2 readers' metaphor interpretation processes.

In the next section, I provide a review of the main studies that have been conducted in the L2 context

2.5 Metaphor interpretation in the L2 learning context

Research on metaphor processing in the L2 learning context is relatively scarce and, therefore, little is known about the L2 learners' metaphor processing strategies and interpretative difficulties. A major factor which is judged to affect metaphor interpretation in the L2 context is the degree of metaphor explicitness. Statistical evidence shows that metaphor explicitness varies from one author to another in literary genres (Brooke-Rose, 1958). Overall, metaphorical expressions tend to be implicit in literature. In this respect, Goatly (1997) shows that explicit signalling of metaphorical expressions is rare in literature but is common in both conversations and news. This suggests that L2 readers will encounter implicit metaphors as they engage with literary texts. However, it is not yet known whether L2 learners can manage to identify metaphorical expressions not explicitly signalled or whether they tend to process them at a literal level.

Picken (2007) investigated the impact of metaphor explicitness on L2 learners' metaphor identification and interpretation performance. According to Picken (2007), a metaphor is explicit if both its topic and vehicle concepts are explicitly stated in the text, whereas a metaphor is considered implicit if only its vehicle term features in the text (Picken, 2007). In this respect, Picken (2007) states that,

Metaphors in literature can be highly inexplicit… and this can make it difficult even for experienced readers to decide whether a literal or metaphorical reading (or a combination of these) is indicated. The challenge is presumably all the greater for comparatively inexperienced L2 readers. (p.60)

Picken (2007) conducted a study to examine the metaphor interpretative performance of thirty L2 first-year Japanese students in a department of English literature at a women's college in Japan to test the effect of metaphor explicitness on their identification of metaphor. The study revealed substantial differences between the group that dealt with the high-visibility version of the metaphor and the group dealing with the low-visibility version. In other words, in the high-visibility condition, fourteen participants identified the metaphor while only one participant misidentified the metaphor as literal. By contrast, in the low-visibility condition, eight participants identified the metaphor as literal. The study suggests that the salient literal meaning of the word in the low-visibility condition prevented identification of a possible metaphorical interpretation which was highly motivated by the context.

The same findings were yielded by a follow-up study conducted on more advanced Japanese students. Although the advanced students showed fewer literal readings in the low-visibility condition than their less proficient counterparts (Picken, 2007, p.78), they still showed more literal readings in the low-visibility condition than in the high-visibility condition. Both studies suggest that metaphor explicitness affects L2 learners' identification of metaphors, leading L2 learners to interpret implicit metaphors rather literally. However, the study did not shed any light on the underlying comprehension process but only provided product interpretations. Thus it is possible that the students dealing with the high-visibility metaphors might have considered a literal interpretation first prior to shifting to a metaphorical interpretation or they might have entertained a literal and a metaphorical interpretation simultaneously. Picken (2001) reports that

school entry Japanese learners' identification of a metaphorical expression located in a short story varied according to the presence of a surface level textual clue. The study showed that presence of an explicit textual clue promoted the learners' identification of metaphors. However, the research shows that the textual clue was not always sufficient to promote a metaphorical reading.

Chang (2002) reported that two MA-level Chinese students reading two poems in English and Chinese faced difficulties in identifying and constructing metaphors, even with respect to the Chinese poem. Both readers found it particularly difficult to infer the metaphor topics. The study found that one reader stuck to the referential meanings of the words and made little effort to opt for a representational reading. Moreover the reader relied on schematic knowledge from her own culture to attempt to understand both poems. With cues provided by the researcher, the reader was able to activate some background information that enabled her to identify the metaphorical meanings of the expressions. Nevertheless, she relied on culture-specific schematic structures in making sense of the metaphors she identified. The second reader could only guess that the phrases were metaphorical but failed to infer the topic for the vehicles she identified and as a result could not think of a possible ground. Both readers seemed to hold the view that every word needs to be understood before the poem could be interpreted. Thus they stuck to the referential level without engaging in a parallel representational interpretation. In addition both readers seemed to be unfamiliar with the sentential and discoursal aspects of metaphor and only appeared to expect metaphors at the word and phrase levels. The study provided insightful information into the online process of metaphor interpretation; nevertheless it involved a high degree of interference on the part of the researcher, who tended to guide the interpretative process by providing clues to background cultural knowledge. Thus the study somehow disrupted the normal

cognitive processes which the participants would have used naturally. In addition, the study was more inclined towards leading the participants towards specific interpretations rather than recording the creative inferential processes that the readers might have employed.

Cardoso and Vieira (2006) found that high school Brazilian learners faced difficulties in deciding on a figurative or literal interpretation of a surface level linguistic metaphor encountered in a lyrical song. Learners' confusion was traced back to their ignorance of a crucial lexical item which was judged to be indispensable for the identification of the metaphorical meaning. The findings were interpreted as supporting Grice's Standard Pragmatic view relating to metaphor interpretation, which states that metaphor interpretation proceeds through an initial stage of identifying a literal deviation, which is followed by a figurative interpretation. This interpretation is based on the fact that readers still considered a literal interpretation despite the presence of a lexical gloss for the unknown word. However, learners' failure to opt for a direct metaphorical interpretation seems to be primarily related to their previous ignorance of the literal meaning of the word. As the conceptual entry of the lexical item was not already integrated into the readers' lexical competence, then the initial phase of lexical decoding, which is mandatory for both literal and figurative interpretation, had not yet been automated, which might have slowed the decoding process. In fact, learners might have been more engaged in an effortful surface level decoding process than in a literal interpretation of the linguistic input. Both studies, however, point to cases where readers opted for a literal interpretation as an initial stage although they seemed to understand every single lexical item. Other factors other than the surface level linguistic difficulties seem to interfere with the readers' metaphor identification and processing skills.

Littlemore (2003) investigated interpretations of metaphors that were actually used by English lecturers teaching a special course for civil servants from Bangladesh. This study found that the learners were generally successful in interpreting their teachers' metaphors. However, the students faced problems related to evaluation and more specifically with the associations or connotations communicated by the metaphor. Hence, the learners attributed negative connotations to metaphors intended to convey a positive message, or vice versa.

Picken (2007) conducted a number of studies to investigate the effect of metaphor awareness-raising on L2 Japanese learners' identification and interpretation of metaphorical language. The first study (Picken, 2007, p.100) showed that a group of learners receiving metaphor awareness-raising training outperformed a group of learners not receiving metaphor awareness-raising training. Thus the former group of students was successful in identifying implicit metaphors in a poem and in interpreting them by reference to the conceptual metaphor of which they were previously made aware. In addition, the conceptual metaphor awareness raising had a long term effect on students' metaphor identification performance. Thus 72 % of the students in a group of learners who received extensive metaphor awareness raising could interpret an invisible metaphor correctly three months after having received the metaphor awareness raising course, compared to 56 % of the learners who did not receive the training (p.106). This finding suggests that conceptual metaphor awareness-raising contributes to EFL students' ability to make independent interpretations of metaphors in literary texts. In addition, these findings suggest that L2 learners may be hampered by their ignorance of conceptual metaphors, particularly those which are culture-specific and, therefore, fail to identify implicit metaphors despite their advanced lexical competence.

The same study, however, showed that awareness of more than one conceptual metaphor sharing the same source domain resulted in confusion as half of the participants correctly attributed a linguistic metaphor to an underlying appropriate metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, while the other half of participants wrongly attributed the same metaphor to LOVE IS A JOURNEY. This finding suggests that awareness of conceptual metaphors does not guarantee success with metaphor identification and interpretation and that closer attention to contextual information is needed to guarantee successful metaphor identification and interpretations.

The research conducted so far on the metaphor interpretative process has shed light on the metaphorical interpretative process. However, little attention has been paid to the online interpretative process as conducted by real readers. In addition, the little research focused on advanced expert literary readers, which leaves the research on the metaphor interpretative process largely inadequate. When advanced readers were involved, only a very small sample was used, including two participants at large. In those studies where larger samples were involved, the focus was placed on the end product rather than on the online interpretative process, which obstructs the derivation of clearer conclusions regarding the metaphor comprehension process. In addition, research based on the conceptual metaphor theory limits the scope of their investigation to the role of conceptual metaphor awareness on metaphor interpretation and ignore the role that other sources of knowledge play in the interpretative process. In addition, this research trend lacks a sensitive approach to the online interpretative process, focusing exclusively on the role of conceptual metaphors in the interpretative process. Thus this trend offers little explanation to the processing of creative metaphors which cannot be easily traced to underlying conventional conceptual metaphors.

2.6 Conclusion

The previous studies provide illuminating insights regarding the L1 and L2 learners' poetic metaphor processing strategies. The studies suggest that metaphor interpretation can be affected by the degree of metaphor explicitness and creativity as well as by the discourse genre in which it is encountered. The research shows that L2 learners fail to identify implicit metaphorical expressions when dealing with literary texts. In addition, L2 learners are hindered by their comparatively limited linguistic competence. Thus even when explicit clues are available, L2 learners do not automatically identify metaphors and in most cases process metaphorical expressions literally.

Research studies conducted within the framework of conceptual metaphor theory show that L1 learners make use of conceptual metaphors in identifying and interpreting metaphorical expressions. Similar research conducted on L2 learners shows that L2 learners are not aware of culture-specific conceptual metaphors or of linguistic expressions which realize them, which usually results in the readers interpreting metaphorical expressions at a literal level. In addition, L2 learners tend to miss the cultural connotations and associations related to a particular metaphorical expression even when they manage to identify its corresponding conceptual metaphor, hence inferring wrong evaluative implicatures. Moreover, one research study showed that L2 learners tended to rely on their own culture-specific background knowledge when interpreting poetic metaphors, which resulted in the activation of inappropriate schematic frames and the generation of inaccurate metaphorical interpretations. However, the role of the L2 readers' cultural background knowledge in identifying and generating metaphorical interpretations has not been adequately investigated as its effect was only investigated in relation to the activation of conceptual metaphors and

the immediate concepts comprising the metaphorical expression. In addition, no attention has been paid to the creative inferential processes involved in poetic metaphor interpretation and the diversity of interpretations that poetic metaphors generate within and across readers. Thus it is not known whether L2 readers engage with poetic metaphors at a basically local level or construct a larger pragmatic context at the discourse level of the poem. Moreover, very little is known regarding the impact of the L2 learners' linguistic competence and cultural background knowledge on the operation of such a creative inferential process.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The present chapter outlines the research methodology to be followed in the empirical study of the L1 and L2 learners' poetic metaphor interpretation processes. The first section states the research questions addressed in this study. The second section states the main hypotheses. The third section provides a description of the participants taking part in the think-aloud study. The fourth section describes the texts used in the think-aloud study. The fifth section outlines the data collection procedure and the last section details the data analysis tools.

3.2 Research objectives

This study is designed to advance our understanding of how L1 and L2 readers' poetic metaphor interpretation processes differ, with a view to improving poetry teaching in the L2 academic context. Existing research on metaphor interpretation points out a number of metaphor interpretation mistakes made by L2 readers (Chang, 2008; Picken, 2007; Cardoso &Vieira, 2006). These include literal rather than figurative interpretations of metaphorical expressions (Picken, 2007), attribution of incorrect connotative associations (Chang, 2002) for conventional conceptual metaphors, and the inferencing of culturally irrelevant associations. These interpretation mistakes point to the fact that L2 readers may not be provided with adequate poetry teaching training which is adjusted to their abilities and which could help them enhance their interpretative skills. In fact, current poetry teaching methods, which prevail in the L1 and L2 literary reading contexts, do not seem to be based on a sound theoretical

framework which can guide teachers to the devising of efficient teaching methods. In this regard, Lazar (1993) argues that the major poetry teaching methods do not follow a balanced approach that responds to the specific needs of the reader. In addition, the major teaching approaches do not seem to follow a skills-based program that would enable poetry readers to enhance their literary competence. Content-based teaching practice consists of providing learners with background information relating to a particular literary genre, period, or author, while expecting the reader to carry out the interpretative task on their own. The approach encourages the reader to respond in a rather top-down manner to the interpretation task, limiting the readers' personal interaction with the task. In addition, the approach does not enable the readers to exploit the linguistic specificities of the text at hand. Thus little skills-oriented guidance is provided to the reader as to how to go about the interpretative process. Reader-based teaching approaches encourage readers to adopt a more active role with the interpretative process, encouraging them to respond personally. However, the approach provides little background information to the reader, and like the content-based approach, provides no guidance as to how to produce text-warranted interpretations. Lastly, the stylistics approach seems to provide a better skill-based training for the literary reader. However, overreliance on this teaching approach is criticized for limiting the reader's personal interaction with the literary text, leading to mechanical interpretations. Teaching assumptions underlying these different teaching methods may be even more detrimental to the L2 reader, who is likely to have less access to relevant background information or a lower level of language proficiency and who may even have a different cultural conception of the poetic interpretative task, including metaphorical interpretation.

To better respond to the specific needs of the L2 reader in the poetry classroom, L2 teachers need to have a sound theoretical framework which is verified against empirical evidence. The research conducted so far on the metaphor interpretative processes by L1 and L2 participants has shed light on different aspects of the metaphorical process. In the L1 context, a large part of the research has focused on isolated aspects of the metaphor interpretation process, such as metaphor identification, metaphor processing time, metaphor interpretation stages, and metaphor aesthetic evaluations (e.g. Gibbs, 1994; Schumacher, 1997). In most of these studies, the participants were exposed to metaphorical expressions in artificial and decontextualized settings. Research focusing on the inferential interpretative process suffered from a number of shortcomings. Thus Steen (1994) could only report findings on the identification of metaphorical expressions by L1 readers and aesthetic judgments of literary and journalistic metaphors, but found no evidence of analogical interpretative effort. Within the framework of conceptual metaphor theory, some studies (e.g. Picken, 2007; Gibbs & Nascimento, 1996) showed that L1 readers seemed to refer to conceptual metaphors when making sense of poem segments. The evidence provides strong support for the role of conceptual metaphors in the L1 reading context, but it does not describe the interpretative process as such. In fact, the studies only searched for evidence of conceptual metaphor use, and did not focus on the overall poetic metaphor interpretation process. In two related studies, Gibbs and Boers (2001) provided inconsistent findings as to whether L1 participants would opt for an allegorical reading of poems showing few explicit clues. The first study showed that L1 poetry students resisted such a reading, while a second study showed that psychology students had a greater tendency to read two poems allegorically, though they showed many cases of literal interpretation. However, the latter study involved cuing hints about the poet's

writing style, which might have prompted the participants to adopt an allegorical reading.

Research on L2 participants' metaphor interpretation processes is scarce. One research trend has focused on the L2 participants' abilities to identify metaphorical expressions (e.g. Picken, 2001; 2007). The research by Cardoso and Viera (2006) showed that L2 learners needed explicit clues to identify implicit metaphors and that failure to identify metaphors was mainly attributed to their limited level of language proficiency, which prevented them from exploiting lexical clues (Cardoso & Vieira, 2006). However, the same study showed that the learners still failed to identify metaphors despite the presence of glosses to the unknown words. Research studies within conceptual metaphor theory found that L2 readers could not identify underlying conventional metaphors, though they benefited from conceptual metaphor awareness raising (Picken, 2007). However, the research within conceptual metaphor theory was limited to conventional conceptual metaphors and, therefore, shed no light on the L2 participants' interpretation of creative poetic metaphors, a shortcoming which was highlighted by Picken (2007). Chang (2002) reported that two MA-level Chinese students were unable to identify metaphors in an English poem until the researcher pointed out some clues for them. He also reported that the students stopped at the initial stage of topic identification and limited their focus to phrase level metaphors, never considering metaphors at the sentential and discourse levels. The study provided insightful information into the online process of metaphor interpretation, particularly in relation to the role of the L2 reader's cultural background knowledge. Nevertheless the study involved only two participants and involved a high degree of interference on the part of the researcher.

Overall, existing research has provided only partial information on the online interpretative processes real L1 and L2 participants engage in when dealing with different metaphorical language. Research on metaphor interpretation by L1 participants suggests that L1 readers are efficient in processing conventional metaphors. The research also shows that L1 readers activate conceptual metaphors when interpreting metaphors, though this research was basically limited to conventional metaphors. L1 readers also attribute a special value to literary metaphors and seem prepared to spend more interpretative effort on creative literary metaphors than conventional ones. Nevertheless, the research conducted so far does not provide sufficient information on the extent to which the L1 readers are prepared to engage in a creative interpretative process that adequately exploits the meaning potential of creative poetic metaphors. In the L2 context, information on L2 learners' metaphor interpretation processes is even more limited. Thus it is not yet known whether L2 readers are efficient in distinguishing between conventional and novel metaphors and whether they are motivated to engage in a creative inferential process when interpreting creative poetic metaphors. In addition, it is not known to what extent the L2 readers can access relevant background knowledge in interpreting creative poetic metaphors. In addition, the research provides little ground for comparing L1 and L2 readers' metaphor interpretation processes and for determining whether L1 metaphor interpretation skills are shared by L2 participants.

A major shortcoming underlying previous research is the lack of a sound theoretical framework that could guide empirical investigation towards a more insightful and persuasive account of the process of metaphor interpretation. While the conceptual metaphor theory was used as a framework in a number of studies (e.g. Picken, 2007), the resulting account seems to be mostly applicable to the processing of conventional

metaphors and, therefore, provides no explanation of the inferential processes readers would employ when dealing with creative metaphors, mostly dominant in many poetic texts. Steen's (1994) theoretical framework, genre theory, basically provides an account of the effect of specific text types on final metaphor interpretations and aesthetic judgments but offers no explanatory principles of why readers interpret metaphors in different ways in different genres. In addition, none of the theoretical frameworks shows how the process is undertaken by L1 and L2 readers when dealing with different types of metaphor. Hence, the cognitive inferential processes employed by both groups of readers, and particularly L2 readers, remain largely unexplored.

This study sets out to bridge the gap in the research on L1 and L2 learners' metaphor interpretation processes. More specifically, the study aims to provide a more accurate and persuasive account of the process of metaphor interpretation as conducted by L1 and L2 readers in real time. Thus, the study seeks to establish the extent to which readers are efficient in the identification of metaphors with different degrees of creativity, whether they engage in creative inferential processes when dealing with creative metaphors, and whether the L1 and L2 readers use the same interpretative processes and the same knowledge sources in dealing with conventional and creative metaphors.

To meet these objectives, I make use of the qualitative research paradigm and the case study method. As a qualitative research tool, the case study method offers a richer set of data than other research methods and can, therefore, provide more reliable data on such phenomena as cognitive processes than other tools. In addition, the case study method is best suited to reveal relations between different variables as well as processing differences among different individuals and groups (See section 3.5.1 below for a discussion of the case study method). I also elected to use the think-aloud

technique as a data collection tool. Better than any other tool, this technique has been

widely used in L1 and L2 contexts to tap different types of cognitive processes, such as

reading comprehension processes, writing processes and vocabulary guessing

strategies. The technique has also started to be used in literary circles, including literary

reading processes and metaphor interpretation processes. This technique involves less

interference with cognitive processes than other verbalization tools such as

introspection and retrospection and so provides more reliable data for drawing valid

conclusions about the observed phenomenon (see section 3.5.4 below for a description

of the think-aloud technique). To provide a sound analysis of the L1 and L2

participants' metaphor interpretation processes, I adopt relevance theory as a theoretical

framework (see section 1.4.4.3, Chapter One above, for a discussion of Relevance

theory). Reference to a theoretical framework is useful for guiding the investigation and

analysis of the phenomena. Commenting on the use of theory in informing empirical

research, Hitchcock and Hughes, (1995), state,

> Theory is seen as being concerned with the development of systematic construction
> of knowledge of the social world. In doing this theory employs the use of concepts,
> systems, models, structures, beliefs and ideas, hypotheses (theories) in order to
> make statements about particular types of actions, events or activities, so as to make
> analyses of their causes, consequences and process. That is, to explain events in
> ways which are consistent with a particular philosophical rationale or, for example,
> a particular sociological or psychological perspective. Theories therefore aim to
> both propose and analyze sets of relations existing between a number of variables
> when certain regularities and continuities can be demonstrated via empirical
> inquiry. (pp.20-21)

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) specify the following criteria for a useful

theory, stating that "The better the theory, the more adequately it can explain the

phenomena under consideration, and the more facts it can incorporate into a meaningful

structure of ever-greater generalizability. There should be internal consistency between

these facts" (P.12). In addition, a theory has to meet a set of practical criteria such that

it can generate verifiable contents. In other words, a sound theory should provide the

basis for generating confirmable or falsifiable statements, against which the theory can be validated or rejected.

Relevance theory is chosen as it seems to meet the requirements for an adequate theory. In fact, relevance theory offers general communicative and cognitive principles that can potentially account for the process of metaphor interpretation better than other rival theories. In fact, the theory offers a rational basis for establishing connections between different variables involved in the process of metaphor interpretation and can, therefore, account for relations between processing strategies and end products as well as variations among individual readers. The theory has also a potential to respond to anomalies in the interpretative process. Thus, the theory has a strong explanatory and predictive potential. In addition, the theory provides a solid ground for drawing general conclusions as it seems to have the potential to account for the processing of all types of metaphorical language across different text types and individuals, hence its usefulness for framing the empirical investigation of the online metaphor interpretation process.

The use of a sound theoretical framework supported by empirical evidence would be of great importance for L2 teachers as it would help them form an accurate evaluation of their learners' metaphor interpretation abilities. In fact, such empirical evidence can enable L2 teachers to identify successful metaphor interpretation processes as well as possible weaknesses in the L2 participants' metaphor interpretation processes. Hence, L2 teachers will have a solid ground to intervene in a more efficient way to optimize their learners' metaphor interpretation skills and to model successful metaphor interpretation strategies. At a theoretical level, an empirically tested theory of metaphor interpretation can advance our understanding of the cognitive processes under

study and can contribute to the formulation of a more valid theoretical account of the process of metaphor interpretation.

The study seeks to address the following major issues, which remain to a large extent unanswered by earlier research on the process of metaphor interpretation. Specifically the study is designed to:

1. Advance our understanding of the metaphor interpretation processes used by L1 and L2 participants and whether L1 and L2 participants use different or similar interpretative processes.

2. Investigate aspects of relevance theory empirically, and especially:

   a. How far metaphor identification is a one stage process

   b. Whether the L1 and L2 participants are motivated to seek a wide range of implicatures for creative metaphors

   c. Whether the L1 and L2 participants manage to infer a wide range of implicatures when investing sustained cognitive effort on creative metaphors.

   d. Whether L1 and L2 participants rely on the same sources of knowledge when interpreting creative and conventional metaphors

The above objectives are investigated through the following questions:

3.3. Research questions

1- What processing strategies do the L1 and L2 participants make use of while interpreting poetic metaphors? Do they use the same processing strategies?

2- Will the L1 and L2 participants identify more metaphors in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" than in the poem "Crossing the Bar"?

3- Will the L1 participants identify fewer conventional metaphors and more creative metaphors than the L2 participants?

4- Will the L1 and L2 participants interpret metaphors directly or will they consider literal readings first? Are the L2 participants as efficient as the L1 participants in the identification and interpretation of metaphors, both creative and conventional?

5- Do the L1 and L2 participants limit their interpretative effort to the immediate boundaries of the metaphorical expression or do they process a wider discourse context?

6- What knowledge resources do the L1 and L2 participants draw on in inferring metaphorical interpretations? Do they use the same knowledge resources?

7- Are the L1 and L2 participants motivated to seek richer ranges of implicatures for creative metaphors than for conventional metaphors?

8- Will the L1 and L2 participants invest more effort on the interpretation of creative metaphors than on the interpretation of conventional metaphors? Will the L1 and L2 participants invest a similar amount of time on the processing of conventional and creative metaphors?

9- Do the L1 and L2 participants infer more implicatures for those metaphors they invest more processing effort on?

10- Will the L1 and L2 participants infer the same number of implicatures for conventional and creative metaphors?

11- Will the L1 and L2 participants derive similar interpretations for conventional and creative metaphors?

The above research questions give rise to the following research hypotheses, which are based on the relevance theory metaphor interpretation heuristic.

3.4 Research Hypotheses

This section states the main hypotheses underlying the present study. The hypotheses are entailed by Relevance theory and help to focus the research study on specific aspects of the metaphor interpretation process, which seem to be crucial for the operation of poetic metaphor interpretation. In other words, the hypotheses are used in this study as a starting point to focus on specific aspects of the poetic metaphor interpretation processes in the L1 and L2 contexts rather than to serve as a decisive test on the veridicality of the relevance theoretic account. Commenting on the value of hypotheses in empirical research, Cohen et al. (2000) state,

> [Hypotheses] enable [researchers] to understand the problem with greater clarity and provide them with a framework for collecting analysing and interpreting their data. Second, they are… the working instruments of theory. They can be deduced from theory or from other hypotheses. Third, they can be tested, empirically or experimentally, thus resulting in confirmation or rejection. And there is always the possibility that a hypothesis, once confirmed and established, may become a law. (P. 15)

The hypotheses listed below relate to the main processing aspects which poetic metaphor interpretation is likely to hinge on and in relation to which the L1 and L2 participants may differ. I list the hypotheses underlying the present study and elaborate on their corresponding entailments.

The metaphor identification hypothesis

The L1 and L2 participants will target more metaphors in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" than in the poem "Crossing the Bar" on account of the larger number of potential creative metaphors in the former poems. On the same basis, the L1 participants are expected to identify fewer metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants. No difference between both groups is predicted for the identification of creative metaphors in the poems "The Motive for

Metaphor" and "Snow" (See section 3.5.3 below for an account of the poems chosen for the present study).

The one-stage processing hypothesis

The L1 and L2 participants will identify and interpret metaphors in a direct way rather than move through an initial literal processing stage. This hypothesis is based on the relevance theory communicative principle, which assumes no priority for literal language over metaphorical language.

The discourse processing hypothesis

The L1 and L2 participants will seek interpretations beyond the immediate boundaries of the metaphorical expressions they identify, treating metaphors as contributing to an overall poetic message. This hypothesis is based on the communicative principle of relevance, which presumes that utterance interpretation is a pragmatic process concerned with the search for communicative intentions.

The assumption activation hypothesis

Participants will draw on a wide range of contextual assumptions in making sense of poetic metaphor interpretation. However, the L1 participants will draw on a wider range of culture-specific assumptions than the L2 participants, while the L2 participants will rely on cultural information from their own cultural background and from the target culture.

The implicature maximization hypothesis

The L1 and L2 participants will seek single interpretations for conventional metaphors but richer interpretations for creative metaphors. This hypothesis is based on the cognitive principle of relevance, which states that readers will try to maximize

cognitive effects for those metaphors they find difficult to interpret. Both the L1 and L2 participants are expected to seek single interpretations for the metaphorical expressions featuring in the poem "Crossing the Bar" on account of the preponderance of conventional metaphors in this poem but will be oriented to look for a wider range of implicatures for the metaphorical expressions they identify in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" on account of the preponderance of creative metaphors in both poems. On account of their larger cultural and linguistic knowledge, the L1 participants are expected to show more cases of multiple implicature generation for metaphors in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" than the L2 participants and to infer more single interpretations for metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants.

The cognitive effort Hypothesis

The L1 and L2 participants will infer more implicatures for those metaphors they expend more processing effort on. This hypothesis is based on the prediction posited within relevance theory stating that readers will derive a wider range of implicatures for those metaphors they expend most effort on. This hypothesis entails that the L1 and L2 participants will invest less time on the poem "Crossing the Bar" than on the other two poems, inferring fewer implicatures as well. They will invest more time on the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow", inferring a wider range of implicatures. On the basis of this hypothesis, I predict that the L1 participants will invest less time on the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants, inferring fewer implicatures. I also predict that the L1 and L2 participants will invest comparable amounts of processing time on both poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow", though the L1 participants will derive a larger number of interpretations.

The implicature convergence Hypothesis

The L1 and L2 participants will show more converging implicatures in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow". The L1 participants will show more converging implicatures than the L2 participants in the poem "Crossing the Bar". The L1 and L2 participants will produce convergent implicatures in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar".

To answer the above questions the following methodology is used:

3.5 Research methodology

This section describes the research methodology which I am using in this study. In this study I make use of the qualitative paradigm, and more specifically the case study method, to explore the process of poetic metaphor interpretation by the L1 and L2 participants. Below I provide a discussion of the case study method and the rationale underlying its selection for the present study.

3.5.1 The case study method

Within the framework of the qualitative paradigm, I make use of the case study method. I judge this method to be effective in ensuring a deeper understanding of the poetic metaphor interpretation process and in providing insightful recommendations for enhancing L2 learners' metaphor interpretation skills. For such an objective to be achieved, a method is needed which provides rich and authentic data on the interpretative process, revealing the interaction between its different variables as well as differences between different readers, both within and across language groups. Thus I opted to use the case study method which can potentially best meet these objectives.

The case study method offers a number of advantages for qualitative research. In fact, the case study method has a strong descriptive and explanatory power and has a potential to test and refine theories and to generate new theories about the observed

phenomenon (Richards, 2011, p.210; Stoecker, 1991; Juma'h & Cavus, 2001). In this respect, Juma'h and Cavus (2001) state,

> The theory developed from case study research is likely to have important strengths, like novelty, testability, and empirical validity, which arise from the intimate linkage with empirical validity, which arise from the intimate linkage with empirical evidence. Second, given the strengths of this theory-building approach and its independence from prior literature or past empirical observation it is particularly suited to new research areas or research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate. (p.63)

Case studies can also provide reliable data for deriving practical recommendations in the studied field (Richards, 2011; Stoecker, 1991). In this respect, Richards (2011) states that a case study "will include claims that might range from practical recommendations to the refinement of theory" (p.215). Likewise, Stoecker (1991) adds that a "case study is the best way by which we can refine general theory and apply effective interventions in complex situations" (p. 109).

The aforementioned merits of the case study method can be attributed to a number of features related to the case study method, and which make it suitable for the objectives of this study. To begin with, case studies provide richer data about the cognitive processes being investigated than other data collection tools. Compared with quantitative data collection tools, "Case studies can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis" (Cohen et al., 2000, p.181). In fact, case studies help tap minute details of the phenomenon under study and so reflect the complexity of the studied phenomenon. (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p.317; Cohen et al., 2000, p.152). More specifically, case studies can capture the complexities and intricacies of a particular social behaviour. Hence, Cohen et al. (2000) state, "contexts are unique and dynamic, hence case studies investigate and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance" (p.181). Likewise, Gomm, Hammersley, and Foster (2000) argue that case

studies are best suited to reveal causal relationships between the involved variables and can thus ascertain the best theoretical explanations for the observed phenomenon.

Compared to other research methods, case studies can reveal details not otherwise discovered by other tools. Such details can reveal specific processing stages, processing difficulties, or sources of knowledge the participants make use of when engaging with a particular task, which can have an important role for the refinement of theoretical statements or derivation of practical implications. In this regard, Cohen et al. (2000) argue that case studies can "catch unique features that may otherwise be lost in larger scale data (e.g. surveys); these unique features might hold the key to understanding the situation" (p.184). Case studies are also more flexible than other data collection methods in that they can "embrace and build in unanticipated events and uncontrolled variables" (P.184), thus providing a more comprehensive account of the phenomenon being investigated than structured data collection tools.

In addition, case studies can provide more authentic data than other data collection tools, hence allowing the derivation of more valid results. In fact, case studies can provide real and accurate descriptions of the objects or participants being studied within an authentic naturalistic context. Cohen et al. (2000) state that a case study "provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles" (P.181). In this way the case study method provides reliable data which reflect the viewpoints and perspectives of the involved participants as they engage with the task being studied rather than give hypothetical statements about their performance.

The richness of the case study data allows for the identification of recurrent occurrences (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 109), which makes it possible to draw strong conclusions about the tendencies of the involved participants and to make comparisons

between major patterns, highlighting most efficient processing strategies. At the same time, case studies involve paying attention to single occurrences (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 185). Hence, Stoecker (1991, p. 94) remarks that case studies best explain idiosyncrasies and can, therefore, account for variation in relation to a particular phenomenon. Case studies are best suited to reveal differences for those phenomena which are highly subjective and personal. Commenting on the importance of single occurrences, Cohen et al. (2000) state,

> For example, it may be that infrequent, unrepresentative but critical incidents or events occur that are crucial to the understanding of the case. For example, a subject might only demonstrate a particular behaviour once, but it is so important as not to be ruled out simply because it occurred once; sometimes a single event might occur which sheds a hugely important insight into a person or situation. (p.185)

A major challenge to case studies is the issue of generalizability (Richards, 2011, p.216; Cohen et al., 2000, p.184). Cohen et al. (2000) explain this challenge by the fact that "Human behaviour is infinitely complex, irreducible, socially situated and unique. Hence generalizability is not easily achieved. It is to be qualified or explained otherwise" (p.109). However, the concern with generalizability is not the main goal of qualitative research; rather, qualitative research is basically concerned with reaching a deeper understanding of a particular issue, such as interpretative processes, the testing of theoretical statements, or the formation of new theories. However, case studies can still offer a strong ground for theoretical generalizability on the basis of the soundness of theoretical statements it can empirically substantiate (Yin, 1997, p.239). This is because data yielded by the case study method are "strong in reality" (Cohen et al., 2000, p.184), a feature which provides a "natural basis for generalization" (Cohen et al., 2000, p.184). Juma'h and Cavus (2001) emphasize the theoretical generalizability potential of case studies in the following comment,

> As we build and rebuild theory through this process we are also aiding our ability to generalize because we are employing theory, which we assume to be general by

definition, we are assuming that this case is somehow a reflection of the general whole. It is suggested that we can generalize from case studies because of the belief that general resides in the particular, and because what one learns from a particular one applies to other situations subsequently encountered. (p.61)

The reality basis of case studies, which yields rich and authentic data on the studied phenomenon, also allows for post-generalizability by other researchers and academics, who may decide, on the basis of the thick description provided by the case study, whether the case is applicable to other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.316; Schofield, 1993, p. 200; Cohen et al., 2000, p.109). In this respect, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that "it is not the researcher's task to provide an index of transferability. Rather…researchers should provide sufficiently rich data for the readers and users of research to determine whether transferability is possible. In this respect transferability requires thick description" (p.109).

The value of case studies resides in their strength to provide thick and authentic descriptions. Such data provide a reliable basis for refining theories and formulating more persuasive theoretical statements, hence the theoretical generalizability of case studies. Case studies also offer a strong basis for allowing successive generalizations by researchers and practitioners on account of the detailed descriptions they provide. They also provide insightful information for drawing efficient practical interventions.

The case study method has a number of merits which make it suitable for the objectives of this study. The case study method has the potential to yield rich and authentic data about the poetic interpretative processes of the L1 and L2 participants, which can provide a better understanding of the process of metaphor interpretation. More specifically, the case study method can reveal recurrent patterns and tendencies between participants and participant groups, hence making it possible to determine whether the L1 and L2 participants make use of similar or different interpretative processes, and whether the L1 and L2 participants are equally efficient in the

identification and interpretation of different types of metaphor. While the present study is mostly concerned with identifying general patterns within and across the L1 and L2 participant groups, attention will also be paid to processing differences between participants as well as to idiosyncratic processing strategies. This will help to identify efficient processing strategies which may not be demonstrated by all participants and which may be crucial for enhancing metaphor training tasks.

The case study method can shed light on specific aspects of the metaphor interpretative process as predicted by relevance theory. More specifically, the case study helps to reveal the interaction between a number of variables involved in the process of metaphor interpretation, namely the interaction between metaphor creativity, processing stages, processing effort, and number of implicatures derived. Hence, the case study method makes it possible to establish whether metaphor interpretation is conducted efficiently by both groups of readers, i.e., whether the L1 and L2 participants go through a one-stage or a two-stage interpretative process when interpreting poetic metaphors with different levels of creativity. The case study method can also reveal whether the L1 and L2 participants are motivated to invest sufficient effort in interpreting creative poetic metaphors and the extent to which they seek rich interpretations for creative poetic metaphors. It can also show whether the L1 and L2 participants infer the same or different interpretations for conventional and creative metaphors. Finally, the case study has the potential to unearth the sources of knowledge both participant groups make use of and whether the L1 and L2 participants make use of different sources of knowledge. By focusing on the interaction between these different variables in relation to L1 and L2 participants, the case study method can provide deeper understanding of the poetic metaphor interpretation process. Thus the case study can help test the theoretical account posited by relevance theory regarding

metaphor interpretation and refine it with rich and authentic empirical evidence. Such information can also provide a reliable basis for L2 teachers to devise more efficient metaphor training tasks and to supply the types of background knowledge the learners mostly need.

In the sections below I describe the participants taking part in the case study experiment, the texts used in the study, and the data collection tool employed, namely the think-aloud technique.

3.5.2 Participants

The participants taking part in the present study are ten tertiary-level native English students studying at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland (6 males and 4 females), and ten tertiary-level L2 Tunisian students studying at the University of Sousse, Tunisia (3 males and 7 females). Both groups of participants are enrolled in English studies departments in their respective Universities. Both groups of participants are graduates of English language and literature departments and have studied a variety of literary subjects, including poetry. In fact, both groups of participants studied literary courses, including poetry, for four years as undergraduate students before going on to tertiary-level studies. Although the L1 participants can be expected to have a superior level of language proficiency over the L2 participants, the L2 participants can be judged to have a high level of language proficiency appropriate for the performance of the present study.

The rationale underlying reliance on L1 and L2 participants is to determine whether L2 participants use similar or different metaphor interpretation processes to those used by the L1 participants, whether the L2 participants are as efficient in the interpretation of conventional and creative metaphors as the L1 participants, and whether the L1 and L2

participants use similar or different knowledge resources in making sense of poetic metaphors. This will hopefully provide an accurate idea of the real poetic metaphor interpretation skills of the L2 participants in comparison with L1 reader, which can in turn provide a reliable background for providing more effective training in poetic metaphor interpretation in the L2 poetry classroom.

In the absence of definite sample size selection criteria (Sheperis, Young, & Daniels, 2010, p.53), the size of the sample has been largely determined by the objectives of this study and the qualitative nature of the research method to be employed, namely the think-aloud technique. Some practical considerations affected the size and selection of the sample, such as the difficulty of finding volunteering participants. Nevertheless, the sample size was basically determined by the objectives of the study. The main concern underlying qualitative research is to reach a better understanding of the phenomenon under study by indentifying relations between different variables and explaining the phenomena from the perspective of the involved participants. Thus qualitative research aims to provide an accurate and persuasive account of variation among the involved participants rather than to simply record the phenomenon's frequency. In the case of our study, creative metaphor interpretation is a highly subjective interpretive process, which is likely to yield variable interpretations between individuals as well as between different cultural groups. Thus insights revealed by the consideration of a small sample size are sufficient to illustrate variations in strategy use between individuals.

The size of the sample is also determined by the nature of effects likely to be yielded by the involved variables. Thus a larger sample is needed when a small-effect size is expected; that is, when the relationship between the investigated variables is not strong enough to yield clear effects easily. By contrast, a smaller sample will suffice when a

large-effect size is expected; that is, when the relationship between the investigated variables is easy to emerge (Sheperis, Young, & Daniels, 2010, p.53). In this study, the cultural and linguistic differences between the L1 and L2 participants represent rather strong variables for yielding differences between both groups of participants, which makes the sample currently used sufficient for capturing differences between the L1 and L2 participants.

The sample size is also determined by the data collection procedure to be used and the nature of the data collected. In fact, the participants were meant to take part in a think-aloud experiment, which is judged effective for collecting reliable data on cognitive processes (see section 3.5.4 below for a detailed description of the think-aloud procedure). Such procedure yields a large amount of process data for a small number of participants, which is judged to be adequate for achieving deep qualitative analyses. The sample size has also been decided on by reference to similar previous think-aloud studies conducted on L1 and L2 learners' thinking strategies (e.g. Hanauer, 2001; Picken, 2001; Chang, 2002). Most studies have relied on few participants, ranging between two to ten participants with challenging tasks. While some studies involved larger samples, they exposed their participants to small tasks such as commenting on short text segments (e.g. Gibbs & Nascimento, 1996; Steen, 1994). As this study involves the processing of three poems by each participant, the think-aloud technique is expected to yield a large set of data for each participant, thus providing a wealth of information for responding to the present study's questions. Although the size of the sample is small for generalizability of the study's findings, this shortcoming is offset by the type of in-depth data, the richness of which can be extrapolated to theoretically sound statements, hence ensuring theory-based generalizations.

A combination of purposive and convenience sampling was followed to recruit the participants to take part in the think-aloud study. Purposive sampling consists of selecting participants from a specific group. In this study, the target group was tertiary level students from two different universities. Convenience sampling consists of selecting those participants who are motivated to take part in the study. Convenience sampling was opted for rather than random sampling as not all potential participants were willing to take part in the study. Convenience sampling, however, offered the advantage of recruiting motivated participants, hence ensuring richer think-aloud data. As not all potential participants were motivated to take part in the study, I elected to seize those participants who were motivated and, therefore, volunteered to participate in the study. Reliance on expert readers has been widely recommended in think-aloud studies (e.g. Someren et al., 1994) as advanced participants are more likely than less advanced participants to verbalize their thoughts as they perform the think-aloud technique. They also represent more reliable sources for providing richer information on the phenomenon under study. In this study, advanced L1 and L2 participants are preferred to less advanced participants as they are expected to engage more rigorously with the process of poetic metaphor interpretation on account of their higher literary experience and are, therefore, expected to show more extensive reference to their cultural and literary background knowledge than less advanced participants.

3.5.3 Poems

Poetic texts have been selected to be used in the think-aloud study as poetry represents a genre in relation to which L2 learners can potentially develop their metaphor interpretation processes. Thus it is the objective of this study to verify to what extent L2 participants are efficient in interpreting metaphorical language when engaging with poetic texts. While non-literary texts refer the reader to an external

context, which restricts the reader's construction of the text's meaning, poetry offers

the reader much freedom to respond personally to the text, constructing meaning by

reference to the text itself rather than in relation to an external referential context.

Widdowson (1984) makes this distinction in context between literary and non-

literary texts as follows:

> Conventional kinds of discourse, conforming as they do to normal linguistic principles, fit into a continuity: they are located in ongoing social life which is serviced by the conventional code. When I speak or when I write I do so in response to some requirement and I anticipate some consequence: my discourse is located in a contextual continuum and it has to conform to rule so that it may mediate my involvement in ordinary social interaction. But poetry is not and cannot be part of a continuum in this way. It is essentially dislocated from context, set aside: it presupposes no previous or existing situation outside that created by itself, it anticipates no continuation. It exists apart, complete in itself, self-contained within its own pattern. (pp.158-159)

The above distinction suggests that L2 reader may face processing difficulties in

making sense of metaphors in non-literary texts as these may require the activation

of relevant background knowledge, which may not be explicitly stated in the text. In

such cases, inferencing does not always help the reader to fill in assumed

information. By contrast, the poetic text represents a self-contained meaning entity,

the context of which can potentially be constructed by reference to the poem itself.

In this respect, Lazar (1983) states,

> In very broad terms, it has been said that we are reading something as literature when we are interested in the 'general state of affairs' to which it refers rather than its pragmatic function in the real world (Brumfit & Carter, 1986 p. 16). Thus, when reading a newspaper article we expect it to be verifiable with reference to a world of facts, whereas when reading literary texts we are interested in what Brumfit has described as metaphorical or symbolic meanings which 'illuminate our self-awareness' (Brumfit, Carter & Walker, 1989, p. 27).

The autonomous nature of the poetic context stems from the iconic

characteristics of the poetic sign and its representational function. In fact,

Widdowson (1984) draws a qualitative distinction between the representative nature

of the iconic sign, which is self-referring, the denotative nature of the symbolic sign,

typical of abstracted language, and the referring function of the indexical sign,

typical of referential language use. Hence he characterizes the iconic sign as follows,

> In this case, the signs are not meant to denote, since the intention is to call up a particular state of affairs. But they do not refer either, since there is nothing in the immediate context for them to refer to. What we have here are signs of the third kind that Peirce distinguished: the icon. Their function is not to denote or refer but to represent. And representation is the mode of meaning of literature. The essential condition for reference is that there should be something to refer to, some object, entity or whatever within a context separate from the sign. To put the matter in another way, the index has to have something to point to. With representation, context is necessarily created by the signs themselves and there are no objects, entities or whatever other than those iconically represented by the signs. (p.168)

The poetic text representational character stimulates the reader to engage in

inferential interpretative processes to realize the full potentiality of the iconic poetic

sign. While the interpretative processes are similar to those we use in interpreting

other types of discourse, the reader engages in a process of context construction by

reference to the text itself rather than by reference to an outside context. In this

respect, Widdowson (1984) states,

> The expressions now take on a different character. We have to interpret them as utterances, as instances of language use, and to do this we have to realize them as representations. This involves the engagement of procedures we would normally apply to conventional referential uses of language …. But these procedures are directed now not at recovering meaning in context outside the sign but in creating an internal context within the poem. The procedures have to seek significance therefore in denotational distinctions and in sign patterns over and above their normal referential function. (p. 171)

This entails that poetry requires no specific external discourse context for its

interpretation. The reader has to construct the context by reference to the poem itself.

However, the words within the poem still provide the reader with an array of

associations, which can potentially bear on the interpretation of the poem. In other

words, the reader has greater freedom to enrich the meaning potential of the poetic text

through the activation of a diverse range of associations which are not constrained by a strict external context. Thus Widdowson (1984) states,

> The words carry with them their ordinary language meanings, together with the aura of association that surrounds them because of the contexts of their most common occurrence. And these effects are indeed still active… But their occurrence in the designed message form of the poem make them mean something more, for they appear as part of an unfamiliar pattern, dissociated from the company they would normally keep, and so they take on a strangeness. They are familiar because of the presupposed context they carry with them from normal use, and unfamiliar because of the actual context in which they find themselves. (pp. 160-161)

The poems chosen in the present study are Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem "Crossing the Bar", Wallace Stevens' poem "The motive for metaphor", and "Snow", by Louis MacNeice (see Appendices A1, A2, and A3 below for the three poems). The selection of poems belonging to different poets and to different poetic periods is designed to trigger the participants' reactions to different types of metaphor featuring in different poetic periods, thus providing data for general statements on the process of metaphor interpretation. The three poems deal with three different topics and thus provide a variation of contexts for the participants to express their thoughts and to bring their own personal experiences to bear on their interpretations. In addition, the poems provide a multitude of poetic metaphors, which range from conventional metaphors to highly creative metaphors, thus providing the opportunity to explore readers' reactions to different types of poetic metaphors. In addition, the selection of poems with different degrees of explicitness makes it possible to establish whether advanced L1 and L2 readers will engage in a metaphoric processing of poetic texts even when no explicit clues are available and whether both groups will show the same processing tendencies. While the three poems can potentially be interpreted in an allegorical way, only one poem, "The Motive for Metaphor" involves clear explicit clues impelling a metaphorical reading.

The other poems, "Crossing the Bar" and "Snow" contain few explicit clues compelling an allegorical reading. However, both differ in the level of metaphor creativity involved. Hence "Crossing the Bar" can potentially be interpreted against a number of conventional metaphors while the poem "Snow" and "The Motive for Metaphor" are less amenable to conventional readings. I take up this point in more detail in the sections dealing with each poem below.

The following section explores the three poems used in the think-aloud protocols in terms of their main themes and the metaphorical expressions featuring in them. Conceptual metaphors are made reference to each time a linguistic metaphor can be clearly linked to an underlying conventional conceptual metaphor (see section, 1.4.2.1 in chapter One above for a definition of conceptual metaphors). Conventional conceptual metaphors represent a component of the potential contextual assumptions which readers might make reference to when interpreting metaphorical expressions. The presence of conceptual metaphors contributes to the conventionality of the metaphorical expression. Thus, the less obvious the conceptual metaphors, the more creative the metaphorical expressions are.

Practical factors are also taken into consideration in choosing the texts. The texts have to be short to make sure that the think-aloud study would not take much time. Moreover care is taken to select texts that do not pose linguistic difficulties for the participants; that is, texts which would not compel the participants to refer to the dictionary. Most of all, the presence of metaphors plays the major role in the selection of the texts. Hence the chosen texts have to provide a diverse range of metaphors ranging from conventional to creative metaphors.

- **Poem One: "Crossing the Bar"**

Tennyson's poem 'Crossing the Bar' provides a good example of conventional and creative metaphors, which are both based on conventional conceptual metaphors. At a surface literal level, the poem portrays a journey by the sea at sunset time. At this level the poem seems to pose no comprehension difficulties for the reader. However, the poem can potentially invite a metaphorical interpretation beneath its surface literal sea journey. Although the poem contains no explicit metaphorical expressions compelling a metaphorical interpretation, it involves a wide range of expressions which can potentially be interpreted as metaphorical. These are mostly comprised by classical poetic images and concepts, which involve SUNSET, EVENING STAR, TWILIGHT, SEA, CALL, DARK, BELL, FAREWELL, SLEEP, TIDE, TIME, PLACE, HOME and FLOOD. Within the context of the whole poem, these concepts are likely to call to mind a number of conventional assumptions, which may evoke notions of life and death. In addition, these concepts have the potential of drawing the reader's attention to potentially relevant conventional conceptual metaphors. These are likely to provide the main sources of contextual assumptions once they are activated by the reader. The abundance of conventional associations and assumptions may lead to the generation of relatively strong assumptions, which converge on the notion of death.

Few expressions can potentially be treated as creative metaphorical expressions. These are realized by the concepts BAR and PILOT. However, the preponderance of concepts with conventional poetic assumptions provide a strong context for deriving even convergent interpretations for the latter two metaphorical expressions, though some degree of divergence might be observed as well.

At the start, the speaker talks about his approaching death, which he announces using the linguistic metaphors "Sunset and evening star". Both metaphors can be related to the conventional conceptual metaphor LIFEITIME IS A DAY. In this

sense, "Sunset" can be taken as a metonymy of the last moments of daylight, which can then be metaphorically interpreted as end of life. Similarly, "evening star" can be metonymically related to the end of day and metaphorically to end of life. The notion of ending life is also reiterated by the metaphorical expression "Twilight and evening bell." Again "twilight" can be interpreted metonymically as "end of day" and then metaphorically as "end of life". Like "evening star", "evening bell" metonymically denotes the notion of darkness, which can then be metaphorically interpreted as ending life.

Next the poet expresses the start of his death journey, which is announced by the metaphorical expressions "one clear call for me" and then reiterated by the metaphorical expression "evening bell". The "clear call" and the "bell" metaphorically indicate the summoning of the doomed person, whose journey to death is about to start. The start of the death journey is expressed by the following metaphorical expressions "when I put out to sea", and "when I embark", "when I have crossed the bar". The three expressions can be traced back to the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS A JOURNEY. The resistless power of death is metaphorically expressed by the expressions "but such a tide as moving" and the "Flood may bear me far away". Both expressions are schematically related to a "sea journey" and contribute to the instantiation of the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS A JOURNEY. The poet submits to the call of death but expresses his wish that he dies quietly and that his relatives do not give themselves up to an excess of grief and lamentation. His wish for a calm death is expressed by the metaphorical expression "But such a tide as moving seems asleep/ Too full for sound and foam". In this expression, "tide" or the "sweeping power of death" is metaphorically described as "asleep", which metaphorically denotes a quiet movement of the tide or the journey towards death. The poet's apprehension of an excess of grief

and sorrow is expressed by the following expressions "And may there be no moaning of the bar" and "And may there be no sadness of farewell/when I embark". In the former expression, "the bar" stands for the boundary between life and death, whether it is physical or temporal, which is again part of the DEATH AS JOURNEY conceptual metaphor. "Moaning of the bar", then, refers to the weeping accompanying death, which the poet dreads. This is reinforced by the expression "sadness of farewell", where farewell metaphorically refers to the bereaved family paying their last tribute to their dead relative. Death itself is expressed by the conceptual metaphors DEATH IS DARKNESS and DEATH IS A RESTING PLACE. This former is linguistically realized by the expressions "And after that the dark" and "When that which drew from out the boundless deep." Deepness is usually associated with darkness, and it refers to the mysterious metaphysical existence one comes from and moves to after death. DEATH AS A RESTING PLACE is metaphorically expressed by the expression "Turns again home", where "home" metaphorically refers to the last abode the soul is set to dwell in. A last metaphorical expression used in the present poem is "I hope to see my Pilot face to face", where "Pilot" is metaphorically used to refer to God, or the metaphysical force governing the laws of life and death.

Poem Two: "The Motive for Metaphor"

Wallace Stevens' poem "The Motive for Metaphor" provides the reader with a mixture of conventional and creative metaphors, though the poem is dominated by creative metaphorical expressions. Unlike the poems "Crossing the Bar" and "Snow", the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" is relatively obscure at the literal level. Although it provides explicit clues to metaphorical expressions, which distinguishes it from both other poems, it makes an excessive use of figurative language use, which might pose

interpretation difficulties for the readers. Hence the poem may require the readers to exert greater interpretative effort than they do in connection with the other two poems.

The poem can potentially be viewed as a meta-cognitive meditation on the nature of metaphor. It makes use of a mixture of symbolic and metaphorical expressions to enact the perceptive, conceptual, and expressive potential of metaphor. For Stevens, Metaphor represents a sensitive tool of imagination, through which the mind tries to capture the world around it. As a creative mode of thought, metaphor provides a tool which helps to experience the world afresh and to reconceptualise it in original and creative ways. Thus, metaphor liberates the mind from the constraints of mundane perception and conventional systems of thought.

The poem involves reference to some classical poetic notions and images, which can activate potentially conventional assumptions. These involve the concepts AUTUMN, SPRING, WIND, BIRD, TREE, CLOUDS, MOON, SKY, NOON, and WORLD. While some of these concepts can individually activate relevant conventional associations, they enter into structural combinations with other concepts and hence acquire novel metaphorical meanings. At the same time, the poem involves a number of other concepts which are less evocative of conventional associations in the poem and which are likely to activate only a wide range of weak assumptions. These involve the concepts RED, BLUE, HAMMER, STEEL, FLESH, and RUDDY, which feature as component concepts of creative metaphorical expressions. Unlike Alfred Tennyson's poem "Crossing the Bar", Wallace Stevens' poem involves rather creative metaphors, which cannot be confidently traced to underlying conceptual metaphors.

The poet frames his mediations on the connection between truth and metaphor within a symbolic natural setting. He uses autumn and spring to literally denote a period of physical change, which symbolically evokes a state of psychological defamilirization

regarding the stability of the world around us. Both symbols can be metaphorically traced back to a basic conceptual metaphor which can be termed CHANGE IS INSTABILITY. Both autumn and spring can be interpreted as denoting a state of intellectual instability where the mind contemplates the world around it, trying to reason it out. The objects of such subtle perception or inspiration are referred to by the metaphorical expressions "half dead", "half colours of quarter things", "obscure world". These in-between aspects of reality are beyond mundane categories of thought and language. The wind as is frequently used in Steven's poetry could be interpreted as a symbol of blunt reality thus the expression "and repeats words without meaning". The subtle mode of metaphorical perception is expressed by the metaphorical expression "the obscure moon." Though the expression "obscure moon" can function as a symbol of the poetic mind entertaining vague visions, the conceptual metaphors KNOWING IS SEEING and KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT can be activated as possible contextual assumptions and so provide a metaphorical basis for the expression 'obscure moon'. In this sense, metaphorical probing offers a defamilirizing perspective on the world around us but only serves to give us the silhouette of the things felt or perceived. The desire to transcend the constraints of everyday reality and its mundane categories, which tunnel our interaction with the world, provides "the motive for metaphor". This is expressed through the metaphorical expression "shrinking from the weight of primary noon", where "primary noon" would stand for the dazzling influence of everyday reality obstructing intimate and fresh perception. Again the metaphorical expression KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT underlies this metaphorical expression. In opposition to the subtlety of metaphor, through which we entertain intimate inspirations, everyday reality is stale and stagnant and represents a confining framework which obstructs vivid and genuine interaction with the world. The rigidity

and prevailing dominance of such inherited reality is expressed through a succession of metaphorical expressions functioning as elaborative vehicles on the main vehicle "primary noon". These involve the following expressions "the weight of primary noon", "the ABC of Being", "the ruddy temper", "the hammer of red and blue", "the hard sound", in turn modified by the metaphorical expression "steel against intimation", "the sharp flesh", "the vital, arrogant, fatal, dominant X." These different metaphorical expressions give rise to a wide range of contextual assumptions which can all be connected to the opposition between the intimate and subtle nature of metaphorical imagination and perception and the stagnant and rigid nature of conventional modes of thought. Thus "hard sound", "ruddy temper" and "fatal, dominant X" evoke connotations of dominance, which obstruct "intimation", while the "sharp flesh" and the "hammer of red and blue" might be taken to refer to the clear-cut and established categories of everyday truth. Together with yellow color of "primary noon", they are primary colors which are opposed to the "half-colors" associated with the object of metaphorical perception.

- **Poem Three: "Snow"**

The poem "Snow", by Louis MacNeice, provides another text where the reader can engage in a creative metaphorical interpretative process to make sense of it at a significant level. Like the poem "Crossing the Bar", and unlike the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", "Snow" provides few explicit clues for a metaphorical interpretation. In addition, "Snow" is similar to "Crossing the Bar" and different from the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" in that it is rather transparent to the reader at a literal level, posing little comprehension difficulties. However, unlike "Crossing the Bar", "Snow" provides no clear evidence of underlying conventional conceptual metaphors. Hence the poem's metaphorical potential, all like the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", can

be seen as generating creative divergent interpretations rather than conventional convergent interpretations. However, while the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" makes excessive use of metaphorical expressions to the extent of rendering its potential subject matter difficult for the reader, the poem "Snow" gives helpful clues for developing an overall insight of the poem, making it easier to interpret the metaphorical expressions involved. The poem makes reference to rather familiar notions and concepts involving the concepts WORLD, ROOM, ROSES, SNOW, FIRE, and WATER as well as notions of conflict, surprise, and intoxication. These are likely to arouse the reader's interest and to activate a wide range of contextual assumptions which may yield a rich set of interpretations.

The poem "Snow" depicts a carefree character, comfortably ensconced in a cosy room when he is suddenly thrown into a baffling awareness of life's contradictions. This intense awareness is triggered by the unusual perception of snowflakes and pink roses side by side, separated only by a pane of glass. The sudden appearance of snow next to the roses shakes the poet's stale perception and drives him to meditate on the now defamiliarized world. He realizes that the world is full of paradoxes and contradictions, which defy one's automated perception and ordinary conceptualizations. At the end of the poem he accepts the mysterious nature of the world having failed to reason away its paradoxes.

While the poem depicts a moment of intense awareness triggered by the perception of discrepant elements side by side, namely snow and roses, the poem can potentially be interpreted at a deeper metaphorical level. The room which provides a cosy setting in which the poet is comfortably ensconced, can very well be seen as that version of reality which we are comfortable with. In other words, it can stand for our pre-established concepts or preconceived ideas, which underlie the poet's automated

perception of the world and which have come to be shaken by the sudden perception of discordant elements belonging to different seasons. Thus he states, "The room was suddenly rich". Again the snow and the pink roses which the poet sees as paradoxical can activate varied contextual assumptions within the framework of the poem. At a metonymic level, snow can be a symbol of winter, but can also stand metaphorically for the later stages of life, the dark side of life, or for the unfamiliar and unexpected. The window can then stand as the boundary between the familiar and comfortable and the unfamiliar and shocking. Again the roses by the window can stand for those rose-tinted spectacles through which we perceive the world around us, and which the poet has suddenly become aware of. Thus the poet begins to see the richness of the world through a fresh process of perception rather than through his automated everyday perception, hence perceiving the paradoxical nature of life. This state of defamiliarization is expressed by the word "rich" while life's paradoxes are expressed through the expressions "soundlessly collateral and incompatible". Again the word "Soundlessly" and the expressions "world is crazier and more of it than we think" and "World is suddener than we fancy it" reflect the poet's attempt at coming to grips with these bewildering contradictions, which defy reason and ordinary expectations. Hence, he describes the variety of the world as "incorrigibly plural", displaying an infinite variety similar to the infinitude of snowflakes.

The second stanza shows the poet meditating on further juxtapositions, sitting back and eating a tangerine. In fact, the poet seems to actively contribute to these apparently incongruous elements, consuming a summer fruit while watching the snow. This reflects a curious attempt on the side of the poet to experience world contradictions by himself. Removing the tangerine skin and portioning it can also reflect a symbolic attempt on the part of the poet to dissect the world and reason its mysteries into

manageable entities. This only seems to add to the intensity of confusion, as he experiences a feeling of intoxication, thus stating "I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various".

The third stanza maintains the state of bewilderment at the contradictions of the world, portraying a new contrast between the fire inside the room and the melting snow outside, hence the phrase "the fire flames with a bubbling sound". The phrase can even be taken to refer metaphorically to the fever-like state the poet starts to experience as a result of his bewilderment at the unpredictable contrasts surrounding him and his inability to reason away its mysteries. However, the poet elaborates on this phrase, possibly equating fire with world's spite, and water with life's joy, hence stating "world is more spiteful and gay than one supposes".

Towards the end of the poem, the poet seems to accept these contradictions as the true essence of the world. In fact, the poet seems to emphasize the role of sense experience in maintaining a fresh awareness of the world, though that experience remains ungraspable by reason. Hence he states "on the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands/ there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses". This suggests that the poet comes to accept the mysterious nature of the world. The glass, like the great bay window, can be seen as a barrier or a divide between the paradoxes of life. It seems as if the poet finally accepts this paradoxical nature of the world as a natural feature of the world without trying to bring these different contrasts into a harmonious unity. This notion is expressed earlier by the phrase "incorrigibly plural" and then by the emphasis that the divide between these discrepant elements, and by analogy life's contrasts, is wider than a mere pane of glass. Alternatively, the glass can stand for automated perception which is subordinated to our established concepts and categories, symbolized in this poem by the cosy room the poet is comfortably

seated in. The poet seems to admit that the world outside there, symbolized by snow, is not to be exclusively seen through those rose-tinted spectacles we tend to look at the world through. The world can in fact take us by surprise, shaking our assumptions and preconceived ideas. The world is not to be taken as a function of that mundane perception, in this poem the glass of the great bay-window, but is to be experienced with all its juxtapositions and mysteries without trying to confine it to our pre-established thoughts and concepts. Hence, he does not name that "more" which exists between the snow and the huge roses, leaving it for the reader to experience that mystery himself.

A think-aloud technique has been opted for to collect process data on the L1 and L2 participants' poetic metaphor interpretation processes. In the next section I provide a discussion of the think-aloud technique, highlighting its usefulness for the present study's objectives.

3.5.4 Think-aloud protocols

In this study I make use of the think-aloud technique as I find it better suited than other data collection tools to serve the purpose of this study, which is to reach a better understanding of the poetic metaphor interpretation process. The think-aloud technique consists of engaging participants in a given task while ensuring that they perform the task in the most natural way. Meanwhile, the participant is asked to verbalize their thoughts as they perform the task. The participant is advised against providing any explanations of the way he performs the task. Total care is taken by the researcher not to interfere with the verbalization process or the performance of the task. Hence "no interruptions or suggestive prompts or questions" are provided to the participants (Someren et al., 1994, p.26).

The think-aloud technique has a number of merits which make it useful for constructing valid descriptions of thinking and inferential processes (Ericsson & Simon, 1984; Someren et al., 1994; Bowles, 2010). According to proponents of the think-aloud method (e.g. Ericsson & Simon, 1984; Someren et al., 1994; Russo, Johnson, & Steven, 1989), the think aloud method reduces interference with the cognitive processes used in a specific task and, therefore, yields more reliable process data than other verbal data collection tools such as introspection or retrospection. Nunan (1992) defines introspection as "The process of observing and reflecting on one's thoughts, feelings, motives, reasoning processes, and mental states with a view to determining the ways in which these processes and states determine our behaviour" (P. 115). In this regard, Someren et al. (1994) argue that introspection does not provide direct clues to the interpretative process as it is prompted after the completion of the task. Given that introspection involves interpretative and explanatory comments on the part of the reader, introspective comments are unlikely to provide reliable verbalizations of the underlying cognitive processes (Someren et al., 1994, p.25; Ericsson & Simon, 1984, p.405). Someren et al. (1994) emphasize the difference between think-aloud protocols and the introspective method, stating,

> In classic introspection… the subject is also encouraged to give an accurate, complete and coherent report on a cognitive process. This may involve interpretation on the part of the subject, and the use of psychological terminology… The main difference with the think aloud method is that the latter requires concurrent verbalization and discourages interpretation on the part of the subject. As a result, introspective reports are more 'readable' than concurrent protocols but also more subject to memory errors and misinterpretations. (P.23)

Retrospection offers the least degree of interference with ongoing cognitive processes as it frees all short-term memory capacity for the completion of the task silently. However, retrospective reports are likely to leave out some information relating to the interpretative process as retrospection is conducted after the completion

of the whole task and, therefore, has to be reconstructed from memory (Someren et al., 1994, P.25). Reliance on memory represents a major shortcoming of the retrospective method as the subject may not be able to remember the different steps s/he has gone through (Someren et al., 1994, p. 25). Like introspection, retrospective reports are likely to degenerate into a fabrication of the processing moves the participant states to have gone through, thus distorting the original thinking processes.

Unlike introspection and retrospection, the think-aloud method involves some degree of interference with the cognitive processes under investigation. In fact, the requirement to think and talk aloud while performing the task places a burden on short-term memory. Thus the memory resources which would otherwise be exclusively allocated to the operation of the cognitive processes are partly invested in the verbalization process. However, empirical evidence on the validity of the think-aloud method suggests that the exhaustion of short-term memory due to the verbalization process does not qualitatively alter the original cognitive processes but only slows them down (Deffner, 1988; Kintgen, 1983; Bowles, 2010).

The think-aloud method requires the subject to perform the task aloud rather than to explain or interpret his/her cognitive processes. Hence thinking aloud minimizes distortion of the actual cognitive processes and provides direct clues on the thinking processes underlying the investigated task. In addition, the concurrent verbalization of the thought processes ensures a more complete record of the process data than that yielded by the retrospective or introspective methods as no memorization is required for the retrieval of the processing stages. It follows from the previous discussion that all three types of process data collection involve some degree of interference. However, while interference due to introspection and retrospection is reported to result in qualitative distortion of the original cognitive processes or the missing out of important

information, the interference of the think aloud method basically leads to the slowing

down of the process, but does not result in serious distortions of the cognitive

processes. In this respect, Kintgen (1983) comments on the value of the think-aloud

method in a study he conducted on literary reading as follows,

> The aim of protocol analysis is precisely to reveal these natural but unnoticed activities, to provide a record of the temporal flow of mental activity that would be impossible for the reader to construct for himself because the self monitoring required would interfere drastically with that normal mental activity. Verbalization also interferes, but since so much of understanding a poem, especially for these readers, involves verbal manipulation, that interference is not likely to be great. (p. 167)

The Think-aloud tool provides rich data on a variety of cognitive processes which

cannot be inferred by examination of the final products of a given cognitive task, such

as a reading, writing or, as in the present case, a metaphor interpretation task (Bowles,

2010, p.01). Hence, Gass and Mackey (2000) point out that, "understanding the source

of second language production is problematic because often there are multiple

explanations for production phenomena that can only be assessed by exploring the

process phenomena" (p. 26). Cohen et al. (2000) emphasize the role of the think-aloud

technique in yielding insightful process data, as "it is not possible to infer causes from

behaviour, to identify the stimulus that has brought about the response" (p.19).

Likewise, Bowles (2010) states,

> In the field of L2 research, it is often difficult to determine the reasoning behind learners' target language use. Without the assistance of verbal reports and other introspective measures, such reasoning is often inferred from the learners' language use (and from the mistakes they make in language production). However, inferring why learners make certain errors in the target language or why they produce language in the way they do can be risky. (p.7)

The technique helps to overcome the shortcomings of relying solely on the end

products of the participants. In fact, reliance on task products provides incomplete data

for inferring the learners' underlying processes and any processing difficulties they may

face. Moreover, products may be generated via many processing patterns, varying in degree of efficiency. Thus exclusive reliance on end products cannot reveal the processing steps learners go through while performing a task and the extent to which the learners are efficient in performing the set task. By contrast, the think-aloud technique can provide useful clues on the processing steps participants make use of while performing a task. Although the think-aloud method does not provide a direct and complete record of the cognitive processes under study, it still provides richer and more authentic data than other data collection methods, such as introspection and retrospection, which makes it possible to reach accurate and valid findings about the metaphor interpretative process (Dias, 1987, p.9). Still, verbal protocols are not to be taken as isomorphic with the cognitive processes generating them; rather, think-aloud protocols are to be treated as partial evidence of the information processed in short-term memory during the interpretative process. Cognitive processes are then meant to be derived from such observable data (Kasper, 1998, p.358).

The think-aloud method has been used in a wide range of disciplines to explore the cognitive processes underlying the performance of problem solving tasks (Ericsson & Simon, 1984; Someren et al., 1994). In the first and second language learning contexts, the think-aloud method has been used to explore a diverse range of learning strategies relating to different academic skills. In this respect, Olson, Duffy, and Mack (1984) state that "The TOL task is best used to study higher level processes in reading: the inferences, predictions, schema elaborations, and other complex cognitions that occur as part of skilled reading" (P.257). The think aloud method has also been found useful in revealing the knowledge resources learners draw on in solving tasks requiring extended cognitive effort (Someren et al., 1994; Steen, 1994, p. 111; Olson, Duffy, & Mack, 1984, p. 257; Elekes, 1988). In addition, the think aloud technique has been

found useful in identifying differences in cognitive processes and amount of background knowledge activated between expert and non-expert subjects (Ericsson, 1988; Olson, Duffy, & Mack, 1984). The process data yielded by the exploration of expert and non-expert processing strategies provides useful information for the construction of an expert processing model, which can be used to help less expert subjects improve their performance on a given task (Someren et al., 1994).

The method is found particularly useful in yielding insights into L1 and L2 learners' reading strategies (Block, 1986). The think-aloud method has been increasingly used by literary scholars to investigate the process of literary interpretation in poetic and prosaic texts. Richards (1936) was among the first to use this data collection tool to investigate various aspects of L1 learners' responses to poetic texts. Similarly, Hanauer (2001) used the think-aloud procedure to investigate Hebrew L2 learners' poetry interpretation strategies. Eva-Wood (2004) investigated the usefulness of a think-and-feel-aloud procedure in enhancing L2 learners' interpretations of poetic texts and found that the procedure helped to enhance the subjects' engagement with the poetic texts and the production of elaborative responses. As part of my MA study (Khelil, 2003), I used the think-aloud technique to collect data on Tunisian EFL learners' vocabulary processing strategies in two literary texts. The tool proved quite useful in providing insightful information on the way EFL learners went about guessing unknown words which they encountered while reading literary texts. A few studies have addressed the process of metaphor interpretation as it is conducted by real readers (e.g. Chang, 2002; Steen, 1994; Cardoso & Viera, 2006; Picken, 2007). The technique proved effective in providing insightful information on many aspects of the poetic metaphor interpretative process, though it has not been fully adjusted to the studying of the online interpretative process (see Chapter Two above for a discussion of some studies using the think-aloud

technique). However, these studies either involved interference with the participants'

interpretative process, using cuing by the researcher (e.g. Chang, 2002), limited their

focus to metaphor identification, surface level comprehension, or metaphor evaluation

comments (e.g. Steen, 1994), or focused on the metaphor processing stages, that is, on

whether the participants process metaphors directly or through a literal decoding stage

(e.g. Cardoso & Viera, 2006). Hence, various aspects of the process of metaphor

interpretation as it is conducted by real L1 and L2 readers have not been adequately

researched. More specifically, it is not well known whether L1 and L2 learners use the

same metaphor interpretation processes as they engage with creative and conventional

poetic metaphors. It is still not well established to what extent readers in both groups

are motivated to invest sufficient effort on poetic metaphors and to seek a wide range of

interpretations for creative metaphors. In addition, it is not yet well established whether

L2 readers are as efficient in the identification and interpretation of both conventional

and creative metaphors as the L1 participants. Previous research has also provided no

information on the types of knowledge resources the learners make use of while

interpreting poetic metaphors and whether the L1 and L2 participants make use of the

same or different knowledge resources. In this respect, the role of the reader's cultural

background knowledge has not been properly investigated. Hence, it is not yet well

known whether the L1 readers' cultural background knowledge gives them advantage

over L2 readers when dealing with L1 poetic metaphors. These yet unexplored issues

represent the main focus of this study, and it is deemed most suitable for the objectives

of this study to opt for the think-aloud technique to fully address them.

In using the think-aloud technique, I aim to redress a major gap in research on

metaphor interpretation by focusing on the cognitive processes L1 and L2 readers make

use of while interpreting poetic metaphors. As with other cognitive processes, poetic

metaphor interpretation processes cannot be observed directly nor can they be confidently inferred from observing product metaphor interpretations. The think-aloud technique seems to be appropriate for exploring the poetic metaphor interpretation process. Unlike automated decoding reading processes, which operate fast and at an unconscious level, poetic metaphor interpretation is a slow inferential process which pertains to conscious reasoning. Such a conscious inferential process can be unearthed by the use of the think-aloud method (Steen, 1994, p.110). While other methods would only provide final outcomes of the interpretation task, thus saying little about the underlying process, the think-aloud technique is likely to slow down the interpretative process, bringing to consciousness some tacit knowledge the readers make use of while interpreting metaphors and which would go unnoticed in other performance conditions.

The think-aloud technique is expected to yield rich data that would help reconstruct the processing strategies used by the L1 and L2 participants and to verify important aspects of the metaphor interpretation process as predicted by relevance theory. More specifically, the think-aloud technique will make it possible to determine whether the L1 and L2 participants make use of the same metaphor interpretation processes and whether the L1 and L2 participants are equally efficient in the interpretation of poetic metaphors varying in degree of creativity. In this connection, the think-aloud data will help reveal whether the participants limit their interpretative effort to the boundaries of the metaphorical expression itself or would consider a wider context extending to the discourse level. This will help determine whether interpretative effort invested on a wider context will result in the derivation of a richer range of implicatures. In connection with efficiency, the think-aloud data is bound to show whether the participants in both groups will move through the same processing stages in interpreting conventional and creative metaphors; that is, whether they will use a direct

interpretative process or use a two-stage interpretative process, interpreting poetic metaphors at a literal stage first, or even miss metaphorical expressions treating them at a literal level throughout. The think-aloud data will also make it possible to show whether the participants are motivated to invest sufficient effort on the interpretation of metaphors with varying degrees of creativity and whether they are prepared to consider a wide range of implicatures for more creative or challenging metaphors. Again focus will be placed on whether the L1 and L2 participants invest similar amounts of efforts and derive an equal number of implicatures for the same metaphors. This will help to show whether greater interpretative effort will result in the derivation of richer implicatures. The process data yielded by the think-aloud technique can also tap the types of knowledge the participants in both groups make use of and whether participants in the L1 and L2 groups make use of the same or different knowledge resources. This will help explain whether richer contextual assumptions result in the derivation of richer implicatures. Finally, the think-aloud data will make it possible to determine whether the L1 and L2 participants will infer the same interpretations for the same metaphors and most importantly to relate the participants' final metaphor interpretations to the interpretative processes underlying them. These different aspects of the metaphor interpretative process will be explored in relation to both groups of participants as well as in relation to the types of metaphors targeted by the participants. Thus, the think-aloud protocols will help determine whether the L1 and L2 participants will process conventional and creative metaphors in the same way in terms of scope of discourse context explored, contextual assumptions activated, cognitive effort expended, processing stages involved, and number and nature of implicatures derived. The think-aloud protocols are likely to reflect processing patterns at group level, though attention will also be paid to individual processing tendencies. In fact, the think-aloud

technique may reveal infrequent but significant traces of interpretative processes not revealed by other data collection tools. Such comparative analysis will make it possible to determine whether the L1 and L2 participants make use of the same "pragmatic norms" (Bowles, 2010, p.10), the same types of contextual assumptions, and the same metaphor interpretation skills in dealing with different types of metaphorical expressions. Hence the think-aloud protocols have the potential to provide a persuasive account of variation in metaphor interpretation products by relating the resultant interpretations to the metaphor interpretation processes underlying them.

Overall, the think-aloud technique can help shed light on the complex interaction between a number of important variables in the metaphor interpretative process. These cover the reader's cultural background, degree of metaphor creativity, processing effort, scope of discourse context processed, types of contextual assumptions activated, and range of implicatures derived. The resultant findings are likely to reflect the extent to which relevance theory provides an accurate account of the metaphor interpretation process in the L1 and L2 poetry reading context. Relevance theory describes metaphor interpretation as a function of the degree of cognitive effort the reader invests in the interpretation task and the contextual assumptions s/he manages to activate while interpreting metaphors. With respect to poetic metaphor interpretation, Relevance theory posits that poetic metaphor interpretation requires the construction of a rich contextual framework, which provides the basis for the inferencing of rich and relevant metaphorical interpretations. In this sense, poetic metaphor interpretation is a demanding cognitive activity, which requires integration of information from the poem's context and other background knowledge frames. Both knowledge resources and the processing strategies involved are crucial for the success of poetic metaphor interpretation. In addition, the relevance theory account seems applicable to all types of

metaphorical expression, including conventional and creative metaphors. Thus the theory can explain differences in metaphor interpretation products in terms of metaphor type, processing effort, and accessibility of relevant background knowledge.

The think aloud method is designed to provide a model of the metaphor interpretative processes as operated by expert L1 an L2 academics. Such a model can ultimately provide reliable information for teachers to model expert behavior for less skilled readers and can as well highlight specific points in the interpretative process where instructive intervention is needed. At a theoretical level, process analysis based on accurate empirical data can provide a solid ground for enhancing general theoretical accounts of the process of metaphor interpretation, leading to the formulation of empirically validated theoretical accounts.

To come to terms with any practical difficulties the think-aloud procedure might pose to the participants and to ensure that the main study will be conducted appropriately, a pilot study was conducted with a smaller sample of L1 and L2 participants prior to the implementation of the think-aloud procedure with the main study participants. The following section describes the texts, participants, and think-aloud procedure of the pilot study.

3.5.4.1 Pilot Study

The present section describes the pilot study, which was carried out prior to the full-scale study. It details the procedure which was implemented to collect the think-aloud protocols relating to the poetic metaphor identification and interpretative processes of two samples of non-native EFL students and native English students. The pilot study was designed to test the main procedure to be followed in the main study. This small-scale study was particularly meant to help identify any practical difficulties that the

think-aloud recording procedure may pose to the participants so as to optimize its implementation for the full scale study.

- **Participants**

The subjects taking part in the present study included a sample of three Arab EFL learners and four native English students studying at Strathclyde University. The EFL student sample was selected from an Arabic-speaking community as these were judged to share a great deal of cultural background and linguistic knowledge with the Tunisian L2 learners, who would constitute the subjects of the main study. The three EFL subjects were enrolled in different academic subjects, including business, engineering, and law, but none of them had taken literature courses in English. As the purpose of the experiment was to focus on the practical aspects of the main think-aloud study rather than on the testing of the main hypotheses, then the use of three learners was judged to be a sufficient sample for the purpose of the study. The four native English students included three first year students and one fourth year student. Prior to the study, the learners were contacted during their normal classroom sessions and were orally informed about the main aim of the study. They were informed that participation in the study was voluntary, that it had nothing to do with the assessment of their academic performance, and that it was only required for research purposes.

The subjects showing motivation to participate in the study were presented with an Information Sheet and a Consent Form. The Information Sheet detailed the objectives of the study and informed the students about the procedure to be followed. The subjects were advised that serious visual or dyslexic impairments would prevent them from carrying out the task appropriately. The subjects were reassured that their personal information and their audio-taped and written data would be treated with total anonymity. The learners were asked to read the Information Sheet and to sign the

Consent Form testifying to their agreement to participate in the study and to use their written and audio-taped data for the research purposes of the study.

- **Texts**

One poem was used in the pilot study, which is Blake's "Holy Thursday" from "Songs of Innocence". The poem involved a range of metaphors, which were to a large extent conventional metaphors. The poem was rather easy and included no difficult lexical items for either group. In addition, the involved metaphors were all explicit metaphors, as both the vehicle and tenor concepts were explicitly mentioned. The vehicles explicitly mentioned are 'flowers of London town', 'innocent faces', 'innocent hands', 'multitudes of lambs', 'with radiance all their own', 'mighty wind'. All explicit vehicles refer back to the Topic concept 'children.'

- **Think-aloud experiment**

The study was initially tested with three Libyan students and next with four native English students. All three students were given an instruction sheet explaining the procedure to be followed. The researcher answered some questions relating to the procedure of the study, making sure the learners understood the instructions well. Then all three subjects were asked to complete an author recognition task (Masterson & Hayes, 2007). The purpose underlying these tests was to get a rough record of the learners' literary experience. Following this task, the subjects performed the think-aloud task one at a time. To reduce pressure on the participants, one participant was asked to perform the think aloud task in a calm corner of the room while asking the other two subjects to do a metaphor identification task on a separate poem. This procedure seemed to work well for the participant as it reduced the impact of the researcher's presence and allowed the participant to think on her own more freely. In fact, the presence of the researcher close to the student seemed to distract the

participant, who tended to talk to the researcher rather than to think for herself. At the same time, the procedure was a little bit distracting for the researcher as he missed some of the verbalizations of the participant and therefore might not have interfered at the right moment to elicit immediate retrospective comments.

To familiarize the student with the think-aloud procedure, the researcher asked each participant to perform the task on a different poem. Once the learner gained facility with the procedure, the audio-taping device was put on, and the participant moved to the main study.

The researcher kept his distance from the participant and tried to reduce his focus on the participant carrying out the think aloud task by focussing on the other students doing the metaphor identification task on a printed poem. The researcher would, however, urge the participant to talk when she lapsed into a long period of silence. Once the participant announced that she had finished the identification task, the researcher then asked her about the metaphors that she identified and elicited explanation from her concerning the way she identified the metaphor. In those cases where the participants underlined a large proportion of the text, the researcher would ask the participant to narrow down their focus to the exact phrase or word which she took to be a metaphor. The researcher also drew the participant's attention to parts of the poem where metaphors were not noticed.

The students seemed to be quite at ease with the think aloud procedure, although they lapsed into silence now and then. The students expressed some difficulties with the task. One student expressed some difficulty with using English throughout the task and preferred to clarify her thoughts using both Arabic and English. One student commented that she would have preferred to have a pen and a sheet of paper so that she could underline some text sections and write down some notes. This was a major

shortcoming of using the laptop as a reading device as it did not allow the participants enough freedom to jot down notes which might assist them with the interpretative process. While (kei) was at ease with the task and used English throughout in verbalizing her thoughts, (Bei), found it more helpful to shift between Arabic and English and used Arabic as a way of paraphrasing the poem. Unlike the previous students, (Lei) underlined large parts of the text and only narrowed down her focus when she was prompted by the researcher. This pointed out the importance of asking participants to underline only the sections they judged to be metaphorical.

The same procedure was applied with the sample group of the native English participants. The participants were quite at ease with the performance of the think-aloud procedure and showed more fluency in verbalizing their thoughts. The fourth year student, (Fei), and the first year student, (Dei), verbalized their thoughts quite openly. (Fei) seemed to find the poem rather easy and almost provided metaphor interpretations immediately, without engaging in much explicit interpretative effort. However, Janelle and Juliet tended to lapse into long periods of silence, which required intervention from the researcher.

The researcher interfered at the end of the metaphor identification phase to urge the participants to interpret the metaphors which they had identified and to draw their attention to other metaphors they did not identify. In the latter case, the researcher made sure whether the reader failed to identify the metaphor or whether she understood it rather automatically at a subconscious level or simply processed it literally.

The think-aloud sessions with both groups of participants took no longer than 35 minutes and revealed important shortcomings to be redressed in the main study.

3.5.4.2 Revised think-aloud technique

The pilot study revealed some of the deficiencies which needed to be solved for the main study. Initially, the subjects were asked to read the poem and then to identify metaphors in it. Next, the subjects were asked to interpret the metaphors which they had identified. As the subjects did not verbalise how they identified the metaphor but only named it, then it was not clear whether they identified them accidentally or genuinely or whether they moved through an initial literal processing phase. A better procedure was then devised which consisted of asking the participants to verbalize their thoughts right from the beginning, stating why they took a particular metaphor to be a metaphor. Although the task was sequenced into identification and an interpretative stage, metaphor identification seemed to be carried out even when the participants shifted to the interpretative stage. In fact, the participants seemed to engage in interpretation of the poem right from the start as they were looking for metaphors. As the subjects did not verbalize enough thoughts during metaphor identification, then important information regarding their interpretation processes might have gone unnoticed. Therefore, it was judged to be more rewarding not to sequence the stages of metaphor identification and interpretation and to ask the participants to engage in the process of identification and interpretation simultaneously.

Using the laptop proved not to be quite practical for the participants as it seemed not to allow them much flexibility to take notes, as they would do in their normal reading practices. As such, providing readers with printed poems was thought to be more practical for the participants. Similarly, presenting the poem in stanzas rather than in full seemed to interfere with the normal reading habits of the participants. It was, therefore, deemed more natural to present the poetic text in full at the start of the study.

The researcher would also interfere in those cases where the participant provided an abrupt interpretation of the metaphor without having stated how s/he had arrived to his/her interpretation. In this case, the researcher would ask the reader to retrospect into the way s/he attained his/her interpretation, and urge the participant to think-aloud in a similar way for the rest of the task.

Another major shortcoming revealed by the present study relates to the choice of the poems. The fourth year student (Fei) seemed to find the poem rather easy and, therefore, faced little challenge to engage in an explicit interpretative effort, producing immediate interpretations for most of the metaphors. Thus her protocols yielded basically metaphor interpretation products with little process data. As the main think-aloud study was designed to involve advanced level participants, it was judged important to select more challenging poems which would require the participants to engage in an extended interpretative effort to make sense of the metaphors involved. In addition, the obtained data was rather small given that only one poem was used. Therefore, it became necessary to consider using more than one text, which would be more appropriate as it would help generate more processing data.

The revised method was used with the two participant groups taking part in the main study. The L1 and L2 participants, who finally volunteered to take part in the main think-aloud recording sessions, were contacted through an administrative email service in their respective English Departments or directly at the end of their regular classes. The same email text was sent to tertiary-level students in both universities, inviting potential participants to contribute to a research study to be conducted on poetry reading and offering a small payment for participation. Individual meetings were arranged with the volunteering participants. All recording sessions took place in normal university classrooms.

The recording session was organized as follows: First, the participant would be handed an instruction sheet providing him or her with a brief idea about the purpose of the study and the role he or she was expected to play. More specifically, the instruction sheet informed the participant that the study was concerned with discovering how readers would go about interpreting metaphorical expressions as they engaged with poetic texts. It was emphasized that the study had no evaluative objective and that it was mainly designed to explore the normal metaphor interpretation performance of the participants. Hence the sheet stressed the importance of verbalizing every thought that the reader could think of. The instruction sheet also emphasized that the participant's contribution would be treated in total anonymity. To avoid misunderstanding, I explained to the participant that I had no role to play in the task other than to make sure that he or she kept talking throughout. In fact, I made them aware that my interference would distort the results and that it was methodologically irrelevant, thus making sure the participants would not be offended by not receiving answers for questions or comments they might address to me. The instruction sheet also provided an estimation of the time length the think-aloud session was supposed to take. Thus the participants were informed that a 30-minutes time length was allocated for each poem, though they could take a bit longer if they wished to. Once I made sure the participant understood the task, the participant signed a consent sheet testifying to his or her agreement to take part in the study. A short training task was then carried out on a short stanza from a different poem to familiarize the participant with the verbalization task. The instructions for this task were to read the stanza and try to underline any metaphors the participant could find. Following the identification of metaphors, the participant was instructed to try to make sense of the poem while interpreting the metaphors he had identified. This short-training session proved quite useful as it enabled some

participants to shift from long silence periods followed by a metaphor interpretation to some verbalization of their ongoing thoughts prior to the inferencing of a metaphor interpretation. Once I judged the participant to have gained facility with the think-aloud technique, I moved to the main study and handed the participants the main poems. I made sure the participants followed the same order, dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar" first, followed by the poem "Snow", and finally the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". Throughout the performance, I kept at a comfortable distance from the participants so as to avoid distracting them, and interfered only in those cases when they lapsed into long silence periods to prompt them to speak aloud. To help them concentrate on their task, I pretended to be engaged in some other reading activity, though I would react with encouraging nods whenever the participant seemed to address a comment or question to me. Meanwhile I took notes of the participants' overall interpretative behaviour and prepared some retrospective probes to ask at the end of each poem. The participants were allowed as much time as they needed to do the interpretation task. Given the rather hard demands of the task, refreshments were made available to the participants. The participants were also allowed as much relaxation time as they wished after the completion of each poem.

3.5.5 Data analysis procedure

The present section describes the data analysis procedure applied to the L1 and L2 participants' think-aloud protocols. Data analysis is conducted through the construction of a psychological model, which operationalizes the main principles of relevance theory, and the elaboration of a coding scheme, which is to be applied to the categorization and analysis of the transcribed protocols. Initially, the think-aloud protocols are transcribed and segmented and are then coded by reference to the coding

scheme drawn and categories which are added to the coding scheme and which
emerged during the analysis process.

3.5.5.1 Protocol transcription and segmentation

Protocols are initially transcribed and then segmented. The protocols are transcribed
in terms of a transcription scheme proposed by Hatch (1992). An adjustment is made to
the transcription scheme so as to involve the exact time length for silence periods (See
Appendix B below for a description of the transcription scheme). Segmented protocols
represent the raw protocols. The appropriate cues for segmentation are pauses,
intonation contours, as well as syntactical markers for complete phrases and sentences
(Someren et al., 1994, pp.120-129; Ericsson & Simon, 1984, p.205). If oral prose is
completely grammatical, a segment would essentially be a clause or a sentence, but in
normal speech, statements are often abbreviated to phrases, even to single words
(Ericsson & Simon, 1984, p. 266).

3.5.5.2 Task analysis

Task analysis allows the narrowing down of the coding categories to be used for the
analysis of the think-aloud protocols. According to Someren, et al. (1994), "Task
analysis means constructing a first approximation of the model from information about
the task without taking specific psychological factors into account" (p.65). This is to
say that task analysis "gives a first conceptualization of the range of behaviours that can
appear in the protocols" (Someren et al., 1994, p.73). This is to say that the processing
problem presented to the participants affects their problem-solving behaviour and as a
result the protocol contents can be partly predicted from the task at hand (Someren et
al., 1994, p. 65).

Previous research can help with the identification of categories relevant to the task
of metaphor interpretation. In addition, Someren, et al. (1994) emphasize the role of

textbooks in providing some basic concepts relevant to the performance of a particular

task (Someren et al., 1994, pp. 65-66). However, a major limitation of textbooks is that

they do not exhaust or make explicit all the knowledge needed for the construction of

the psychological model and say little about the cognitive process underlying task

performance. Textbooks "tend to focus on the knowledge that is to be used. Therefore,

even if it is possible to construct a more or less accurate procedure for solving

problems, this is unlikely to be an accurate description of the way in which people

actually solve problems" (Someren et al., 1994, p. 68).

3.5.5.3 Cognitive model

Protocol analysis consists in testing or constructing a psychological model of the

cognitive processes under investigation. The psychological model provides an initial

general framework for the analysis of the protocol data. The psychological model

serves as a basis of predictions about the protocol data (Someren et al., 1994). The

psychological model "summarizes what we know about how people will behave when

performing a task. In other words, the psychological model describes the cognitive

process that will take place in the context of a particular task as implied by a

psychological theory" (p. 78).

Psychological models can be either categorical or procedural. Someren, et al.

(1994) define a categorical model as one that "assigns categories of cognitive processes

to a protocol" (p.51). On the other hand, a procedural model "describes step by step the

cognitive process that takes place during problem-solving" (p. 51). The procedural

model describes the cognitive processes as well as the types of information used during

the interpretative process.

The cognitive model is constructed through a two-stage process. Initially the task to

be performed is analysed by the researcher independently of any theoretical

considerations. Reference to previous research on the performance of the task can help determine some of the categories involved in the performance of the task. At a second stage, reference is made to a psychological theory, which offers a sound model of the cognitive processes likely to be evidenced by the protocols.

The cognitive model constructed for the purpose of the present study is based on a task analysis and the operationalization of Relevance theory. Task analysis is meant to derive categories relevant to the performance of the metaphor interpretative task in a theoretically-independent way. The categories ascribed to the performance of the task are partly derived from previous research on reading processes in general and poetry and metaphor interpretation in particular.

The second stage of the model construction involves the operationalization of the general principles of Relevance theory, which represents the main theoretical framework for the present study. Relevance theory is operationalized along categorical and procedural lines (see Figure 1 below). The model categories consist of the knowledge resources activated during the metaphor interpretative process as well as the process sequences likely to be operated in metaphor interpretation. Subsequent investigation of the protocol data will reveal the extent to which the constructed model can account for the protocol data and the extent to which the psychological theoretical account proposed by Relevance theory fits the actual cognitive processes underlying task performance.

The psychological model, which is constructed as an initial framework for the analysis of the protocol data, is elaborated in terms of a detailed coding scheme. The coding scheme is "an extension to the model that describes how categories of the model will appear in the protocol" (Someren et al., 1994, p. 128). The coding scheme helps to construct a mapping between the psychological model and the protocol data to which it

is applied (Someren et al., 1994, p.126). Thus, the coding scheme extends the model with an operational definition of the categories featuring in the model (Someren et al., 1994, p.129). More specifically, the coding scheme specifies how elements of the model can be identified in the data. The coding scheme can then guide the researcher to make inferences about the underlying cognitive processes in a theory-based manner (Kasper, 1998, p.359). The coding scheme is applied to the raw protocols and used to compare the coded protocols with the psychological model.

FIGURE 1. The poetic metaphor interpretative process as described by Relevance Theory.

Activation of extra-textual background:

Knowledge: encyclopaedic, culture-specific,

literary

sustained cognitive effort for

creative metaphors

a wide range of diverging

interpretations for creative

metaphors

Communicative principle of Relevance

Reader $\longrightarrow$ Poetic text $\longrightarrow$ Metaphor identification $\longrightarrow$ metaphor interpretation $\longrightarrow$ Interpretative effort $\longrightarrow$ Generation of interpretations

Cognitive principle of Relevance

processing and integration of

information at the co-textual level

Limited interpretative effort

with conventional metaphors

a limited range of converging

interpretations for conventional

metaphors

The coding scheme construction is based on the psychological model illustrated above. (See Figure 1 above).

3.5.5.4 Coding Scheme

Coding schemes are either adopted from existing ones or constructed anew (Kasper, 1998). Opting for an original coding scheme has the advantage of offering a data-based analysis which guarantees a high degree of sensitivity to the collected data. On the other hand, reliance on a totally original coding scheme does not allow for comparability across studies sharing the same field of investigation (Kasper, 1998, p.359). In the present study I judged it useful to make use of existing coding schemes applied to the analysis of reading comprehension processes used in relation to literary texts as these would help with the coding of reading activities relevant to the overall task of poetry reading and which occur in parallel to the metaphoric interpretation activity. However, I sought to integrate existing coding categories into a more comprehensive coding scheme of metaphor interpretation which is based on the Relevance theoretical framework as existing codes are not attuned to the process of metaphor interpretation.

The main requirement of a coding scheme is that it allows objective coding of protocol fragments in terms of the psychological model (Someren et al., 1994, p. 135). One requirement of the coding scheme is completeness. This is to say that the coding scheme must contain descriptions of all reasoning steps that appear in the model and that can be expected to appear in the protocols. The coding scheme may not, however, cover all the protocols. Moreover, the coding scheme must be clear enough to be used by outsiders. This is necessary to maintain objectivity of the coding procedure. In addition, the coding scheme should be applicable to segments irrespective of their context. In other words, if a coding category describes a single cognitive process, then it must be possible to recognize this without the context in which it appears.

This section describes the coding scheme constructed for the present study. The coding scheme elaborates on the psychological model outlined above (see Figure 1, above). The coding scheme details the psychological model in terms of reading and interpretative processes related to the task of poetry reading and metaphor interpretation as well as in terms of the information types likely to be activated during the metaphor interpretation task. The coding scheme is primarily attuned to test the applicability of the psychological method, based on relevance theory, to the think-aloud data on metaphor interpretation. However, the coding model involves other general reading and processing categories which apply to a wider range of reading and interpretative processes. These are derived from earlier research studies on reading strategies which cover a wide range of text types, including poetic texts. The coding scheme is derived prior to data analysis. It is constructed in such a way as to detail the interpretative processes likely be evidenced by the think aloud protocols. As Boyatzis (1998) defines it, a code refers to "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (p. 63).

Devising a coding scheme is meant to facilitate the process of qualitative analysis which is adopted in this study. More specifically, the coding scheme is used in this study as the major component of the thematic approach which is to be applied to the analysis of the process and product data yielded by the think-aloud protocols. However, the coding process is not meant to be restricted to the protocol data that fit the coding scheme but is rather meant to incorporate any other process categories which can be inferred from the protocol data and which do not fit the pre-established coding scheme.

The coding scheme which is constructed for the coding of the present study's think-aloud protocols is structured as follows:

1. Metacognitive processes

Metacognitive processes refer to explicitly stated processes, which the participant is aware of and controls in a conscious way. The metacognitive processes reflect the participant's awareness of his goals at different stages of the task performance and his or her assessment of his degree of comprehension at a given point. Metacognitive processes involve the following categories:

Planning (PLAN): The reader consciously plans his/her reading and interpretative processes.

Process monitoring (PROC-MON): The participant monitors the progress of a particular process and expresses awareness of its operation.

Comprehension monitoring (COMP-MON): Participant monitors his/her comprehension at a particular point during the interpretative process. By monitoring his/her comprehension, the participant determines whether s/he has reached an adequate interpretation or s/he should invest more effort with the interpretative process.

2. Affective evaluation

Affective evaluation refers to the participants' emotional reaction to the task at hand. The participant's affective reactions can affect the participant's level of engagement with the interpretative task. Affective evaluation falls into two types:

Positive comments (POS-COMM): Positive comments refer to positive reactions on the part of the participant to the task as a whole or to a specific component of the task. The participant's positive comments may help explain the reader's sustained effort and thorough engagement with the task.

Negative comments (NEG-COMM): Negative comments refer to negative reactions on the part of the participant to the task as a whole or to a specific component of the task. Negative reactions help to pinpoint the processing difficulties which the participant may be facing at a particular point during the interpretative process.

3- Textual analytical processes

Text analysis processes refer to bottom-level reading and analytical processes applied to textual information processing. These processes are used particularly at initial stages of the task performance to help construct a basic text representation prior to considering further implicational meanings. These involve the following processes:

Reading (READ): The participant reads sections of the poem either silently or aloud.

Re-reading (RE-READ): The subject rereads sections of the poem silently or loudly. The use of this strategy indicates either lack of understanding or an attempt on the part of the participant to reflect on the content.

Question meaning of a word (QUEST-WORD): The reader does not understand a particular word.

Question meaning of a section of the poem (QUEST-TEXT): The reader does not understand the meaning of a portion of the text.

Question information in the text (QUES-INFO): The reader questions the significance or veracity of content.

Paraphrase (PARA): The reader rephrases content using different words. This strategy is used to aid understanding or to consolidate ideas.

Saturation (SAT): Saturation consists of the completion of the logical form of the utterance. This process involves reference assignment and the completion of elliptical utterances.

Disambiguation (DISAM)**:** Disambiguation refers to selection of a particular sense for a polysemous word or the selection of a particular parsing of an ambiguous grammatical structure. With respect to relevance theory, both saturation and disambiguation are largely determined on a pragmatic basis and are not solely mandated by the linguistic system.

Summarizing (SUM): The participant summarizes sections of the poem or some of the ideas s/he has generated up to a point.

4. General Elaboration processes

Elaboration processes reflect the reader's attempt to clarify or expand an idea. Elaboration may also be a strategy used by the participant to construct relevant contextual information or to consider implications. Elaborative processes may cover the following categories:

General elaboration (GEN-ELAB): Participant elaborates in an open, speculative fashion.

Word-based elaboration (ELA-WO): Participant elaborates on word meanings and connotations.

Speaker-oriented elaboration (ELA-SPE) Participant elaborates on the speaker's thoughts and feelings

Personal elaboration (ELA-PER): Participant elaborates by relating the poem's content to personal experiences and memories.

Perception-based elaboration (ELA-VIS) Participant elaborates by reacting to the world of the text from a perceptual perspective.

Affective elaboration (ELA-AFFE): The participant reacts emotionally to information in the text.

5- General interpretation processes

General interpretation processes refer to steps the participant goes through in dealing with the poetic text as a whole as it is unlikely that the reader will limit himself to the local boundaries of the metaphorical expressions and is likely to conduct the process of metaphor interpretation in parallel with interpretation of the overall poetic text meaning. In fact, deciding on whether to treat a specific expression as metaphorical depends to a large extent on the pragmatic context the reader constructs for the interpretation of the poem as a whole. General interpretative processes involve the following categories:

Content anticipation (ANT-CONT): The reader predicts what content will occur in succeeding portions of text.

Information Integration (INFO-INTEG): The reader connects new information with previously stated content.

Hypothesis generation (HYP-GEM): the reader formulates a hypothesis about the content of the poem.

Hypothesis confirmation (HYP-CON): the reader confirms an assumption, interpretation or a hypothesis about a section of the poem as s/he integrates further contextual information.

6- **Assumption activation**

Assumption activation refers to the process by which the reader moves from a text stimulus to activate a number of assumptions which s/he uses to infer implicatures. These are classified into the following categories:

Linguistic assumptions (LING-ASSUM): Linguistic assumptions relate to information activated by the participant regarding the lexical meanings of words and phrases featuring in the text. These are assumptions derived on purely semantic grounds.

Cultural assumptions (PRAG-ASSUM): These are extralinguistic assumptions which the participant brings to bear on the interpretative process. Pragmatic assumptions can be differentiated into factual, literary, and cultural specific assumptions. The general category is attributed to assumptions where there is room for overlap between universal and culture specific assumptions.

Factual assumptions (Fact-ASSUMP): factual assumptions refer to information which the reader treats as factual and which he activates as a ground for deriving relevant interpretations. Factual assumptions refer to rather objective facts universally accepted.

Cultural assumptions (FACT-ASSUMP): Culture-specific assumptions refer to assumptions which are specific to a particular language group and are, therefore, more likely to feature in the protocols of one language group rather than the other.

Literary assumptions (LIT-ASSUMP): Literary assumptions relate to the text genre as well as to knowledge about the poet and the poetic period of the text at hand.

Author related assumption (AUTH-ASSUMP): the reader activates background knowledge about the poet.

Text Interpretation (TEXT-INT): the reader draws inferences about the content of the poem.

7- Stylistic comments

Stylistic comments refer to various comments the readers produce in relation to the poet's style figurative language. Stylistic comments cover the following:

General stylistic comments (STYL): Participant comments on the poet's style in general

Simile (SIM): Participant acknowledges a simile in the poem

Symbol (SYM): Participant acknowledges a symbol in the poem

Allusion (ALLU): Participant acknowledges an allusion in the poem

Diction (DICT): Participant acknowledges the author's word choice

Structure (STRU): Participant acknowledges the form and/or structure of the poem

8- Metaphor identification processes

Metaphor identification refers to explicit identification of a metaphor. The process of metaphor identification can occur as a first stage or can follow the interpretation of an expression as a metaphorical expression.

Explicit metaphor identification (EXP-MET-IDEN): The reader explicitly identifies a figurative expression as a metaphor and labels it as such.

Implicit metaphor identification (IMP-MET-IDEN): the reader implicitly identifies a metaphor. This is reflected in his/her treatment of an expression as a metaphor without explicitly identifying it.

Topic identification (TOP-IDEN): The reader identifies the topic for a metaphor.

Vehicle identification: (VEH-IDEN): The reader identifies the metaphor's vehicle.

9- Metaphor Interpretation processes

Metaphor interpretation refers to the steps the participant takes to construct context and produce an adequate interpretation of metaphorical expressions. On the relevance theoretical account, creative metaphorical language represents a challenge to the reader and requires greater inferential effort than conventional metaphors or literal utterances. To make sense of metaphorical language, the reader engages in a deep inferential effort which integrates information from different sources, textual and extra-textual, linguistic and pragmatic, in order to derive plausible interpretations that satisfy her/his expectations of relevance. The process of constructing contextual information may operate implicitly, particularly for conventional metaphors. However, the process may surface when the reader engages with more challenging metaphors.

Some of the process categories are already attributed to the general interpretative processes likely to operate in parallel with the metaphor interpretative process. In the present section, these are narrowed to the specific task of metaphor interpretation. The following codes describe the sub-processes that are likely to feature in the participants' protocols when interpreting metaphorical expressions.

Question meaning of metaphor (MET-QUES): The reader does not understand the metaphorical expression and questions its meaning.

Rehearses metaphorical expression (MET-REH): the reader focuses on and rereads metaphorical expression repeatedly.

Metaphor linguistic assumptions (M-LING-ASSUM): These are assumptions derived solely from the lexical meanings of the words comprising the metaphor.

Metaphor factual assumptions (M-FACT-ASSUM): This category applies to pragmatic assumptions derived from the reader's factual knowledge.

Metaphor culture-specific assumptions (M-CULT-ASSUMP): Culture-specific

assumptions refer to assumptions attributed to the metaphorical expression which are derived

from the reader's cultural background knowledge.

Metaphor literary assumptions (M-LIT-ASSUMP): This category refers to assumptions

derived from general knowledge of literary metaphors or the relevant poet's use of metaphor.

Generating metaphor implications (M-IMP-GEN): The reader formulates a hypothesis

about the metaphorical expression by considering its implications.

Checking metaphor implications (M-IMP-CHECK): The reader processes further

information to check the assumptions/implications s/he is considering as potential

implicatures.

Implicature confirmation (IMPL.CON): the reader establishes a previously hypothesized

implication as a plausible implicature of the metaphor.

Ad hoc concept construction (CON-CONST): This process refers to a shift from a separate

processing of the topic domain and the vehicle domain to a joint processing of both domains.

The process of ad hoc concept construction is conducted in parallel with the process of

implicature generation. Ad hoc concept construction is conducted through a process of free

enrichment. The process of free enrichment necessitates the adjustment of encoded lexical

concepts in a way that leads to the construction of an ad hoc concept relevant to the pragmatic

context in which the lexical concepts are used. With respect to a metaphorical expression, this

process entails the adjustment of the vehicle concept so as to render it truth-conditional and

coherent with respect to its respective topic concept and the overall discourse context in

which it is used (See Chapter One, section 1.4.4.3.3 above for a discussion of the notion of ad

hoc concept in metaphor interpretation).

3.5.5.5 Application of the coding scheme

Strauss and Corbin (1990) propose three stages in the generation and application of a coding scheme. The first stage involves a process of open or initial coding, which consists of "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). At this stage, the coding process is very detailed and is designed to generate as many codes as necessary to encapsulate the data (p. 402). The codes generated at this stage are derived from the psychological model formulated by reference to the Relevance theoretic account and refer to sub-levels of the interpretative processes and information sources used likely to be used by the participants during the interpretative process. Some codes are derived from the specific task of poetry reading while other codes are derived from previous research on the reading process and which are likely to be involved in the metaphor interpretative task. At a second stage, an axial coding is conducted, during which bottom-level codes are aggregated into higher level categories. At the final stage, a selective coding is conducted, which consists of the process of "selecting core categories and systematically relating them to other categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116). A core category is the central issue or focus around which all other categories are integrated. Selective or focused coding entails emphasizing the most common codes. The data are then re-explored and reevaluated in terms of these selected codes.

In this study, I observe the coding stages proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), though the first coding stage does not apply in this study as the coding scheme is drawn prior to the coding process. However, while the analysis consists of accounting for the data in terms of the coding scheme detailed in this section, it remains sensitive to any processing steps or patterns which do not fit into the coding scheme already drawn in this section.

The coding scheme is applied to the think-aloud protocols in such a way as to cover as much of the protocol data as possible using the categories already detailed in the coding

scheme. Each segment is coded separately when it can be attributed a clear category. Table 1

below illustrates how the coding scheme has been applied.

Table 1

A sample of the coding process as applied to the L1 and L2 participants' think-aloud

protocols.

Protocol segment/episode	Code category	Code symbol
Snow as a state is very unstable snow is not liquid snow is not a solid snow is this fleeting instant of frozen water which as soon as we touch it disappears can't hold snow in your snow unless you pack it tightly into a snowball you can't hold a snowflake	Factual assumptions	FACT-ASSUMP
fires don't normally bubble	Linguistic assumptions	LING-ASSUMP
For me the snow and pink roses I don't know if this is true at all but it seems to imply maybe confetti you know when you're at a wedding or something there's confetti that's strewn and floats like snow	Cultural assumptions	CULT-ASSUMP
Too full for sound and foam could interpret that as a metaphor but I would assume it's just a description of em let me think just the kind of properties of the water the description of how the water looks which maybe its hard to know exactly what it means when it says Too full you might interpret that as metaphorical but not necessarily it wouldn't feel as if its metaphorical in a strict sense	Literal processing	LITE-PROC
Ok I see the journey as a whole throughout this poem as a metaphor for the journey throughout life perhaps towards death	Central Metaphor	CEN-MET
the obscure moon clarity and ambiguity so meaning and the loss of meaning	Implicature generation	IMPL-GEN
for tho' from out our . bourne (3 sec) time and place here I think they are important outward of life (4 sec) of time and place (5 sec) the flood may bear me far (3 sec) the flood . may bear me far I hope to see my pilot face to face so I think pilot is here about God or Jesus Christ and then the flood emmm this stream that is taking me too far life when I crossed the bar and again the bar the separation between life and . and death (3 sec) so emm the thing that stands between the two that I need to cross in order to reach my destination	Metaphor Integration	MET-INTEG

One or more segments are, however, aggregated together to form an episode, which is then given a code category. Someren, et al. (1994) define an episode as "a sequence of segments that corresponds to a single element" (p.120). The latter coding strategy applies to those segments which are used in succession and which seem to serve one common function, such as reading and rereading activities, a contextual assumption being activated, or an implicature being inferred. Thus separate segments serving one common function are treated as an episode when no other move interferes between any of these. This coding strategy has been used by Someren, et al. (1994, pp.124-127). In Table 1 above, the text segment "Fires don't normally bubble" constitutes a single segment and is attributed a single code, namely "Linguistic assumption". However, the other protocol sections are all made up of more than one segment, and therefore represent aggregations of segments or episodes. Each episode realizes one code category.

3.5.5.6. Process analysis

The analysis procedure adopted in this study is primarily qualitative in orientation and is meant to answer the research questions listed above (See Chapter Three, section 3.3 for the research questions) and to verify the research hypotheses underlying the present study. Ultimately, the analysis procedure is designed to provide an empirically validated account of the process of metaphor interpretation as it is conducted by advanced L1 and L2 expert readers. However, a quantitative method is also used to complement the qualitative approach and to help inform some of the research questions that cannot be solely answered in qualitative terms. Coolican (2004) comments on the difference between qualitative and quantitative data analysis in the following terms:

> 'Quantification' means to measure on some numerical basis, if only by frequency. Whenever we count or categorise, we quantify. Separating people according to astrological sign is quantification. So is giving a grade to an essay. A qualitative research, by contrast, emphasises meanings, experiences (often verbally described), descriptions and so on. Raw data will be exactly what people have said (in interview or recorded conversations) or a description of what has been observed. Qualitative data can be later

quantified to some extent but a 'qualitative approach' tends to value the data as qualitative. (p. 60)

Thematic analysis represents the main principle underlying the qualitative analysis of the L1 and L2 participants' think-aloud protocols. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic" (p.80). Thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative research, but there is no agreement about how it is to be conducted. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) propose two general ways in which themes or patterns can be identified, namely in "an inductive or 'bottom up' way or in a theoretical or deductive or 'top down' way" (p. 83). The present study is framed within the theoretical framework of relevance theory, and therefore fits in more neatly with a "theoretical thematic analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.84). Braun and Clarke (2006) make the distinction more clearly in the following comment,

> A 'theoretical' thematic analysis would tend to be driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the area, and is thus more explicitly analyst driven. This form of thematic analysis tends to provide less a rich description of the data overall, and more a detailed analysis of some aspect of the data. Additionally, the choice between inductive and theoretical maps onto how and why you are coding the data. You can either code for a quite specific research question (which maps onto the more theoretical approach) or the specific research question can evolve through the coding process (which maps onto the inductive approach). (p.84)

Reliance on a plausible theoretical account helps to inform the analysis process by drawing attention to important variables which seem to determine the success and efficiency of the interpretative process. In turn, the process data on metaphor interpretation can contribute to the corroboration of the theoretical framework posited by relevance theory and can thus lead to the strengthening or weakening of the credibility of the relevance theory account of poetic metaphor interpretation, a point which is made by Ericsson and Simon (1984, p.280) in relation to the interaction between theory and empirical testing. In addition,

the qualitative analysis can help identify regularities which do not easily fit into the posited

theoretical framework. In the latter case, a new tentative theory may be introduced to account

for the observed regularities (Simon, Langley, & Bradshow, 1981).

In this study, the general principle underlying the analysis of the think-aloud protocols is

to shift from ascription of codes which are close to the data to more selective and abstract

ways of conceptualizing the phenomenon of interest. In this respect, Braun and Clarke (2006)

propose that data analysis proceeds from the identification of discrete entities to the

formulation of higher level patterns. Hence they state,

> Ideally, the analytic process involves a progression from description, where the data have
> simply been organized to show patterns in semantic content, and summarized, to
> interpretation, where there is an attempt to theorize the significance of the patterns and
> their broader meanings and implications. (p.84)

The coding scheme is meant to focus on specific aspects of the interpretative process,

which represent the main themes of the present study, namely the metaphor interpretation

stages, the types of contextual assumptions participants make use of, the scope of discourse

context processed, cognitive effort expended, and the implicature generation process. These

main aspects underline the main research objectives, research questions, and research

hypotheses motivating the present study.

The coding process is used to identify those cases where the participants identify and

process metaphorical expressions directly rather than moving through a literal interpretative

stage. A metaphor is processed directly when the participant explicitly identifies it as a

metaphor right from the start or comments on it at a figurative level even though s/he may not

explicitly identify it as a metaphor. On the other hand, a metaphor is processed through a

literal processing stage when the participant comments on it literally prior to treating it

metaphorically. This information helps to reflect the extent to which L1 and L2 readers are

efficient in the interpretation of conventional and creative metaphors and whether the L1

participants are more efficient in metaphor identification and interpretation than the L2

participants. This makes it possible to answer Questions 2 and 3 concerned with conventional and creative metaphor identification by the L1 and L2 participants. The coding process also helps to answer question 4 concerned with the processing stages involved in metaphor interpretation. It also helps to verify the one-stage processing hypothesis posited by the relevance theory framework. Since the relevance theory interpretative heuristic predicts that metaphor interpretation is conducted through a one stage interpretative process, no literal processing code featured in the coding scheme. However, the need for this coding category has emerged while coding the protocols as some metaphors are found to be processed literally.

The coding process also makes it possible to reveal the extent to which the participants move beyond the immediate boundaries of metaphorical expression. While this is initially meant to be revealed by noting the contextual assumptions participants refer to from different parts of the text, another category has been added to the coding scheme, namely the identification of a central metaphor or a general idea, as many participants are found to look for central metaphors and general ideas while interpreting the poem and the local metaphors they identified. This is found useful in answering question 5, which is concerned with the scope of context the participants refer to in interpreting metaphors, and helps to verify the discourse processing hypothesis formulated above, which is motivated by the communicative principle of relevance.

Assumption coding helps to reveal the types of knowledge the L1 and L2 participants make use of and any differences between the L1 and L2 participants in terms of types of contextual assumptions used. This helps inform Question 6 stated above, concerned with the types of contextual assumptions participants make use of and differences in types of contextual assumptions between the L1 and L2 participants. This aspect of the coding process can also verify the assumption activation hypothesis concerned with the activation of

contextual assumptions and the differences between the L1 and L2 participants with respect to the types of contextual assumptions activated.

3.5.5.7 Product analysis

A quantitative analysis is conducted to complement the qualitative analysis in the present study. Using a quantitative dimension in addition to a qualitative approach has started to be highly recommended in case study research (e.g. Yin, 2009; Richards, 2011). In this respect, Richards (2011) states,

> While qualitative research is particularly well suited to developing the sort of rich description and interpretive penetration that is most suited to bringing a case to life, there is no a priori reason for refusing to consider a quantitative dimension, and as mixed method research gathers strength it is likely that this will feature more and more. (p. 210)

Quantitative analysis is recommended for specific purposes in qualitative research. In this respect, Kasper (1998) states that,

> Many research questions require establishing the frequencies with which different task-related processes occur in the protocols, for instance, in order to determine which processes distinguish (LI and L2) expert from novice readers or writers, or how L2 learners' strategy use may change over time as a result of training. But frequency counts of individual categories obscure the sequence of, hierarchy of, and interrelation among task-related thought processes.

Quantitative analysis is conducted to reflect the prevalence of major processing trends within and across participants and participant groups, hence providing a dimension for identifying possible differences between the L1 and L2 participants. In addition, the quantitative analysis is meant to compute the number of metaphors identified and the range of implicatures for different metaphors, different poems, and different students. This helps to draw relationships between a number of variables involved in the poetic metaphor interpretation process, namely the relationship between metaphor type, processing time, and number of implicatures inferred. Thus, coding of inferred implicatures helps to answer

questions 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, which are concerned with various aspects of the implicature generation process. These cover the following aspects:

- **Relationship between metaphor creativity and implicature generation**

Richness of implicatures is measured in terms of the number of implicatures generated per metaphorical expression. Implicatures proposed for the same metaphor are considered different if they are seen as denoting different notions or concepts, however slight the difference might be. This criterion has been adopted to help record the slightest poetic effects the participants may come to infer in relation to a particular metaphorical expression. However, literally synonymous implicatures are taken to denote the same implicature rather than different implicatures. Thus a slight semantic distinction between two or more implicature instances is treated as one type of a poetic effect which needs to be noted and, therefore, results in the emergence of different implicatures. For instance, in interpreting the expression "on the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands", (K) proposed the following interpretation "Variation in the perception of the world" while (C) inferred the following implicature "the poet here may be referring to a different way of seeing the world". Both implicatures are seen as denoting the same interpretation and are, therefore, seen as the same interpretation. Other implicatures are seen as making totally distinct implicatures, expressing different notions. For instance, (S) saw the same expression as denoting "experiences imposed by destiny" while (F) saw it as standing for "The traces of life and the progress of life and age". Still Sami suggests a different interpretation, taking the sentence to mean "difficulty in making sense of the world around him ehhh I mean he is::: maybe confused by the sensual experiences". This coding aspect helps to determine whether poems involving creative metaphors elicit more metaphor interpretations than poems involving conventional metaphors. In addition, this measure will help to show whether the L1 and L2 participants infer the same number of metaphors for creative and conventional metaphors.

This implicature coding helps to answer question 7, concerned with the extent to which the L1 and L2 participants are motivated to seek rich interpretations for creative metaphors and whether they infer the same number of implicatures for creative and conventional metaphors. This also helps to verify the metaphor effect hypothesis, predicting that participants will infer more implicatures for creative than conventional metaphors.

- **Relationship between metaphor creativity and processing time**

Total length of protocols per poem makes it possible to determine if L1 and L2 participants invest more time on the processing of creative metaphors than on the processing of conventional metaphors. As the students can't focus on each metaphor separately without considering other metaphors in parallel, time length is measured for the performance of the whole poem. This measure can provide rough evidence on the time readers invest on poems containing mostly conventional metaphors and those containing mostly creative metaphors. This also allows for comparison between the L1 and L2 participants, verifying whether the L1 and L2 participants invest the same time on the interpretation of conventional and creative metaphors. This helps to address question 8 above, which is concerned with the relationship between processing time and type of metaphor. This can also help to verify the metaphor effect hypothesis stated above, based on the cognitive principle of relevance.

- **Relationship between processing effort and number of implicatures inferred**

Closely related is the effect of refocusing on metaphorical expressions. This coding category makes it possible to focus on processing effort online rather than in terms of time length. This category makes it possible to see if individual metaphors receiving repeated attention yield richer interpretations than other metaphors processed only once. This coding helps to answer question 9 above concerned with the effect of processing effort on metaphor interpretation. Again this information helps to verify the cognitive effort hypothesis,

predicting that extended cognitive effort will result in the inferencing of richer metaphor interpretations.

- **Similarities and differences between L1 and L2 participants' final metaphor products**

Implicature coding helps to identify similarities between the L1 and L2 participants in relation to number of implicatures inferred for conventional and creative metaphor. This helps to answer question 10, which is concerned with the extent to which the L1 and L2 participants infer the same number of implicatures for conventional and creative metaphors. This analysis helps to verify the implicature maximization hypothesis stated above. In addition, implicature coding allows for the drawing of comparison between the L1 and L2 participants' final implicatures so as to determine the degree of convergence between participants' implicatures within and across participant groups and to determine the extent to which the reader's cultural background may affect their interpretation of conventional and creative metaphors. This serves to answer question 11 concerned with qualitative similarities and differences between the L1 and L2 participants' final metaphor interpretations, and to verify the Implicature convergence hypothesis stated above.

3.5.5.8 Poetic metaphor interpretation model

A poetic metaphor interpretation model will be derived on the basis of the process and product data analysis. The model will illustrate the major processing orientations observed within and across participant groups and the knowledge sources employed during the metaphor interpretation process. The model will be compared to the psychological model derived from relevance theory and will help establish the extent to which the psychological model based on relevance theory accounts for the actual L1 and L2 participants' metaphor interpretation processes. In other words, the model will propose an empirically based description of real readers' poetic metaphor interpretation processes which can help formulate

an informed evaluation of the relevance theory account of poetic metaphor interpretation. Comparison will focus on whether the processes relevance theory predicts are actually used by the participants and whether any of the processes demonstrated by the participants contradict its predictions and cannot be accommodated by its general principles.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a description of the research procedure employed in this study. The data collection tool used in this study consists of the think-aloud technique and supportive retrospective comments. The think-aloud technique has been selected among other data collection tools as it is thought to provide more authentic data on the metaphor interpretation processes than other tools such as exclusive retrospection and introspection, though the latter tools have been elicited occasionally to complement gaps in the think-aloud protocols. In fact, the think-aloud technique is judged to minimize distortions of the online metaphor interpretation processes as it focuses the participants' efforts on the performance of the assigned task without requiring them to interpret or explain their ongoing interpretative processes, as is required by introspective reporting. In addition, the think aloud method ensures a more complete verbal protocol than retrospection, as it requires no reconstruction of information from memory. The think-aloud technique places more cognitive demands on short-term memory than other data collection tools as it engages the participants in the parallel but unusual task of thinking and talking aloud. However, this higher cognitive effort is reported to mainly result in the slowing down of the cognitive process rather than in its distortions.

The chapter has also provided a description of the texts and the participants' profiles. The participants taking part in this study are L1 and L2 tertiary-level students specializing in literary studies in their respective universities. Selection of both samples of participants is meant to reflect the extent to which the readers' cultural background knowledge can influence

their metaphor interpretation processing as well as their metaphor interpretation products. Reliance on expert readers is also meant to yield rich data on the process of metaphor interpretation, which could benefit both teachers and metaphor scholars. In fact, advanced readers are likely to show efficient poetic metaphor interpretation processes which could be used to enhance poetry teaching for both L1 and L2 learners of literature. In addition, such information can be of great use in advancing theoretical accounts of metaphor interpretation as a whole.

Three poems are used in the present study, which provide a multitude of themes for the readers to respond to. Using three short poems belonging to different poetic periods is meant to help formulate more general statements about the process of metaphor interpretation. In addition, the three poems provide different types of metaphorical expressions, which differ in their degree of creativity. Hence the poem "Crossing the Bar" can potentially be interpreted in relation to conventional conceptual metaphors. By contrast, the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" involve less conventional metaphors and a higher degree of creativity potential than the poem "Crossing the Bar". This difference in metaphor creativity is likely to reflect the extent to which the participants will engage in a creative interpretative process when dealing with creative metaphors. Both poems "Crossing the Bar" and "Snow" provide few clues for explicit metaphorical expressions, and are, therefore, likely to reflect the extent to which the L1 and L2 readers will engage in allegorical interpretations of poems showing no explicit metaphorical clues. This will also help show the effect of metaphor conventionality on the processing of implicit metaphors as both poems differ in their creativity potential.

Finally, the chapter provides an account of the data analysis procedure to be conducted in this study. The study's main analytical orientation is qualitative in nature, though some level of quantification is included. The qualitative analysis is meant to reveal the metaphor identification patterns of both participant groups as well as their metaphor processing

strategies. It is also meant to shed light on the knowledge resources they make use of while interpreting metaphors and the implicature generation patterns they show in connection with different metaphor types. General metaphor processing patterns are sought within and across participants, though individual patterns may also be highlighted.

The qualitative analysis is complemented by a quantitative analysis of the participants' final metaphor products. Quantitative analysis can show trends in metaphor identification across poems and participant groups. In addition, the quantitative analysis is designed to highlight prominence of particular processing patterns within and across participants and the types of knowledge resources mostly used. It is also meant to reveal possible relationships between degree of metaphor creativity on the one hand and level of cognitive effort and range of interpretations on the other hand. Quantitative analysis is also designed to spot degree of convergence and divergence in metaphor interpretations across different poems as well as across both participant groups.

Given the adoption of relevance theory as a theoretical framework for this study, a psychological model has been derived which is based on the main principles posited by relevance theory. This model describes the main stages which are likely to be followed in the processing of different types of metaphorical expressions, the adjustment of cognitive effort according to metaphor being addressed, types of contextual assumptions likely to be accessed, and the range of implicatures the participants are likely to derive for different metaphor types. This general psychological model has been elaborated into a detailed coding scheme, which includes components from Relevance theory as well as categories from previous research on literary interpretation. The coding scheme is elaborated in such a way as to guarantee a full coverage of the protocol data while making sure it is warranted by the general theoretical background and the psychological model ensuing from it.

Chapter Four

Major metaphor interpretative processes

across the L1 and L2 participants

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the major metaphor interpretation processes observed across the L1 and L2 participants, while I turn in Chapter Five to the main differences observed between the L1 and L2 participant groups. I aim to start answering question number one stated above, which probes the general processing strategies used by the L1 and L2 participants while interpreting poetic metaphors. I also aim to answer question number three, which probes the scope of the pragmatic context the readers attend to when interpreting poetic metaphors. By answering this question, I also aim to verify "the discourse processing hypothesis" stated above, which predicts that metaphor interpretation will be conducted at a discourse level beyond the immediate boundaries of the metaphorical expressions. This hypothesis is based on the relevance theory communicative principle of relevance, which presumes that an utterance is meant to communicate a message which is to be retrieved by reference to its discourse context.

The second section of this chapter is concerned with the implicature generation process. It is designed to answer question five stated above, which is concerned with the extent to which the L1 and L2 participants will be motivated to seek a wider range of interpretations for creative poetic metaphorical expressions than for conventional metaphors. By answering this question, I aim to verify the "implicature generation hypothesis" above, which predicts that the L1 and L2 participants will be motivated to seek a wider range of metaphorical implicatures when dealing with creative poetic metaphors than when dealing with less creative metaphors.

This section is also designed to verify whether the participants manage to infer a wider range of interpretations for those metaphors they expend more effort on, thus verifying the "cognitive effort hypothesis" predicting that participants will infer more implicatures for those metaphors they expend more effort on.

4.2 Metaphor processing patterns

In this section I describe the major metaphor interpretation processes which the L1 and L2 participants are found to use. Throughout I illustrate the metaphor interpretation patterns with examples from the participants' think-loud protocols. A major finding which emerges from the metaphor process analysis is that differences in the use of metaphor processing strategy are not so much related to the participants' cultural or language background as they are related to individual processing orientations which are observed across both participant groups. Two major processing patterns have been identified as characterizing the processing tendencies of two participant groups across the L1 and L2 participants. The first tendency consists of positing a general idea or central metaphor, against which the whole poem is interpreted, including any local metaphors which the participant identifies. The second processing tendency consists of integrating contextual assumptions from different parts of the text as well as activating assumptions from the participant's background knowledge to interpret the poem and any metaphors in a rather bottom-up manner. Both processes were used by most of the participants in both groups. Thus, the majority of the participants in both groups adjusted their use of the processes as they moved across the interpretation task. I refer to this group as the synthetic group, which includes (P), (D), (E), (G), (L), (T) and (R) in the L1 participant group and (K), (H), (N), (I), (F), (S), (W), and (C) in the L2 participant group. In addition to looking for central metaphors or general ideas, the synthetic participants also showed a tendency to integrate contextual assumptions to

interpret metaphors against each other, even when they seemed to identify a central metaphor or a global idea. However, a small number of the participants in both groups showed an exclusive use of a top-down interpretative process. I refer to this group as the holistic group. It involves the participants (W) and (M) in the L2 group and (J), (Y), and (A) in the L1 participant group. The holistic participants used the central metaphor strategy almost systematically across the three poems, rarely integrating information. By contrast, the synthetic participants showed an integrating orientation throughout.

This finding helps to reveal the general metaphor processing strategies of the L1 and L2 participants. It also lends support to the "discourse processing hypothesis" stated above, which predicts that the L1 and L2 participants will seek interpretations beyond the immediate boundaries of the metaphorical expressions they identify, treating metaphors as contributing to an overall poetic message. In fact, both processing tendencies show that the readers try to make sense of the metaphors they identify by reference to a general discourse context, treating them as components of an overall poetic message being communicated rather than mere decorative elements at the margin of the overall poetic message being communicated.

Below I illustrate both types of processing tendencies with examples from the L1 and L2 participants' metaphor interpretation protocols.

4.2.1 Activation of central metaphors or general ideas

Analysis of the participants' metaphor interpretation processes demonstrates that the participants were inclined to seek implicatures beyond the immediate boundaries of the metaphorical expression being interpreted. Thus the participants would look for general thematic frames or central metaphors in making sense of the poem as a whole and the metaphorical expressions they interpreted. This step reflects the participants' attempt at maximizing the relevance of the implicatures they derived by relating them

to the overall pragmatic context of the poem. In doing so, the participants would construct a frame which governed the activation of relevant contextual assumptions. This strategy is consistent with the poetry reading strategies reported by previous studies, which found that advanced L1 and L2 readers followed a point-driven interpretative process when reading and interpreting poetic texts, even though the readers found it mostly difficult to infer a main point for the text they were reading (Vipond and Hunt, 1984). This finding is also consistent with Gibb's and Boers' (2001) study on L1 college students, which reported that the L1 college participants looked for local metaphorical interpretations as well as general metaphorical interpretations and global allegorical themes of the poems they engaged with. However, this finding contradicts Chang's study (2002) in which he reported that advanced-level MA Chinese readers mostly limited their metaphorical interpretative effort to word-level metaphors and seemed to be unfamiliar with sentence level or discourse level metaphors. In fact, the participants in the present study seemed to be fully aware of discourse-level metaphors, treating the whole poem as a representation of a global metaphor. They also showed other discourse level interpretative processes, as they subsumed a number of metaphors under one superordinate vehicle rather than treating them separately as distinct metaphors.

This strategy can be observed with virtually all the participants. However, while the holistic minority relied almost exclusively on this strategy in the three poems, the synthetic participants used an integrating strategy in parallel. However, some synthetic participants showed less text-based integration when dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar", in relation to which they identified one or more central metaphors which could potentially yield immediate plausible interpretation. Nevertheless, they still maintained a higher degree of context integration than the holistic participants.

In the following example, (M), a holistic participant, infers a general metaphor underlying the whole poem "The Motive for Metaphor" right from the start. She interprets the whole poem as being based on a central idea of human birth and life. Hence she states,

> I think (.) here the poem is related it can be interpreted as life from when the baby is I think it is related to the process not of giving birth but to the process when the baby is in the womb and it (.) and it::: and it I don't know it is closed its DNA its genes and everything that's from the last letter the x because from the male and female there is the x so that's the dominant x that's how I interpret it

(M) uses this central metaphor in interpreting many expressions she identifies as metaphorical in this poem. In commenting on the expression "The hammer of red and blue", she states,

> Then the ruddy temper the hammer (.) of red and blue the hard the ruddy temper the hammer hammer here I think is related to the heart beat (.) ehhh the ruddy temper (.) don't know the red and blue the red and blue maybe the veins in the body they are red and blue

On another occasion, she states, "the hard sound (.) steel against intimation intimation the sharp the hard sound this is the heart beat against the flesh of the body". Still on another occasion, she comments,

> The vital arrogant fatal dominant X the vital is vital because as I said earlier in the each chromosomes of the male and the female we find the X gene the X chromosome it is vital (.) without it there would be no there is no such thing as (.) the::: human race it is arrogant because it's present always present it shifts itself it is fatal fatal in a ways because some chromosomes they have DNA they have illnesses in them and it is dominant because it is always present

In the following example, (W), a holistic participant, identifies a central metaphor in the poem "Crossing the Bar", which she then uses to interpret the poem. Thus she states,

> there is the idea of always of embarking and I think a central metaphor to the whole poem despite he uses only one word when I embark that embarking is is is standing for his very wish to initiate a new experience when I embark what if I embark towards that experience and it fails so I think it is a central central metaphor

standing for his own for his own wish to go into a new direction probably new experiences with other women

She also identifies a general idea in the poem, which she uses in conjunction with

the central metaphor in interpreting the whole poem. Hence she says,

> which is::: again (7 sec) we have the idea of regret which is recurrent throughout the poem we have moaning we have sadness and words like sunset and twilight and evening which impart a kind of gloomy setting to the poem and (.) he says and may and may which is the auxiliary expressing a wish and may there be no sadness of farewell when I embark so his it is a kind of dilemma he wanna cross that bar but at the same time he is thinking of what if I cross that bar and then I regret that very that very act of crossing it

(W) identifies a main notion, that of globalization and its impact on Irish literature,

when interpreting the poem "Snow". She uses this main idea throughout the poem.

> world is suddener than we fancy it I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various and the fire flames with a bubbling sound for world is more spiteful and gay than one supposes on the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses it is there is a sort of ehhh dichotomy that is running throughout the poem and pink roses and snow may stand for the contradictions brought about by cultural diversity and these contradictions might not fit the cultural specificity of Ireland that's why he says collateral and incompatible

(W) interprets the expression "the room was suddenly rich" by reference to the

general idea she has identified. Hence she states, "The room might be stand might stand

for Ireland the room was suddenly rich and the the rich cultural heritage of Ireland

might be could be (5 sec)". On another occasion, she comments on the expression

"soundlessly collateral and incompatible" by referring to the same notion. Hence she

states,

> The great bay window was spawning snow and pink roses soundlessly collateral and incompatible world is suddener than we fancy it emmm world is suddener than we fancy it I know Irish people Irish have always been against that idea of modernization and change that it it it has brought with it might be could be that he is expressing a fear of what globalization might bring

(W) uses the same notion to comment on the expression "The drunkenness of things

being various". Hence she states,

I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various (.) the drunkenness of things being various he is expressing kind of ehhh (3 sec) of fear of things being various (.) of variety probably variety of culture and how they come to influence Ireland as we know throughout history there has been always that (3 sec) that fear facing ehhh of facing those set of changes brought about by:: (4 sec) by modernity modernism (3 sec)

She also comments on the expression "There is more than glass between the snow and huge roses" by referring to the general idea she has entertained so far. Hence she comments,

the fire flames with a bubbling sound for world is more spiteful and gay than one supposes on the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses and he said by the end of the poem that there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses probably ehhh the snow would stand for ehhh (4 sec) would stand for::: all that is not Irish that does not belong to Ireland and huge roses probably it stands for for Ireland his hometown

Like (W) and (M), (A), an L1 holistic participant, identifies a central metaphor in dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar". In fact, she states, "So I interpreted crossing the bar as a metaphor for death so he says I am crossing the bar I mean obviously this is not a reference to a sea journey but we can trace death with reference to the notion of a journey particularly a nautical one".

Identification of this central metaphor helps (A) identify further metaphors and interpret them easily. The following example shows how (A) identifies and interprets metaphors in a rather automatic way. Thus she states,

oh that makes sense then so I interpret it as death so obviously he wants to say that they don't like others to see me when I am dying I am little bit confused here I am not sure what tide means but it's obviously about being borne towards (.) a kind of afterlife or some other kind of destination once he crosses this bar it suggests that there is an alternate destination there is also twilight and evening bell which may also be suggestive of old age twilight years coming to an end evening bell the last bell before death and after that the dark obviously he dies and the flood may bear me far which is obviously dependent on your life how you behaved in your life and Pilot I thought would be some kind of creator or deity figure some kind of divine figure

(A) explicitly states that she is looking for a central metaphor in interpreting the poem "Snow". This interpretative strategy has not been explicitly stated in dealing with Tennyson's poem "Crossing the Bar", although this can be inferred from her overall interpretative behaviour as she keeps referring to the notion of death as journey throughout. In dealing with "Snow", however, she fails to find a central metaphor immediately and hence becomes aware of this interpretative obstacle. Thus she says, "I think the metaphors in this poem are not as clear as they are in Tennyson (.) There the metaphors were much more obvious I mean I am trying to find a central metaphor there I can't seem to (3 sec) can't seem to find one".

(J), a holistic L1 participant, infers a central idea in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". He states,

> And the whole poem seems to be about em language metaphor description and the way of looking at things where it's not as it seems and the use of metaphor is em basically perhaps disguising what's really there but disguise isn't necessarily a good thing so you've got but what this central stanza seems to indicate that the ultimate conceit of the poem is that this kind of coverage is valuable desiring the exhilaration of changes so that's how I'd interpret the rest of the poem, by that obscure moon metaphor most of what the thing.

(J) comments on a number of metaphorical expressions in a holistic manner, referring back to the general notion he has constructed earlier. Thus he states,

> there's a bunch of metaphors in terms of half colours quarter things the obscure moon the moon as in obscured but also obscure in the literal sense but perhaps half-covered by clouds em red and blue again there's a kind of doubleness here there's red and blue so it's half red half blue so we've got half colours and quarter things, half red half blue seem again obscure moon again things being covered and obscured and cut-up which again indicates this idea of metaphor as a way of disguising and covering things or perhaps covering up certain aspects of them.

(Y), a holistic L1 participant, also shows a general top-down metaphor interpretation process. In dealing with the poem "Snow", she posits a general idea, stating that "it seems like the poem is (3 sec) like about some kind of amazement about the world (.) in some way". (Y) uses this general idea throughout in dealing with other

metaphorical expressions she attends to. She keeps referring back to the notion of amazement in interpreting metaphorical meanings. Hence she states,

> just through the repetition that the world was sudden suddener and the world is crazier and there is more than glass between snow which the idea of things being incompatible and being various and the kind of (5 sec) snow and roses are a mix you would not expect and just this idea of the drunkenness being various (3 sec) that you feel it is a kind of metaphor it is not literally drunken a tangarine it is kind of amazement at the world I suppose (5 sec) yeah just more than we think and more than one supposes it just kind of emphasizes that idea of having habitual expectations for the things and suddenly being aware of the non conformity to those expectations or not being straightforward.

Like the holistic participants, the synthetic participants relied on central metaphors or general ideas to interpret the poems and the metaphors involved. However, they were more prepared to integrate information and interpret metaphors against each other and against other information in the text when no central metaphors or general ideas could be posited right from the start. In what follows, I provide further examples of central metaphor identification as used by the synthetic participants while I deal with their integrative processes in the next section below.

Like (M), (N), a synthetic L2 participant, sees the whole poem "The Motive for Metaphor" as conveying the progress of human life from birth to death. She uses the schema of baby birth throughout as she goes about interpreting the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". In the following example, she comments on the expression "you like it under the trees in autumn", stating,

> you like it under the trees in autumn under the trees in autumn I think the trees here stand for the womb of the of the mother and autumn is like ehhh autumn so and it stands for the fetus so we have under you like it under the trees in autumn so you like this stage of the human being as a fetus in his mother's womb because everything is half dead everything his whole life is ehhh the life of this fetus it is half dead.

(N) follows the same course of thought, interpreting the subsequent metaphors in relation to the central metaphor she has inferred. Thus she states,

In the same way you were happy in spring so spring it is like ehhh (.) with the half colors of quarter-things (.) the slightly brighter sky the melting clouds the single bird the obscure moon so single bird we have the baby that is growing up that is now he is a child full of life colours things are bright ehhh he is there is no problems no suffering so the clouds which are really symbolizing a problem are melting so no problems then single birds it is happiness.

(C), a synthetic L2 participant, infers a general idea underlying the poem "Crossing the Bar". He sees the whole poem as being based on the notion of human life, extending from birth to death. Thus he states,

The flood may bear me far the flood so here the the key the key notion is the key concept water so the poem starts from sunset and evening star and when I have crossed the bar (.) so there may be so here we can draw an implicit analogy between this ehhhh (5 sec) this predominant concept of water and real life which is the beginning of life the birth ehhh (3 sec) I mean embryonic life of the baby before the baby was borne.

(C) refers to this general idea as he addresses other metaphorical expressions. In the following example, he comments on the expressions "Tide as moving seems asleep" and "sunset and evening star and after that the dark", saying,

Tide as moving seems asleep but such a tide as moving seems asleep too full for sound and foam (4sec) even this could consolidate this ehhhh finding of ehhhhh of birth (6 sec) and sunset is dark and oblique and obscure ambiguous sunset is the final stage of life final something which is (.) when I have crossed the bar.

(H), a synthetic L2 participant, shows the same strategy in dealing with the poem "The Motive for Metaphor." She states,

Maybe the poem is talking about literature and the word literature tends to give meanings to some things to few things only to find that these meanings are open to different other interpretations so we tend to construct meanings and to deconstruct meanings especially in postmodern literary theories (7 sec) so meanings truth can never be caught they are always beyond our reach.

She also comments on the metaphorical expression "The weight of primary noon shrinking from the weight of primary noon" by referring to the same notion of meaning "deconstruction", Hence she states,

The weight of primary noon shrinking shrinking from the abc so abc there is order but when we have shrinking here so we have this order we have a move from order

to disorder from the construction of meaning to different other meanings to deconstruction.

Evidence of the same strategy is noted with the synthetic L1 participants. For example, in dealing with the poem *"Crossing the Bar"*, (R) identifies what seems to be a main idea underlying the poem. Thus he states, "I am not sure what the bar is. I assume (3 sec) what is moaning then moaning of the bar does the bar moan you know a sand bank (4 sec) I am gonna keep going in the death line". Likewise, (P) explicitly states that he has identified a central metaphor, which, he states, could be used as a point of reference for the interpretation of whatever metaphors he may identify later. Thus he states, "Crossing the bar Alfred Lord Tennyson ok crossing the bar (5 sec) seems to me to be a metaphor for death and thus the whole poem can (.) can be the various specific features of the poem can be interpreted according to this metaphorical scheme".

(P) uses this central metaphor in interpreting virtually all the metaphors in the poem. Thus he comments on a set of other metaphorical expressions in relation to the central metaphor he has inferred. Thus he comments,

> and after that the dark dark a metaphor for death perhaps also a metaphor for death that does not include a heaven or a hell afterwards (.) maybe it is a moment where the poem seems to move towards a more atheistic vision perhaps or pessimistic vision of what happens after death and may there be no sadness of farewell when I embark (4 sec) again sadness of farewell may work as a metaphor for those relatives who are moaning and embarkation again serves as a metaphor for death for the moment of passing over

(G), in turn, explicitly shows her attempt at identifying a general metaphor in dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar". Hence she states,

> but in a way this one's more difficult to do cause I think that the whole thing is metaphorical rather than like I don't know I think it has less examples of individual

metaphor but the whole poem is more of a metaphor so it's harder to identify specific metaphors in that way.

(G), however, does not seem to find a basic idea or central metaphor and deals with metaphors at a more local level. In dealing with the poem "Snow", however, she succeeds in identifying a central idea, stating, "The whole poem's about doubleness where nothing is where's there's a twoness to everything em of inside outside snow and roses a tangerine being consumed and spitting out the pips".

Her comments on a number of expressions bear traces of this general idea she has constructed. Thus she states,

> fragmentation em yeah just kind of chaos yeah again maybe a fragmentation a sort of I get this whole idea that the poem is about the world being crazy it's a place of chaos of fragmentation that struggle to relate maybe the snow and the huge roses are an element of your life and there's this notion of a barrier which is difficult to get over into the craziness of the world em

(G) notes the same notion of fragmentation in dealing with the expression "and feel the drunkenness of things being various".

Like most L1 participants, (L) seems to identify a general metaphor in dealing with the poem "Crossing the bar". Hence she states,

> Immediately I'm noticing the title and crossing the bar and thinking about what that could mean I'm thinking of journeys thinking of crossing over into death a journey towards death perhaps thinking of the nautical implications of the poem ok I see the journey as a whole throughout this poem as a metaphor for the journey throughout life perhaps towards death.

As is noted with the other participants, (L)'s identification of this central metaphor helps her identify other metaphorical expressions and to interpret them effortlessly. In a meta-cognitive comment she states, "it always takes a while to get into it and then things become quite apparent but there's once you get onto the track of interpreting the poem a certain way but in this poem it seems quite obvious it is about returning to God

and returning to heaven". In fact, (L) seems to find it fairly easy to identify and

interpret a number of metaphorical expressions. Commenting on a number of

expressions, she states,

> When I put to sea the sea is a metaphor for pushing out to sea I see that as a being a metaphor for heading towards the last stage of life death see the tide as a metaphor for the pull towards death (4 sec) I see turns again home as not just returning home on this ship but there's a metaphor for returning to a state of not being a state of death a state of rest (5 sec) again twilight and evening bell as with the first line sunset and evening star as being a metaphor for the pillars of life the different stages in time of life (4 sec) and after that the dark as being the death (4 sec) when I embark being a metaphor for death (5 sec) hope to see my pilot face to face is a metaphor for seeing God the pilot specifically the pilot as a driving force in the voyage I see that as metaphor for God for this life crossing the bar again crossing over into death

(E), an L1 synthetic participant, infers a general notion of "change" underlying the

poem "Snow". He states,

> I think snow is about change the nature of change things could change very quickly (3 sec) change as I come to understand change is an amorphous concept that's obvious overall in the poem change is (3 sec) amorphous concept change is not an immutable concept.

(E) seems to use the notion of change in dealing with almost all the expressions he

deals with metaphorically. In dealing with the expression "The room was suddenly rich

and the great bay window was spawning snow and pink roses against it", he states,

> the room was suddenly rich and the great bay window was spawning snow and pink roses against it (4 sec) so the outside (5 sec) so I think the great bay window was spawning snow against the room means there is no avoiding change so the man is sitting in the room the the great bay window was spawning snow and pink roses it is actually the window which is spawning so the outside is changing the inside so there is no hiding from change change cannot be avoided

(D) shows a similar tendency in dealing with the poem "Snow". He identifies a

central notion of frozen temporality. He states,

> The room was suddenly rich this seems to be the central concept of the poem two images working in harmony (4 sec) but there's this idea of suddenly (.) suddenly the

transfer from one state to another suddenly is this idea of a frozen instant suddenly (3 sec) the sudden awareness suddenly speaks to the instant.

(D) uses the general notion of temporality in commenting on other metaphorical expressions. In interpreting the expression "on the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands", he states,

> On the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands they become like photographs take a photograph of something and you have a frozen image like a certain space in a certain time documents of the recognition of temporality (4 sec) the cameras the snowdrops these are the instruments of temporality fleetingly there is no instant that you can hold a snowdrop in your hand there is only one instant that it exists as a snowflake before it becomes water in your hand (.) because there is this change in state change in time and place world is suddener recognition of temporality passing

In dealing with the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow", (T) a synthetic L1 participant, identifies a central metaphor, which he keeps referring to in order to identify and integrate other metaphorical expressions. His tendency for central metaphor identification is reflected in the following protocol segment, as he states,

> But like Tennyson the metaphors adopt to something more complete rather than being used as a kind of a passing phrase the metaphors bind to the whole poem and make up its totality so the key metaphors in this poem is ideas so certain things represent his own point so the metaphor is the idea of the snow and pink rose being against the bay window and that's an unlikely combination that he has flowers and snow at the same time

(T) uses this general idea in commenting on a number of metaphorical expressions. Thus he states,

> and he develops this metaphor with further natural objects so in the second stanza he talks about tangerine to develop this idea of the plurality of world world is crazier and more of it than we think incorrigibly plural I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various so the tangerine becomes a metaphor for the plurality of the world

(T) interprets other metaphorical expressions in this poem by referring to the previous central metaphor.

(T) shows the same processing strategy in dealing with the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". Hence he states, "This image to illuminate the central metaphor which is that poets like metaphors". (T) utilises this general idea to comment on a number of expressions which he addresses metaphorically. Thus he states,

> in the same way you were happy in spring with the half colours of quarter things quarter things a small metaphor quarter things being the partly grown plants the slightly brighter sky, the melting clouds the single bird (.) the obscure moon in fact all of these things become symbols or metaphors potentially in poetry classic poetic images that can be turned into metaphors the single bird the obscure moon the melting clouds brighter skies so again that all build up to the central metaphor the poet likes metaphors likes places because they create metaphors and he extrapolates from these metaphors

As a whole, this section has shown that the participants try to establish the relevance of poetic metaphors by interpreting them against a larger pragmatic context, in this case a global thematic or central metaphor, rather than by referring exclusively to the immediate concepts comprising the metaphorical expression. This finding is further supported by another processing strategy demonstrated by the participants in interpreting poetic metaphors, particularly when the participants fail to infer a general idea or a central metaphor. In fact, in those cases where the participant do not seem to identify a central idea or metaphor, the process of metaphor interpretation is conducted in a rather bottom-up manner, whereby the reader attempts to integrate contextual assumptions from different parts of the text, or to interpret the metaphorical expressions against each other. I turn to this point in more detail in the next section.

4.2.2 Metaphor integration

Both the L1 and L2 participants are found to consider metaphors in relation to one another and in relation to other contextual information, using newly constructed information to check and elaborate on previously interpreted metaphors. This strategy is mostly demonstrated by the L1 and L2 synthetic participants. This strategy is used when the participants do not seem to have inferred a general idea or a central metaphor

underlying the whole poem or as an additional processing strategy to central metaphor identification.

The integrating participants used this strategy more frequently in relation to the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow". However, with the exception of (D), an integrating L1 participant, the integrating participants used this strategy less frequently in dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar". This can be explained by the fact that all L1 integrating participants except (D) identified one or more of the central metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" and, therefore, faced less need to engage in a thorough context construction. Still, the integrating L1 and L2 participants used this strategy more frequently than the holistic L1 and L2 participants even in the poem "Crossing the Bar".

Like the previous processing strategy, this step reflects the participants' search for metaphorical implicatures in the larger pragmatic context of the poem. This strategy was explicitly stated in the participants' comprehension monitoring strategies, which reflects their tendency to construct further contextual information before an interpretation was generated. The following extract by (P) illustrates how he moves backward and forward as he tries to interpret metaphorical expressions against each other,

> But more obviously shrinking from the weight of primary noon (4 sec) here the weight stands as a metaphor for the strength of the sun (.) but also the import of the crisis moment (6 sec) so the weight of clarity of persistence endurance (.) in ties with the abc of being again clearly metaphorical (5 sec) the abc the children's primer to existence the abc of which is unchanging sort of harsh light of reality (3 sec) so let's go back (.) the hammer of red and blue (6 sec) yeah that's the world around perhaps a metaphor for living simply for a kind of visible life a life without shadows an ordered life.

(P) shows this integrative strategy again as he tries to interpret another set of metaphorical expressions. Thus he states,

I am not pretty sure about that the hammer of red and blue again the impression the powerful impression of primary colours on the senses which again we can interpret in the light of primary noon it seems a clear correspondence between metaphors mutually reinforcing the striking of phenomenological sense of perception overwhelmed by a simple intensity again the hard sound steel against intimation the sharp flesh the vital arrogant dominant x (4 sec) ok I need to go back and think about this more looking to clarify what these metaphors are getting at by reading the poem again (5 sec) I suppose it is all all these metaphors in the last six lines (.) are metaphors for (.) that which is unchanging sort of harsh light of reality.

Similarly, (Y) derives mutually contrasting contextual assumptions in interpreting the metaphorical expressions at the end of the poem, contrasting them with those she has dealt with at the beginning of the poem. Hence she states,

But actually that is contrasted completely in the last two stanzas the abc of being which I don't think (.) which is just you (.) almost seem in contrast with these metaphors and things that are not easily literal or able to define You have quite strict structures in place the abc of being (.) which suggests kind of for existence in some way and so and that goes with the sharp flesh and steel you see you have got that kind of casual and you were happy in spring and want change and need for metaphor it is kind of stopped and it is kind of regimented and quite structured and natural way of looking at things and which is ultimately vital arrogant fatal and dominant so not particularly appealing.

(T) shows a similar interpretative process when dealing with the same metaphorical expressions towards the end of the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". He states,

The primary noon connects with the primary colours of red and blue the ruddy temper so primary colours coming here and he hates these primary colours (.) things being strong and heavy and violent and steel against intimation so again still an absolute colour and definite ideas arrogant fatal dominant x and (4 sec) he is interested in intimation and suggestion and that's the motive for metaphor (5 sec) we can say it is that's the way to poetic and more sensitive way of being whereas if you are just interested in these definite things and absolutes you are basically a fascist yeah ok so that's it the motive for metaphor is to have a more sensitive complex understanding of the world and our place in it and the uncertainties and the changes are exhilarating and beautiful and trying to hammer things into shape dominating dominates us and makes us robots and makes us inhuman.

(G) draws a comparison between the metaphorical expressions featuring in different stanzas, noting a sharp contrast between both stanzas and their constituent metaphors.

Thus she states,

Em again spring is metaphorical it's a signification for the seasons again where unlike things where they are half-dead there are now half colors of quarter-things so things are beginning to build towards a wholeness again rather than a breaking down unlike the metaphors in the first stanza which are cold and pale and death things are coming to life (3 sec) the slightly brighter sky the melting clouds (3 sec) brighter now (4 sec) the slightly brighter sky the melting clouds as if melting winter away (5 sec) em but there's still that withdrawal there's only a single bird there isn't an abundance yet.

In dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar", (G) fails to identify a general notion

or central metaphor. Consequently, she resorts to a bottom-up interpretative process,

interpreting metaphorical expressions against each other. Hence she comments,

so twilight and evening bell and then in the next line you've got and after that the dark you've got that the notion of time coming in here which then links on to things later on where you've got the notion of time and place and the idea of departing so it's the kind of idea that at a certain point in the day or a certain point in time there's going to be a change in the environment em and then we've got the flood which links back to the tide the movement em the flooding and ebbing of the tide.

(G) also interprets a number of metaphorical expressions in relation to one another

in dealing with the poem "Snow". She states,

and I think the snow and the pink roses are supposed to represent some sort of dichotomy that I can't work out because it leads into the next stanza where it says the world is incorrigibly plural so the snow and the pink roses so it's this idea of a doubleness of a twoness I'm guessing are symbolising em and it's that kind of dichotomy that makes the world crazy, this idea of doubleness of twoness where nothing's maybe where there's not an idea of a wholeness it's more fragmented and that feeds into the next line where the speaker eats the tangerine which is a whole and spits out the pips so there's kind of rejecting, it's not taking in the whole thing there's still something left which he's pushing out (3 sec) so there's still kind of like fragmentation of a self-contained whole and then the drunkenness of things being various various to me would imply the whole idea of dichotomy and a struggle for wholeness of oneess where things are plural various.

(L) shows a clear attempt at interpreting metaphors in relation to one another as she

proceeds through the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". Hence she comments,

The first metaphor I came across was the wind and I interpreted it at the time as being representative of the poetic spirit and now I think as I move through the poem that things like that are depicted through natural metaphors things like the wind the seasons changing the noon in the sky moon and then toward the final stanza the metaphors seem to be to do with the body and this all creates a picture of these

things that lie within the poet or the poetic spirit as being natural and vital as the beating heart the heartbeats of the hammer of red and blue.

She also shows a similar processing strategy in dealing with other metaphorical expressions in the same poem. Hence she comments,

> I think that if I link all of these metaphors together to interpret the poem as whole I'm seeing it creates a picture of the poet as being foreign to everyday life as being unable to belong with the ABCs of being without interpreting or having a bit of friction against it because overall I'm getting a picture of the poet and how the poet has a feeling of necessity to create from the world around to stick out from the everyday life and notice the unusual.

(D) shows a similar tendency in interpreting the poem "Snow". Although he seems to derive a general notion, he simultaneously investigates metaphorical expressions against each other. In commenting on the metaphorical expression "there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses", he states,

> more than glass is the the glass and the bay window the glass and the bay window separates the inside interior comfort from the outside world but there's no distinction between the natural world and the manmade world obviously the tangerine pips that have been spat out glass is obviously this manmade state whereas the snowflake the roses are all natural but there's more than this manmade material the (.) the liminal boundary of the window the is border of space and time temporality presented by this recognition for the recurring image (.) this inability to actually capture the snowflake manmade world and the natural world (.) also something to do with the idea of the fixed state where the flower is wilting and dying in every (3 sec) the glass is the only frozen state in the poem the glass is suspended in time pips the passing of time and the snowflake the roses the room was suddenly rich and the great bay window was spawning snow The room can be transformed by the recognition or the juxtaposition but the things within the room are not transformed, it's more than glass I suppose (.) physical state of the glass compared to the natural imagery the passing of time

(D) does not seem to identify a general notion in dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar". He proceeds in a bottom-up manner, interpreting metaphors against each other. Hence he states, "It's quite interesting to see the rest of the imagery and metaphors has been relatively peaceful not a lot of motion in the poem until the idea of a flood, the idea of a deluge". (D) continues to interpret metaphors against each other,

trying to grasp a common idea or central metaphors. After dealing with a number of

metaphors, he reaches the following interpretation:

> There seems to be quite a collection of very unwieldy metaphors and they are very common commonly used by bad poets Tennyson is quite obviously not a bad poet sun sea time place sailors God these are some large scale metaphors for poetry or within poetry they're very familiar, they're very familiar commonly used sea sky planets stars God or time but also used commonly badly they are commonly used (3 sec) because they are universally recognisable and they communicate something of the vast intentions of the poem because they are so vast because they they become extremely (.) the sea water in general is such an unwieldy metaphor because you know the water in my glass is held within my container the sea is lost the form is lost and the meaning is lost sunset is something which is typically romantic Romantic indications (3 sec) circularity of time the daily recurrence of the sunset the tide the evening even the evening bell which rings to denote man's demarcation of time against the natural demarcation of time (.) and I think it's these three simple lines.

Like the L1 participants, the Tunisian L2 participants showed the same tendency

in interpreting poetic metaphors against each other (.) In the following example, (H)

interprets a couple of metaphors against each other in the poem "Snow". Thus she

states,

> incorrigibly plural plurality so that's variety in the world I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various of course here the tangerine cannot refer to the food itself the literal meaning it has it can it can be read as a metaphor for the world itself we said there is the room that's a metaphor for the world the world is made up of different classes different people and it can also the world is compared to a tangerine the tangerine the fruit so there is the fruit so it is fertility it is life but I peel and portion and spit the pips again the tangerine there is a positive aspect about it there is something positive in the difference in the world and there is something negative this because this different leads to different conflicts and different I mean struggles etc. I spit here the verb spit has a negative connotation.

In the following example, (H) infers a common implicature for a set of expressions.

Hence she states,

> Can- be so all the metaphors convey the idea of the world first of all the room tangerine bubbling sound they all refer to the world but this world as made up of different categories different ethnic groups different classes different whatever is different.

(C) follows a text-based interpretative process, trying to retrieve common

assumptions for a number of expressions featuring in the poem "The motive for

Metaphor". Hence he states,

> So the poem starts with autumn it moves to spring and then it moves to (3sec) the obscure moon lighting an obscure world moves to oxymoron desiring the exhilarations of changes (.) perhaps it is about a kind of personification here exhilarations of changes and then it moves to the ruddy temper of the hammer so here there is a mixture between the personal and the objective yes the personal ehhhh seems to merge into the objective and the object like steel against intimation (.) so (.) the motive for metaphor the motive for metaphor (31 sec) so the whole poem is about metaphor and it is motivated by this motive of metaphor which which pervades in every in every stanza of the poem and that's it.

(S) shows a similar strategy as she infers a common implicature for a number of

metaphors in the third stanza, contrasting stanzas against each other. Hence, she states,

> like the autumn sad and grief in the same way you were happy in spring with the half colors of quarter-things the slightly brighter sky the melting clouds the single bird the obscure moon I think all these maybe a metaphors standing for moments of happiness (7 sec) and the change from stanza one to stanza two here there is grief throughout leaves dead it is all about grief sadness second stanza is brighter and and clouds and single birds meaning there is change in his life from one phase to another.

Likewise, (K) infers a common implicature for the expressions "world is suddener

than we fancy it" and "world is crazier and more of it than we think". She comments,

> The first stanza ends by the line saying world is suddener than we fancy it maybe what the narrator here means is that the world is::: different from what we expect it to be here this idea is reinforced in the beginning of the second stanza world is crazier and more of it than we think.

(N) interprets the metaphorical expression "twilight and evening bell" in relation to

the metaphorical expression "one clear call for me", stating,

> twilight and evening bell twilight and evening bell and after that the dark so twilight and evening bell it is it goes with calling for me so we have something that is calling for the for the speaker and twilight again it is it is the thing that separates night from day separates darkness from light separates between the two lights the one that the speaker is currently living in and the other life that he aspires to or he wants to go to emm so darkness relates to this life and light twilight relates to the other life.

In interpreting the poem "Snow", (I) addresses a number of metaphors in relation to one another, forming a rather coherent interpretation. Hence he states,

> so maybe then there is a kind of mental barrier that forbids not forbids that restricts the speaker's interpretation to one singular interpretation and not to plural and being various though he admits that he or she of course admits that because we don't know if the speaker is a man or a woman so it admits it in saying that world is crazier and more of it than we think world is suddener than we fancy it there is here a realization of the plurality of the of the of the multidimensional multidimensional nature of life of world of life somehow but then there is more than glass this alludes to the speaker's mental and psychological status so then we think of the room as the generated meaning and we think of snow as the meaning of life that is not meaning of life which is not grasped understood.

(F) interprets the metaphorical expression "there is more than glass between the snow and huge roses" in relation to the words "Snow" and "huge roses", which she treats as metaphorical as well. She states,

> and there is more than glass between the snow and huge roses so the speaker here comes back to the beginning when he said the window is between the front of window between the snow outside and the roses inside and he says there is more than glass between the snow and the roses so the boundary here glass here is a metaphor for the boundary perhaps the limit between snow which we said is a metaphor for time and the roses which is a metaphor for happiness so he said there is no or not there is no barrier between the time and happiness but there is more than glass so glass as transparent can become obscure and dark if we want it to be it to be so there is tiny barrier between time and happiness and we have to resolve the equation so that we reach that happiness symbolized by the roses.

Overall the findings relating to the L1 and L2 participants' general metaphor interpretation processes show that the participants in both groups shared two similar metaphor interpretation processes. Both processing strategies show that readers go beyond the immediate boundaries of the metaphorical expressions they identify and integrate metaphor interpretation into a discourse level interpretative framework, though one group of the participants is inclined to invest more integrative effort than another. This finding provides strong support to the "discourse processing hypothesis" formulated above, which predicts that the participants will seek implicatures beyond the immediate boundaries of the metaphorical expression being interpreted, viewing

metaphorical expressions as contributing to the expression of an overall poetic message rather than mere decorative tools. This finding fits in with the communicative principle of relevance posited by relevance theory, which views utterance interpretation as an endeavour on the part of the receiver to infer communicated intentions behind produced utterances

So far, I have attempted to trace the general interpretative processes participants appeared to use following identification of metaphorical expressions. In the next section I focus on the implicature generation tendencies identified across the L1 and L2 participant groups.

4.3 Implicature generation patterns

This section focuses on the major metaphor implicature generation patterns observed across participant groups and poems. The analysis of the participants' implicature generation tendencies shows that the majority of the participants in both groups have a general tendency to look for one interpretation in most cases, irrespective of the poem and metaphorical expressions included. This finding contradicts "the implicature maximization hypothesis" listed above in so far as creative metaphors are concerned, as it predicts that the L1 and L2 participants will be motivated to seek rich interpretations for creative metaphors, mostly prevalent in the poems "Snow" and "The Motive for Metaphor", and basically single interpretations for less creative metaphors, which predominate in the poem "Crossing the Bar". Figure 2 below shows the overall implicature generation tendencies of the synthetic and holistic participants.

Figure 2

The Metaphor implicature generation patterns of the Integrative and Holistic

participants.

	C.B	M.M	S
Integrative	16.4	13.6	10.7
Holistic	9.2	6	7.4
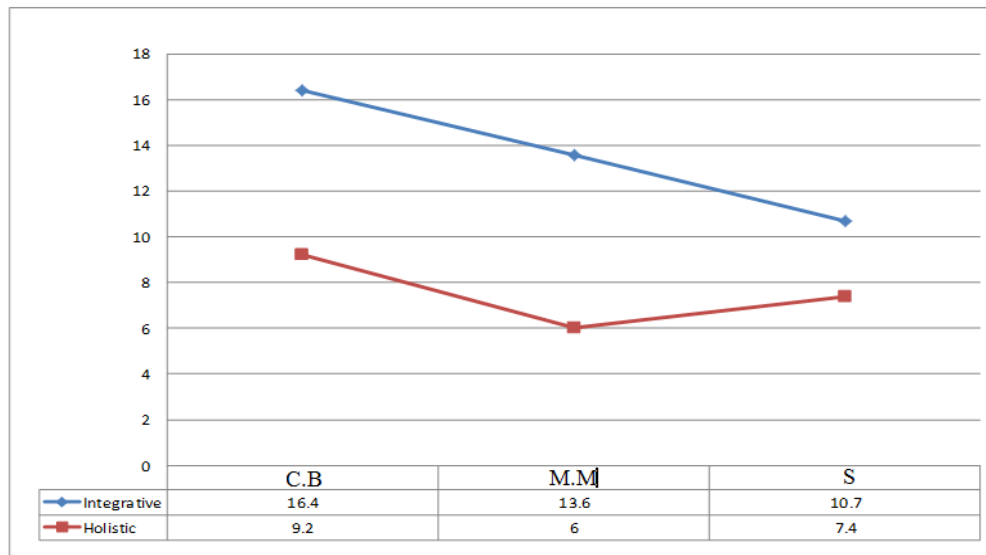
Figure 2 shows that both the integrative and holistic participants inferred more

implicatures in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than in the other two poems, which

suggests that creative metaphor interpretation represents a challenge to readers

regardless of their interpretative styles. However, the figure also shows that the

integrative participants inferred more implicatures for the three poems than the holistic

participants. This can be explained by the fact that the former participants invested

more time and integrated more contextual information than the latter participants.

Looking at each group separately, it can be noted that the holistic participants were

slightly more successful in dealing with the poems "Crossing the Bar" and "snow",

where less local metaphors were explicitly mentioned, than in dealing with the poem

"The Motive for Metaphor", which contained more explicitly stated metaphors. This

finding suggests that the holistic participants were more at ease with poems for which

they could generate a general theme or central metaphor than with poems containing a

lot of explicit metaphors with no clear notion binding them.

The above figure shows that the integrative participants had a greater tendency to infer more implicatures than the holistic participants. Nevertheless, only a minority of the integrative participants was found to seek rich interpretations while the majority was only content with single interpretations. Figures 3 and 4 below illustrate the variation between the participants' implicature generation tendencies.

Figure 3:

Total number of implicatures derived by the L1 participants in the three poems.

	(P)	(D)	(E)	(R)	(T)	(G)	(L)	(J)	(Y)	(A)
Snow	18	11	17	6	6	11	6	8	6	4
The motive for metaphor	28	19	12	14	16	14	7	7	10	5
Crossing the Bar	34	42	21	8	16	12	17	4	5	16
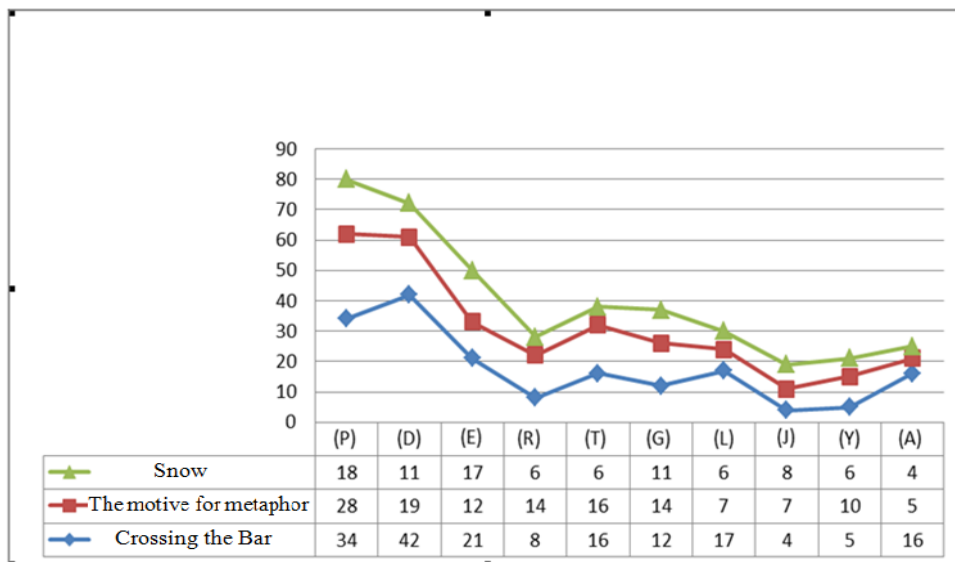
Figure 4:

Total number of implicatures derived by the L2 participants in the three poems.

	(K)	(S)	(M)	(F)	(I)	(H)	(N)	(C)	(W)	(B)
Snow	11	18	11	13	11	6	12	8	10	10
The motive for metaphor	14	18	9	13	12	15	5	8	9	10
Crossing the Bar	20	13	13	12	11	11	10	9	8	10
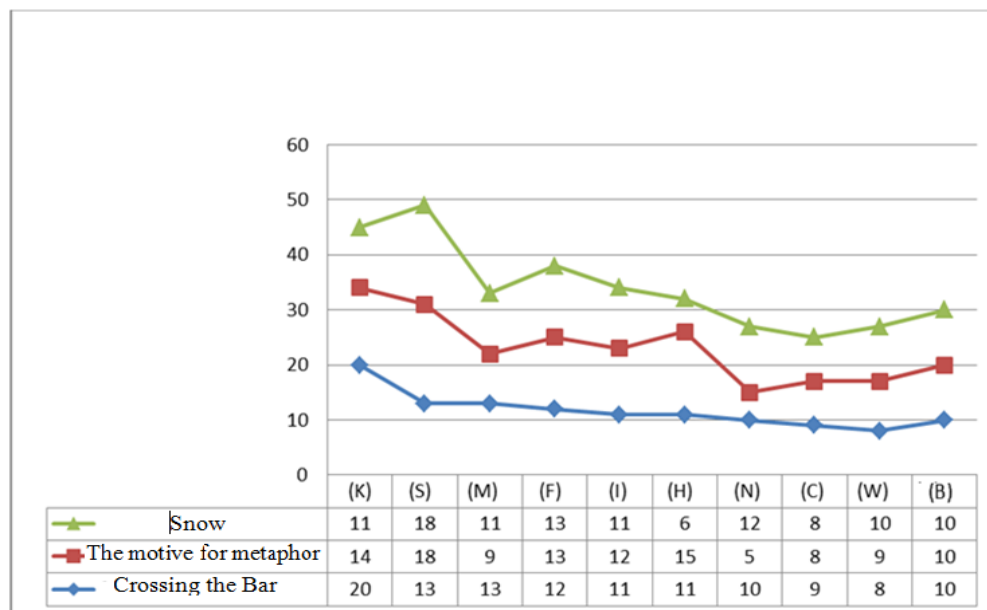
Figures 3 and 4 above show that a minority of participants in the L1 and L2 groups, all integrative in orientation, had a greater tendency to seek rich interpretations than the remaining participants. These involve (P), (D), and (E) in the L1 participant group, and (K), (S) and to a less extent (F) and (I) in the L2 participant group (see Tables 2 and 3 below for more detail). While (K), (I), and (F) showed this tendency very clearly in the poem "Crossing the Bar", (S) showed this tendency in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow". The remaining six L2 participants showed a systematic inclination to look for one interpretation across the three poems and only occasionally sought more than one interpretation. In dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar", (K), (I), (F), and, to a less extent, (S) considered more than one interpretation for a number of metaphorical expressions and at times sought even a wider range of interpretations. In dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar", (K), (I), (F), and, to a less extent, (S) considered more than one interpretation for a number of metaphorical expressions and at times sought even a wider range of interpretations. These participants did not seem to

generate a general interpretation of the poem right from the start and followed a rather bottom-up interpretative process, considering a variety of plausible interpretations for many metaphors. The second group of participants, including both integrative and holistic participants, showed a consistent tendency to seek single implicatures for the majority of the metaphors they identified. (W), (C), and (B) followed a bottom-up interpretative process, constructing an interpretation of the poem as they progressed through the poem and inferring single interpretations that fit in with the ongoing interpretations they were constructing. By contrast, (N), (H), and (M) inferred a general notion or central metaphor right from the start and used these general frames in a rather top-down fashion to interpret the metaphorical expressions they identified, hence inferring single implicatures that cohered with the general thematic or figurative frames they constructed.

Table 2

Number of implicatures relative to the number of metaphors identified by the L1 participants.

	Crossing the Bar		The motive for metaphor		Snow	
	Number of metaphors	Number of implicatures	Number of metaphors	Number of implicatures	Number of metaphors	Number of implicatures
(P)	16	34	14	28	9	18
(D)	17	42	13	19	7	11
(E)	14	21	9	12	8	14
(R)	7	8	9	14	6	6
(T)	9	16	11	16	3	6
(G)	7	12	12	14	8	11
(L)	12	17	7	7	6	6
(J)	6	4	5	7	5	6
(Y)	4	5	10	10	5	6
(A)	12	16	8	5	6	4
Total	104	175	98	132	63	88
Ratio of Implicatures to Metaphors	1.69		1.34		1.39	

Table 3

Number of implicatures relative to the number of metaphors identified by the L2 participants.

	Crossing the Bar		The motive for metaphor		Snow	
	Number of metaphors	Number of implicatures	Number of metaphors	Number of implicatures	Number of metaphors	Number of implicatures
(K)	6	20	8	14	7	11
(S)	9	13	11	18	10	18
(M)	9	13	8	9	7	11
(F)	6	12	8	13	10	13
(I)	4	11	8	12	8	11
(N)	10	11	13	15	5	6
(H)	9	10	5	5	9	12
(C)	7	9	5	8	6	8
(W)	7	8	9	9	10	10
(B)	8	10	7	10	9	10
Total	75	117	82	113	81	110
Ratio of Implicatures to Metaphors	1.58		1.37		1.35	

In interpreting the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow", (S) maintained the same tendency, thus considering a wide range of interpretations for some metaphorical expressions. (K), (I), and (F), showed fewer cases of multiple-implicature generation in the latter two poems, but still did so more than the other six participants. All other six participants maintained the same one-implicature generation process they used in interpreting the poem "Crossing the Bar", inferring single interpretations that could be integrated into their ongoing interpretation of the poem or any notions or central metaphors they identified.

The same implicature generation patterns can be noted with the L1 participants. Thus the participants (P), (D), (E), and (T), all integrative participants, showed a greater

tendency than the remaining six participants to infer more than one possible interpretation in at least one poem. Like the L2 participants, the L1 participants showed more cases of multiple implicature generation in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than in the other two poems.

Examining these integrative participants' online interpretative processes, three patterns emerged. The first pattern occurred when the participants did not manage to construct an overall interpretation of the poem at an early stage of the interpretation task and, therefore, followed a bottom-up interpretative process considering various interpretations for some challenging metaphors. The second pattern occurred when the participants inferred a central metaphor underlying the poem right from the start, thus interpreting the metaphorical expression they identified against this central metaphor, producing basically single interpretations. A third pattern emerged where the participants constructed a general idea or central metaphor at an early stage but still considered more than one plausible interpretation. This pattern was observed even when conventional metaphors were identified as such, especially in the poem "Crossing the Bar.

This finding contradicts the prediction stated in the "implicature generation hypothesis", which predicts that the participants will seek more interpretations for creative metaphors than for conventional metaphors. Although this finding seems rather surprising, it is consistent with a previous research study reported by Gibbs and Boers (2001), which found that college students inferred more meanings in a familiar poem by Frost than in a less familiar poem by 'Kumin', both at the level of general metaphorical theme and at the level of specific metaphorical interpretation. Commenting on the participants' reactions to their interpretations of the familiar metaphorical expressions, Gibbs and Boers (2001) state that "The fact that participants

gave higher ratings for whether they learned something new having read Frost's poem than they did for Kumin's poem suggests that reading poetry can still impart new messages for familiar life themes" (p.22).

In sum, this section has revealed that the L1 and L2 participants mostly sought single interpretations regardless of the metaphorical expressions and poems they dealt with. A minority of participants in both participant groups, all synthetic in orientation, showed some tendency to look for richer interpretations for some metaphors in all three poems. Unexpectedly, both the L1 and L2 participants inferred more implicatures in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than in both other poems, which contradicts the "implicature generation hypothesis" listed above predicting that the L1 and L2 participants will infer more implicatures for creative metaphors, mostly predominant in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" than for conventional metaphors dominating in the poem "Crossing the Bar". This finding suggests that the participants attend to conventional metaphors and may even be tempted to look for more than one plausible interpretation but are not as much willing to seek rich interpretations for creative metaphors which they find difficult to interpret.

Below I turn to illustrate the two implicature generation patterns with evidence from the L1 and L2 participants' think-aloud protocols.

4.3.1 Single metaphor implicature inferencing

This section illustrates the implicature generation process as demonstrated by participants in both participant groups, relating their implicature generation tendencies to their general interpretative processes. As mentioned earlier, the participants showed a general tendency to seek single interpretations, with the exception of a minority of synthetic participants in both groups, who sought more than one single interpretation in few cases. While both the holistic and most of the synthetic participants would stop at

the first implicature that fit their overall interpretation of the poem, some of the synthetic participants would seek more than one possible interpretation. Both the holistic participants and most of the synthetic participants seemed to provide single and immediate interpretations for those metaphors which they identified as conventional. With more creative metaphors, both the holistic and synthetic participants still sought single interpretations, but on few occasions, some of the synthetic participants sought more than one plausible interpretation. In this section, I focus on the process of single metaphor interpretation, while I turn to the process of multiple implicature generation in the next section

In the following example, (D) proposes an immediate interpretation for the expression "you like it under the trees in autumn because everything is half dead", stating "autumn is as a metaphor for the ageing of the person before the winter before they grow old and die". Likewise, he provides a direct interpretation in dealing with the expression "In the same way you were happy in spring", stating, "again by referring back to spring this refers to the outset of life (3 sec) like a happy child". The immediacy of the implicatures seems to derive from conventional associations relating autumn to old age and spring to life.

(A) interprets a number of metaphorical expressions in a direct way after she has identified a central metaphor in the poem "Crossing the Bar", providing short implicatures. Thus she states,

> oh that makes sense then so I interpret it as death so obviously he wants to say that they don't like others to see me when I am dying I am little bit confused here I am not sure what tide means but it's obviously about being borne towards (.) a kind of afterlife or some other kind of destination once he crosses this bar it suggests that there is an alternate destination there is also twilight and evening bell which may also be suggestive of old age twilight years coming to an end evening bell the last bell before death and after that the dark obviously he dies and the flood may bear me far which is obviously dependent on your life how you behaved in your life and Pilot I thought would be some kind of creator or deity figure some kind of divine figure so I hope to see my pilot face to face which can be interpreted as some kind

of God figure when I have crossed the bar lots and lots of references to death but obviously placed within an overall metaphor of a journey.

(E) finds it easy to propose immediate interpretations for a number of metaphorical expressions in the poem "Crossing the Bar". In commenting on the expression "sunset and evening star", He states,

> so I guess this is the evening of their life and there is no doubt it (.) it is a clear call it is (.) as he sails across the sea it is a clear sign for me it is a clear call he has been called by it this is something that is bigger than him it is not something passive

He also suggests a more or less definite interpretation for the expression "I hope to see my pilot face to face", stating,

> I hope to see my pilot face to face that means she (4 sec) Pilot face to face I don't think he is talking about a pilot (.) a normal pilot someone who is going to take the ship into a harbour I don't think he is talking about something like that I think the person is taking about something greater than that I guess he is talking about something supernatural something I think he is talking about God actually I hope to see my God face to face when I have crossed the bar that's how I take it that's how I interpret it

(L) shows a similar metaphor implicature generation pattern to that of (A). In fact she proposes single and immediate interpretations to a number of metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar". Commenting on the expression "sunset and evening star", she states,

> Well just being caught again by the first line sunset and evening star and I see that as a metaphor for the beginning and ending stages of life from the birth the sunset being a metaphor for the birth and the evening star being a metaphor for the end the beacon of life in sight

She shows the same patterns in interpreting the expression "When I put out to see", stating, "When I put to sea the sea is a metaphor for pushing out to sea I see that as a being a metaphor for heading towards the last stage of life death." She also comments on the expression "the tide as moving seems asleep", stating, "I see the tide as a metaphor for the pull towards death". Using the same central metaphor of a journey towards death, she interprets the expression "turns again home" in a rather direct way,

stating, "I see turns again home as not just returning home on this ship but there's a metaphor for returning to a state of not being a state of death, a state of rest"

(P) shows similar ease in interpreting some metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar". Thus he comments,

> Alfred Lord Tennyson ok crossing the bar seems to me to be a metaphor for death and thus the whole poem can be the various specific features of the poem can be interpreted according to this metaphorical scheme. Sunset and evening star and one clear call for me sunset becomes a metaphor for perhaps old age evening star seems to stand metaphorically for again this resists metaphorical reading to a degree you can't find a sort of allegorical schema we still have sense that it is just a journey out by sunset and night but also the evening star and one clear call for me they do invite reading as metaphors the call of God to the dying man the light of heaven which the dying man can see

Like the previous participants, (R) provides immediate and single interpretations for a number of expressions in the poem "Crossing the Bar". He comments on the expression "twilight and evening bell", stating, "Twilight and evening bell and after that the dark and may there be no sadness of farewell When I embark. So As I have said I can see that he is possibly dies dying maybe". He comments equally easily on the expression "and after that the dark", stating "I suppose that is working the tone you know it sounds (5 sec) after that the dark. It is because ehhhh (3 sec) a finality to::: (3 sec) makes me think about death there is not gonna be a sunrise it is the end of it".

The ease with which (A), (E), (P), (L), and (R) derive single implicatures for the above metaphors can be accounted for in terms of the conceptual metaphors they have identified when dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar".

The same strategy has been demonstrated by some Tunisian L2 participants, and especially when a central metaphor or general idea is thought to underline the whole poem. For example, (H) provides implicatures for a number of metaphorical expressions in the poem "Crossing the Bar", which all revolve around the notion of death. In dealing with the expression "and one clear call for me", she states, "Turns

again home twilight and evening bell so twilight and evening bell here can be

metaphorical and it echoes the call in line two so we have the call and evening bell

maybe it is a call for the end of life and the beginning of new life in death".

She also proposes an immediate interpretation for the metaphorical expression

"when I have crossed the bar", stating,

> When I have crossed the bar so crossed the bar so here there is the achievement of
> the journey from life to death I have crossed the bar (4 sec) crossed it may have a
> religious connotation the crucifixion so Christ and that can fall to the same realm of
> spiritual as I said renewal we have pilot we have crossed so star light light in death
> not light in present light

(N) shows a similar interpretative pattern in relation to the metaphor "Crossing the

Bar", particularly after she has decided on an overall interpretation of the whole poem.

Thus she comments on the expression "When I have crossed the bar", stating,

> When I have crossed the bar when I cross this this to to the other world (.) the bar
> then crossed the bar (5 sec) I am just trying to understand what is meant by the bar
> not the literal meaning but the metaphorical meaning symbolic so maybe it is life so
> what it is separating the speaker from his from Jesus Christ or from God is life so
> life is like an obstacle (.) so and we have to to I think we need to really die to live
> you have to live this world this life in order to live the other life so I think that's the
> bar that's the thing that we have to cross this this life

(W) provides mostly single interpretations for most metaphors in the poem "Snow",

as she keeps referring to a general idea which she takes to underlie the whole poem. In

dealing with the expression "The room was suddenly rich ", she comments, "the room

might be stand might stand for Ireland the room was suddenly rich and the the rich

cultural heritage of Ireland might be could be."

She shows the same tendency in dealing with the expression "There is more than

glass between the snow and huge roses", stating,

> The fire flames with a bubbling sound for world is more spiteful and gay than one
> supposes on the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands there is
> more than glass between the snow and the huge roses and he said by the end of the
> poem that there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses probably
> ehhh the snow would stand for ehhh (4 sec) would stand for::: all that is not Irish

that does not belong to Ireland and huge roses probably it stands for for Ireland his hometown

(C) comments on a set of metaphors in a rather automatic way in dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar." His interpretation is based a general idea he constructs for the whole poem. Thus he states,

> The flood may bear me far the flood so here the the key the key notion is the key concept water so the poem starts from sunset and evening star and when I have crossed the bar . so there may be so here we can draw an implicit analogy between this ehhh (5 sec) this predominant concept of water and real life which is the beginning of life the birth ehhh (3 sec) I mean embryonic life of the baby before the baby was borne (4 sec)

He uses the general notion he has inferred in interpreting the poem "Crossing the Bar", to interpret the expression "and the flood may bear me far". Thus he states,

> Evening bell and after that the dark and may there be no sadness of farewell when I embark and may there be no sadness of farewell when I embark for tho' from out our bourne of time and place the flood may bear me far the . the flood may bear me far the the our bourne of time and place emmmm it is:::: birth time and place emmm

Like the previous participants, (M) shows the same interpretative tendency when dealing with some metaphors in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", where she brings a medical schema to bear on the whole text. In interpreting the expression "The hammer of red and blue", she states,

> Then the ruddy temper the hammer . of red and blue the hard the ruddy temper the hammer hammer here I think is related to the heart beat . ehhh the ruddy temper . don't know the red and blue the red and blue maybe the veins in the body they are red and blue

She proposes an immediate interpretation for the metaphorical expression "the vital arrogant fatal dominant x", using the same medical notion she has used earlier. Hence she states,

> the vital arrogant fatal dominant X the vital is vital because as I said earlier in the each chromosomes of the male and the female we find the X gene the X chromosome it is vital (.) without it there would be no there is no such thing as . the::: human race it is arrogant because it's present always present it shifts itself it is

fatal fatal in a ways because some chromosomes they have DNA they have illnesses in them and it is dominant because it is always present.

Single metaphor implicature generation was the main metaphor interpretation tendency of the participants in both groups. Nevertheless, a minority of the synthetic participants in both groups of the participants showed an inclination to seek more than one possible interpretation for some metaphors. I take up this point in the section below.

4.3.2 Multiple implicature generation

In this section I focus on the implicature elaboration process as evidenced by a small group of L1 and L2 synthetic participants. This processing tendency was undertaken when the reader did not seem satisfied with the interpretation he or she first inferred, thus processing further textual information to elaborate his or her initial interpretations. Refocusing on metaphors helped the participants to infer more implicatures, though not always. It did also help the readers shift from literal readings to figurative interpretations, or to elaborate on previously inferred implicatures. While not all synthetic participants inferred rich implicatures when interpreting metaphors, the participants deriving the highest number of implicatures feature all among the synthetic participants. This finding suggests that sustained cognitive effort invested on the integration of information and interpretation of metaphors against each other provides a better chance for the readers to unearth richer meanings for metaphorical expressions.

In what follows, I illustrate the aforementioned implicature generation pattern with examples from the L1 and L2 participants' processes. In the following examples, (K) provides single and short inferences which can basically be seen as topic statements of the metaphor vehicle. (K) infers a first implicature for the metaphorical expression "the flood may bear me far". Thus she suggests,

for tho' from out our bourne of time and place the flood may bear me far I hope to see my pilot face to face when I have crossed the bar (15 sec) the flood here can stand for a problem maybe may bear me far or separation or anger (7 sec)

On a second occasion, (K) states,

the flood the flood is it is an aid to the speaker in his journey or is it ehhh I mean a foe here or:::. it sounds kind of negative word in this context (.) the fact that the flood is taking him away I mean it is not a pleasant thing to do the flood may bear me far the (.) it can stand for something that is overwhelming him as I said a problem he is facing a problem or fear which he cannot overcome or find a solution (5 sec) a bit confusing because he is eager to start on his journey.

In treating the word "snow" as a metaphor, (K) again shows a tendency to provide short and single interpretations which can be seen as topic statements. Initially, she suggests that "the title of the poem is snow it can have::: many ehhh meanings snow can stand for coldness it can stand for death it can stand for purity". Later she elaborates on her interpretation of the word "Snow" by inferring a further implicature. Thus she states,

World is suddener than we fancy it (.) world is crazier (10 sec) here the speaker also means that not only the moments of joy that are short because if we take snow to refer to the dark or hard moments of life then they don't also last for ever because snow melts quickly (.) perhaps this is what the speaker means.

(S) infers the following implicature as she attends to the metaphorical expression "the abc of being". She states, "desiring the exhilarations of changes the motive for metaphor shrinking from the weight of primary noon the abc of being the abc of being is the beginning of life experience or whatever … or::: what we take for granted".

On a second occasion, as she develops an overall interpretation of the poem, she infers another implicature for the metaphor, which coheres with the ongoing interpretation of the poem. She states, "Shrinking from the weight of primary noon the abc of being it is from the beginning of one's life he starts to find the meaning this motive is natural so a human attribute".

(M) infers one implicature as she initially deals with the expression "there is more

than glass between the snow and the huge roses",

> I think there is a call for the opening of the mind and not only see what the eye sees
> to go beyond what the::: what is (.) what we can see and to interpret it in a different
> way (.) it's here when she or he says the glass between the snow and huge we sorry
> there is more there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses (.) there
> is more to life maybe between the snow and the huge roses between what we see
> what we think.

As she refocuses on the metaphorical expression against the notion of "race

differences" she later infers, she infers a different implicature. Thus she states,

> so by saying there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses that may
> be could be a reference to races co-coexistence races can co-exist despite apparent
> barriers. Barriers are really thin and breakable

(F) addresses the metaphorical expression "and the fire flames with a bubbling

sound" twice. On the first encounter with the metaphorical expression, (F) considers a

metonymic interpretation, a literal reading and then a metaphorical interpretation. Thus

she proposes the following interpretation, stating, "the fire flames this is of course is a

metaphor but it can be it can go in all directions possible the fire flames can stand for

the rise of sunshine or for itself perhaps the emotions when there are like passion fire

flames with a bubbling sound."

As she progresses through the poem, (F) deals with the metaphorical expression

again, this time proposing a different implicature,

> it can be about knowledge or wisdom … our experience of the fire flames becomes
> happy at the end of the day so wisdom I believe the fire flames here in this couple of
> lines stands for wisdom and knowledge we stop bubbling we start as non wise human
> beings and then we acquire knowledge

(I) refocuses on the metaphorical expression "I hope to see my pilot face to face"

twice. Initially, he considers an implicature denoting physical referents. He states, "Can

we construct aim of the ship as pilot crossing the bar perhaps someone else I don't

know another person another person or another entity it could be the land home". He

later considers a different interpretation inferring a number of implicatures:

> we think of embark and we think of it as death it could be and we think of pilot as
> post-natal so that it denotes a reunderstanding understanding understanding of the
> past life and that understanding generates the fact that to see the pilot face to face it
> means to discover the true essence of our one's life face to face

(W) infers an implicature for the metaphorical expression " The obscure moon

lighting an obscure world", which is based on the concept of classical poets which she

brings to bear on the text. She states,

> The obscure moon lighting an obscure world the classical poets by by:::: (4 sec) not
> classical not classical the poets those at least those who who:::: who just use the
> the::: don't use creative metaphors are usually they are obscure and lighting an
> already obscure world so there is no real invention in that ehhh

> On a second occasion, (W) infers a more elaborate implicature, evoking a

philosophical account of the relationship between language and reality,

> The very moment we start to to write those experiences to write them down the very
> specificity of those experiences although they are very simple experiences the very
> specificity of them escapes us and I think this is what the poet refers to when he
> says the obscure moon lighting an obscure world it is the literal language which
> obscures the very experience the poet tries to::: tries to express although he
> manages to express it I mean he manages to express only part of it he cannot
> express all of it (.) and this is the very dilemma that language usually poses to us
> and so we refer to metaphors as a way of trying to grasp the specificity of those
> experiences but but usually our efforts are fruitless.

> Like the L2 participants, the L1 participants have shown cases of metaphor

interpretation where they elaborate on their initial interpretations. In the following

example, (D) proposes an initial implicature for the metaphorical expression "the

obscure moon lighting an obscure world". (D)'s attempt at metaphor interpretation

shows a clear process of analogical thinking. Thus he states,

> of things that never be quite expressed seems to be an overwriting of the concept of
> creating poetry how do you express something which is always just on the tip of
> your tongue or always at the corner of your eye how do you articulate a sense which

in essence will always be inarticulate or prearticulate how do you express something inexpressible the thing itself the meaning itself the message itself you look for such a thing in poetry (4 sec) will never be (.) rather it will be a collusion of metaphors a collection of (.) half colours and quarter things

He later elaborates on his first interpretation, stating, "Well the moon is something which illuminates which casts light on things (4 sec) my interpretation is that metaphors illuminates poetry (.) so we have the obscure world of the poem the obscure moon the image or the metaphor my interpretation refers to."

(D) infers an implicature for the expression "The hard sound steel against intimation". He states, "this is literally the poet at the point of composition as he crafts or kind of sculpts, hard sounds against the flesh, the very real human aspect of writing poetry." He elaborates on his initial interpretation as he deals with the same expressions again. Thus he states,

> you kind of steel yourself against intimation kind of the poet's own internal sensor or editor the poet's awareness of the artifice or even the fraudulence of his own craft the poet's awareness of the things which he writes which are abstractions or intentionally confused or confusing.

(D) derives a final interpretation as he interprets the metaphor in relation to other metaphors. He states,

> Drawing a line on sharp flesh hammering steel (3 sec) craftsmanship (.) quite a physical exercise almost kind of violent whereas flesh is soft and vulnerable (.) a relationship between the human element of poetry and the technical element of poetry (3 sec) the material which would be moulded or sculpted remoulded or resculpted (.) battered into shape by the hard sound (.) the hard flesh thinking of the human and technical aspects.

(G) shows a similar processing tendency in dealing with the metaphorical expression "When I have crossed the bar". Initially she states,

> It's the threshold again it links into the idea of time and there being a point in the evening or something a point where something comes to that is then crossed he's reached this point where he's crossing into a new zone in his life the twilight's a new zone in the day in his life in the water

On a subsequent encounter, she states,

Ok I think crossing the bar as a notion as a metaphor as a concept is about entering new territories going into something new so he's crossing the threshold into something new something unknown em I guess that's kind of part of life as a wider concept yes yep that's what I think

(E) proposes an initial interpretation for the metaphorical expression "The obscure moon lighting an obscure world". He states,

The use of the obscure moon the obscure world this is (.) he is using metaphor to understand something but I am not sure about he is trying to understand … he is using metaphor as a method of enquiry I think (.) yes the motive for metaphor as a method of enquiry in order to help understand a concept or a process by equating one thing with another or to illuminate that concept or process that's why that's the motive for metaphor (5 sec) so the essential motive for metaphor is didactic is a part of a learning process that's the motive for metaphor (8 sec) metaphor helps to explain (.) that's the motive.

He elaborates on the same metaphorical expression on a subsequent encounter, stating,

So (4 sec) metaphor it is a moon (3 sec) it gives light of some kind so it is lighting an obscure world so metaphors are never perfect perfect metaphor and interpret a metaphor in different ways so this the moon is a metaphor but it can be interpreted in different ways so it is not perfect there is no definitive interpretation there can be more than one interpretation for metaphor and that's part of the strength of metaphor

He concludes by inferring another implicature, stating,

lightening an obscure world so (.) metaphors try to explain something using language to explain something that is perhaps usually not in itself linguistic using something to explain our physical phenomenon or an emotion you are not using language to explain language itself you are using one medium to explain one different medium.

(L) proposes an initial implicature for the expression "I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various."

I peel and portion a tangerine I'm thinking of the tangerine as being a metaphor for the world for the life that the narrator has suddenly noticed the spitting of the pips is a metaphor for interpreting the world, for taking it in and spitting it out, the narrator is seeing the pips the act of spitting them as being a metaphor for trying to interact with the world is a metaphor for just the processing of the things around.

She proposes a different interpretation on a subsequent occasion,

> I see the peeling of the tangerine as being a metaphor for the peeling and portioning of those metaphors the way the mind is trying to section the world to interpret it the drunkenness of things I don't immediately see it as a literal drunkenness I see it as a being a metaphor for I'm thinking of the things associated with drunkenness with the room spinning perhaps sensations blurring into one another I'm seeing the drunkenness as being as a way the voice of the poem is taking in the things around, the things that are suddenly rich and suddenly noticed perhaps blurring into one another so the drunkenness is the experience of trying to take them in of being drunk with these things perhaps.

(P) comments on the metaphorical expression "the drunkenness of things being various" as he deals with the poem "Snow". He states,

> Seems for me a metaphor for the unpredictability which is in turn is a way of talking about our inability to predict re-experience this unknowability of the world in terms of the drunkenness of things rather than our inadequacy perhaps the drunkenness of things drunkenness of things ..it is also a metaphor perhaps for . our sense of alienation from a world that makes us seem well I got that it is the same point drunkenness of things being various this could be various forms of drunkenness of things not only of things imperfectly knowable by us and unpredictable to us but also in different ways from each other to us

He later elaborates on the same expression, hence stating,

> That kind of game encourages us to see the drunkenness of things being as the drunkenness of things being various that is the form the form that drunkenness take is that of being various which goes back to the incorrigibly plural which then becomes a metaphor for the different ways things can appear to us in different moments at different times the metaphors seems works interestingly if we think about is because it is attributing drunkenness to things to the world but it actually conveys that sense of our own drunkenness or our own (.) our sense of confusion and inability to make things cohere ok.

(R) deals twice with the metaphorical expression "the obscure moon lighting an obscure world". Initially he sates,

> The obscure moon seems to be a metaphor as well for not for a metaphor again but this terms seems to be that he is decided (.) he realizes he is being too obscure but it is not just slightly brighter or melting cloud what am I saying half colours of quarters things he is realizing he is too vague so that's metaphor vague metaphors maybe

Later he elaborates on this metaphorical expression, by stating,

> The obscure moon lighting an obscure world of things that would never be quite expressed (4 sec) makes me think (3 sec) obscure world makes me think that everyone always talks in metaphor no one actually says what he feel or what he think

(T) comments on the expression "I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various" in the poem "Snow", stating,

> I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various so the tangerine becomes a metaphor for the plurality of the world and he talks about the plurality and then he peels and portions (.) and spits the pips and feels the drunkenness of things being various (5 sec) so it is quite a complex metaphor there the tangerine represents the multiple facets of the world that he can peel it and portion it.

He elaborates on his initial implicature, stating,

> Just a couple of more things to say about Macneice I really mentioned the tangerine but I want to add something to the metaphor used there (.) the tangerine I am just adding an element to that that occurred to me kind of the idea of the tangerine has a sphere like the world he peel back the layers and separate the parts and dissect it like he is doing this shows things being various that plurality just reinforcing that central metaphor.

Generally, refocusing on metaphors more than once resulted in the inferencing of more implicatures, though not always. Refocusing allowed the participant to reconsider metaphorical expression in the light of new assumptions constructed from different parts of the text, including implicatures derived for other metaphorical expressions. It also helped the participants refine metaphorical implicatures against each other, thus producing more coherent interpretations. In some cases, however, refocusing only resulted in the elaboration of implicatures initially inferred rather than in the inferencing of different implicatures or in the strengthening of previously inferred implicatures.

The findings suggest that the participants have a better chance of inferring more implicatures for metaphorical expressions they choose to expend more effort on. However, the findings also show that only a minority of synthetic participants were

motivated to seek richer interpretations for metaphors, while the majority of the participants were content with the first implicature they could derive. This finding questions the "implicature generation hypothesis" stated above, which predicts that the participants will seek multiple interpretations for creative metaphors, mostly located in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow", and be content with single interpretations for conventional metaphors, mostly dominant in the poem "Crossing the Bar". Thus the findings challenge the applicability of the relevance theory cognitive principle of relevance to poetic metaphor interpretation as the participants did not seem motivated to maximize the cognitive effects that can potentially be derived from creative metaphors.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that participants in both language groups shared the same general metaphor processing strategies but differed at an individual level. Regarding metaphor processing strategies, two tendencies have been observed across both participant groups. The first tendency consisted of constructing a general idea or central metaphor, against which local metaphors were identified and interpreted. The second processing tendency was rather bottom-up in orientation and consisted of integrating contextual assumptions from different parts of the text and interpreting metaphors against each other. The majority of the participants in both groups used both strategies in parallel. I referred to this group as the synthetic participants. By contrast, a small minority in both language groups relied on the top-down processing mode almost exclusively, making little integrative effort. This group I referred to as the holistic participants.

This finding suggests that the participants systematically refer to the wider context in making sense of metaphorical expressions, going beyond the immediate boundaries

of the metaphorical expressions. Thus the findings lend credence to the communicative principle of relevance as formulated within the relevance theory framework. In fact, the findings suggest that the participants take metaphors as contributing to the construction of an overall poetic message and is, therefore, to be interpreted as communicating an overall message rather than to be treated as a marginal decorative tool. However, the participants followed different paths in realizing the communicative potential of metaphors. These findings inform question number three stated above, which is concerned with the scope of interpretive context the participants are willing to cover in interpreting poetic metaphors. The findings also give strong support to the "discourse processing hypothesis", predicting that participants will interpret metaphors beyond the immediate boundaries of the metaphorical expression.

Investigation of the L1 and L2 participants' implicature generation patterns shows that the participants were mostly inclined to seek single interpretations in the three poems, though they did look for more than one interpretation at times. Thus the participants mostly provided single and short implicatures for some metaphors in a rather automatic way while on few occasions they refocused on some metaphorical expressions, providing a wider range of interpretations. This tendency was demonstrated by most participants in both groups, both holistic and synthetic. However, a small synthetic group in both groups showed a tendency to adjust their cognitive interpretative effort depending on the metaphorical expressions they identified. Thus, this subset of synthetic participants would produce single interpretations for metaphorical expressions for which they could presumably activate conventional associations or which could easily cohere with a central metaphor or main idea they identified. On the other hand, they would consider a wider range of implicatures for more challenging metaphorical expressions they found difficult to interpret. However,

these participants still considered alternative interpretations for some metaphors they identified as conventional, presumably because they were not totally satisfied with their initial interpretations or because the metaphors were open to more than one possible conventional interpretation. These findings contradict the "implicature generation hypothesis", which predicts that readers will be motivated to seek rich interpretations, especially for creative metaphors, thus questioning the applicability of the cognitive principle of relevance as applied to poetic metaphor interpretation. The findings give some support to the "cognitive effort hypothesis", predicting that the participants will seek to maximize cognitive effects for those metaphors they cannot provide immediate interpretations for and would attain more interpretations for those metaphors they expend more effort on. In fact, although the participants did not always attain more implicatures by refocusing on metaphor, expending more effort on the metaphor interpretation task offered the participants better chances to infer rich metaphorical interpretations.

Chapter Five

Major Differences between the

L1 and L2 metaphor interpretation processes

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on the metaphor processing differences observed between the L1 and L2 participants. While the L1 and L2 participants have shown some common tendencies in processing metaphors and in inferring implicatures, some differences have also been noted between both groups of readers. Processing differences have been noted in connection with the metaphor identification phase, the metaphor interpretation stages the L1 and L2 participants moved through, types of contextual assumptions the participants in both groups mostly relied on, the processing effort the L1 and L2 participants expended on conventional and creative metaphors, the number of implicatures the L1 and L2 participants inferred and the degree of convergence observed across both groups of participants in connection with conventional and creative metaphors. A major factor underlying these different aspects of distinction relates to the L1 participants' superior knowledge of and activation of underlying conceptual metaphors and conventional associations, which rendered their interpretation of certain poetic metaphors, namely conventional ones, more efficient and more plausible than those of the L2 participants. The findings in this section help to inform question number two above, which is concerned with the extent to which the readers in both groups interpret metaphorical expressions directly or move through an initial literal processing stage. The findings also serve to verify the one-stage processing hypothesis, predicting that readers would attend to metaphorical expressions in a direct way rather than consider a literal interpretation first.

5.2 Metaphor identification

In this section I present and discuss the main findings relating to the L1 and L2 participants' metaphor identification products. By focussing on metaphor identification I mean to determine the extent to which the participants adopt a figurative interpretation approach to poetic texts, which vary in their degree of metaphor creativity, and to establish whether the L1 and L2 readers identify the same metaphors in dealing with creative and conventional metaphors (See chapter three, section, 3.5.3, above for an account of the metaphorical potential of the three poems used in this study). Thus this section is meant to answer questions 2 and 3 stated above, which are concerned with conventional and creative metaphor identification and differences between the L1 and L2 participants with respect to the identification of creative and conventional metaphors. I also aim to verify the metaphor identification hypothesis stated above, which predicts that the L1 and L2 participants will identify more metaphors in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" than in the poem "Crossing the Bar" on account of the preponderance of creative metaphors in the former two poems. the hypothesis also predicts that the L1 participants will identify fewer metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants, while no difference between the L1 and L2 participants is anticipated for the identification of creative metaphors in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and Snow"

Overall, the findings show that the L1 participants adopt a greater metaphorical approach to the interpretation of poetic texts than the L2 participants. This is reflected by the total number of metaphors identified in the three poems (See table 4 below). Differences can, however, be noted between the L1 and L2 participants. In fact, the L1 participants identified more metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" and the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" than the L2 participants while the L2 participants identified

more metaphors in the poem "Snow" than the L1 participants. The difference in

metaphor identification between the L1 and L2 participants is found to be statistically

significant as shown by the Chi-square test in table 4 below. Using *df=2,* a value of

5,991 is required for significance with p<0.05. The obtained value (X2 =6,942) is

higher than the critical value (5,991). Hence we reject the null hypothesis that metaphor

identification does not depend on the reader's background.

Table 4

 Significance test on metaphor identification across the L1 and L2 participants.

	Crossing the Bar	The Motive for metaphor	Snow	Total
L1 participants	104	98	63	265
L2 participants	75	82	81	238
Total	179	180	144	503

X2=6,942   df= (3-1)*(2-1)= 2x1=2   6,942>5.991 at the level of 0,05

Tables 5 and 6 below provide detailed descriptions of the number of metaphors

identified by the L1 and L2 participants in the three poems

Table 5

Number of metaphors identified by the L1 participants.

	Crossing the Bar	The motive for metaphors	Snow	Total
(P)	16	14	9	39
(D)	18	13	7	38
(E)	14	9	8	31
(R)	7	9	6	22
(T)	9	11	3	23
(G)	7	12	8	27
(L)	12	7	6	25
(J)	6	5	5	14
(Y)	4	10	5	19
(A)	12	8	6	26
Total	105	98	63	264
Mean	10.5	9.8	6.3	26.4

Table 6

Number of metaphors identified by the L2 participants.

	Crossing the Bar	**The Motive for metaphor**	**Snow**	**Total**
(K)	6	8	7	21
(S)	9	11	10	30
(M)	9	8	7	24
(F)	6	8	10	24
(I)	4	8	8	20
(N)	10	13	5	28
(H)	9	5	9	23
(C)	7	5	6	18
(W)	7	9	10	26
(W)	8	7	9	24
Total	75	82	81	238
Mean	7.5	8.2	8.1	23.8

These findings suggest that both the L1 and L2 participants are inclined to adopt a metaphorical approach when reading poetry. However, the results also reveal surprising results, particularly for the L1 readers. As has been revealed earlier, the L1 participants seemed to identify conventional conceptual metaphors, which might have brought some conventional metaphors to the foreground. Given their superior knowledge of these conventional conceptual metaphors, the L1 participants attended to more conventional metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants. This finding suggests that while conventional metaphors may go unnoticed for native speakers in non-literary discourse, as has been proposed by previous research studies (Gibbs, 1994), they are likely to be noticed and attended to in poetic texts. In other words, readers seem not to take any expressions for granted while reading poetry, however familiar they seem to be, and are inclined to re-examine them in the new poetic context in which they are encountered. Similar attendance to conventional metaphors was reported by a study conducted by Gibbs and Boers (2001), in which L1 college participants attended to more metaphorical expressions in a familiar poem by Frost than

in a less familiar poem by Kumin. By contrast, the L2 participants identified fewer metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than in the other two poems. This finding cannot, however, be explained by the fact that the L2 participants ignored the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" because they were conventional and so transparent. As has been revealed earlier, only three L2 participants identified the conventional metaphors while the remaining L2 participants dealt with the metaphors as creative. This might then have prevented them from noting conventional metaphors. This finding contradicts the "metaphor identification hypothesis" as far as conventional metaphor identification is concerned and helps to answer questions two and three above.

The results are also inconclusive in relation to the L1 and L2 participants' identification of creative metaphors. While it was expected that the L1 participants would identify a comparable number of metaphorical expressions to those identified by the L2 participants in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow", in which many expressions can potentially be identified as creative metaphors, the results show that the L1 participants identified more metaphors than the L2 participants only in relation to the poem "The motive for Metaphor" while the L2 participants attended to more metaphorical expressions than the L1 participants in the poem "Snow". These metaphor identification patterns are illustrated by Figure 5 below.

Figure 5

Metaphor identification patterns by the L1 and L2 participants
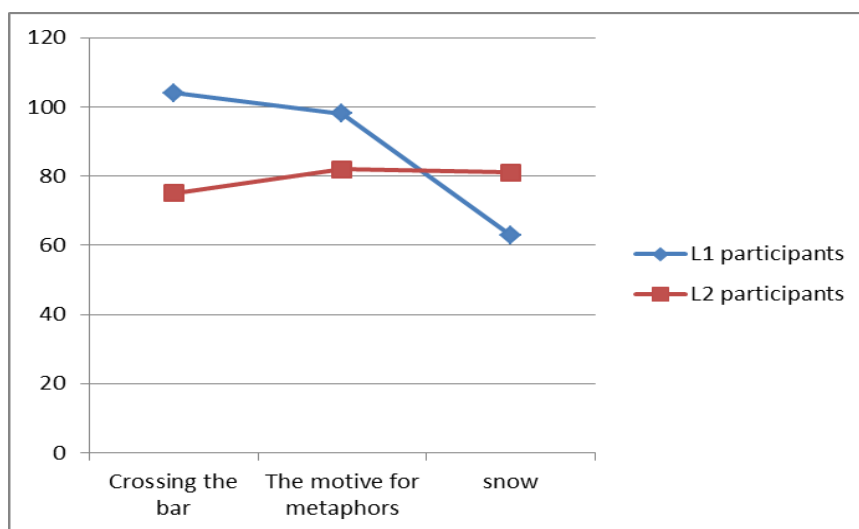
The figure shows that the L1 participants identified more metaphors in the poems "Crossing the Bar" and "The Motive for Metaphor" than for the poem "Snow". In contrast, the L2 participants attended to similar numbers of metaphors across the three poems. While the L1 participants attended to more metaphors in the poems "Crossing the Bar" and "The Motive for Metaphor" than the L2 participants, the L2 participants attended to more metaphors than the L1 participants in the poem "Snow". Examining the L1 and L2 participants' metaphor processing tendencies, it can be observed that the L1 participants attended to more metaphors than the L2 participants when these were either explicitly stated or could be easily traced to underlying conventional conceptual metaphors. However, when dealing with implicit creative metaphors, the L1 participants showed a tendency to attend to fewer metaphors than the L2 participants, subsuming a number of expressions under one super-ordinate vehicle. In contrast, the L2 participants maintained the same tendency of attending to discrete metaphorical expressions, regardless of metaphor creativity or explicitness.

Overall the results suggest that the L1 participants are inclined to engage in a more thorough metaphorical reading of poetic texts than the L2 participants, as shown by

their significantly higher number of identified metaphorical expressions in the poems "Crossing the Bar" and "The Motive for Metaphor". Their superior knowledge of the conventional conceptual metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" might have provided them with additional resources to target more metaphorical expressions than the L2 participants. By contrast, the participants' metaphor identification findings in relation to the poem "Snow" suggest that the L1 participants may be less inclined than the L2 participants to read a poem metaphorically when no explicit clues compelling a metaphorical interpretation are available.

In the following section, I focus more closely on the interpretative processes used by both groups of participants in dealing with the metaphorical expressions they identified.

5.3 Metaphor interpretation stages

This section focuses on the metaphor interpretation stages participants in the L1 and L2 groups seemed to go through. This analysis is meant to establish the extent to which the readers are efficient in identifying and interpreting metaphorical expressions and whether the L1 participants have an advantage over the L2 participants in interpreting metaphorical expressions. The findings show that while the L1 and L2 participants followed a one-stage interpretative process on the whole, the L2 participants showed significantly more cases of a literal processing stage. Thus, the L1 participants showed 26 cases of a one-stage interpretative process and only four cases of a two-stage interpretative process. By contrast, the L2 participants showed 17 cases of a one-stage interpretative process and 13 cases of a two-stage interpretative process. Tables 7 and 8 below provide a classification of the general interpretation dispositions of the participants in relation to the three poems.

Table 7

General processing patterns of the L1 participants in the three poems

	One-stage processing	Two-stage processing
(P)	C.B; M.M; Sn	
(D)	C.B; M.M; Sn	
(E)	C.B; M.M; Sn	
(R)	C.B; M.M; Sn	
(T)	M.M; Sn	C.B
(G)	C.B; M.M; Sn	
(L)	C.B; M.M	Sn
(J)	M.M; Sn	C.B
(Y)	M.M; Sn	C.B
(A)	C.B; M.M; Sn	
Total	26	4

C.B: Crossing the Bar; M.M: The Motive for Metaphor; Sn: Snow

Table 8

General processing patterns of the L2 participants in the three poems

	One-stage processing	Two-stage processing
(K)	M.M; Sn	C.B
(S)	M.M	C.B; Sn
(M)	M.M	C.B; Sn
(F)		C.B; M.M; Sn
(I)	M.M; Sn	C.B
(N)	C.B; M.M; Sn	
(H)	C.B; M.M; Sn	
(C)	M.M; Sn	C.B
(W)	M.M; Sn	C.B
(W)		C.B; M.M; Sn
Total	17	13

C.B: Crossing the Bar; M.M: The Motive for Metaphor; Sn: Snow

The difference between both groups was particularly noticed in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar", where seven L2 participants seemed to go through an initial literal interpretative stage before shifting to a metaphorical processing stage compared to three L1 participants showing the same strategy in the same poem.

This finding is rather surprising as the poem seems to involve more conventional metaphors than both other poems and would, therefore, be expected to be more immediately amenable to a metaphorical interpretation than both other poems. A possible explanation is that the L2 participants still hesitate in dealing with

conventional metaphors lacking explicit clues. Although the poem "Crossing the Bar" can potentially be traced to underlying conventional conceptual metaphors, namely DEATH AS A JOURNEY and LIFETIME AS A DAY, the poem provides few if any explicit clues compelling a metaphorical interpretation (see section 3.5.3, Chapter Three, above for a description of the poems used in this study), which might, therefore, have rendered some potential metaphors less immediately available to some participants. This finding suggests that the L2 participants, and to a much less extent the L1 participants, may not be able to identify conventional poetic metaphors readily when these are not explicitly stated. In fact, closer examination of the participants' interpretation products in the poem "Crossing the Bar" shows that the students who demonstrated the highest cases of a literal interpretative stage in both groups, namely (F) (10 instances), (M)(10 instances) (W) (7 instances), (I) (6 instances) in the L2 participant group; and (J) (8 instances), and (D) (7 instances) in the L1 participant group (see tables 9 and 10 below), were among those who did not identify any of the conventional metaphors underlying the poem "Crossing the Bar", or who spent some length of time processing the poem before inferring any of the conventional metaphors.

In addition, the L2 participants showed relatively more cases of a general two-stage processing mode in relation to the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" than the L1 participants, which again suggests that they are less efficient than the L1 participants in identifying and interpreting creative metaphors. It can be noted that the L2 participants showed more cases of a two-stage interpretative process in relation to the poem "Snow" than the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", which again suggests that the L2 participants are less efficient in the identification of creative metaphors when these are not explicitly stated. Tables 9 and 10 below provide detailed description of the participants' two-stage metaphor interpretation cases across the three poems.

Table 9

Literal processing cases by the L2 participants

	Crossing the bar	**Motive for metaphor**	**Snow**	**Total**
(K)	5	1	0	6
(S)	4	1	1	6
(M)	10	2	3	15
(F)	10	8	7	25
(I)	6	1	0	7
(N)	2	0	0	2
(H)	0	0	0	0
(C)	5	2	1	8
(W)	3	0	0	3
(W)	7	7	4	18
Total	62	22	16	100

Table 10

Literal processing cases by the L1 participants

	Crossing the bar	**Motive for metaphor**	**Snow**	**Total**
(P)	3	1	0	4
(D)	7	0	1	8
(E)	1	0	0	1
(R)	1	2	2	5
(T)	5	0	0	5
(G)	4	1	0	5
(L)	0	0	1	1
(J)	8	2	3	13
(Y)	4	0	1	5
(A)	4	1	0	5
Total	35	7	8	50

On the whole the evidence provides a strong though inconclusive support to the "one-stage processing hypothesis" listed above, which predicts that participants will identify and interpret metaphors readily without moving through an initial literal interpretative phase. While this statement holds true for the L1 readers, it does not seem to be applicable to the L2 readers as evidenced by the present findings. These findings

are consistent with Gibbs' (1994, pp.99-106), Steen's (1994, p.138), and Picken's (2007, p.78) studies in so far as the L1 participants are concerned but pose some challenge to the L2 readers' metaphor identification and interpretation efficiency.

Below I illustrate both processing tendencies in connection with the three poems and the participants' general interpretative styles.

5.3.1 The one-stage processing mode

The L1 participants all showed a general one-stage interpretative process in at least two poems, with the exception of (J), (Y), and (T), who showed a general two-stage interpretative process in dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar", and (L), who followed a two-stage interpretative process in dealing with the poem "Snow". The following verbalizations provide instances of the one-stage interpretative process as used by participants in both groups. In the following example, (E) rules out a literal interpretation as he attends to the expression "I hope to see my pilot face to face". Thus he states,

> I hope to see my pilot face to face that means she (.) Pilot face to face I don't think he is talking about a pilot (.) a normal pilot someone who is going to take the ship into a harbour I don't think he is talking about something like that I think the person is taking about something greater than that I guess he is talking about something supernatural something (4 sec) I think he is talking about God.

(A) follows a one-stage interpretative process throughout in interpreting the poem "Crossing the Bar". In the following extract, she interprets a number of expressions, namely "when I embark", "put out to sea", and "I hope to see my pilot face to face".

> When I embark is very indicative of the same line and line four when I put out to sea it is quite relevant to that one (4 sec) I actually try to see a connection with line four they come similar it is almost similar the beginning and the end so he says when I put out to sea line four and when I embark which is about six or seven lines time and when I have crossed the bar so it is almost like the poem is infiltrated with his thoughts about his personal death so when I embark is suggestive not of a nautical journey but of death as a journey. Pilot face to face has a meaning of divinity so the pilot is not representative of someone steering the ship but the ship is also a metaphor for life.

(L) identifies the expression "The obscure moon lighting an obscure world" as metaphorical and comments on it as follows,

> I see the obscure moon as again as a metaphor for something for the poetic drive perhaps the obscure moon that lights the obscure world it is a metaphor for the particular intellect of the poet or the ability of the poet to see things in a particular way (5 sec) yeah that's how I see the obscure moon.

In the following example, (P) opts for a metaphorical interpretation of the expression "World is crazier and more of it than we think", stating,

> World is suddener than we fancy it and world is crazier and more of it than we think incorrigibly plural it is perhaps metaphorical terms metaphorical ways of saying (.) that reality always overwhelms our preconceived preconceived notions that we bring to it to interpret it and as a way of expressing that that disjunction.

Similarly, (R) infers a metaphorical implicature for the expression "I hope to see my pilot face to face" on his first encounter with the expression, hence commenting,

> I hope to see my Pilot face to face when I have crossed the bar (4 sec) I assume the pilot in the sense of death and that is the way it is going (.) it is God sort of overriding controller or someone that's trying to point (3 sec) make me think that he is entirely committed that there is a God.

(T) immediately infers a figurative implicature for the word "Autumn" as he deals with the expression "you like it under the trees in autumn" in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". Thus he infers, "so he likes autumn because he can see seize an image or situation that allow him to extrapolate a metaphor of a cripple moving among the trees".

Like the L1 participants, the L2 participants are also found to follow a one-stage interpretative process in most cases, though to a less extent. Like the L1 participants, this process was particularly noticed in relation to the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", but, unlike the L1 participants, it is noticed much less in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar". This can mainly be attributed to the fact that the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" involves more explicitly stated metaphorical expressions than

any of the other two poems. The following examples provide samples of the L2

participants' one-stage metaphor interpretation processes.

In dealing with the poem "Snow", (K) identifies the words "Snow" and "roses" as

metaphorical and proposes a figurative interpretation immediately. Hence she states,

> So from the beginning of the poem the room was suddenly rich and the great bay-window was spawning snow and pink roses against it it is describing a room ehh spawning snow and pink roses against it he is describing the window of the room the room was suddenly rich and the great bay-window was spawning snow and pink roses against it roses here may stand for the comfort of life (7 sec) I mean the speaker may see those moments of joy and comfort in one's life as being short they::: they pass quickly not as we think . I mean a flower does not live long it is it is delicate.

Likewise, (I) deals with the phrase "The abc of being" as metaphorical right from

the start, stating,

> of things that would never be quite expressed where you yourself were not quite yourself and did not want nor have to be desiring the exhilarations of changes the motive for metaphor shrinking from the weight of primary noon the abc of being the pre-structured predetermined predetermined (5 sec) ways of living ethics values etc.

(N) explicitly states that she is searching for a metaphorical interpretation of

expression "when I have crossed the bar". Hence she states,

> When I have crossed the bar when I cross this this to to the other world (.) the bar then crossed the bar (5 sec) I am just trying to understand what is meant by the bar not the literal meaning but the metaphorical meaning symbolic so maybe it is life so what it is separating the speaker from his from Jesus Christ or from God is life so life is like an obstacle . so and we have to to I think we need to really die to live you have to live this world this life in order to live the other life so I think that's the bar that's the thing that we have to cross this this life.

Like the previous participants, (H) addresses the expression "There is more than

glass between the snow and the huge roses" as metaphorical as she first encounters it.

She states,

> On the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses there is more than glass (4 sec) glass can automatically here be a metaphor but it can be a metaphor for what glass is something variable but at the same time something very fragile so (4 sec) there is

more than glass more than glass (5 sec.) the snow and the huge roses so the boundaries between the snow and the huge roses are compared to glass (6 sec) the snow and the huge roses maybe glass is a reference to the valuable value that difference may have in life.

(W) attributes a direct metaphorical interpretation to the expression "there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses", hence stating,

The fire flames with a bubbling sound for world is more spiteful and gay than one supposes on the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses and he said by the end of the poem that there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses probably ehhh the snow would stand for ehhh (4 sec) would stand for::: all that is not Irish that does not belong to Ireland and huge roses probably it stands for for Ireland his hometown.

On other occasions, the participants did not seem to opt for a metaphorical interpretation right from the start, but processed the text rather literally or hesitated between a literal and a figurative interpretation. I turn to this point in the section below.

5.3.2 The two-stage processing mode

In sheer contrast to the previous one-stage interpretative process, the participants in both groups are found to follow a two-stage interpretative process in few cases. However, the L2 participants are found to go through a two-stage interpretative process much more frequently than the L1 participants. Hence, the L1 participants showed four cases where they appeared to take the poem literally before shifting to a figurative interpretation while the L2 participants showed 13 such cases. While only three participants in the L1 group seemed to follow a general two-stage interpretative process in the poem "Crossing the Bar", seven of the Tunisian L2 participants followed a two-stage interpretative process in the same poem. In addition, more L2 participants showed this tendency in some instances when dealing with the poems "Snow" and "The Motive for Metaphor" than the L1 participants. In the following, I provide examples of the two-stage metaphor interpretation process as demonstrated by the participants in both groups.

(C) shows a basically literal reading process when dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar". This tendency is particularly noted at the start of the poem, but is gradually replaced by a figurative interpretation process. In attending to the expressions "Crossing the Bar" and "the flood may bear me far", (C) states,

> Sunset crossing the bar sunset what is crossing the bar it is this journey it is so it is a journey in the sea it could be a journey in the sea and it starts with sunset and ends with flood it starts with sunset and ends with flood.

(C) shows the same tendency in dealing with the expression "the obscure moon lighting an obscure world", moving through an initial literal interpretative stage. Hence he states,

> the obscure moon lighting an obscure world (.) lights the obscure moon lighting an obscure world (.) so (.) how come that it is obscure obscure moon what does he what does the poet mean by obscure moon this is strange (3 sec) obscure moon (.) perhaps in comparison to the sun it is obscure (.) or perhaps it is not in its full shape emm so (.) it is a crescent or something like that lighting an obscure world (.) of course lighting the dark world of things that would never be quite expressed.

Focusing on the expression "sunset and evening star", (W) comments on the denotative meanings of the words comprising it. He states,

> emm the first line is:: sunset and evening star (.) ehh ok we can (.) one can (.) may understand that ehh the relationship between sunset and evening star ehh (.) is established from the very beginning and just refer to the night so sunset and evening star ehhh are two celestial elements (3 sec) which we see very late during the day and this gives us an idea about the settings the::: and more precisely the temporal (.) settings (5 sec) ehhh (.) so it could give us also (.) an idea about (.) ehhh the relationship between (.) the (.) the sun and the evening star.

(W) uses encyclopaedic assumptions relating to the concept of journey to interpret the expression at a purely literal level. He keeps the same literal readings till the end of the poem.

(M) shows a systematic inclination to interpret a number of expressions at a literal level in dealing with the poem "Snow". In the following example, she comments on the

expression "soundlessly collateral and incompatible" at a purely literal level, hence stating,

> The room was suddenly rich (4 sec) soundly collateral and incompatible world is suddener than we fancy it emmm ehhhh I think the collateral and incompatible here are the snow and the roses snow is winter while roses we see them in spring flowers blossom in spring but here we can there is the matching of snow and roses so (.) it is it is we do not we are not used to and is not supposed to be so there is something something strange going on.

(F) shows a similar literal interpretation process, in particular when dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar". Commenting on the expression "and may there be no sadness of farewell when I embark", she constructs a literal interpretation around the emotional moments associated with the concept of a journey. Hence she states,

> and may there be no sadness of farewell when I embark so by this time we can discover that the speaking voice the speaker is leaving the sea and there will be farewell but he says may there be no sadness of farewell when I embark he wishes the farewell or the good bye not to be as sad as we can imagine.

In the following example, (F) shows a shift from a literal to a metaphorical interpretation when dealing with the expression "one clear call for me". Thus she says,

> One clear call for me here call can stand for the literal meaning of the call perhaps someone calling the speaker a speaking voice or the transcendental meaning of call which can be a message a divine message or sign and since the title says it is crossing the bar it can mean someone calling the speaking voice or a call inside his mind.

Like the previous participants, (W) interprets a number of expressions at a literal level before shifting to a figurative interpretation. The following example reflects (W)'s literal conception of the word "bar" and the notion of journey as a whole. Hence she comments,

> and may there be no moaning of the bar when I put out to sea but such a tide as moving seems asleep too full for sound and foam when that which drew from out the boundless deep turns again home (4 sec) twilight and evening bell and after that the dark and may there be no sadness of farewell when I embark there is this sentence (.) which again reinforces my idea of of his of the speaker speaker's wish to go to cross that bar.

As she progresses through the interpretation process, she ends up shifting to a metaphorical reading. Thus she states,

we can say the bar might stand for reality his current state which he:: he wishes to go beyond he expresses a desire to break the barriers of life and this is confirmed by::: (3 sec) by many.

(S)shows a clear shift from a literal to a figurative interpretation when dealing with the expression "Crossing the Bar". Hence she initially states,

I think that the bar here and the sea I think the bar and the sea stand for their literal meanings here they both stand for life and especially the sea life is like waves up and down so the sea like it is it is not stable.

Then, she shifts to a metaphorical interpretation as she processes further textual information. Hence she infers that the journey is about having a new experience, stating,

crossing the bar is to to cross what's like to to have journey not a journey to have a new experience and the fact of crossing it it the flood it it stands for the hardships he may encounter so he is afraid (20 sec) it has a lot of ideas and contradictory meanings the first idea that I have got is that somebody has a bad experience and he wants to start anew but he is afraid of having another experience that would fail at the end.

Few L1 participants showed cases of a two-stage interpretative process. This is particularly noticeable in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar". For example, (G) comments literally on the expression "turns again home", stating, "Yeah so the tide reflects what comes next in the next few lines so it says drew from out the boundless deep Turns again home (4 sec) and for me that reflects the tide so you're drawing out you're turning back again."

In another example, she shows the same literal interpretative inclination. Hence she states,

so twilight and evening bell and then in the next line you've got and after that the dark you've got that the notion of time coming in here which then links on to things later on where you've got the notion of time and place and the idea of departing so

it's the kind of idea that at a certain point in the day or a certain point in time there's going to be a change in the environment em.

(J) shows a strong disposition to treat many expressions in the poem "Crossing the Bar" at a metaphorical level. He is the only participant across both groups of participants to have maintained a literal interpretation of the poem till the end, taking it as a purely literal journey into the sea. The following three utterances illustrate (J)'s literal interpretation trend. Initially he comments on the expression "Moaning of the Bar", stating, "Em I would assume that the answer that I came up with reading and that it's just basically the sound that the boat would make as it pulls up on to the sandbank that would be my assumption". He then explicitly verbalizes his literal interpretative process, taking the expressions "one clear call for me" and "When I put out to sea" as purely literal statements. Hence he states,

> The rest of it I read fairly literally I don't see any other clearly opaque action metaphors probably because there's a lack of verbs so there's a bunch of statements sunset and evening star and one clear call for me clear call I'd imagine someone actually calling sunset and evening star is just a noun phrase when I put to sea is just a way of describing him going out to sea putting out to sea.

Like the previous participants, (E) interprets the expression "That which drew from the boundless deep turns again home" at a literal level, stating,

> That which move from the boundless deep turns home again (4 sec) or this is the tide he is talking about this is the tide which drew from the boundless deep turns home again when when the tide is going in and out.

The analysis of the L1 and L2 participants' metaphor processing stages suggests that the L1 participants are more efficient than the L2 participants in identifying metaphors and opting for a figurative interpretation. This difference is particularly noted in connection with the processing of conventional metaphors lacking explicit clues. Less significant differences are noted in relation to more creative metaphors, though the L2 participants seem to take more time to identify implicit creative metaphors and so move through an initial literal interpretative stage.

In this section, differences in the metaphor processing stage have been attributed to the L1 participants' higher familiarity with conventional metaphors. Differences between the L1 and L2 participants have also been noted in relation to the types of contextual assumptions the participants drew on in making sense of the metaphorical expressions they attended to. I take up this point in more detail in the next section.

5.4 Types of contextual assumptions activated

This section focuses on the knowledge resources the participants in both groups appeared to rely on when interpreting metaphors. Assumption activation represents a major component of the metaphor interpretation process as expounded by Relevance theory (See section 1.4.4.3, Chapter One above for a discussion of the main tenets of Relevance theory). This process is undertaken once a participant has identified a particular expression as metaphorical and engaged to interpret it. The findings discussed in this section help to verify the "assumption activation hypothesis" stated above. This hypothesis predicts that the readers will rely on a diverse range of assumptions in interpreting poetic metaphors and presumes that the L1 participants will activate more culture-specific assumptions than the L2 participants.

Participants in both groups showed reliance on a diverse range of contextual assumptions. These were derived from the encyclopaedic entries of the concepts which the participants treated at a metaphorical level as well as from other concepts featuring in the poem. The range of assumptions which the participants were found to use included assumptions derived from their knowledge of the world, culture-specific assumptions, literary assumptions, symbolic assumptions, and lexical semantic assumptions. Tables 11 and 12 below present the types of contextual assumptions the L1 and L2 participants made use of as well as the number of assumptions each participant retrieved relevant to each assumption category.

Table 11

Type and number of contextual assumptions constructed by the L2 participants

	Factual assumptions	Cultural assumptions	Literary/Symbolic assumptions	Lexical associations	Total
(K)	8	1	5	2	16
(S)	8	0	6	2	16
(M)	14	1	2	3	20
(F)	19	2	2	4	27
(I)	8	3	2	0	13
(N)	1	3	2	3	9
(H)	13	3	3	7	26
(C)	12	0	1	10	23
(W)	5	2	9	2	18
(B)	19	1	4	1	25
Total	105	15	36	34	190

Table 12

Type and number of contextual assumptions constructed by the L1 participants.

	Factual assumptions	Cultural assumptions	Literary/symbolic assumptions	Lexical associations	Total
(P)	7	2	5	3	17
(D)	14	3	25	18	60
(E)	10	3	7	7	27
(R)	12	0	4	5	21
(T)	9	3	9	3	24
(G)	10	5	6	4	25
(L)	7	0	2	3	12
(J)	2	0	1	5	8
(Y)	2	2	5	3	12
(A)	10	2	6	10	28
Total	83	19	70	54	226

The process of contextual assumption activation lends support to Widdowson's

(2004) theoretical presumptions about the pragmatic aspect of literary interpretation,

which fits in with the relevance theory account of metaphor interpretation. Commenting

on the identification of textual patterns in a poetic text, Widdowson (2004) states,

> The identification of this textual pattern does not, of itself, yield an interpretation,
> as we have seen. What interpretation involves is the relating of the language in the
> text to the schematic constructs of knowledge, belief and so on outside the text. In
> this way, discourse is achieved. Co-textual connections are semantic in character,
> and are only relevant to the pragmatic process to the extent that they can be
> contextually realized. (p. 61)

Participants in both groups were found to rely mostly on their knowledge of the world, followed by literary symbolic associations, and lexical/semantic associations. The participants showed the least recourse to culture-specific associations. However, the L1 participants were found to make greater use of literary symbolic associations, lexical/semantic associations, and cultural assumptions than the L2 participants, who in turn relied more on their knowledge of the world than the L1 participants. Examination of the participants' contextual assumption activation shows that the L1 participants managed to retrieve more literary symbolic associations than the L2 participants for a number of concepts making up potentially conventional metaphors. This was particularly noticed in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar", which contains many concepts related to conventional conceptual metaphors, such as the concepts SUNSET, DARK, SLEEP, TWILIGHT, EMBARK. This tendency was also noted in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", which, though it contains mostly creative metaphors, still contains a few familiar conventional concepts, namely AUTUMN, SPRING, BIRD, and MOON in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". Less symbolic associations were retrieved in relation to the poem "Snow", containing the least concepts connoting conventional symbolic associations. Another major distinction is that the L1 participants verbalized more intuitions about specific lexical elements than the L2 participants, commenting on notional and connotative associations evoked by some words or groups of words. These were used as assumptions for interpreting metaphors and the poem as a whole. While the L1 participants were expected to rely more significantly on their cultural background knowledge than the L2 participants, the study showed that they did so only insignificantly. In addition, the L2 speakers seemed to intuitively know that a great deal of their own background knowledge was irrelevant, and therefore, rarely made use of it even though they did not have access to the same

background knowledge as the L1 speakers. Instead, they considered cultural assumptions from the target culture whenever they could, using their cultural background only sporadically.

These findings contradict a study conducted by Chang (2002), which reported that two MA-level Chinese participants limited themselves to referential rather than representational readings of potential metaphorical expressions and relied mostly on their native culture when processing the set poems. This study's findings show that both the L1 and L2 participants went beyond the referential meanings of the words comprising the metaphors and attempted to interpret them at a figurative level, attending to various sources of contextual assumptions and associations so as to infer figurative interpretations.

The sections below illustrate how the participants in both groups draw on a diverse range of assumptions in making sense of the metaphors they have attended to, highlighting differences between the L1 and L2 participants.

5.4.1 Factual assumptions

Participants in both groups were found to derive contextual assumptions from their knowledge of the world in interpreting poetic metaphors. Some of these assumptions related to the specific concepts used metaphorically or to other concepts which the participants focussed on during the interpretation task. It can, however, be noted that the L2 participants used factual assumptions more frequently than the L1 participants. This can be seen as an attempt on their part to compensate for limited access to relevant cultural, literary, symbolic, or lexical associations which were comparatively more easily accessible to the L1 participants.

In the following example, (M)retrieves factual assumptions about the concepts of MOON and SUN in dealing with the metaphorical expression "The obscure moon

lighting an obscure world". Hence she states, "The obscure moon (.) the obscure moon lighting an obscure world so moon normally comes out at night but here it is lighting the obscure world when we know the sun is supposed to do such things".

In dealing with some metaphors in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", (M)activates a medical schema, which she uses to derive relevant assumptions. Thus she infers a general metaphor for the poem, stating,

> I think (.) here the poem is related it can be interpreted as life from when the baby is I think it is related to the process not of giving birth but to the process when the baby is in the womb and it (.) and it::: and it I don't know it is closed its DNA its genes and everything that's from the last letter the x because from the male and female there is the x so that's the dominant x that's how I interpret it.

She relies on the same schema in interpreting the metaphorical expression "the hammer of red and blue".

> Then the ruddy temper the hammer (.) of red and blue the hard the ruddy temper the hammer hammer here I think is related to the heart beat (.) ehhh the ruddy temper (.) don't know the red and blue the red and blue maybe the veins in the body they are red and blue.

(M)uses the same medical schema in interpreting most metaphorical expressions in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor".

(F) draws an analogy between the concept of TANGERINE and WORLD as she metaphorically addresses the expression "I peel a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various". Thus she explores some features of the concept tangerine, which she interprets as metaphorical vehicles of some world features. Hence she states,

> and I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various so here the metaphor the fruit tangerine perhaps the acid the acidity of the tangerine is what generates the drunkenness sense of drunkenness thinking about how things can be so various so any acid like any other fruit or drink the acid generates an abrupt feeling or taste it can be a beautiful taste but it is abrupt and unpleasant at the beginning but then taste comes by the end to be like recognized so world and meaning whenever we come across them from the very beginning we don't like the decipher the meaning of life and world and we have

that abrupt taste but as a tangerine world can lead us to think about variety and diversity of course and it starts as unpleasant and it becomes pleasant at the end.

Like (F), (W) shows a similar interpretative process when dealing with the expression "I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various". He draws on a number of assumptions related to the concept of TANGERINE to interpret the whole expression. Thus he says,

> Ok then we have I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various so we have ehhh (3 sec) a nice image here of ehhh (3sec) peeling and ehhh it is like peeling an orange or:::: ehhh a fruit and the idea of division and portions we have (.) the (.) it is like it is like I mean the speaker is:::: is peeling something a fruit or ehhh and he::: he is spitting the pips ehhh after he has peeled this something unknown to the reader but it is an entity which can be peeled does not it is not necessarily a real entity it could be a concept it could be the world itself so peeling and dividing and making things in portions ehhh and spitting the pips ehhh may refer to a selection may refer to a ehhh (4 sec) ehhh a preference of something over the other.

(N) shows a quite similar interpretative process, as she tries to derive an implicature for the expression "Twilight and evening bell". She retrieves factual assumptions about the concept of TWILIGHT, hence stating,

> Twilight and evening bell twilight and evening bell and after that the dark so twilight and evening bell it is it goes with calling for me so we have something that is calling for the for the speaker and twilight again it is it is the thing that separates night from day separates darkness from light separates between the two lights the one that the speaker is currently living in and the other life that he aspires to or he wants to go to emm so darkness relates to this life and light twilight relates to the other life

Like the L2 participants, the L1 participants also relied on their knowledge of the world in interpreting metaphorical expressions, though they seemed to use this strategy less frequently than the L2 participants. (T) shows a clear attempt to infer an implicature for the expression "I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various" by drawing an analogy between the properties of the concept TANGERINE and the concept of WORLD. His interpretative process is similar to that shown by (W) and (F) illustrated above. Thus he states, "The tangerine I

am just adding an element to that that occurred to me kind of the idea of the tangerine

has a sphere like the world he peel back the layers and separate the parts and dissect it

like he is doing this shows things being various that plurality."

(D) shows a more thorough exploration of his knowledge of the world than any

other L1 participant. He considers various properties of the concept he is focusing on,

which he then uses to infer figurative implicatures. In the following example, (D)

focuses extensively on the physical properties of the concept SNOW. Thus he

comments,

> Snow as a state is very unstable snow is not liquid snow is not a solid snow is this
> fleeting instant of frozen water which as soon as we touch it disappears can't hold
> snow in your snow unless you pack it tightly into a snowball you can't hold a
> snowflake in your hand it's not a solid it exists in a perfectly fluid state snow is
> always in a permanent border state.

Later (D) infers a metaphorical implicature in commenting on the concept SNOW,

using the contextual assumptions he has activated earlier from his knowledge of the

world. Thus he infers,

> The snowdrops these are the instruments of temporality (.) fleetingly there is no
> instant that you can hold a snowdrop in your hand there is only one instant that it
> exists as a snowflake before it becomes water in your hand (4 sec) because there is
> this change in state change in time and place world is suddener recognition of
> temporality passing.

(P) shows an attempt to interpret the expression "The fire flames with a bubbling

sound" by considering assumptions from the encyclopaedic entry of the concept FIRE.

Thus he infers an implicature, stating, "fire can be spiteful in the sense that it burns also

it consumes it causes pain if you touch it also it consumes things transforms them turns

into ash to dust".

(G) comments on the expression "soundlessly collateral and incompatible" by

stating,

Soundlessly collateral and incompatible so they are incompatible because the pink roses if they were literally there shouldn't be there because the snow would destroy them (3 sec) snow suffocates plants and pink roses (3 sec) so pink roses should never be in existence at the same time as snow so therefore they're incompatible.

(L) relies on her knowledge of the concept of TIDE to infer an implicature about its possible metaphorical meaning in the poem "Crossing the Bar". Thus she states,

And may there be no moaning of the bar when I put out to sea there's a lot of sound here a lot of next line is such a tide as moving seems asleep there's a lot of push and pull of the tide here which makes me think of the parallels between the sea and life and how life moves forward as the tide moves in and out it's moving from one stage to another which ties in with the title crossing the bar crossing over from one place to the second place through life from living to dying perhaps.

Reliance on knowledge of the world seemed to play a major role in the interpretation of metaphorical expressions, particularly when no immediate conventional associations could be retrieved in connection with concepts making up challenging metaphors. However, the participants attended to other types of contextual assumptions while interpreting metaphors. Literary symbolic associations represented the second most frequently used type of contextual assumptions in both participant groups, though the L1 participants made greater use of this contextual assumption category. I deal with this point in the next section.

5.4.2 Literary symbolic assumptions

This section focuses on the way the participants in both groups made use of contextual assumptions derived from their background literary knowledge. Literary symbolic associations refer to comments the participants made about the poet, the poem's genre and period, references to other literary texts as well as symbolic associations relating to concepts featuring in the poem. This type of contextual assumptions was mostly activated in connection with relatively potential conventional

metaphors and was, therefore, mostly used in the poem "Crossing the Bar", though it was also used in connection with some metaphors in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". The findings also show that the L1 participants tended to consider literary and symbolic assumptions more frequently than the L2 participants (See Table 6 and 7 above for a comparison of both groups' usage of literary symbolic associations), which suggests that the L1 participants had a larger familiarity with conventional symbolic imagery than the L2 participants. In what follows I provide examples of the use of literary symbolic associations by both groups of participants.

In dealing with the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", (A) refers to other poems by Wallace Stevens as she focuses on the expression "The obscure moon lighting an obscure world of things that would never be quite expressed". Hence she comments,

> When you get to the third stanza which I think actually is playing on the old notion of the volte or the notion of (4 sec) the obscure moon lightening an obscure world of things that would never quite be expressed in other words it is just like the other poem in the black poet where he says that a bee's noise can never be expressed because it is so instantaneous.

She also explicitly states her attempt to retrieve information about the overall poetic style of Wallace Stevens. She initially compares Steven's imagery to that of Tennyson, hence stating "I think what he wants to say here is not the old kind of Tennyson's metaphors it is something completely different". Later she comments on Steven's style, stating,

> I am familiar with Wallace Stevens and I realize how he likes to play with language I mean the emperor of ice-cream is neither impenetrable to read when you read it first and then actually you realize (4 sec) the icecream it is one of his seminal works when you get to the final stanza you think is this poem about someone making an icecream He likes to juxtapose kind of strange images I try to think back about all the stuff of Stevens.

(A) seems to retrieve immediate symbolic associations for the concept TWILIGHT as she attends to the metaphorical expression "twilight and evening bell", hence stating,

"there is also twilight and evening bell which may also be suggestive of old age twilight years coming to an end".

Like (A), (D) comments on the familiarity of some concepts in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", focusing on "autumn" and "spring". Hence he states,

(.) this very obvious appeal to a dual concept of something living surrounded by dead things stereotypically clichéd (.) how poetic the idea of autumn is the seasons changing (.) autumn is as a metaphor for the ageing of the person before the winter before they grow old and die.

Later he comments on the concepts SPRING, stating,

I think this is very interesting (4 sec) a little more bit than the preceding three lines which initially seems to be he is satirizing the familiar imagery in the same way you were happy in spring again by referring back to spring this refers to the outset of life (.) like a happy child.

(D) shows a similar trend to (A)'s as he explicitly shows his attempt to retrieve information from his background knowledge of Lord Alfred Tennyson. Hence he introspects, "I'm trying to think of Lord Alfred Tennyson poems and all that I can remember is Locksley Hall and even then I can't remember that". (D) follows the same strategy in trying to make sense of the expression "incorrigibly plural" in the poem "Snow". Thus he states, "This idea of plurality I'm thinking of the line of MacNiece that it's not possible to stop in the same room twice". He also shows an attempt at overcoming interpretation difficulties in interpreting the phrase "steel against intimation" by recollecting a line with a similar structure in one of Yeat's poems. Thus he retrospectively comments, "So I've managed to read into most of this apart from the exception of steel against intimation which reminds me of Yeats when he says shorn against ruin or shored you against my ruin"

In another context, (Y) notices traditional symbolic images in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", for which she retrieves typical associations. Thus she remarks,

This machinery is against quite poetic symbolism later on so (3 sec) in the first you have got kind of symbolism which you find quite often in poems and this is particularly traditional expectations of poetry (.) so the idea of using seasons for symbolizing change is a quite a recurrent theme and something that is quite traditional metaphor to use and particularly the wind and autumn and so on and the idea of the sky and the single bird as well like this bird being a kind of symbol of freedom or liberation in some way.

(P) comments on the expression "The obscure moon lighting an obscure world" by comparing it to "The kind of Romantic Shelley's moon". (T) comments on the metaphor "Pilot" by surmising that it may entail "some Greek classical reference perhaps". (E) makes a comment on the overall poetic period to which the poem belongs, stating that the poem is "an instance of confused writing 1930s 1940s the time when this was written". Likewise, (R) comments on the concept of SEASON by stating that "Spring (3 sec) seasons are always a metaphor did never mean the seasons." (G) comments on the concept SPRING, activating rather conventional associations. Thus she states, "spring like autumn is metaphorical it's where things come alive em and it's where this person was happy so yeah happy in the spring em (.) where everything's starting to build together to have colours I think I've spoken". Later she retrieves associations about the concept AUTUMN, namely a notion of change, stating,

Ok so the trees in autumn em the trees are symbolic in themselves because them like everything in autumn is half dead autumn signifies season changes again that idea of moving from something into something else (.) summer into autumn autumn into winter.

Like the L1 participants, the L2 participants are also found to make use of their background literary knowledge in interpreting the poem as a whole and in dealing with the metaphors they have identified. In this respect, the L2 participants tended to retrieve information relevant to the poetic periods the texts belong to or to the poets with which they were familiar in trying to make sense of the poem. In fact, all participants are found to seek information about the poets after reading the poem, apparently identifying them as potentially useful for helping them with the interpretation process.

For instance, commenting on the poet, (I) states, "Louis MacNeice ok Irish if I remember well that could be of significance".

The participants are also found to use information about the poetic period or the literary movement to which the poem belongs in accessing relevant assumptions. In the following example, (K) retrieves assumptions about the literary notion of Transcendentalism and the poetic period of Romanticism in dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar". She focuses on specific features within the poem, namely nature elements, within the framework of Transcendentalist and Romantic poetry. Hence she states,

> but here since I:: Tennyson transcendentalism (6 sec) since I mean since the writer stands for (.) he is a transcendentalist and transcendentalism resembles romanticism in some traits so we can have the presence of some elements of nature (3 sec) ehhh and here it is the case because we have sunset ehhh we have ehhh what else (.) twilight we have flood (7 sec) sunset and evening star and one clear call for me and may there be no moaning of the bar when I put out to sea sea the presence of the sea.

(S)considers a Romantic framework as she tries to interpret the expression "For though from out our bourne of time and place" in the poem "Crossing the Bar". Hence she states,

> and then he said when I embark for tho' from out our bourne of time and place time and place capitalized meaning (4 sec) the problem is time time and place maybe he is trying to escape escapism he is trying to escape this life to transcend to transcend that period of time which was sad during his life or even to transcend this this life to live in other I don't know his imagination or romantic poets try to do.

(W) shows much use of information from her background literary knowledge. In the following example, she retrieves assumptions about the poet Alfred Lord Tennyson in interpreting the poem "Crossing the Bar". Thus she comments,

> and this probably alludes to his own experiences because I think that Alfred Lord Tennyson was known ehh for his he was an unstable person and even during his lifetime he he went through many experiences I mean which really failed which were not a real success for him.

Later she comments on the symbolic transcendental and metaphysical background

of a number of concepts featuring in the poem, thus stating,

> we can say the bar might stand for reality his current state which he:: he wishes to go beyond he expresses a desire to break the barriers of life and this is confirmed by::: (3 sec) by many . by the use of ehhh of a diction pertaining to the metaphysical or::: transcendental field or realm like star sea boundless deep (3 sec) embark so when he says when I embark it is as if the speaker is starting a new or:::: I mean a new experience or heading towards an other direction that reality or his present life cannot offer him probably he is embarking towards his beloved.

On another occasion, (W) uses her knowledge about modernism and its impact on

Irish literature in dealing with the metaphor "drunkenness of things being various".

Hence she states,

> I peel and portion a tangerine and spit the pips and feel the drunkenness of things being various (.) the drunkenness of things being various he is expressing kind of ehhh (3 sec) of fear of things being various (.) of variety probably variety of culture and how they come to influence Ireland as we know throughout history there has been always that (3 sec) that fear facing ehhh of facing those set of changes brought about by:: (4 sec) by modernity modernism (3 sec).

Like (W), (H) shows much reliance on her literary background knowledge. In the

following example, she relies on her knowledge about the author as well as the poetic

period in making sense of the expressions "when I put out to sea" and "When I

embark". She states,

> There is a journey from one place to another and in this context it is journey from life to death because with Alfred Lord Tennyson as I know he is a Victorian medievalist and there is the idea of there is the hope for a better future Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote about the Chivalric age and the utopian medieval era so may be he is not satisfied with the present and he is not actually satisfied with the present so he looks for a better future he looks for a better kind of life maybe that life he dreams of is realized in death embark as I said has a metaphorical meaning so there is a move from one location to another (.) there is a move from life to death and death is revealed through different metaphors like the sea and boundless deep.

(H) makes use of her knowledge of postmodern literature in dealing with the poem

"The Motive for Metaphor". She uses such information to identify a central metaphor

underlying the poem. Thus she states,

> maybe the poem is talking about literature and the world literature tends to give meanings to some things to few things only to find that these meanings are open to different other interpretations so we tend to construct meanings and to deconstruct

meanings especially in postmodern literary theories (7 sec) so meanings truth can never be caught they are always beyond our reach

(C) considered conventional associations for the concepts AUTUMN and SPRING, commenting,

> in the same way you were happy in spring so now there is a shift from autumn to spring and of course we know that spring is a flourishing season is when we talk about spring we talk about bloom and blossom and something like birth with the half colors of quarter-things with the half colors of quarter-things (.) the slightly brighter sky the melting clouds (.) the single bird the obscure moon (.) birds and sky and moon and all these are characteristics of the spring season (.) which ehhh which of course imply a sense of (.) exhilaration (.) and and happiness.

Similarly, (N) commented on the concept SPRING, hence accessing associations of fertility. She states,

> and obscure moon emmm focus on colours and on light on happiness spring fertility and then the obscure moon lighting an obscure world moon and world so coming out from the world of the child to to adulthood to people are growing so the child who is self-absorbed is now growing up and trying to encompass and include and understand the world things that are around.

The higher frequency at which the L1 participants made use of literary contextual assumptions demonstrates that the L1 participants may have a richer store of relevant literary background knowledge than the L2 participants, which provides them with greater resources to infer relevant implicatures and to minimize their reliance on their knowledge of the world every time literary symbolic associations could be attained.

The participants in both groups were also found to make use of semantic and lexical associations related to the concepts making up the metaphorical expressions or to other concepts in the vicinity. Again, the L1 participants showed more frequent use of this strategy than the L2 participants. I illustrate this point in the section below.

5.4.3 Lexical/semantic associations

A major type of contextual assumptions used by both groups of participants, and especially by the L1 participants, relate to a vast range of associations, connotations,

and intuitions the participants verbalized in connection with some lexical items or concepts. For example, the participants noted such lexical deviations as incongruent collocations. Incongruent collocations allowed the participants to identify metaphors and to make guesses about their possible meanings. For instance, (A), (R), (G) and (E) in the L1 participant group and (C) in the L2 participant group attended to the expression "and the fire flames with a bubbling sound", noting that bubbling was not the sort of sound produced by fire. Thus (R) comments, "and the fire flames with a bubbling sound for world does not make sense because the fire does not bubble bubble suggests water". Similarly, (A) notes "with a bubbling sound obviously flames don't have this (.) sound actually they crackle". Likewise, (E) states "the fire usually crackles water bubbles". (G) makes a similar remark, stating "and then fire is personified as having a bubbling sound interesting fires don't normally bubble it's almost a bit like a cauldron bubbling…"

(E) and (A) note a collocation incongruity in the use of the verb "spawn". Thus (A) remarks that "the great bay window is spawning snow spawning is something that is completely to do with regeneration it is not a word that you say or would associate with a window". (E) makes a similar remark, normalizing the collocation pattern of the verb "Spawn" by associating it to fish and drawing possible implicatures thereby. He states,

> The snow affects a sudden change spawning snow to spawn snow usually a fish spawns eggs giving birth here it is something (3 sec) here it is related to winter this is an unexpected verb [….] the great bay window was spawning snow and pink roses against it so snow (5 sec) are spawning the snow but it is by the window that spawning the snow so and spawning I think of the fish salmon spawning eggs giving new life this is to bring change in life the great bay window brings life change and enrichment to the room the bay window spawns pink roses it is interesting why he uses spawn because obviously choices are for a reason salmon spawn a salmon spawn giving new life this is an interesting use of words the great bay window gives way to life change and enrichment

(C), an L2 participant, attends to the verb "Bubble" as well, but seems to confound it with the verb babble. Hence he states,

and the fire flames with a bubbling sound (.) this is another explicit sort of metaphor the fire flames with a bubbling sound it could be it could be read as a kind of metaphor but the problem is in the bubbling sound (.) does this (.) is (.) I mean (.) is this characteristic of humans bubbling sound or something (4 sec) I am not quite sure.

Lexical information also involves associations relating to some words or separate sounds or sound sequence. These were used to infer metaphorical inferences. This is mostly noted in relation to the sound sequence in the expression "The abc of being", and the letter X in the expression "the vital arrogant fatal dominant x". For example, (T), (D), (E), (P), and (R), all activated associations related to the phrase "The abc of being". Thus (T) states, that the "abc of being denotes the fundamental and absolute" while (E) states that "the abc of being of being (.) may be it is the basics of being …". Likewise, (R) comments on the expression, stating that "The abc of being the abc of being is beliefs the kind of things that a person take for granted". (P) and (D) provide similar associations in connection with this phrase. Hence, (P) states, "the abc the children's primer to existence the abc of which is unchanging sort of harsh light of reality" while (D) discerns associations to learning, stating, "primary noon primary noon primary noun there's something about the classroom here you learn the abc of being." (T) infers relevant associations for the colours "Red and blue". Using these associations, he tries to infer an implicature for the expression "the hammer of red and blue". Hence he comments,

> The sharp flesh the vital arrogant fatal dominant X ok so (.) the primary noon connects with the primary colours of red and blue the ruddy temper so primary colours coming here and he hates these primary colours (.) things being strong and heavy and violent and steel against intimation so again still an absolute colour and definite ideas arrogant fatal dominant x and (4 sec) he is interested in intimation and suggestion and that's the motive for metaphor.

(E) comments on the concept CHANGE as he deals with the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", stating that "change is (.) amorphous concept change is not an immutable concept". (P) activates associations of "energy" and "intensity" in relation to the verb

"bubble", stating that "bubbling because expressing life energy perhaps it is also for world because it seems to speak of (.) speaks of the whole of everything that designates intensity". Likewise, (T) seems to activate similar associations for the same verb "Bubble", stating, "The bubbling sound so the fire is bubbling and dancing it is quite joyful it is full of life".

Few such associations are noted with the L2 participants. For instance, (S)comments on the phrase "The abc of being", stating, "desiring the exhilarations of changes the motive for metaphor shrinking from the weight of primary noon the abc of being the abc of being is the beginning". (M)produced similar comments to (D)'s and (P)'s, stating, "the motive for metaphor shrinking from the weight of primary noon (.) ehhh primary noon I think it is related to the abc here because we know the abc is the:: (.) first steps of learning we learn the alphabet the abc."

(C) also considers associations for the colours red and blue in the expression "the hammer of red and blue", on the basis of which he derives a number of implicatures. Thus he states,

The ruddy temper the hammer (.) of red and blue the hard sound the ruddy temper ruddy temper (.) the hammer of red and blue (.) the hard sound the hammer of red and blue the hard sound (3 sec) the hammer of red and blue (.) colours (.) red and blue (6 sec) even red and blue could be read as a kind of oxymoron because blue it implies a::::: it implies (4 sec) it is the colour of (.) the sea the colour of the sky it implies life or something red (3sec) is a morbid is a morbid colour it is the colour of blood and colour of::: so (.) here he mixes colours the poet seems to mix these two incompatible colours in order to create (.) to generate an ambiguous feeling in the mind which takes place in the mind of the reader.

(K) infers associations for the concepts of TWILIGHT on the basis of its association with DARKNESS, which denotes "ignorance". Hence she states,

Twilight and evening bell and after that the dark a metaphor ehhh (7 sec) twilight and evening bell twilight may stand for literally part of the day but twilight taken metaphorically it can stand for sadness (.) it can stand for ignorance (3 sec) since it is close to darkness (.) ignorance in the sense that the speaker does not know what

will happen or::: I mean he is afraid of something about to happen (.) if I am not mistaken

(C) infers a "pathetic" mood in focusing on the expressions "sadness of farewell" and "moaning of the bar". Hence he states,

> and after that the dark and may there be no sadness of farewell here there is something pathetic something piteous sadness of farewell when I embark and may there be no moaning of the bar moaning here there is that ambiguous noise or that that sound which is pathetic a pathetic sound moaning of the bar which implies a sense of bitterness and ehhhhhh (4 sec) of course.

(H) makes a similar comment as she addresses the poem "Crossing the Bar". Hence she states, "and may there be no moaning of the bar there is moaning so there is here moaning has a metaphorical meaning it can be associated with sadness with agony." (F) comments derives a notion of "tranquility" as she focuses on the expression "and the tide as moving seems asleep", stating, "ok and then the third metaphor but such a tide as moving seems asleep such a tide as moving seems asleep (3sec) here is the tranquility of the tide".

The participants also noted semantic relations between lexical items in the poems, which allowed them to note major themes or ideas and to note global metaphor patterns. (A) states this processing strategy explicitly as she engages with the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", hence commenting,

> So you look for a semantic field relating to the mind or eating or whatsoever and now I am actually trying to see what's in this poem and obviously you have got like autumn spring moon the obscure moon melting clouds it is obviously about a change.

(D) tries to construct relevant associations for the concepts featuring in the last line of the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". He comments that "fatal suggests death", and later considers further associations for a number of other concepts, stating,

> vital vitality of an arrogant swaggering confident fatal deadly dominant all-powering overwhelming but I wonder why the four together x as the poet or the poet's own compulsion towards metaphors but why is it fatal why is it vital.

(P) retrieves associations for the concepts STEEL and INTIMATION, as he deals with the expression "The ruddy temper the hard sound steel against intimation". Thus he infers the notions of "rigidity", "lack of clarity", and "modern world" associated with the concepts RUDDY, HARD, and STEEL. He opposes the three notions to the notion of "thought" which he presumably associates with the word "intimation". Thus he states,

> This is a clear metaphor for rigidity and perhaps also for the modern world coming in the ruddy because confused ruddy because unclear the sense of a lack of clarity steel is also functioning if it is a metaphor for the modern world it is also the world of things the material world which is against the world of thought.

(N) makes a similar comment as she deals with the poem "Crossing the Bar", stating,

> I think the first thing I notice is the semantic field of of the contrast between darkness and light we have sunset star dark and then ehhh we have the semantic field of sadness farewell so the overall mood of the poem is about emm ehhh melancholic.

(C) and (W) notice the dominance of lexical registers in the poem "Crossing the Bar". Hence (C) states, "So just turns again home twilight and evening bell the predominance of lexical register of nature lexical items of nature" while (W) comments that " the diction there is ehhhh the dominance of the diction related to sea and travel". (N) posits a common assumption for a set of words in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", stating "so emmm so the hard sound steel against intimation (3 sec) the sharp flesh we have a lot of sharp things here the vital (.) arrogant (.) fatal (.) dominant cluster of adjectives…" Similalry, (H), derives a common association for the words "dark", "Asleep", and "Moaning", stating, "and and after that the dark the dark also cannot be read literal here it is metaphorical because it goes in the same context of sleeping and mourning and boundless deep so it is death".

The participants also seemed to consider connotations for some concepts. For example, (Y) derives a negative connotation for the journey the speaker is about to start, stating, "and then the idea that he says sadness of farewell so it does not seem like a positive journey for the moment." (L) derives totally different connotations, stating "Again no moaning of the bar here there's no negativity here no moaning of the bar makes me think of youthfulness there's none of the creakings of old age throughout this journey it seems that there's lot of vitality a lot of natural state." (R) notices a contrast in the connotations of different lexical items in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", stating, "what he is saying he starts with a flowery language at the start but what he is actually saying is not nice it's vital arrogant fatal the dominant x is very you know (.) straightforward." (A) notices negative connotations in dealing with the poem "Snow." Hence she states, "you know you get these notions spiteful drunkenness crazy suddener all things incorrigible these are not nice words so obviously he feel threat I think." Likewise, (G) derives common negative connotations for the sequence of adjectives metaphorically used in the last line of the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". Thus she states, "and you know the last line is very very negative The vital arrogant fatal dominant em it's all very powerful word choice not quite sure what it's referring to but the ABC of being…". (E) remarks that "rich always something positive".

The L2 participants also considered connotations for a number of concepts featuring in the poem, though they seemed to be hesitant in some cases. In the following example, (H) hesitates between negative or positive connotations for the words "crazy" and "difference", thus stating,

> there is this richness of the world but at the same time there is this clash between the rich and the poor between black and white between men and women etc that makes difference lose its positive value and be associated with negative connotations world is crazier and more of it than we think crazier so again it is like word is suddener there is a negative connotation it can be a positive connotation crazy that's life that's joy but it can be at the same time a negative connotation

crazy so it is the opposite of wise so (4 sec) this I mean some people how can we say it they do not make positive use of their wisdom they try to benefit from difference for their own intentions and turning into like wars like gender hierarchy there is with difference there is always this negative associations conflicts etc

(K) shows the same attempt at identifying connotations for the concept "Flood" in the poem "Crossing the Bar", but she seems not to be certain about the connotation to choose. She states,

I am sure flood here means something it is like a symbol but what is it (.) the flood the flood is it is an aid to the speaker in his journey or is it ehhh I mean a foe here or:::. it sounds kind of negative word in this context

(M)seems to be struggling in reconciling negative connotations she has of the concept FIRE with positive connotations which the context seems to force. Thus she states,

and the fire flames with a bubbling sound for world is more spiteful and gay than one supposes (.) ok so we we relate fires and flames to something bad ok but here it says is more spiteful and gay than one supposes (.) so first of all we think things are supposed to happen in a certain order but the world changes this order and gives another meaning to life and there is also we giving meaning to fire flames and something bad (.) they can bring gay which is happiness which we do not think of when we relate to fire

Besides using semantic and lexical associations, the participants in both groups showed few cases of cultural association activation. While the L1 participants relied on their cultural background in some cases, the L2 participants did not rely on their own cultural background knowledge in making sense of the metaphors, but made recourse to the target culture whenever some relevant cultural information was available for them. I discuss this point in more depth in the next section.

5.4.4 Cultural assumptions

Participants in both groups have shown evidence of using contextual assumptions from the target language culture. Most of these were used in dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar" and mostly involved religious associations. Some of the L2

participants seemed to be familiar with some aspects of the target language culture and used these as assumptions for interpreting the poem as a whole and the metaphorical expressions involved. In rare cases, the L2 participants relied on their cultural background knowledge in interpreting metaphors. Unlike the study by Chang (2002), which reported that MA-level participants relied heavily on their cultural background knowledge in interpreting metaphors in English poems, the present study's findings suggest that the L2 participants seemed to be aware of the fact that much of their cultural background knowledge was not relevant for the interpretation of metaphors in L2 poems. At the same time, the L2 participants did not show much familiarity with the target language culture, thus relying on the target language culture only sporadically.

This result is consistent with Zapata' study (2005), which found that American L2 learners of Spanish failed to identify religious notions identified by their Argentinian counterparts as they read a poem in Spanish. While both groups shared some notions, only the Argentinian informants identified a religious theme in the poem. This finding gives support to the "assumption activation hypothesis" stated above, which predicts that the L1 participants will be able to access a wider range of culture-specific assumptions in interpreting creative and conventional poetic metaphors.

In the following example, (G) seems to draw on cultural associations linked to the concept of MOON. Hence she states,

> Em I think in the context of the poem that you is a partner possibly female because of the allusions to the moon em because of like moon and female and that whole link (4 sec) women are linked to seasonal changes (3 sec) nature and we change like the seasons in some ways (3 sec) yeah she is linked to the moon of things that would never be quite expressed where you yourself were not quite yourself going to say it's about a female who desires change like the seasons em there's more moon imagery with primary noon is that (5 sec) where the moon does something.

On another occasion, (G) draws on specific cultural traditions related to marriage and to funerals in dealing with the poem "Snow" and more specifically with the expression "Snow and pink roses". Thus she states,

> For me the snow and pink roses I don't know if this is true at all but it seems to imply maybe confetti you know when you're at a wedding or something there's confetti that's strewn and floats like snow do you want me to write it down Maybe you haven't heard this one before (.) confetti in the UK or like in America or whatever I assume they use it in America- they do here often when there's a marriage when you come out of the church or the registry office or whatever people throw confetti it's like tissue paper but it's often pink and they throw it up in the air and it covers people it's a sort of celebration…combining the image.

(G) seems to find it difficult to accommodate the positive associations of "confetti", which she has activated earlier, with a notion of pessimism she seems to infer. Therefore, she considers further assumptions, which are largely derived from a culture-specific framework. Thus she comments,

> I don't know (5 sec) unless it's life and death again but then again that might be too much the fire and things you could possibly say it was death and things (5 sec) again the window as that notion of a threshold but again I'm not too sure (3 sec) maybe it could be that because then pink roses would also maybe be at a funeral yeah but this is the thing you see allusions in everything.

Both (T) and (P) note religious connotations with regard to the expression "and the flood may bear me far". Thus (P) states,

> The flood here is an image of the power of nature maybe uncaring nature I want to see my Pilot my pilot here is a metaphor for Christ over the flood most clearly want to see my pilot face to face I hope to be metaphor for Christian redemption so we can see here tension between (3 sec) my pilot a metaphor for Christ it seems most obviously when I have crossed the bar when I have died.

Similarly, (T) ascribes religious connotations to the word "flood" and thus comments "and the flood may bear me far so this (.) the flood gives you the sense of Biblical flood and the sense is this is a great voyage".

(E) considers possible relevant associations connected with the colours red and blue. Thus he states, "the hammer of red and blue red and blue red and blue that's the

American flag red and blue these are American political system red for the republican party blue for the democratic party". In turn, (Y) is reminded of the concept of SICKLE in dealing with the metaphorical expression "hammer of red and blue". Thus she states,

> I don't know if I can pick any metaphors from that but I am trying to understand it the hammer of red and blue as a symbol for a country or a symbol for something or a symbol for the hammer of red and blue just the hammer and sickle that goes with it I guess a common idea so it is obviously about a poetical change then.

In the following example, (D) states that he can infer a notion of "black humour", as he attempts to deal with the expression "The obscure moon lighting an obscure world of things that would never be quite expressed". Hence he comments,

> Something of the kind of black humour in operation there seems to be some black humour in operation in this poem a kind of bitter irony here giving way to much (3 sec) frivolity he did not have to do it nor want to do it he did it through some other compulsion change the tone here.

The L2 participants also showed cases where they relied on a number of assumptions, mainly from the target language culture, in interpreting poetic metaphors. In the following example, (N) refers to "the crucifixion of Jesus" in interpreting the metaphorical expression "and there may be no sadness of farewell when I embark" in the poem "Crossing the Bar". Thus she states,

> and may there be no sadness of farewell so farewell (6 sec) emm it reminds me of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ when he said don't mourn me or don't be sad because I am not really going to die I am going to heaven so ehhh you should not really be sad about leaving this life because you are going to a better place when I embark.

(N) uses the same cultural framework in interpreting the expression "I hope to see my Pilot face to face when I have crossed the bar". Hence she comments,

> ehhh turns again home twilight and evening bell darkness (4 sec) my pilot pilot and space and time I think it is something that is divine or celestial that transcends time transcends place it is it is more like the other world so my pilot here the one who guides me who is who is ushering me to salvation to a better life capitalized so I think it is about God emm salvation so the flood I think it is there is some religious

items here vocabulary so salvation I think it is about Jesus Christ because Alfred Lord Tennyson is a Christian man so we have Jesus here on one side the speaker on the other side and Jesus is calling for him ushering him guiding him towards salvation towards light towards ehhh a better place this place does not abide by the law of this world does not abide by time and place as we know them ehhh (.) I hope to see my pilot face to face so we have a longing to see to face God to face his saviour and we all know that religious people it is one aims of religious people to face God.

Both (W) and (K) note religious connotations in relation to the word "bell". Hence (W) states, "so we have twilight and evening bell which is more or less related to the Christian faith". Likewise, (H) comments, "Twilight and evening bell again we have this twilight by sunset and evening bell this can be the bell of the church".

(H) uses the same religious associations in making sense of the metaphorical expression "When I have crossed the bar", activating assumptions similar to those proposed by (N). Hence she comments,

> When I have crossed the bar so crossed the bar so here there is the achievement of the journey from life to death I have crossed the bar (4 Sec) crossed it may have a religious connotation the crucifixion so Christ and that can fall to the same realm of spiritual as I said renewal we have pilot we have crossed so star light light in death not light in present light

In one case, (F) refers to a culture-specific association in dealing with the expression "you like it under the trees in autumn because everything is half dead". More specifically, she infers an association of the season "autumn" from her native culture, namely that autumn is the season upon which the success of the agricultural crops depend. Thus she infers that autumn in the poem might stand for "life", stating, "because everything is half-dead yeah everything in relation to nature is half-dead but we say that autumn is the year so autumn is a time of rebirth so it is half-death to introduce life".

In a similar case, (W) activates a proverbial expression in her native culture in interpreting the metaphorical expression "and there may be no moaning of the bar

when I put out to sea". As she infers that the poet is afraid of going into a new unknown experience that might end up worse than the previous ones, she falls back on this native cultural proverb to support her interpretation. Hence she states,

> But ehhh but he is as I said he is kind of wary or hesitant and the bar of course the bar it is recurrent recurrent in the poem and it stands for the obstacles that life (.) poses (6 sec) he said turns again home and home here it stands maybe for reality when I go back back to reality and not not to to go not to cross the bar it is turns again home I I what if   I:::: experience worse than the bad I am already experiencing so as we say in Arabic better stick to what evil you have than experience something worse so I think this is all I can say about the poem.

Overall, the use of cultural associations was not widely used by either group. Nevertheless, the activation of cultural associations was more common with the L1 participants than the L2 participants. In addition, the evidence demonstrates that the L2 participants did not make reference to their cultural background, and with the exception of two cases demonstrated by (F) and (W), the L2 participants basically referred to associations connected with the target language culture. This can be accounted for by the fact that the L2 participants had already studied poetry for many years and had, therefore, developed the skill to interpret poetic texts against the target language cultural and literary frameworks, possibly judging their own cultural background to be irrelevant for the interpretation of poetic texts in the target language.

Reliance on contextual assumptions has been widely observed across both groups of participants. As a whole, both participant groups relied mostly on their knowledge of the world and less on other types of contextual assumptions. Nevertheless, the findings show that the L1 participants used more literary, symbolic, lexical, and cultural associations than the L2 participants while the L2 participants relied on knowledge of the world more than the L1 participants. Knowledge of the world and lexical associations seem to be mostly used with metaphorical vehicles for which the readers did not seem to retrieve conventional literary and symbolic associations, while literary

symbolic associations seem to be more readily activated for metaphorical vehicle concepts carrying conventional associations. The findings give further support to the "discourse processing hypothesis", predicting that metaphor interpretation will be conducted by reference to a wider pragmatic context going beyond the immediate boundaries of the concepts making up the metaphorical expression. The findings also give support to the "assumption activation hypothesis" put forward within the frame of Relevance theory, which predicts that metaphor interpretation requires the activation of a wide range of associations from the encyclopaedic concepts comprising the metaphorical expression. However, the findings give limited support to the prediction that the L1 participants will access a wider range of culture-specific assumptions than the L2 participants on account of their larger access to cultural background knowledge. Although the findings show that the L1 participants showed a wider use of literary, symbolic, and lexical semantic associations than the L2 participants, they only insignificantly outperformed the L2 participants in the activation of culture-specific assumptions.

5.4 Processing time and number of interpretations inferred

In this section I focus on the number of implicatures inferred by the L1 and L2 participants in relation to the three poems. The findings show that the L1 participants inferred more metaphor implicatures than the L2 participants. The difference in implicature interpretation is found to be significant by reference to the Chi-square statistical tool. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected at a 0.05 value of significance.

Table13

Significance test for metaphor implications inferred for the three poems

	Crossing the Bar	The Motive for metaphor	Snow	Total
L1 participants	175	132	88	396
L2 participants	117	113	110	340
Total	293	245	198	736

X2=11,605   df=(3-1)*(2-1)=2x2=1   11,605>5.991 at the level of 0.05

Figure 6 below illustrates the L1 and L2 participants' metaphor implicature generation tendencies in the three poems.

Figure 6

Metaphor implicature generation tendencies by the L1 and L2 participants
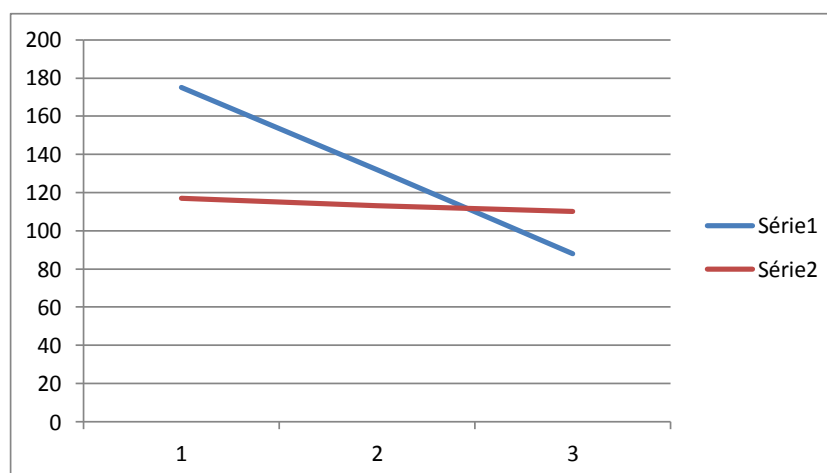
The figure shows that the L2 participants have maintained the same tendency across the three poems, while the L1 participants seemed to attend to fewer metaphors and to infer fewer implications in the poem "Snow" than in the other two poems. By examining the L1 and L2 participants' interpretative processes in connection with the poem "Snow", it can be noted that the L2 participants showed a tendency to attend to more discrete metaphorical vehicles than the L1 participants, reading the poem at a rather bottom-up level. On the other hand, the L1 participants treated a number of expressions in the poem "Snow" as instances of a super-ordinate metaphorical vehicle.

Differences within and between the L1 and L2 participant groups can also be accounted for in terms of the nature of metaphors the participants dealt with and the length of time they spent. Tables 14 and 15 provide a detailed description of the relationship between number of metaphors identified, number of implicatures derived and length of time spent on the processing of the three poems by the L1 and L2 participants.

Table 14

Participants	Crossing the bar			The Motive for metaphor			Snow		
	metaphors	implicatures	Time	metaphors	implicatures	Time	metaphors	implicatures	Time
(K)	6	20	22.00	8	14	33.00	7	11	13.00
(S)	9	13	17.00	11	18	24.00	10	18	23.00
(M)	9	13	20.00	8	9	17.00	7	11	13.00
(F)	6	12	21.00	8	13	18.00	10	13	23.00
(I)	4	11	35.00	8	12	38.00	8	11	25.00
(H)	10	11	13.00	13	15	21.00	5	6	17.00
(N)	9	10	22.00	5	5	19.00	9	12	15.00

(C)	7	9	23.00	5	8	19.00	6	8	17.00
(W)	7	8	14.00	9	9	16.00	10	10	13.00
(W)	8	10	26.00	7	10	29.00	9	10	25.00
Total	75	117	213	82	113	234	81	110	184
Ratio of implicatures per metaphor	-	1.56	-	-	1.37	-	-	1.35	-
Ratio of Time per metaphor	-	-	2.84 sc	-	-	2.85 sc	-	-	2.27 sc

Relationship between processing time and number of inferred implicatures for the L2 participants.

Table 15
Relationship between processing time and number of inferred implicatures for the L1 participants.

Participants	Crossing the bar			The Motive for metaphor			Snow		
	metaphors	implicatures	Time	metaphors	implicatures	Time	metaphors	implicatures	Time
(P)	16	34	15.00	14	28	20.00	9	18	17.00
(D)	17	42	28.00	13	19	22.00	7	11	25.00
(E)	14	21	17.00	9	12	32.00	8	17	27.00
(R)	7	8	14.00	9	14	30.00	6	6	26.00
(T)	9	16	17.30	11	16	19.00	3	6	21.00
(G)	7	12	18.00	12	14	22.00	8	11	15.00
(L)	12	17	13.00	7	7	17.00	6	6	16.00
(J)	6	4	12.00	5	7	13.00	5	8	14.00
(Y)	4	5	13.00	10	10	18.00	5	6	12.00
(A)	12	16	14.00	8	5	28.00	6	4	24.00
Total	104	175	161	98	132	221	63	88	197
Ratio of implicatures per metaphor	-	1.69	-	-	1.34	-	-	1.39	-
Ratio of Time per metaphor	-	-	1.54 sc	-	-	2.25 sc	-	-	3.12 sc

The "cognitive effort hypothesis" stated above predicts that both the L1 and L2 participants will invest less time on the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than on those in the poems "Snow" and "The Motive for Metaphor" and will, therefore, derive fewer metaphors in the former poem than in the latter two poems. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that the poem "Crossing the Bar" contains mostly conventional metaphors, which can be easily attributed to underlying conceptual metaphors. On the same grounds, the "cognitive effort

hypothesis" that the L1 participants will invest less time than the L2 participants in dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar", deriving fewer implicatures in return. This prediction is based on the fact that L1 participants will be more familiar with and, therefore, more efficient in the identification of conventional metaphors than the L2 participants and will, therefore, find it easier to come up with strong conventional implicatures. At the same time, it is predicted that the L1 participants will infer a wider range of implicatures than the L2 participants for the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" on account of the wider range of assumptions they can access in dealing with creative metaphors (see section 5.4 above for a discussion of the differences in the use of contextual assumptions between the L1 and L2 participants). No difference in processing time is, however, predicted in the processing of creative metaphors by L1 and L2 participants.

Since the participants did not focus on metaphorical expressions serially but in parallel as they performed the interpretative task, cognitive effort is operationalized as a function of the length of time the participants invested on each poem. Figures 2 and 3 below illustrate the relationship between number of metaphors identified, number of implicatures inferred, and processing times measured in round minutes for each participant group across the three poems.

Figure 7: Relationship between processing time and number of inferred implicatures for the L1 participants.
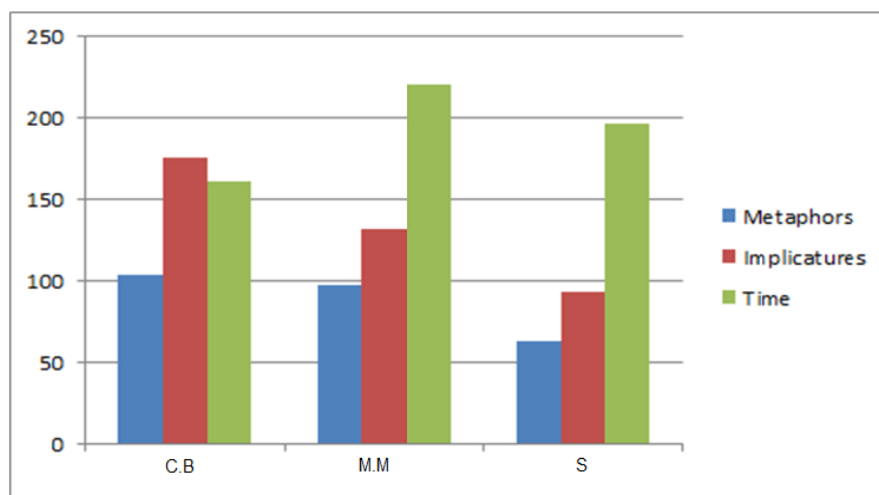
Figure 8: Relationship between processing time and number of inferred implicatures for the L2 participants.
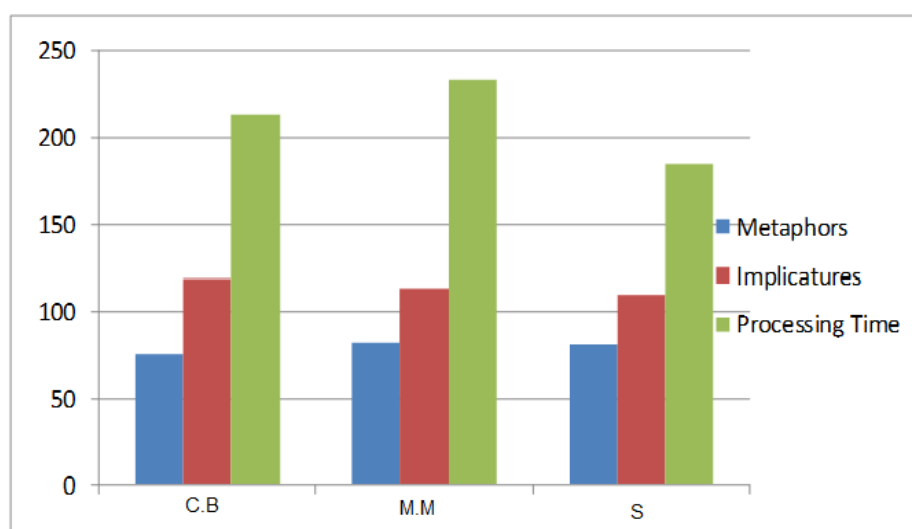
Figure 7 shows that the L1 participants spent significantly less time processing metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than they did in the two other poems. At the same time, the L1 participants inferred more metaphorical implicatures in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than they did in the other two poems. This can be attributed to the fact that the L1 participants found the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" easier to interpret than most of the other metaphors in the other two poems. While both "Crossing the Bar" and "The Motive for Metaphor" included conventional metaphors,

the former poem involved more conventional and less creative metaphors than the latter poem. In this respect, (T) drew a comparison between the metaphors he dealt with in the poem "Crossing the Bar" and those he was addressing in the poem "Snow", stating,

> So the metaphors are not perhaps as obvious as in Tennyson but like Tennyson the metaphors adopt to something more complete rather than being used as a kind of a passing phrase the metaphors bind to the whole poem and make up its totality.

(A) makes a similar comparison, comparing the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" to those in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". Thus she states that "I think what he wants to say here is not the old kind of Tennyson's metaphors it is something completely different". Likewise she comments on the metaphors in the poem "Snow" by setting them against the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar". Thus she remarks, "I think the metaphors in this poem are not as clear as they are in Tennyson".

A surprising finding, however, is that some of the synthetic L1 participants were not satisfied with the conventional metaphorical implicatures they inferred, but sought further implicatures. In fact, while some of the participants did not immediately infer some of the conventional metaphors which could account for the poem's potential meanings, some others still looked for further possible implicatures even after having inferred a plausible implicature that was in harmony with a conventional conceptual metaphor. For example, (P), who identified a conventional metaphorical interpretation in dealing with the expression "I hope to see my Pilot face to face", infers that "Pilot" could stand for God, an interpretation which fit in readily with his overall understanding of the poem "Crossing the Bar" as a journey towards death, hence he states, "Stands for Christ over the flood; most clearly want to see my pilot face to face I hope to be (.) metaphor for Christian redemption".

Nevertheless, (P) does not stop at this interpretation which seems quite plausible, but considers an alternative interpretation on a subsequent occasion. Thus he comments,

> I suppose my Pilot is a guide who shows somebody the way so in that sense perhaps the pilot as well as standing metaphorically for Christ can also be related to we can read it in terms of a dead beloved who has preceded the speaker through death but I think that again that feels like a secondary sense a secondary metaphor.

(E) and (A) showed the same tendency as (P), though they seemed quite confident about the notion of imminent death prevailing in the poem, thus considering alternative interpretations for metaphors they seemed to be certain about their conventional metaphorical meanings. One possible explanation for this tendency is that the L1 participants found a number of concepts featuring in the poem "Crossing the Bar" and some in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" rich in terms of conventional poetic associations and were, therefore, able to retrieve a wide range of associations for these frequent poetic concepts, considering a wide range of possible implicatures. By contrast, the L1 participants found the concepts making up most metaphors in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" less evocative of poetic conventional associations. Thus, although they spent more time processing metaphors in both poems, they could access fewer assumptions or associations and thus inferred fewer metaphorical implicatures than they did in the poem "Crossing the Bar".

Figure 8 shows that the L2 participants spent slightly less time on the poem "Crossing the Bar" than on the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" but more time on the poem "Crossing the Bar" than on the poem "Snow". Looking back to the L2 participants' metaphor interpretation processes, it can be seen that the majority of the L2 participants dealt with the metaphors in the three poems as creative metaphors. Thus, with the exception of three participants, who interpreted the poem against a

conventional conceptual metaphor, showing awareness of some target-culture religious and symbolic associations, all other participants interpreted the poem in a creative manner. Hence, difference in length of time expended on the three poems seems to be determined by the length of the poems rather than by the type of metaphors. Hence the L2 participants spent longer periods of time on the processing of the longer poems "Crossing the Bar" and "The Motive for Metaphor" than on the shorter poem "Snow". Like the L1 participants, the L2 participants inferred slightly more implicatures for the poem "Crossing the Bar" than for the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" though they spent slightly less time on the poem "Crossing the Bar". Again this might be explained by the fact that although the majority of the L2 participants treated the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" as creative, they still found these metaphors less challenging than those in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" and, consequently, could think of more than one plausible interpretation on some occasions. These findings give strong support the prediction that the L1 participants will invest less time on the processing of conventional metaphors but gives no conclusive evidence about the L2 participants. In addition, this finding contradicts the prediction that the L1 and L2 participants will derive more interpretations for the creative metaphors, mostly located in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow", than for conventional metaphors, mostly located in the poem "Crossing the Bar".

A major difference that can be seen between the L1 and L2 participants is that the L1 participants spent significantly much less time than the L2 participants in connection with the poem "Crossing the Bar" and inferred more implicatures as well. This finding supports the prediction stated within the cognitive effort hypothesis that the L1 participants will invest less time on conventional metaphor interpretation than the L2 participants. Nevertheless, contrary to what has been predicted by the cognitive

effort hypothesis, the L1 participants inferred more implicatures than the L2 participants with respect to the poem "Crossing the Bar". This finding can be explained by the fact that the L1 participants seemed to find the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" more evocative of familiar literary and symbolic associations than the L2 participants, which allowed them to consider a wider range of interpretations than the L2 participants.

No major difference can be seen concerning the L1 and L2 participants' processing effort and range of implicatures in relation to the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow". Although both groups of readers invested more interpretative effort on the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" than on the poem "Crossing the Bar", they still did not derive richer interpretations on account of the higher effort they expended. This finding suggests that challenging creative metaphors pose interpretation difficulties for both L1 and L2 participants.

5.5 Final metaphor interpretations

This section focuses on the differences and similarities between the L1 and L2 participants' metaphor interpretation products. This section is meant to verify the "implicature convergence hypothesis" stated above, which relates to aspects of convergence and divergence in the participants' final metaphor products, both within and across participant group. The implicature "implicature convergence hypothesis" predicts that the participants will infer more converging interpretations in the poem "Crossing the bar" than in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow". This prediction is based on the fact that the former poem includes a number of metaphors which can potentially be interpreted against the conventional conceptual metaphors LIFE IS A DAY, DEATH IS A JOURNEY, DEATH IS DEPARTURE. By contrast, the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" are less interpretable in terms of

conventional conceptual metaphors and are, therefore, more likely to generate a wider range of diverging implicatures. The "implicature convergence hypothesis" predicts that the L1 participants will infer more converging implicatures than the L2 participants in relation to the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" on account of their superior culture-specific knowledge and greater familiarity with conventional conceptual metaphors. It also predicts that both the L1 and L2 participants will derive overlapping metaphor interpretations in the three poems, but more overlapping is expected in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar" than in relation to the two other poems.

Focusing on the L1 and L2 participants' final metaphor interpretation products, it can be noted that the participants produced mostly divergent interpretations across the three poems (See Appendices G, H, and I below for the L1 participants' range of implicatures per metaphor, and Appendices J, K, and L, for the L2 participants' range of implicatures per metaphor). On few cases, however, they produced convergent metaphor interpretations. Most cases of convergence were identified in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar", where more conventional conceptual metaphors were likely to be inferred. Indeed, the L1 participants derived a significantly higher level of converging implicatures in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than they did in the other poems. The L2 participants showed only a limited degree of convergence in the poem "Crossing the Bar", but more converging implicatures in the latter poem than in the other two poems. The findings suggest that conventional metaphors are likely to generate converging metaphorical interpretations more often than creative metaphors. The findings give strong support to the convergence hypothesis, particularly for the L1 participants, as evidence shows that the participants derived convergent and so strong implicatures in connection with the poem "Crossing the Bar", containing mostly conventional metaphors while inferring mostly divergent and so weak implicatures in

the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow", where creative metaphors dominate.

Differences were, however, noted between the L1 and L2 participants regarding the degree of convergence between their corresponding implicatures. Indeed, the L1 participants produced significantly more converging implicatures than the L2 participants in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar", which mostly related to one or more conventional conceptual metaphors potentially underlying the poem. Thus seven L1 participants inferred the implicature "Death" in interpreting the metaphorical expression "Crossed the Bar". Likewise, five L1 participants inferred the implicature "a sign of death" when interpreting the expression "One clear call for me". In addition, six participants interpreted the expression "Put out to sea" as meaning a "Journey to Death". In interpreting the metaphorical expression "and after that the dark", seven participants inferred the implicature "Death". Similarly, nine participants attributed the implicature "God/Jesus" to the expression "I hope to see my Pilot face to face". Only one significant case of convergence is noted in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", with five L1 participants proposing similar implicatures for the expression "and repeats words without meaning" while no cases of convergence are noted in relation to the poem "Snow".

Compared to the L1 participants, the L2 participants produced fewer converging implicatures even in the poem "Crossing the Bar". In two cases, five participants inferred a common implicature, thus ascribing the implicatures "Journey from life to death" and "metaphor for life" for the expression "Crossed the bar". Otherwise, no significant cases of convergence were noted in relation to the other metaphors in the three poems. The results show that convergence is more likely to occur when the metaphorical expressions are realized in conventional terms. Thus all L1 participants

except (J), (Y), and (D) inferred the general metaphor of DEATH AS A JOURNEY in the poem "Crossing the Bar" and have, therefore, produced converging implicatures in relation to many metaphorical expressions. Similarly, (H), (N), and (M)in the L2 participant group took notice of some clues which drew their attention to the conventional metaphor DEATH AS A JOURNEY. The remaining participants did not take notice of any clues and, instead, interpreted the metaphorical expressions in a rather creative way. The least degree of convergence is observed in relation to the poems "The motive for metaphor" and "Snow". Indeed, in dealing with both poems, the participants expressed difficulties in inferring a central metaphor and, therefore, inferred widely diverging implicatures.

The evidence supports the prediction stated in the "implicature convergence hypothesis", predicting that the L1 participants will show more converging implicatures than the L2 participants in dealing with conventional metaphors, mostly in the poem "Crossing the Bar". This finding suggests that the L2 participants are not as efficient as the L1 participants in retrieving conventional conceptual metaphors despite the fact that the concerned conceptual metaphors are shared by both cultures. The finding also suggests that the L1 cultural background knowledge gives the L1 readers the edge over the L2 participants in interpreting poetic metaphors, particularly when conventional metaphors are involved.

Overlapping implicatures were also noted across both participant groups, particularly in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar", though the L1 participants represented the largest group for most cases of inter-group convergences. This can be explained by the fact that the conventional conceptual metaphors underlying the poem "Crossing the Bar" were evident to most L1 participants but only to few L2 participants. Fewer cases of cross convergences were noted in relation to the other two

poems. Again this finding highlights the role of the reader's cultural background knowledge in interpreting poetic metaphors, both conventional and creative. Hence, the results support the prediction entailed by "the implicature convergence hypothesis", which anticipates that the L1 and L2 participants will generate overlapping but also different metaphor interpretations, with more converging implicatures noted in the poem "Crossing the Bar".

The model in figure 9 below illustrates the main metaphor interpretation tendencies and the implicature generation patterns shown by the L1 and L2 participants.
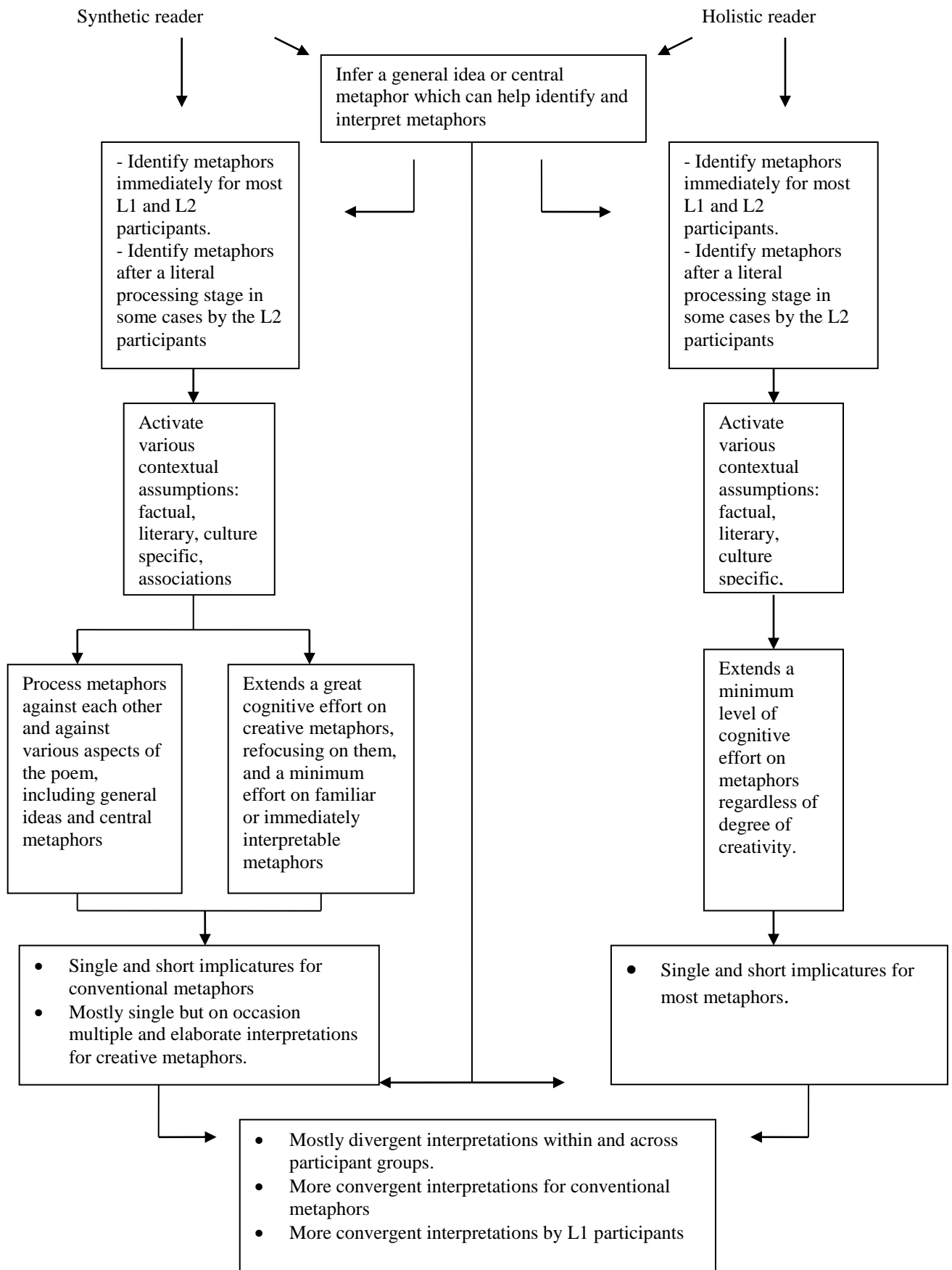
Synthetic reader

Holistic reader

Infer a general idea or central metaphor which can help identify and interpret metaphors

- Identify metaphors immediately for most L1 and L2 participants.
- Identify metaphors after a literal processing stage in some cases by the L2 participants

- Identify metaphors immediately for most L1 and L2 participants.
- Identify metaphors after a literal processing stage in some cases by the L2 participants

Activate various contextual assumptions: factual, literary, culture specific, associations

Activate various contextual assumptions: factual, literary, culture specific,

Process metaphors against each other and against various aspects of the poem, including general ideas and central metaphors

Extends a great cognitive effort on creative metaphors, refocusing on them, and a minimum effort on familiar or immediately interpretable metaphors

Extends a minimum level of cognitive effort on metaphors regardless of degree of creativity.

- Single and short implicatures for conventional metaphors
- Mostly single but on occasion multiple and elaborate interpretations for creative metaphors.

- Single and short implicatures for most metaphors.

- Mostly divergent interpretations within and across participant groups.
- More convergent interpretations for conventional metaphors
- More convergent interpretations by L1 participants

Figure 9: Model of the poetic metaphor interpretation process as reconstructed from the L1 and L2 participants' think-aloud protocols.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on differences between the L1 and L2 participants with respect to some aspects of the metaphors interpretation process. Analysis of the L1 and L2 participants' think-aloud protocols shows that as a whole the L1 participants identified more metaphors than the L2 participants. While the L1 and L2 participants identified both conventional and creative metaphors, the L1 participants surprisingly identified more conventional metaphors than the L2 participants. This finding suggests that poetic metaphors are always open to further interpretations as there are no clear-cut distinctions between conventional and creative metaphors. Thus the participants attend to metaphorical expressions even though they might seem familiar or evocative of conventional meanings and check their meaning potential against the new context.

Analysis of the participants' metaphor interpretation processes shows that the participants mostly followed a one-stage interpretative process, though few cases of a two-stage interpretative process were noted. The L1 participants showed more cases of direct metaphor interpretation than the L2 participants in the three poems. However, the largest differences between both groups regarding metaphor processing stages were noted in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar". This finding was attributed to the fact that the poem "Crossing the Bar" involved more conventional metaphors than the other two poems, which involved more creative metaphors. This suggests that the L1 participants' higher awareness of the conventional metaphors in their target language assisted them in identifying and interpreting conventional poetic metaphors more efficiently than the L2 participants and that L2 participants do not systematically identify conventional metaphors in a linguistically foreign context even though they may be universally shared. The L2 participants also showed few cases of a two-stage interpretative process in the other two poems, though less than they did in the poem

"Crossing the Bar". This was noticed in relation to the poem "Snow" and less in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". Though both poems contained mostly creative metaphors, the poem "Snow" contained more implicit metaphors than the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". This finding suggests that L2 participants may hesitate between literal and metaphorical readings when no explicit clues are available to creative metaphors. The findings help to answer question number two concerned with the metaphor interpretation stages. The results also provide strong support to the one-stage processing hypothesis in so far as the L1 participants are concerned but question its applicability to the L2 poetry reading context.

In the second section of this chapter I dealt with differences between the L1 and L2 participants with respect to the types of contextual assumptions they relied on in making sense of the metaphors they identified. Participants in both groups were found to rely on a diverse range of assumptions, which included assumptions from their knowledge of the world, literary and symbolic associations, cultural assumptions as well as a variety of lexical and semantic associations connected with a number of concepts featuring in the poems. Both the L1 and L2 participants mostly relied on assumptions derived from their knowledge of the world. However, as a whole the L1 participants made a more frequent use of literary, symbolic, lexical, and cultural associations than the L2 participants while the L2 participants relied more frequently on factual assumptions than the L1 participants. Though not a rule, participants seemed to rely on their knowledge of the world or on semantic lexical associations when they failed to access relevant conventional associations, literary or symbolic. While reliance on cultural assumptions was not widely observed, the evidence suggests that the L1 participants still had a slightly greater access to relevant cultural assumptions than the L2 participants. These findings provide answers to question number four concerned

with types of contextual assumptions used by participants and possible differences between the L1 and L2 participants. The findings also give rather strong support to the "assumption activation hypothesis" predicting that the L1 and L2 participants will attend to contextual assumptions from the encyclopedic entries of the concepts comprising the metaphorical expressions among others. However, the findings show that the L2 participants did not rely on their own culture in making sense of the poem, presumably aware that much of their culture would be irrelevant to the interpretation of metaphors in an English poem, but attempted instead to activate cultural assumptions from the target culture. Thus the findings help to refine rather than reject the "assumption activation hypothesis", suggesting that advanced L2 readers may reduce reliance on their native cultural background while maximizing sensitivity to the target language culture.

The relationship between metaphor type and length of time invested by the L1 and L2 participants provides conclusive evidence for the L1 participants but not for the L2 participants. As far as cognitive effort is concerned, it can be seen that the L1 participants did spend more time on the processing of metaphors in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" than on the poem "Crossing the Bar". The L2 participants did spend slightly more time on the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" than on the poem "Crossing the Bar" but they also spent more time on the processing of the poem "Crossing the Bar" than on the poem "Snow". This can be explained by the fact that most L1 participants and only few L2 participants identified the conventional metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar", hence the L1 participants found it easier to interpret the metaphors in this poem while most L2 participants dealt with the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" as creative ones. These findings inform the first part of question six concerned with the amount of cognitive effort invested by the

L1 and L2 participants on conventional and creative metaphors. Moreover, the L1 participants are found to invest significantly less time on the processing of the poem "Crossing the bar" than the L2 participants, a finding which informs the second part of question six, while no significant differences between both groups of participants is noted in relation to both other poems. This finding confirms the prediction stated in the cognitive effort hypothesis, predicting the L1 participants will invest less time than the L2 participants on the interpretation of the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar".

Relationship between processing time and number of implicatures derived by the L1 and L2 participants for conventional and creative metaphors contradicts the cognitive effort hypothesis. In fact, the L1 participants spent more time processing the metaphors in the poems "The motive for metaphor" and "Snow" than in the poem "Crossing the Bar" and yet inferred fewer metaphors for the former poems. This finding can be explained by the fact that the L1 participants found the conventional metaphors evocative of more conventional and symbolic associations than the metaphors in the other two poems and could, therefore, think of a wider range of plausible implicatures for a minimum amount of time. By contrast they found the metaphors in the other two poems less evocative of symbolic and conventional associations. However, rather than seeking a wide range of possibilities, they seemed content with the first implicatures they could think of. The L2 participants invested slightly more time on the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" than on the poem "Crossing the Bar" but inferred slightly more interpretations for the latter poem. This can be explained by the fact that the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" are less challenging than the metaphors in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". In addition, some L2 participants inferred conventional metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar",

which rendered their interpretation of the latter poem easier and more evocative of possible interpretations.

The L1 participants also inferred more implicatures for the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants although they invested less time on this poem. This finding contradicts the prediction stated in the "cognitive effort hypothesis" in so far as cognitive effort spent on conventional metaphors is concerned as the hypothesis predicts that the L1 participants will spend less time on the processing of metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants and will derive fewer interpretations. Again this finding can be explained by the fact that more L1 participants identified conventional metaphors than L2 participants in the poem "Crossing the Bar", which allowed them to infer metaphorical expressions more readily than the L2 participants. This suggests that the L1 participants are more efficient than the L2 participants in interpreting poetic metaphors, notably conventional metaphors. Nevertheless, this finding also contradicts the prediction stated in the cognitive effort hypothesis that the L1 participants will infer fewer implicatures for conventional metaphors mostly located in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants.

No major difference between the L1 and L2 participants was observed with respect to the relationship between processing time and number of inferred implicatures in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow". This finding suggests that although the participants may be willing to invest more time on creative metaphors than on conventional metaphors, they still fail to infer richer interpretations for the former type of metaphor. The findings suggest that creative metaphors pose a challenge to L1 and L2 participants alike. The findings give partial support to the "cognitive effort hypothesis" in that conventional metaphors seemed to require less processing time than creative metaphors, especially for the L1 participants. Nevertheless, the findings

contradict the prediction that creative metaphors will generate a higher number of implicatures than conventional metaphors as a result of the higher amount of processing effort invested.

Considering the L1 and L2 participants' final metaphor interpretation products, it can be noted that the participants produced mostly diverging metaphor interpretations in relation to the three poems, while converging interpretations represented only a minor part of the inferred implicatures. Most converging implicatures were noted in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar" in the L1 context while no significant differences were noted in the number of converging implicatures across the three poems in the L2 context, though slightly more convergences were noted in the poem "Crossing the Bar". These findings provide partial support to the implicature convergence hypothesis listed earlier, predicting that L1 and L2 participants will derive more converging implicatures in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than in the other two poems and that L1 participants will still infer more converging implicatures in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants. While the latter part was confirmed, the former prediction shows that only the L1 participants showed significant cases of converging implicatures in the poem "Crossing the Bar" while the L2 participants showed limited cases of convergence as most of them seemed to deal with the metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" as creative metaphors, hence the divergence in their final interpretations.

Converging implicatures were noted across participant groups, particularly in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar", though the L1 participants represented the largest group for most cases of between-group convergences. This can be explained by the fact that the conventional conceptual metaphors underlying the poem "Crossing the Bar" were evident to most L1 participants but only to three L2 participants. Fewer cases

of cross convergences were noted in relation to the other two poems. This finding highlights the role of the reader's cultural background knowledge in interpreting poetic metaphors, both conventional and creative, suggesting that L1 participants are more efficient than the L2 participants in identifying conventional metaphors and in accessing relevant associations.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Implications

6.1 Introduction

    This chapter reviews the main conclusions derived from the data analysis chapter and proposes a range of pedagogical implications for metaphor teaching practice, which are informed by the research findings of the present study. These can serve as research-based orientations for EFL teachers, by reference to which better teaching techniques can be devised to promote the L2 learners' metaphor interpretation skills.

6.2 Main Conclusions

    This study is undertaken to explore the actual metaphor interpretation processes that L1 and L2 advanced-level participants make use of while interpreting poems. This study is designed to determine differences in the knowledge frames the L1 and L2 learners may draw on during the interpretative process and whether the L1 learners' cultural background knowledge puts them at advantage over the L2 learners. In addition, the study aims to establish whether the L1 and L2 learners are inclined to interpret poetic metaphors creatively or rather stick to a superficial reading of the metaphors they encounter in poetry. Relevance theory is chosen as a plausible theoretical framework for the present study as it was judged to provide a more plausible account of the process of metaphor interpretation than other metaphor theories. The theory is better suited than other theories to account for the online activation of knowledge resources the reader draws on and to describe the online steps readers undertake in making sense of metaphors with different degrees of creativity. Most importantly, the theory offers general communicative and cognitive principles of relevance which can adequately account for variation in the metaphor interpretative process as applied to different kinds of metaphors. In addition, the theory can best

account for variation in the process of interpretation across different readers and reader groups.

The analysis of the L1 and L2 participants' think-aloud protocols revealed both similarities and differences with respect to the poetic metaphor identification and interpretation processes employed by both groups. In interpreting the metaphorical expressions they identified, the participants showed two tendencies. The first processing strategy consisted of positing a general idea or central metaphor, against which the whole poem was interpreted, including any local metaphors which the participant identified. Alternatively, the participants would integrate assumptions from different parts of the text as well as from their background knowledge to interpret the poem and any metaphors in a rather bottom-up manner. The former strategy was used in all three poems by both groups of participants. However, it was more obviously used by most L1 participants in the poem "Crossing the Bar" together with three L2 participants. These were the participants who identified one of the potential conceptual metaphors underlying the poem "Crossing the Bar", and who, therefore, interpreted most metaphors in relation to the central metaphor they brought to bear on the poem.

The participants used an alternative strategy when they found it difficult to infer a general idea or a central metaphor. This consisted of interpreting the metaphorical expressions in relation to one another and in relation to contextual assumptions derived from different parts of the text. A minority group in both the L1 and L2 participant groups used this strategy more frequently than their respective group partners across the three poems. However, while the L2 integrating participants used this strategy across the three poems in a similar way, the integrating L1 participants, excepting (A), used this strategy less clearly in the poem "Crossing the Bar". This can be explained by the fact that all the L1 integrating participants identified a central metaphor in the poem

"Crossing the Bar", and hence faced less need to integrate assumptions, while the L1 participants together with the integrating L2 participants dealt with the metaphorical expressions as creative and, therefore, maintained their general integrative interpretation style. Throughout, the L1 readers used the integrative processing strategy more frequently than their L2 integrative counterparts.

Both processing strategies show that the majority of the participants go beyond the immediate concepts forming the metaphorical expression and consider the wider context in making sense of metaphors. The majority of the participants showed a tendency to integrate information and to consider assumptions from various sources of knowledge, while a minority group in the L1 and L2 groups showed little inclination to engage in an adequate context construction effort, even when they failed to infer a general interpretative framework.

The participants in both groups showed a general tendency to infer single interpretations for the metaphors they identified across the three poems. However, on a few occasions, the participants did seek more than one single interpretation. The participants showed a tendency to infer single interpretations when they identified a central idea or metaphor which they confidently brought to bear on the text whereas they considered more than one interpretation in some cases where they failed to bring the text to a definite interpretation. The latter tendency was more frequently evidenced by the integrating participants in both groups, even when a central metaphor was confidently derived, as it was the case in the poem "Crossing the Bar". In a few cases, the readers even failed to propose interpretations for some of the metaphors they identified. This finding shows that with the exception of few participants in each language group, most readers paid as much attention as was needed to posit one single interpretation, which means that most readers did not set themselves a high meaning

construction threshold when interpreting poetic metaphors and treated them as they did other types of metaphors, which runs counter to the relevance theoretic account of poetic metaphor interpretation. Another surprising finding is that some L1 learners, notably the integrating ones, did consider further plausible interpretations when they seemed to infer the conventional conceptual metaphors underlying the poem "Crossing the Bar". This finding seems to be explained by the fact that the L1 participants found conventional metaphors more amenable to interpretation than creative metaphors as they could retrieve conventional associations connected with the conventional metaphor vehicles.

Differences between the L1 and L2 participants were noted in relation to a number of aspects of the poetic metaphor interpretative process. With regard to metaphor identification, the L1 participants showed an overall tendency to attend to more metaphors than the L2 participants. However, the L1 participants remarkably identified more metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants. This is the poem where the surface level metaphors could potentially be interpreted against the conventional conceptual metaphors LIFETIME IS A DAY, DEATH IS DEPARTURE, and DEATH IS A JOURNEY. As revealed by the participants' interpretation protocols, the L1 participants showed evidence of the use of these conceptual metaphors while interpreting the poem "Crossing the Bar", while only three L2 participants showed traces of these conceptual metaphors during their interpretations of the poem. This finding suggests that the L1 participants' familiarity with the conceptual metaphors helped them notice more metaphors than the L2 participants. A rather surprising finding was noted with respect to the identification of metaphorical expressions in the poem "Crossing the Bar" by the L1 participants. Thus while it was expected that the L1 participants would pay less attention to the metaphorical expressions in the poem

"Crossing the Bar" than in the other two poems on the grounds that the former poem contained a higher number of conventional metaphors, the L1 participants paid no less attention to the metaphorical expressions in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than those in the other three poems. This finding suggests that in poetry reading, even conventional metaphors may catch the reader's attention. In addition, knowledge of relevant conceptual metaphors seem to facilitate the identification of metaphors.

Identification of the more creative metaphors featuring in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" did not fit into a clear pattern. While the L1 participants identified more metaphors than the L2 participants in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", the L2 participants identified more metaphors than the L1 participants in the poem "Snow". The L1 participants showed a clear tendency to focus on more discrete metaphors than the L2 participants in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", but were less willing than the L2 participants to treat certain expressions as metaphorical in the poem "Snow". This finding suggests that the L2 learners were more willing to over-interpret a poem metaphorically than the L1 participants when no clues were available. However, this explanation is rather tentative and is not strongly borne out by the present study. It is also inconsistent with previous research showing that L2 participants were more inclined to miss metaphors when no clear clues were available in the surrounding context.

Focusing on the metaphor interpretation process, the results show that both the L1 and L2 participants followed mostly a one-stage interpretative process. However, the L2 participants showed more cases of a two-stage interpretative process than the L1 participants. This difference was manifest in the three poems, though it was mostly evidenced in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar". In fact, the L2 learners showed significantly more cases of a two-stage interpretative process in dealing with the poem

"Crossing the Bar" than the L1 learners. This finding suggests that the L1 participants were more efficient than the L2 participants in dealing with both creative and conventional metaphors. However, the difference was mostly noted in the poem "Crossing the Bar" and "Snow", which provided less clues for a metaphorical reading than the poem "The Motive for Metaphor". This finding suggests that the L2 learners still go though a literal interpretative stage and at times miss a figurative interpretation in interpreting poetic metaphors.

Both the L1 and L2 participants were found to use assumptions from different sources. These covered their knowledge of the world, literary and symbolic associations, lexical associations, and cultural associations. Both groups of participants relied more on their knowledge of the world than on other assumptions. However, the L2 participants relied more frequently on their knowledge of the world than the L1 participants, while the L1 participants relied more on literary, symbolic and lexical associations, rarely showing evidence of cultural association use. The evidence suggests that the L1 participants had a greater access to relevant literary symbolic and cultural associations than the L2 participants and assumed these to be more relevant for metaphor interpretation than knowledge of the world. Similarly, the L2 participants tended to assume that their cultural background knowledge was irrelevant to the interpretation of poetic metaphors in the L1 context and as such rarely focused on their own cultural background, using information from the target culture when available. However, the L2 participants relied more on their knowledge of the world than the L1 participants as an attempt to compensate for lack of relevant literary, symbolic, and lexical and culture specific associations.

The study did not reveal significant correlations between length of time spent on the processing of metaphors and the number of implicatures derived. While it was expected

that the participants would invest more time on the poems "Snow" and "The Motive for Metaphor" than on the poem "Crossing the Bar" and would consequently derive more implicatures for the former two poems, the protocols yielded opposite findings. The findings show that the L1 and L2 participants did spend more time on more challenging metaphorical expressions than conventional ones, but did not necessarily infer a wide range of implicatures. In fact, the L1 participants invested more time on the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" than on the poem "Crossing the Bar", and yet inferred more implicatures for the latter poem. This can mostly be accounted for by the fact that the L1 participants found the poem "Crossing the Bar" easier to interpret than the other two poems on account of the conventional conceptual metaphors they identified. In addition, the integrative participants in the L1 group were not satisfied with the immediate interpretations they could infer in this and other poems and considered further possibilities alongside the immediate inferences they could infer for some metaphors. This finding suggests that there is no clear-cut distinction between conventional and creative metaphors in poetry and readers are always inclined to look for possible new meanings even for apparently conventional metaphors. The L2 participants spent almost as much time on the processing of the poem "Crossing the Bar" and the poem "The Motive for Metaphor", but derived slightly more implicatures for the former poem. This can be explained by the fact that some L2 participants identified the conventional metaphors underlying the poem "Crossing the Bar". In addition, the L2 participants seemed to find the poem "Crossing the Bar" relatively easier to interpret than the metaphors in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow".

The findings suggest that the L1 participants are more efficient in the interpretation of conventional metaphors than creative metaphors. They are also more efficient in the

interpretation of both conventional and creative metaphors than the L2 participants, but they are significantly more successful in interpreting conventional metaphors than the L2 participants. Thus the L1 participants invested less time in the interpretation of the poem "Crossing the Bar" and yet inferred more implicatures. This can be explained by the fact that most of the L1 participants identified the conventional conceptual metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" while only a few of the L2 participants showed traces of these conventional conceptual metaphors. These conventional conceptual metaphors might have facilitated the process of metaphor identification and interpretation for the L1 readers while the L2 readers might have dealt with these metaphors as creative ones, hence spending more time.

Considering the participants' metaphor interpretations it can be noted that the participants inferred mostly divergent interpretations across the three poems. However, some convergent interpretations were noted in the poem "Crossing the Bar". This is particularly shown by the L1 participants, who showed significantly more convergent interpretations in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants. This finding suggests that the L1 readers are capable of deriving strong implicatures for conventional metaphors and a wider range of weak implicatures for creative metaphors while the L2 readers are less capable of deriving strong implicatures for conventional metaphors, deriving weak implicatures for all types of metaphorical expressions.

The study findings detailed above suggest a number of pedagogical and research implications, which I will elaborate in the following two sections.

6.3 Pedagogical implications

On the basis of the research findings provided by this study and previous similar studies, it can be noted that learners seem to have no clear idea of what constitutes an adequate poetic metaphor interpretation achievement. In addition, they seem to lack

some efficiency in adapting their metaphorical interpretative processes to different types of metaphors and, presumably, to different types of texts. Hence, it can be noted that L2 learners' metaphorical interpretation skills are not fully developed and some assistance is needed to help them develop their metaphorical interpretation competence. As a remedy, a number of pedagogical implications can be proposed which can help L2 teachers and students reach better metaphor interpretations, both in literary as well as in other types of text.

6.3.1 Metacognitive awareness raising practice

To help students understand the requirements for an adequate interpretation of poetic metaphors, a pragmatic component may well be introduced in poetry teaching courses which can enhance L2 learners' awareness of the poetry reading process. In fact, L2 teachers can provide their students with a set of awareness raising tasks relating to different aspects of the metaphor interpretation process. Research on metacognitive awareness raising has shown that learners can benefit from training sessions which are designed to enhance their command of language processing skills relating to a particular academic subject (Ely & Alvarez, 1996). Awareness raising involves introducing learners to basic concepts of the metaphor interpretation process and efficient processing strategies. These are explained and illustrated by authentic examples and reinforced through classroom practice tasks.

6.3.1.1 Conventional metaphors versus creative metaphors

On the basis of the findings in the present study, it can be noted that the L2 participants are not as efficient as the L1 participants in identifying and interpreting conventional metaphors. With the exception of three L2 participants, the remaining participants dealt with the poem "Crossing the Bar" in the same way as they dealt with the other two poems, treating metaphors as creative metaphors. By contrast, the L1

participants showed more ease with the identification and interpretation of metaphors in the poem "Crossing the Bar" than the L2 participants. This suggests that teachers may try to make L2 learners aware of the distinction between conventional and creative metaphors, portraying them as two ends of a continuum rather than as clear-cut categories. At this stage, the teacher can introduce the notion of conceptual metaphors to the L2 learners as a way of facilitating the distinction between conventional and creative metaphors.

6.3.1.2 Conceptual metaphor awareness raising

The teacher can introduce his students to the notion of conceptual metaphors. At this level, the teacher illustrates the role that conceptual metaphors can play in interpreting metaphors, especially conventional metaphors, both in poetry and outside poetic texts. The teacher emphasizes that conceptual metaphors can help the students gain autonomy with the metaphor interpretative process, showing how a number of linguistic metaphors in poetic as well as in non-literary texts can be interpreted by reference to conventional conceptual metaphors. This step seems of paramount importance to L2 learners. As the present study has shown, only few L2 learners managed to identify the conceptual metaphors of LIFE IS A JOURNEY, LIFE IS A DAY, DEATH IS A JOURNEY in dealing with the poem "Crossing the Bar", which prevented them from identifying potential metaphorical expressions, treating some text sections at a literal level. By contrast, seven of the L1 learners managed to identify these conceptual metaphors in dealing with the same poem. Raising L2 learners' awareness of conceptual metaphors is reported to result in enhanced metaphor noticing and metaphor interpretation (Gibbs & Nascimento, 1996; Picken, 2007). In this respect, Picken (2007) suggests that the teacher introduces students to the most common conceptual metaphors which relate to recurrent themes in poetry and literature in

general. These are likely to prove quite useful in helping learners notice metaphors and interpret them. In addition, raising the L2 learners' awareness of conceptual metaphors is important as it helps them identify invisible metaphors. As the present study has revealed, L2 learners tended to interpret many expressions in the poem "Crossing the Bar" at a literal level, and showed a greater tendency than the L1 readers to move through an initial literal interpretative stage before shifting to a figurative interpretation. In fact, the L1 learners' awareness of conventional conceptual metaphors seems to have given them the edge over the L2 readers with respect to the poem "Crossing the Bar". Picken (2007) reported that participants who were introduced to conceptual metaphors were able to notice and interpret invisible metaphors in follow-up studies, which provides strong evidence that knowledge of conceptual metaphors is a useful resource for helping learners identify and interpret implicit metaphors in the long term, hence gaining autonomy with the metaphor interpretation process.

Practice can consist in illustrating how a number of surface level linguistic metaphors in the same poem or across a number of poems and poets can all be traced back to an underlying conceptual metaphor. The teacher may point out a number of expressions in the poem and ask the learners to trace them back to a conceptual metaphor. The teacher may use the reverse procedure, positing one or more conceptual metaphors underlying the poem and asking the learners to identify any expressions in the poem which can be interpreted as instantiations of the underlying conceptual metaphor. The teacher may also use poems with less explicit metaphors, which can potentially be reduced to an already familiar conceptual metaphor, and ask learners to infer the potential conceptual metaphor underlying the poem and the expressions that instantiate them in the poem.

The teacher may also use more creative metaphors, which can in turn be traced to conventional conceptual metaphors. This practice highlights how apparently original metaphor can potentially be reduced to underlying conventional metaphors. Thus learners are encouraged to look carefully for clues around the text that might help them detect conventional conceptual metaphors behind original creative metaphors.

The teacher, however, highlights the fact that awareness of conceptual metaphors is not sufficient for the interpretation of all types of creative metaphors and that conceptual metaphors represent only one aspect of the figurative competence of the reader. Further processing skills need to be developed to deal more successfully with creative metaphors showing little connection to an underlying conceptual metaphor.

6.3.2 Creative metaphor interpretation

While conceptual metaphors can help with the interpretation of conventional metaphors and the identification and interpretation of invisible metaphors, they seem less helpful when learners engage with novel creative metaphors. The present study has shown that the L1 and L2 participants faced more interpretation difficulties in dealing with the metaphors in the poem "The Motive for Metaphor" than in both other poems and still more interpretation difficulties in the poem "Snow" than in the poem "Crossing the Bar". In dealing with the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow", both the L1 and L2 participants showed little convergence in relation to the implications they have inferred as both poems could not potentially be traced back to a clear conceptual metaphor. While the participants were expected to invest more cognitive effort and to derive a wide range of interpretations in dealing with challenging metaphors, the study revealed that the participants were mostly inclined to consider a single plausible implicature, with only few participants in each language group seeking more than one possible interpretation. The latter participants were more

prepared than the other participants to take ambiguity in their stride and to integrate information from different parts of the text in an attempt to construct relevant contextual assumptions. They also considered more extra-textual assumptions than the other participants, relying one their knowledge of the world and literary assumptions as well as a variety of connotations to derive relevant implicatures. Hence they inferred more elaborate implicatures than the other participants. Nevertheless, the other participants seemed to rely on the most accessible assumptions they could think of and did not seem to make sufficient effort to enrich the range of possible assumptions. In a few cases, the participants expressed difficulties with the interpretation process, preferring to abandon the interpretation task altogether.

These findings suggest that the teacher may try to raise their students' awareness of efficient processing strategies to be applied when dealing with creative poetic metaphors. Learners need to be made aware of the fact that ambiguity is a normal feature of poetry and metaphor is one such device that pots use to generate density and ambiguity of meaning. They are then encouraged to deal with ambiguity as a normal aspect of poetic texts. The learners can also be made aware of the fact that poetic metaphors are to be explored through the derivation of a wide range of interpretations rather than to be brought to a definite single interpretation. At this point, the teacher highlights the importance of spending sufficient time and effort on challenging poetic metaphors rather than ignoring them. A number of concepts and corresponding tasks can be introduced to enhance the students' approach to creative poetic metaphors.

6.3.2.1 Weak implicatures versus strong implicatures

Learners seem not to be fully aware of the nature of inferences that they may derive when interpreting poetic metaphors. The fact the majority of the participants were inclined to derive single interpretations most of the time implies that the learners stop at

the first inference that makes sense to them. This suggests that the learners need to be made aware of the distinction between strong and weak implicatures and to highlight the prevalence of weak implicatures in the interpretation of poetic metaphors. The teacher can provide learners with metaphorical expressions involving rather conventional metaphors and creative metaphors. He or she then asks the students to work individually on both types of metaphors. Next the students read out their interpretations, which are then bound to show convergences in relation to conventional metaphors and divergences in relation to creative metaphors. This practice best illustrates for the learners the distinction between strong and weak implicatures in dealing with conventional and creative metaphors. The teacher may also engage the learners in a contrastive work involving metaphor interpretation in poetic and non-literary texts. This practice is likely to enhance the L2 learners' aptitude to enrich the range of possible interpretations in dealing with challenging metaphors.

In addition to promoting the learners' readiness to seek more than single interpretations for creative metaphors, the teacher can engage the learners in interpretation strategies when interpreting creative poetic metaphors. These may involve the identification of lexical associations that would enable them identify possible metaphor patterns as well as brainstorming activities.

6.3.2.2 Lexical concepts versus ad hoc concepts

L2 learners may initially be introduced to the difference between lexical concepts and ad hoc concepts. This distinction is important as it makes the reader aware of the flexible nature of meaning and thus prepares the learner to adopt a pragmatic approach to meaning construction rather than to be constrained by the literal meanings of words. The findings in the present study show little evidence of explicit ad hoc concept construction. Thus the findings give support to Sperber and Wilson's (1986) version of

poetic metaphor interpretation but little support to Carston's (2002) ad hoc concept construction. In fact, the participants mostly focused on the derivation of implicatures but rarely made an effort to focus on the vehicle concept itself. Some work on the vehicle concept itself would provide more plausible text-based interpretations than looser types of inferences. To illustrate both concepts to the learner, the teacher may provide poems containing instances of a given lexical concept and ask the learners to think about the specific meaning each instance of the concept may be denoting in the poem or across a set of poems or poets. Some contrastive work may be involved, where lexical concepts from poetic and non-poetic texts may be compared. This kind of work is likely to illustrate the creative aspect of poetic language and the adjustment of lexical meanings in poetic texts. This practice is also likely to enhance learners' flexibility in dealing with metaphorical vehicles and can ultimately enhance their general pragmatic competence in negotiating meaning in all types of discourse.

6.3.2.3 Brainstorming

At a first stage, the teacher can provide learners with short poems containing explicit and rather creative metaphors and ask them to identify the metaphorical expressions and to underline the words being used metaphorically. The teacher ascertains that the learners know the literal meanings of the metaphorical words. Next, the teacher asks the learners to focus on some concepts comprising metaphorical expressions and to engage in a brainstorming activity. In doing this activity, the learners are asked to think of any denotations, connotations, or associations they can think of in relation to the different concepts forming the metaphorical expressions. This activity is highly recommended by Widdowson (1975) and Littlemore and Low (2006). In fact, Littlemore and Low (2006) state that the brainstorming activity can help to activate the reader's knowledge of the source domain underlying the metaphorical expression. In

addition, Picken (2007) states that brainstorming can help to "to encourage students to explore alternatives and not just settle for the first plausible interpretation that occurs to them" (p.141).

This activity can be performed either individually or in small groups. Group work brainstorming activities can be more motivating for the learners as it can show the students the cumulative nature of meaning construction and as such can help develop in them greater tolerance for ambiguity and more patience with the interpretative process. It can also reveal the wide range of knowledge resources they can draw on in interpreting metaphors. The teacher avoids guiding the learners towards a specific interpretation but can contribute to the overall interpretative process by suggesting further possibilities or further knowledge frames to consider.

6.3.2.4 Identifying metaphor patterns

The teacher can engage learners in discourse-level interpretative tasks whereby the learners are led to identify possible metaphor patterns on the basis of semantic, conceptual, or thematic grounds or by reference to associations or connotations shared by different lexical items featuring in the poem. In this respect, Picken (2007, P. 93) states that metaphor interpretation involves the identification of a metaphorical pattern, which is usually instantiated by semantically related lexical items. The teacher can facilitate the task by pointing out sets of lexical items, which can be grouped together under different metaphorical patterns, leaving to the learners the task of identifying and labeling the potential metaphorical patterns (Rosenkjar, 2006). Alternatively, the teacher can point out major notions in the poem and ask the participants to identify any metaphorical expressions they think can substantiate these notions. These processes seem to work successfully in the case of the advanced level L1 and L2 students in the current study. In fact, the participants used main ideas or notions as a way of

identifying and interpreting metaphors. In addition, the participants identified shared associations as well as semantic fields, which allowed them to identify central metaphors or general metaphorical patterns in the poem. These processing strategies need to be reinforced by the teacher and introduced to the other learners, who may not be fully aware of them.

6.3.2.5 Integrating contextual assumptions

Learners need to be made aware of the sources of knowledge they can rely on in accessing relevant contextual assumptions. Work can involve drawing on knowledge of the world, culture-specific knowledge, literary knowledge of the poet, poetic period and any connotations or associations related to the concepts in the poem. When available, cultural information can be provided to the learners in the shape of denotative information or in terms of associations or connotations linked to some concepts featuring in the poem. Cultural information is not to be designed to guide the reader to a specific interpretation. Rather cultural information related to a specific concept can be loosely provided, leaving the learner the opportunity to select what is mostly relevant to the interpretation of the metaphor in the specific context of the poem. Focusing on recurrent metaphors or concepts within and across poets can also help develop the learners' knowledge of some of the cultural associations related to a particular concept, which provides the L2 learners with additional knowledge resources for enriching their poetic metaphor interpretations.

The teacher emphasizes the importance of checking a wide range of knowledge resources when looking for relevant assumptions. The teacher also highlights the importance of integrating extra-textual assumptions with co-textual assumptions, in such a way as to provide text-motivated coherent interpretations rather than impressionistic inconsistent interpretations. This step is important as the findings in the

present study show that some participants showed a tendency to interpret metaphors serially by evoking a general idea or central metaphor, making little effort to activate and integrate information from different sources.

6.4 Limitations and Implications for future research

The present study has attempted to fill in the gap in the research on the process of poetic metaphor interpretation, with the view of promoting our understanding of how poetic metaphors are interpreted by real L1 and L2 readers. It has been designed to explore differences in poetic metaphor interpretation between advanced L1 and L2 readers, focusing, among other things, on the extent to which the readers' cultural background knowledge influences the range of implicatures they derive. It adopted Relevance Theory as a theoretical framework, against which the L1 and L2 readers' online interpretative processes were analyzed. Relevance theory was opted for among other theories as it was found to provide a more plausible account of the process of metaphor interpretation than other theories. In fact, the theory offers a pragmatic approach to metaphor interpretation, which acknowledges the role of the broader context in the interpretative process. It also offers persuasive cognitive processing principles which seem flexible enough to account for the processing of different metaphorical expressions varying in degree of creativity. Most of all, Relevance theory acknowledges the role of the reader's background knowledge, including his cultural background knowledge, in the interpretative process, which represents one of the focus points in the present study.

The adoption of Relevance theory as a framework for the empirical study of the L1 and L2 learners' poetic metaphor interpretation processes proved helpful in providing a clearer account of the metaphor interpretative process. This aspect of metaphor interpretation has hardly ever been investigated rigorously enough by previous

research. The study has revealed important insights into the process of poetic metaphor interpretation as conducted by advanced L1 and L2 participants, showing similarities and differences between both groups of participants and spotting efficient as well as less efficient interpretative processes. The study gives strong but inconclusive support to the relevance theory account of poetic metaphor interpretation. In fact, the participants mostly identified metaphors in a rather direct manner without recourse to a literal interpretative stage. Nevertheless, the L2 participants showed a two-stage interpretative process on a number of occasions. This was particularly noticed in relation to the poem "Crossing the Bar", where few surface clues are available to compel a metaphorical interpretation. In addition, the participants invested more effort on the interpretation of creative metaphors than on the processing of conventional metaphors. This is especially reflected in the longer periods of time the L1 participants invested in the poems "The Motive for Metaphor" and "Snow" than on the poem "Crossing the Bar". However, the L2 learners showed equal spans of time on the processing of the three poems, which suggests that L2 learners are not as efficient as the L1 readers in the distinction between conventional and creative metaphors, hence treating potentially conventional metaphors as creative. However, the learners did not seem to derive a wide range of interpretations in return to their expended time and effort. While most of those participants who spent more time did infer more implicatures than those who spent less time on the task, there were cases where longer periods of processing time did not result in richer implicatures. Overall, the participants mostly looked for single interpretations, with only a minority of the participants in both groups searching for more than one plausible interpretation for some metaphors. This finding needs further verification with a wider community of learners so as to establish

the L1 and L2 learners' poetic metaphor implicature generation tendencies more definitely.

The present study made use of the think-aloud procedure as the main data collection tool. This procedure was selected as it was found to be more suitable than other available data collection tools in capturing traces of the online interpretative process of real readers. The tool provided rich data on the knowledge resources used by the participants as well as insights into the processing steps they seem to take in dealing with metaphors. Such information proved quite useful in reconstructing the metaphor interpretation patterns employed by the participants and to spot differences in strategy use both within and across participant groups. Although the findings provided by this tool make it possible to derive persuasive accounts of the metaphor interpretative process, which makes it possible to generalize to theory, the tool was used with a limited number of participants, which makes it difficult to generalize the findings to the larger communities of the L1 and L2 learners. In addition, the study involved only advanced level participants, making it difficult to generalize its findings to the less advanced L1 and L2 participants. In fact, beginner L2 participants may face other types of challenges not experienced by the advanced level L2 participants, involving interference of their cultural background knowledge and difficulties deriving from their limited level of language proficiency. Azuma (2005) found that metaphor interpretation success correlated with the reader's level of language proficiency, and more specifically in terms of their vocabulary knowledge. Thus she found that "the less vocabulary they know, the lower their metaphorical ability" (208). Future research could then involve participants with different levels of language proficiency.

Where possible, a larger sample of participants would provide the ground for clearer tendencies and more conclusive accounts of the process of metaphor

interpretation. While introspective and retrospective comments were elicited whenever the participants lapsed into long periods of silence, a more structured retrospective procedure can be used at the end of the task, which could complement the think-aloud data and provide further insights into the process of metaphor interpretation, thus granting a higher degree of validity to the study findings.

The present study has focused on L1 and L2 learners' metaphor interpretation processes with a view of characterizing the metaphor interpretation processes of both groups of learners in poetic texts. Although the study has provided useful insights into the process of poetic metaphor interpretation, the findings provide no conclusive evidence on whether the learners' processing of poetic metaphors differs from their metaphor interpretative processes in other types of text. Using relevance theory in connection with genre theory, future research can expose participants to poetic texts and non-literary texts within the same study. Such a comparative study can reveal whether learners can adjust their metaphor interpretative processes to genre requirements or whether they deal with metaphors using a unified approach.