

# CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS AS DIDACTIC TOOLS

## LAS METÁFORAS CONCEPTUALES COMO HERRAMIENTAS DIDÁCTICAS

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# CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS AS DIDACTIC TOOLS

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### Abstract

The aim of the paper is to show different applications of conceptual metaphors (CM) in the context of language teaching and learning. Metaphors prove to be useful tools enhancing and facilitating the didactic process. The paper presents the concept of CM and its domains and mappings in the areas of second language classroom that is as a tool for better comprehension and production of a foreign language. The application of CM proves especially effective in the teaching processes involved in the development of perceptive skills of reading and listening. Its potential is visible not only in raising students' intercultural awareness but also in teaching integrated skills. Additionally, metaphors have a positive impact on language of argumentation, stating, defending and making hypothesis. The paper focuses on idioms, phrasal verbs, polysemous expressions and vocabulary as the areas where CM can enhance production and reception of new lexical items in particular.

**Keywords:** conceptual metaphors; didactic tools; language classroom; phrasal verbs; polysemous expressions; idioms; new lexical items

### Resumen

El objetivo del artículo es mostrar diferentes aplicaciones de las metáforas conceptuales (MC) en el contexto de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de idiomas. Las metáforas demuestran ser herramientas útiles para mejorar y facilitar el proceso didáctico. El documento presenta el concepto de CM y sus dominios y asignaciones en las áreas de aula de segundo idioma que es como una herramienta para una mejor comprensión y producción de un idioma extranjero. La aplicación de CM demuestra ser especialmente efectiva en los procesos de enseñanza involucrados en el desarrollo de habilidades perceptivas de lectura y escucha. Su potencial es visible no solo para aumentar la conciencia intercultural de los estudiantes sino también para enseñar habilidades integradas. Además, las metáforas tienen un impacto positivo en el lenguaje de la argumentación, enunciando, defendiendo y haciendo hipótesis. El documento se centra en expresiones idiomáticas, verbos (frasales), expresiones polisémicas y vocabulario, como las áreas donde CM puede mejorar la producción y recepción de nuevos elementos léxicos en particular.

**Palabras clave:** metáforas conceptuales; herramientas didácticas; aula de idiomas; verbos (frasales); expresiones polisémicas; modismos; nuevos elementos léxicos.

## INTRODUCTION TO CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY (CMT)

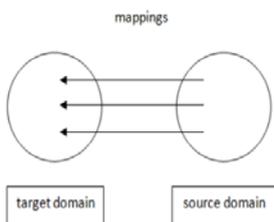
As Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2008) claimed in their remarkable book and confirmed in later works, many aspects of human life cannot be automatically understood in terms of the naturally emergent dimensions of our experience e.g. human emotions, abstract concepts, mental activity, time, work, human institutions, social practices, etc. The problems with understanding occur even in confronting physical objects that have no inherent boundaries or orientations, and this is where conceptual metaphors apply. Lakoff and Johnson have liberated the metaphor from the constraints of literary studies and gave it a new life in the form of more than a mere stylistic device. The conceptual metaphor, understood as a way of thinking, is pervasive in every-day language. It helps us structure our thoughts, especially when they are related to complex and abstract concepts, by drawing similarities between the familiar and the unfamiliar. Lakoff and Johnson (2008, p.177) claim that though most of abstract concepts can be "(...) experienced directly, none of them can be fully comprehended on their own terms. Instead, we must understand them in terms of other entities and experiences."

## MODEL OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY

In a conceptual metaphor theory there are two domains matched on the basis of their perceived similarity. They are labelled the source and the target domain and belong to concrete and abstract concepts respectively. The abilities of human mind make it possible to perceive patterns and similarities between the two domains immediately and therefore human mind can instantly create metaphorical mappings. These cross-domain mappings (i.e. correspondences existing between these two domains) result from mapping cognitive models or schemas from the source domain to the target domain.

The model of Conceptual Metaphor is represented as follows:

**Figure 1.** Conceptual Metaphor Model (mine after Lakoff and Johnson, 1980)



## CMT and language acquisition

As it has been observed, language is a tool that can be applied not only in oral communication as well as in expressing and sharing our experiences with other language users, but also it helps us in "(...) making sense of the world around us and categorizing concepts we encounter (Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003 in Thom, 2007, p. 10)".

Conceptual Metaphors are pervasive and ubiquitous and can be used in a variety of environments ranging from literature, formal and informal types of spoken discourse, different kinds of written discourse such as media, newspaper articles and books, and also classroom environment and language acquisition setting (Filipczuk, 2015). Boers (2004, p. 236) claims that in the theory and practice of language teaching and learning metaphor has been perceived as "(...) a challenging device to comprehend, store and reproduce figurative language."

In this context, metaphor can also commonly be used for the purposes of empathy, memorization, familiarization, vocabulary recall and retention, lexical item organization, breaking cross-linguistic and cross-cultural obstacles, explanation, comprehension, retention, vocabulary learning, interpretation, awareness raising, contextualization as well as languaging (Swain, 2006, p. 98) that is "(...) the process of making meaning and shaping the knowledge and experience through language (...)."

Both students and teachers find conceptual metaphors useful tools in the processes of acquiring new knowledge for similarity of patterns and images and associations, universality of human thought, conventionality and fixed enhancements, introduction of the new in terms of the old and known, options for a greater textual creativity and the expansion of the perception of the world.

As Low stated in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (2008, p. 212): "Metaphor makes things exciting and understandable and, as such, has been applied to education since time immemorial."

## Practical applications of CMT in foreign language learning

Vocabulary items are basic parts of English and therefore they enable successful communication. It has been stated that (Murcia and Rosensweig 1979, p. 242): "A person who has learned maximum number of vocabulary but minimum number of structures is more favourable than a person who is opposite to this case (...)."

The employment of metaphors in vocabulary learning helps us establish connections between two concepts belonging to different areas. Metaphors can also be used to illustrate the process of changing words' meanings and students can use L2 more

creatively and autonomously if they are acquainted with the use of CMT. Through metaphors students can draw the meaning on the basis of word parts and memorize them thanks to rhyming pairs, associations, first/last letter method, acronyms, key word method, flashcards, notes, and using new lexis in a meaningful sentence. Therefore, Conceptual Metaphors have been used for teaching and learning of new lexical items and polysemy, idioms and idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs. Additionally, metaphors can be applied in classroom instructions and explanation of educational concepts because they help teachers and learners (Low 2008, p. 213):

- find a salient, memorable label for an otherwise difficult concept;
- clarify a concept which is diffuse, abstract, or generally complex
- extend thought; or
- locate problems with a particular conceptualization and then bring about some sort of change.

Another interesting observation made by Low (2008) is that any language user, presumably a learner or a teacher does not need to apply metaphoric, complex, figurative figures of speech in order to convey metaphors and conceptual metaphors in particular. Metaphors allow the teacher to communicate with a student whose knowledge of the underlying theory is scarce, visualize abstract concepts, create inferences and make predictions, motivate the learner, and finally aid the teacher with suitable tools to adjust the learning environment and context to individual need of a student.

## Conceptual Metaphor and polysemous vocabulary items

Teaching vocabulary through metaphors is particularly useful in the case of polysemous vocabulary items. Polysemy indicates that one word has many different meanings which are based on metaphorical usage of target language. Polysemy is also a categorization phenomenon containing a prototype and its extended meanings. The original word usually derives from a concrete prototypical experience. As Pérez (Pérez 2016, p. 5) observes:

One of the main tenets of Cognitive Linguistics is that the figurative meanings of polysemous words are not arbitrary, but motivated by people's recurring bodily experiences in the real world. This principle has changed the understanding of the phenomenon of polysemy, since, as Lakoff and his followers argue, the different senses of a polysemous word are not the result of arbitrary historical development, but can be traced to an underlying conceptual metaphor (...).

Teachers should first focus on the original, prototypical meaning and then through metaphors, introduce the sub-meanings. It is important to remember that polysemous expressions base on metaphorical usage of L2 as well as that polysemy like metaphors has a prototype and its extended meanings.

By way of illustration, let us have a closer look at the polysemy of the word HEAD. As the prototypical meaning of *head* suggests, it is the uppermost part of the body. Yet, some other meanings both in English, Spanish and Polish prove to be rather distant from the prototype. Some of them are elaborations based on the perceived similarity between *head* as the uppermost part of human body, and *head* as the uppermost part of different objects, flowers, tress, etc. Others, are more abstract metaphorical extensions derived from the functional similarity between *head* as the most important part of human body and *head* as the most important part of family, organisation, company, etc. Another group of meanings also rely on metonymic extension from *head* as a body part into *head* as the intellectual function and capacities that reside within it (container for content metonymy). This group can also be related to the container metaphor, i.e. head is a container for thoughts, intellect, etc.

**Figure 2.** The head of planning and organization. Cartoonist: Schley, Karsten <https://pl.pinterest.com/pin/308707749436090394/>



In the table below, we reproduce a number of examples of meanings which vary from the prototypical meaning of *head*. These extensions are clearly motivated and present in the three analysed languages: English, Spanish, and Polish.

**Table 1.** Polysemy of HEAD in English, Spanish and Polish (examples are mine)

		<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Examples of use</b>
1.	English	the chief person of a group, family, organisation, state, the manager	his first season as a head coach, grandfather was always considered the head of our family, head of state
	Spanish	un jefe, un líder	aguiar es la cabeza de la organización mafiosa, cabeza de la familia, cabeza de la Iglesia
	Polish	szef, osoba przewodnicząca czemuś	głowa rodziny, głowa kościoła, głowa państwa
2.	English	top or the highest part	the layer of white bubbles on top of beer
	Spanish	principio o parte extrema de una cosa	las cabezas de una viga, las de un puente.
	Polish	górną, zaokrągloną część czegoś	główka od szpilki, główka od zapalki
3.	English	Talent	Harriet has a (good) head for figures. I'm no head, but I am sure you made a mistake in your addition
	Spanish	juicio, talento y capacidad	Pedro es hombre de buena cabeza no tener cabeza para algo
	Polish	umysł, talent, człowiek oceniany ze względu na jego umysłowość	Tęga głowa, mieć głowę na karku

		<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Examples of use</b>
4.	English	other:	the head of the queue / a head of lettuce, the chack cliffs around Beachy Head/ the side of a coin / the main part of a phrase, the top part of a spot containing pus/ a black head
	Spanish	otros:	cabeza de ajo cabeza de agua
	Polish	inne:	głowa cukru - the head of sugar głowa kapusty - the head of a cabbage głowa łóżka/ wezgiowie - the head of the bed, bedside, head głowa - włosy, uczesanie - coiffure

		Meaning	Examples of use
5.	English	idioms:	<p>Big head - hangover</p> <p>Per head - per person</p> <p>A head - a headache</p> <p>The head - the toilet (nautically)</p> <p>A head - a member of the drug culture; a hippie or a person who drops out of mainstream society because of drug use. (From the 1960s and 1970s)</p> <p>A cool head - The ability to remain calm and rational during stressful situations</p>
	Spanish	modismos:	<p>calentar la cabeza a alguien - to give hope to sb, let sb wait in vain</p> <p>cuando entré en casa, vi que todas las cosas estaban cabeza abajo - everything was upside down</p> <p>de pies a cabeza - whole</p> <p>ser cabeza de turco - be a scape goat</p> <p>tener la cabeza en su sitio - have the head in the right place/ be sensible</p> <p>mantener la cabeza fría - to stay cool</p> <p>tener la cabeza llena de pajaros - be dreaming</p>
	Polish	idiomy:	<p>mieć głowę na karku - be sensible, have a head for sth</p> <p>woda sodowa uderzyła komuś do głowy - success went to sb's head</p> <p>od stóp do głów - whole</p> <p>nagłówek - the heading in a newspaper</p> <p>z głową w chmurach - be dreaming</p>

## Conceptual Metaphor and idioms and idiomatic expressions

Idioms are those metaphorical expressions which have been greatly conventionalised to the extent that native speakers of a language no longer perceive their figurative nature; in this way they are similar to dead metaphors and darkened compounds (reference). Students may experience difficulties while learning new vocabulary items and idiomatic expressions in particular as the figurative language cannot be interpreted literally. Simpson and Mendis (2003, p. 423) defined idioms as: "(...) a group of words that occur in a more or less fixed phrase whose overall meaning cannot be predicted by analyzing the meaning of its constituent parts."

Kövecses (2002/2010, p. 233) claims that:

many, or perhaps most, idioms are products of our conceptual system and not simply a matter of language (i.e., a matter of the lexicon). An idiom is not just an expression that has a meaning that is somehow special in relation to the meanings of its constituting parts, but it arises from our more general knowledge of the world embodied in our conceptual system. In other words, idioms (or, at least, the majority of them) are conceptual, and not linguistic, in nature.

Gaining control over metaphors may aid learners' comprehension of new, figurative expressions and help them manage idioms in the target language. It has been observed that instructions basing on CMT and used for idiom learning foster engagement, motivation and production (Kömür and Çimen, 2009). Moreover, idioms when presented in connection to the underlying metaphor prove to facilitate greater retention and comprehension rates and after-task cloze and comprehension prove higher learning effectiveness. Following there are some examples of how idioms can be broken down into conceptual metaphor:

**Table 2.** List of idioms taught during the study (after Kömür and Çimen 2009, p. 207)

<b>ANGER IS HEAT</b>	<b>LIFE IS A JOURNEY</b>	<b>MONEY IS A LIQUID</b>	<b>HAPPY &amp; SAD</b>	<b>MAKING MISTAKES</b>
To make one's blood boil	To go through life with eyes closed	To pour one's money down the drain	To feel down	To trip up
To blow up at someone	To cross the bridge when it comes	To liquidate assets	To be in the depths of despair	To stumble over
To start a heated argument	To be at a crossroads	To stay afloat	To look down in the mouth	To take a wrong step
To lose one's control	Of life to take an unexpected direction	To keep one's head above water (financially)	To walk on air	To fall flat on one's face
To be hot tempered	To pass away	To go under/To sink	To be low	A slip of the tongue
To burn with indignation	To be over the hill	To freeze (of a price or wage)	To cheer up	
To have a fiery temper			To lift one's spirits	
To explode			(of things) To be looking up	
To blow one's top			To feel blue	
To go ballistic			To be in a black mood	
A huge argument erupts				

Other idiomatic expressions present in a number of languages pertain to the category of conceptual metaphors (including, e.g. the container metaphor). They are commonly used in English and Spanish, and it has been observed that even speakers of distant languages and geographically distant cultures have these in common, so they can draw comparison and find a reference point (Kövecses, 2001). Consider the following examples:

A. Time is money/ el tiempo es dinero

Figure 3. Time is money



- You're wasting my time./ Pierdes mi tiempo.
- This gadget will save you hours/ Esto te ahorrará horas.
- I've invested a lot of time in this project./ Invertí muchas horas en el proyecto.
- I don't have the time to give you./ Gracias por el tiempo que me donaste.

B. Love is a journey / amor es un viaje

Figure 4. Love is a journey



- Look how far we've come. / Mira lo lejos que hemos llegado
- We're at a crossroads./No sé a dónde se dirige esta relación.
- We'll just have to go our separate ways/ Hemos decidido seguir distintas vías.
- I don't think is relationship is going anywhere. / No creo que la relación vaya a ninguna parte
- We're just spinning our wheels/ Nuestra relación no se mueve.

## C. Argument is war

Figure 5. Argument is war



- He attacked every weak point in my argument.
- I've never won an argument with him.
- If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out
- His criticisms were right on target.
- He shot down all my arguments.
- Your claims are indefensible.
- I demolished his argument.

## D. Being/ eating at home is a container

The speaker puts ideas (objects) into words (containers) and sends them (along a conduit) to a bearer who takes the idea/objects out of the word/containers. Reddy (1979) documents this with more than a hundred types of expressions in English, which he estimates account for at least 70 percent of the expressions we use for talking about language. Here are some examples:

1. Would you like to go out for lunch?
2. I don't think we should be going out tonight
3. Johnson would invite Scott out to dinner

## E. Difficulties are containers

- How do you get out of this situation?
- He could be in a lot of trouble
- He's already up to his neck in the nation's troubles
- Well, I think we're in a mess
- I try not to get myself into too much trouble

## F. The conduit metaphor

- It's hard to *get* that idea across to him.

- I *gave* you that idea.
- Your reasons *came through* to us.
- It's difficult to *put* my ideas *into* words.
- When you *have* a good idea, try to *capture* it immediately in words.
- Try to *pack* more thought into fewer words.
- You can't simply *stuff* ideas *into* a sentence any old way.
- The meaning is right there *in* the words.
- Don't *force* your meanings *into* the wrong words.
- His words *carry* little meaning.
- The introduction has a great deal of thought *content*.
- Your words seem *hollow*.
- The sentence is *without* meaning.
- The idea is *buried in* terribly dense paragraphs.

#### G. UP and DOWN metaphors; HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN

I'm feeling up. That boosted my spirits. My spirits rose. you're in high spirits. Thinking about her always gives me a lift. I'm feeling down. I'm depressed. He's really low these days. I fell into a depression. My spirits sank.

- physical basis: Drooping Posture typically goes along with sadness and depression, erect posture with a positive emotional state.

#### H. Conscious is up; unconscious is down

- Wake up Wake up. I'm up already. He rises early in the morning. He fell asleep. He dropped off to sleep. He's under hypnosis. He's under hypnosis. He sank into a coma.
- Physical basis: Humans and most other mammals sleep lying down and stand up when they awaken.

#### I. Health and life are up and sickness and death are down

- He's at the peak of health. Lazarus rose from the dead. He's in top shape. As to his health, he's way up there. He fell ill. He's sinking fast. He came down with the flu. His health is declining. He dropped dead.
- Physical basis: Serious illness forces us to lie down physically. When you're dead, you are physically down.

#### J. Having control or force is up and being subject to control or force is down

- I have control over her. I am on top of the situation. He's in a superior position. He's at the height of his power. He's in the high command. He's in the upper echelon. His power rose. He ranks above me in strength. He is under my control. He fell from power. His Power is on the decline. He is my social inferior. He is low man on the totem pole.
- Physical basis- Physical size typically correlates with physical strength, and the victor in a fight is typically on top.

## K. More is up; less is down

- The number of books printed each year keeps going up. His draft number is high. My income rose last year. The amount of artistic activity in this state has gone down in the past year. The number of errors he made is incredibly low. His income fell last year. He is underage. If you're 100 hot, turn the heat down.
- Physical basis: If you add more of a substance or of physical objects to a container or pile, the level goes up.

## L. Foreseeable future events are up (and ahead)

- All upcoming events are listed in the paper. What's coming up this week? I'm afraid of what's up ahead of us. What's up?
- Physical basis: Normally our eyes look in the direction in which we typically move (ahead, forward). As an object approaches a person (or the person approaches the object), the object appears larger. Since the ground is perceived as being fixed, the top of the object appears to be moving upward in the person's field of vision.

## M. High status is up; low status is down

- He has a lofty position. She'll rise to the top. He's at the peak of his career. He's climbing the ladder. He has little upward mobility. He's at the bottom of the social hierarchy. She fell in status.
- Social and physical basis: Status is correlated with (social) power and (physical) power is up.

## N. Good is up; bad is down

- Things are looking up. We hit a peak last year, but it's been downhill ever since. Things are at an all-time low. He does high-quality work.
- Physical basis for personal well-being: Happiness, health, life, and control--the things that principally characterize what is good for a person--all are up.

## O. Virtue is up; depravity is down

- He is high-minded. She has high standards. She is up right. She is an up-standing citizen. That was a low trick. Don't be underhanded. I wouldn't stoop to that. That would be beneath me. He fell into the abyss of depravity. That was a low-down thing to do.
- Physical and social basis: GOOD IS UP for a person (physical basis), together with SOCIETY IS A PERSON (in the version where you are not identifying with your society). To be virtuous is to act in accordance with the standards set by the society/person to maintain its well-being. VIRTUE IS UP because virtuous actions correlate with social well-being from the society/person's point of view. Since socially based metaphors are part of the culture, it's the society/person's point of view that counts.

#### P. Rational is up; emotional is down

- The discussion fell to the emotional level, but I raised it back up to the rational plane. We put our feelings aside and had a high-level intellectual discussion of the matter. He couldn't rise above his emotions.
- Physical and cultural basis: In our culture people view themselves as being in control over animals, plants, and their physical environment, and it is their unique ability to reason that places human beings above other animals and gives them this control. CONTROL IS UP thus provides a basis for MAN IS UP and therefore RATIONAL IS UP.

### Phrasal verbs and conceptual metaphors

Phrasal verbs constitute the most frequent multi-word units in English and therefore they are common and highly productive. It is clear that they belong to the category of vocabulary units in English language. Therefore, as noted by Thom (2017, p.4): "Instead of simply being additive to language learning, explicit vocabulary (including phrasal verbs - comment mine) teaching is central to the development of language competence."

On average learners will encounter one phrasal verb in every 150 words in English (Thom 2017). In the case of conversational registers the ratio is even higher. As Gardner and Davis (2007, p. 340) wrote, phrasal verbs are: "very common and highly productive in the English language as a whole."

Phrasal verbs are independent constructions and their constituent elements function differently when on their own and when inside a phrasal verb. Both prepositions and adverbs can be combined with the verb and then they are referred to as particles. Their original function changes as well which is confusing both to students and teachers. Their meaning ranges from literal and transparent, to idiomatic, arbitrary, random or unpredictable. Since the ways in which native speakers of English perceive and refer to the world is stemmed by semantic patterns and motivated by embedded cognitive structures they inherently possess, therefore, phrasal verbs are not transparent to other language learners of English.

Interestingly phrasal verbs can also be referred to as *multi-word verb constructions* (Thom, 2017), and they may contain multiple parts of speech forming three optional syntactic combos; either verb + preposition (as in *take over, fill in*), verb + adverb (as in *take away*), or verb + adverb + preposition (as in *come up with, get out of*).

In view of such a variety of combinations, possible interpretations and applications of phrasal verbs can be confusing both for teachers and students, and therefore for

simplicity phrasal verbs are frequently referred to as verb + preposition construction. The complexity of phrasal verbs becomes transparent when we realize that the prepositions or adverbs function differently when in a phrasal verb; they lose their original function.

Once again, conceptual metaphor proves useful for disentangling the intricacies of meaning and usage of phrasal verbs. Conceptual metaphors, are often structured on the basis of image schemas, i.e. the schematic representations of the world that we gain through repetitive embodied experience. Image schemas provide a *sui generis* framework for understanding other aspects of the world, no matter how distant from the embodied experience deriving from the physical configurations of material objects in space. Thus, image schemas provide the familiar knowledge for the source domain which is transplanted onto the source domain of the more abstract, e.g. temporal, social, emotional concepts.

## Examples of Phrasal verb PICK UP

As discussed in the Cambridge Dictionary, PICK UP alone has 24 different meanings. Clearly presenting such a diversity of meaning, and applications may cause confusion among learners of English as L2. Below, I present a number of examples including phrasal verb and a variety of its meanings with the verb PICK UP after Thom (2007, p. 6)

1. He leads a group to a city park to **pick up** trash (*to lift or take off the ground*)
2. Cell phone towers are able to **pick up** a caller's location on a 911 call. (*to detect*)
3. He was trying to get a cab to go **pick up** his daughter (*to take in a car*)
4. Republicans failed to **pick up** a single seat in the chamber (*to take, to win*)
5. momentum is starting to **pick up** (*to increase*)
6. You need to **pick up** where you left off (*to resume*)
7. Showing them pictures can help them to **pick up** the language (*to learn, to acquire*)

As seen in the examples above, the meaning of the phrasal verb ranges from literal and transparent (in sentence 1) to more idiomatic ones in other sentences. The phenomenon of a shift of phrasal verb meaning from literal to arbitrary and obscure one is common not only in the case of PICK UP, as it has been observed each of the 100 most frequently used phrasal verbs in English convey on average 5.6 distinct meanings (Gardner and Davis 2007).

## Container metaphor phrasal verbs

Due to such a variety of meanings and consequently great difficulty in comprehension and memorisation of phrasal verbs, Conceptual Metaphor becomes a useful tool in the context of language acquisition. If we group concepts and meanings according to the CM the phrasal verbs belong to, they become easier to understand, memorize and apply. Here there are some examples of the applications of one of the most common CM domains, already presented above in the case of idiomatic expressions, that is the CONTAINER.

Students are introduced to the intricacies of phrasal verbs through conceptual metaphors:

- CONSCIOUSNESS IS A CONTAINER: knock out, pass out
- EXISTENCE IS A CONTAINER: put out, die out, wipe out, fade out
- FOCUS IS A CONTAINER: look out, watch out, check out
- DIFFICULTIES ARE CONTAINERS: get out, be in, be up, get oneself into
- BODIES & MINDS ARE CONTAINERS: pour out, squeeze out, reach out
- USABILITY IS A CONTAINER: wear out, wash out, rust out
- SETS & GROUPS ARE CONTAINERS: kick out, pick out, come out, force out
- SITUATIONS ARE CONTAINERS: get out, crawl out
- MOUTH IS A CONTAINER: stuck out, deal out, speak out, cry out, yell out
- NON-EXISTENCE/ INVISIBILITY IS A CONTAINER: leak out, figure out, turn out, point out, come out

We frequently perceive human body as a container for emotions. Examples showing the productivity of this metaphor exist both in English and Spanish.

- English: It just started really boiling inside of me
- Spanish: Aún podía sentir las brasas de su ira (still smoldering)
- English: She erupted/ She 's on a short fuse
- Spanish: Pedro tiene poca mecha / Estoy a punto de estallar

## Phrasal Verb particle visualization

In order to aid students with the comprehension of phrasal verbs, conceptual metaphors employing trajector and landmark configurations can be used. These rely on our natural interpretation of the world and organize the context by employing the foreground and the background as reference points (Thom, 2007). Thom noted that "When we apply the concept of trajector and landmark to phrasal verbs, we think of the subject in focus as the trajector, and the landmark is conceptualized as a type of container, path, group or surface."

The above mentioned trajector and landmark can be used to represent metaphors in a pictorial form (Rudzka-Ostyn 2003). For the purpose of the article the central and extended meanings of OUT are taken into consideration. The following pictures (after Rudzka-Ostyn 2003) represent the prototypical meaning of OUT basing on its spatial-orientation. Such application of metaphor and trajector - landmark spatial-orientation in various contexts, helps the learners build their comprehension of phrasal verbs rooted in conceptual container metaphors.

## Central meaning of OUT

**Figure 6.** Image schema OUT - central meaning



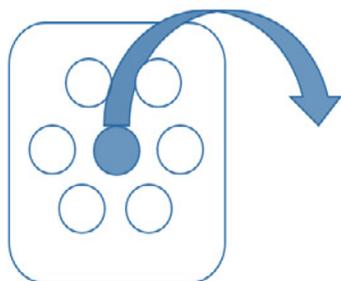
By the time you wore it out, it would be out of fashion anyhow.

The wave had washed out the road in some places.

The lock on the patio door had rusted out long ago.

## OUT as in leaving a group

**Figure 7.** Image schema OUT - leaving a group



In this case we may presume that we deal we sets and groups e.g.:

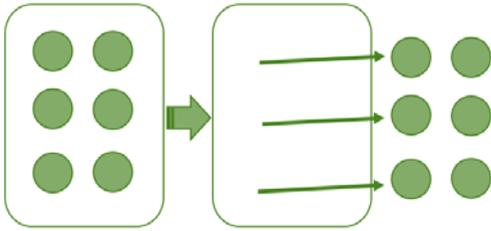
I was kicked out of the team.

She may be pick out from the crown.

John was forced out of the club.

## OUT as in leaving a body

**Figure 8.** Image schema OUT - leaving the body



In this case we rely on the BODIES AND MINDS ARE CONTAINERS metaphor.

I couldn't get his question out of my mind.

He poured out his heart, sharing his story.

She's going to squeeze the life out of him.

I reached out to greet him.

I wonder if Ed is out of his mind.

He decided to hear her out anyway.

## CONCLUSIONS

As stated above, conceptual metaphors prove to be useful tools in facilitating learning figurative expressions from the target language such as idioms, phrasal verbs and vocabulary items and polysemy in particular. Many authors have proved (Thom, 2007; Kömür and Çimen, 2009; Pérez 2016) that classroom instruction based on metaphor rely on the interactive properties between the source and the target domains and give students a rationale to ponder upon why the phrases mean what they mean, so the learning gain is more visible. Therefore, metaphor-based classroom instructions foster learners' engagement, motivation and productivity whereas lexical items grouped under metaphorical categories are easier to learn and retain. Moreover, metaphors enhance cross linguistic awareness and competence, learn-

ers' autonomy and critical thinking. Additionally, it has been observed that atypical and novel metaphor production is perceived as acceptable and correct and consequently metaphor awareness fosters the productive language learning.

Through metaphors learners are able to enter an area of a new language with a fully formed awareness of the metaphorical mind, figurative mind.

Regrettably, though it is clear that applying conceptual metaphor has a strong potential to facilitate teaching and learning new lexical items, the majority of available materials treat them only very marginally. Their didactic potential would be particularly effective in teaching/ learning of the following:

- Acquisition and production of new vocabulary and polysemous expressions
- Comprehension of phrasal verbs and idioms
- Clarification/ familiarization
- Memorization and retention
- Intercultural awareness, empathy and understanding
- Learner's engagement, motivation and productivity
- Crosslinguistic awareness and competence
- Productive language learning

In view of the universal nature of metaphors regardless of the culture, education, and experiences of the language user, they undoubtedly they may serve as useful tools in the language classroom. That is why, it can be claimed based both on research and teaching experience, that conceptual metaphor theory should be included in course books as an important device boosting the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process.

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