
According to recent studies of Cognitive Linguistics carried out by outstanding scholars such as George Lakoff, Zoltan Kövecses and some others, we organize our thoughts, our experiences and our reality by means of metaphors. Metaphor, which had traditionally been considered a matter of language and literature, is a device of thought, i.e. we experience and understand things in terms of other things using metaphorical concepts, as George Lakoff points out in his book *Metaphors we live by*. This process of organizing our thoughts and concepts using metaphors involves imposing the structures of one thing into another more abstract concept. That is the reason why we can understand, for example, arguments in terms of war: we lose and win arguments, we see the person we argue with as an opponent, we carry out verbal battles, we attack an opponent, etc. A concept is partially structured by a metaphor, i.e.
the metaphorical concept hides some aspects and highlights another. This process is called categorization which is also a way of structuring experiences. As Lakoff points out in the following example, when someone says something like “I’ve invited a sexy blonde to my party”, “I have invited a lesbian”, or “I have invited a Marxist”, the three cases may be referring to the same person, but someone chooses to highlight the characteristics that better fit his/her purposes.

Having this into account, it is my intention, when writing this article, to emphasize the usefulness of teaching our students how we organise our thinking and our language by means of metaphors, idioms and sayings. Therefore this topic is related to some sets of contents established in the Andalusian Order passed on 10th August 2007. In this order the contents of the curriculum of Compulsory Secondary Education are divided into the following sets:

| SET OF CONTENTS FOR ESO (RD 1631/2006 and Andalusian Order 10th August 2007) |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Set 1: Listening.               | Set 5: Knowledge about the linguistic system and learning awareness. |
| Set 3: Reading.                 |                                  |
| Set 4: Writing.                 |                                  |

The topic of this article is enclosed in set 5 and set 6 because it has to do with the organisation of language and with the cultural background of the speaker, because the language and thought of a person are both organised according to the reality and culture in which that person lives in. For example, George Lakoff points out that in Western culture the concept of time is understood in terms of money, so the metaphor “time is money” is based on an industrial society which is organised through hourly wages, telephone units, hotel room rates, courses paid hourly and so on. In this sense, time is spent, wasted, invested and saved like money. Time is also a limited resource like money, so it can be used up, and we can have enough or we can run out of it. Finally, as money, time can be given or can be lost and we can thank for having it. Therefore, teaching our students some metaphors of our thinking may be very productive and motivating because they can think over their linguistic system and their own culture. In the following sections we will see some different types of metaphors and the interesting way we work with them to talk about our experiences in real life.

2. USING METAPHORICAL CONCEPTS TO ORGANISE OUR THOUGHT, ACCORDING TO GEORGE LAKOFF AND MARK JOHNSON

Whether or not our mind is organised in terms of metaphorical concepts is still of much debate among Cognitive linguists. George Lakoff, a very well-known scholar on the subject, talks about this in his article “Some Empirical Results about the Nature of Concepts”. His theory deals with the understanding of abstract concepts by means of metaphorical mappings of other more simple concepts. Therefore, we can understand, for instance, the abstract term “love” in terms of “a journey” and also in terms of “madness”. There exist utterances such as “this relationship goes no where, she is driving me mad, we are following different directions”. These mappings are cognitive in nature and independent of linguistic realisations. Mappings are not arbitrary but
grounded in our physical or social experience and, therefore, we establish projections between the physical environment and the abstract concepts. Lakoff also defines abstract reasoning as image-based reasoning under metaphorical projections to abstract domains. These projections of metaphors to abstract concepts include category formation, metaphoric and metonymic mappings.

a. Categories and metaphors: orientational metaphors, ontological metaphors, personification, metonymy and synecdoche

According to Lakoff categories can be defined as ideal abstract cases. We need to categorize the reality by grouping things and experiences according to their common features. Let’s think of a bird, there exist hundreds of different types of birds but we recognize one when we see it. Let’s think of a more abstract concept such as an ideal life, we recognize one as well when we see it. We need to define stereotypes and categories which, of course, vary from culture to culture and throughout the time. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define several types of main conceptual metaphors which are as follows:

Orientational metaphors: Their basis is on our having physical bodies and spatial orientations such as up-down, in-out, front-back, etc. For example, having control or force is “up” and that is why there are expressions such as “I’m on top of the situation, he’s in a superior position”, however being subject to control or force is considered to be down as it is indicated in the following sentences “he is my social inferior”, “he is under my control, he fell from power”. This has a physical basis: the winner in a fight is typically on top. Another example of orientational metaphor is the state of being conscious which is up, “get up, wake up”, while being unconscious is considered down, “he fell asleep, he is under hypnosis, he sank in a coma”. This last example has also its physical explanation which is that we sleep lying down and stand up when awaken. More is up and less is down, “the number of goods keep going up”, “my income rose last year” (Physical basis: if you add more of a substance to a container the level goes up). High status is up while low status is down: “he is at the peak of his career, he’s climbing the ladder, she fell in status”. Good is up and bad is down: “she has high standards, an upstanding citizen, a low trick, a low-down thing to do”. Rational is up/ emotional is down: “the discussion fell to the emotional level”.

Ontological metaphors are those metaphors that help us to structure events, activities, emotions and ideas as substances and entities. Therefore we can refer to them (e.g. “we are working toward peace”), we can quantify them (e.g. “it will take a lot of patience, there is so much hatred in the world”), and identify their aspects (e.g. “modern life, brutality of war, the pressure of his responsibilities”). Although these expressions are not noticed as being metaphorical, they are indeed.

Personification, metonymy and synecdoque are three different cases of metaphorical conceptualization. Personification is an ontological metaphor where the physical object is given characteristics of a human person (e.g. “life has cheated me”, “inflation is eating up our profits”). Through metonymy, one entity is used to refer to another that is related (e.g. “he likes to read the Marquis de Sade” (the writings of), “the Times hasn’t arrived at the press conference yet” (the reporter from the Times). Synecdoque is a special case of metonymy where the part stands for the whole (e.g. “we need some new blood in the organization” (new people), “there are a lot of good heads at the university” (intelligent people), “she is just a pretty face” (the face stands for the person), “Nixon bombed Hanoi” (controller for controlled), “Watergate changed our politics” (the place for the event).
b. Image-schemas: container schema, part-whole schema, the source-path-goal schema, and the link schema

Many metaphoric and metonymic mappings are image-schemas which are abstractions or generalizations over spatial concepts, according to Lakoff. These spatial and physical concepts may be identified as a container, a part or a whole of something, a path, and a link between things. These spatial concepts are schemas that help our thinking to conceptualize more complex experiences, emotions, and social realities. Let’s study them a bit further:

**Container schema**

It has its basis on our having physical bodies with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation. States and emotions are much conceptualized in terms of containers (e.g. “She is in love, he’s out of his mind”). In these examples love is considered an entity with an interior, an exterior and a boundary. A person can be considered a container for the emotions and a force with an area of influence. (We will later deal with the metaphors used to talk about emotions).

**Part-whole schema**

This schema has also bodily experience because we are whole beings with parts that can be manipulated. For example, a family and some social organizations like marriage are seen as a whole—the creation of a family begins traditionally with a married couple and the spouses are seen as parts. Society is also seen as a whole and social classes as parts, among those parts some are conceptualized as being up and others as being down. On its turn, human being is seen as a composition of two parts: “subject” (reason, conscience) and “self” (body and emotions), which is usually controlled by the subject. The husband, for instance, has been traditionally considered reasonable and a serious “subject”, whereas the wife conventionally was emotional, sentimental and the weaker “self”. Some entailments derive from this conceptual metaphor about the two parts of a person. We can have “loss of self” (losing control of emotions), and therefore, “a divided person” is someone with “split/scattered self”, someone who is in conflict between reason and emotions.

**The source-path-goal schema**

The bodily experience of this schema is as follows: when we move anywhere, there is a place we start from, a sequence of locations between the starting and ending point and a direction. By means of this schema we understand “life as a journey”, because a journey defines a path. We are born (starting point) and we live our lives in different stages, which are a sequence of locations, which allows us to say things like “my life has no direction, I don’t know where I’m heading”. The “obstacle” conceptual metaphor is an entailment of the “path” schema, as we can find it in our way which prevents us from reaching our destination: “A life full of problems (obstacles) avoids the person to be happy”, being happiness the ultimate destination.

**Link schema**

This link-schema has its bodily basis in the links that are to secure the location of two things with strings, ropes and other means, so there are abstract links in social and interpersonal relationships, and thus, we can make connections and break social ties. This image-schema has much to do with the image-schema of force which, in its turn, is subsidiary to path schema. The structure of the “link” image schema is made up of two entities, A and B and the link between them can be, thus, of attraction, repulsion, diversion, counterforce, compulsion, etc. For instance, we have expressions such as “their union is very strong, they are very much attracted, they have split up”. The image
schemas of attraction and repulsion can happen, for example, when two people are attracted to each other because of their affinities. “Counterforce” image-schema is defined by Johnson as two equally strong forces that collides face-to-face and neither of them changes its direction (This is related to the “obstacle” metaphor). “Compulsion” happens when either an external or internal force affects a passive subject, (e.g. someone can be moved by a poem)

c. Emotion concepts according to Zoltan Kövecses: expression of anger, fear, pride, respect and love using metaphors

Zoltan Kövecses in his book *Emotion Concepts* points out that metaphors, metonymies, idioms, and sayings are the expressions we use to convey emotion concepts such as anger, pride, respect and love. He explains that emotion concepts are prototypical cognitive models representing our understanding of the emotion. For example, the cognitive model of love is made up with its entities: the self, the other, the love itself and a combination of propositions such as “love is blind, she carries a torch for him, he was burning with love, she gave him her heart, he worships the ground she walks on”. To express our concept of love we use conceptual metaphors such as “love is fire” and “the object of love is a deity”. Emotion concepts consist of four parts: (1) a system of conceptual metaphors, (2) a system of conceptual metonymies, (3) a set of related concepts and (4) a category of cognitive models. We have to say that some emotion concepts have some physical and behavioural basis and the container metaphor, which we previously talked about, has much to do in the conceptualisation of emotions as we will explain in the following paragraph.

**Container metaphor.** According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), we impose forms of container to things that have no such a form. The container metaphor applies to a large number of emotions, mainly those emotions characterized by increased body heat and physical agitation like anger, pride, love, admiration, shame, sadness, etc. The body becomes a container for the emotions and there are expressions such as, “she was filled with emotion, emotion welled up inside her, there is a lot of passion in her, I feel empty, and I feel emotionally drained”. Furthermore, when talking about emotions, the language also includes spatial expressions like “deep, inner, innermost, central, superficial, shallow, inside, outside”, etc. And thus, we may find expressions like “deeply moved, deeply hurt, deeply disappointed”. Kövecses explains that in our folk model of the self, the emotions are the deepest part of the self, thoughts are less deep and actions are the most outward manifestations. The cognitive self is superior to the emotional self because the mind container is superior to the body container of emotions (i.e. what Lakoff names subject and self).

**Anger.** Its conceptualization derives, to a certain extent, from the Metonymic Principle that says that “the physiological effects of an emotion stand for the emotion”: The physiological effects of anger are increased body heat, increased of internal pressure, agitation, etc. These physiological effects create expressions such as “a heated argument, he was quivering/shaking with rage” which are commonly used. Some of the metaphors that also help to define the emotion of anger are as follows:

1) The body is a container for the emotion: “he was filled with anger”, “she was brimming with rage”, “you make my blood boil”, “simmer down”, “let him stew”. This central metaphor has a rich system of metaphorical entailments. The intensity of anger leads to the rise of fluid which produces steam till the person explodes. This leads to expressions such as “Pretty soon I was in a towering rage”, “she could feel her gorge rising”, “she got all steamed up”, “I was fuming”, “when I told him he just exploded”, “she blew up at me”, “he won’t tolerate any more of your outbursts".
2) The metaphor “anger is fire/heat” is based on the physiological effects of anger: “Those are inflammatory remarks”, “she was doing a slow burn”, “he was breathing fire”, etc.

3) The metaphor “anger is insanity” is based on agitation because people who are insane are unduly agitated. We see in the following expressions the overlap between the cultural models of the effects of anger and the effects of insanity. “I just touched him and he went crazy”, “you are driving me nuts”, “he went bananas”, “he got so angry that he went out of his mind”, “I’m mad” (which is the most conventional expression to define a state of anger). Anger is understood in our cultural model as a negative emotion.

4) In Western culture, it is a widespread metaphor that passions are beasts inside a person. According to this metaphor, there is a part of each person that is a wild animal. Civilized people are supposed to keep that part of them private. Loss of control is equivalent to the animal getting loose. This central metaphor leads us to the next metaphor “anger is a dangerous animal”: “he unleashed his anger”, “he lost his grip on his anger”, “he has a monstrous/fierce temper”. The aggressive behaviour of an animal corresponds to angry behaviour which in its turn metonymically stands for anger.

5) The cause of anger is a physical annoyance which gives expressions such as “don’t be a pain in the ass”, “you’re getting under my skin”, “he’s a pain in the neck”, “don’t be a pest”, etc.

The prototypical cognitive model of anger distinguishes several stages: (1) Offending event, the wrongdoer intentionally offends the self. (2) Anger, physiological effects. (3) Attempt at control. (4) Loss of control. (5) Act of retribution. There are deviations of this model. “Turning the other cheek”, for example, in this culture is considered to be like a saint act. Controlling anger is praiseworthy.

Fear. According to the metonymic principle, the physiological and behavioural effects of fear stand for fear. Thus, we have expressions like “she was shaking with fear”, “he was trembling like a leaf” (physical agitation). “His heart pounded with fear”, “my heart leapt into my throat”, “I had my heart in my mouth when I had the interview” (increase in heart rate). “He was grey with fear”, “you’re white as a sheet” (blood leaves face). “I was chilled to the bone”, “it made my blood run cold”, “a blood-curdling scream” (drop in temperature). “That man gives me the creeps”, “a shriek from the dark gave me goose bumps”, “his skin was prickling with fear” (skin shrinks). “That was a hair-raising experience”, “it was a hairy driving down that narrow road” (hair straightens out). “She was paralyzed with fear”, “I was petrified”, “he had rubber legs”, “I was rooted to the foot” (inability to move). “Don’t be a chicken shit”, “don’t pee in your pants just because you see a snake” (involuntary release of bowels or bladder). “When he heard the police coming, the thief took to his heels”, “the mouse scurried into his hole”, “the army sent the enemy scuttling” (flight).

The metaphors for fear highlight certain aspects of the large number of possible causes of fear. It is very interesting the relationship between the cause of fear and the way fear itself is conceptualized. Fear can be a vicious enemy, a tormentor, an illness, a supernatural being, etc. So fear is conceptualized as an entity that can threaten our lives and can cause physical and mental suffering. Some conceptual metaphors of fear are the following:

1) Fear is a fluid in a container: “fear was rising in him”, “he was full of fear”.

2) Fear is an enemy: “there was a fear lurking in her heart”, “fear slowly crept up on him”, “he was choked by fear”.

3) Fear is an illness: “she was sick with fright”, “he couldn’t get over his fear”.

4) Fear is a supernatural being: “it was a ghastly scene”, “this is a spooky place”.

5) Fear is an opponent: “panic overtook them”, “fear gripped the village”.

6
6) Fear is a natural force: “fear swept over him”, “I was overwhelmed by fear”.
7) Fear is a superior: “fear drove him to do something he wouldn’t have done normally”, “fear dominated his actions”.

From these conceptual metaphors and the metonymic concepts, the cognitive model of fear follows the next stages: (1) Danger, (2) fear exists, (3) attempt at control, (4) loss of control and (5) flight.

**Pride.** The behavioural reactions of pride according to our cultural model are the following: erect posture, chest out, brightness of eyes, smiling, telling people about one’s achievements, head held unnaturally high, forms of walking, thinking one is unique and boasting. According to the general metonymic principle, these behavioral reactions of pride stand for the emotion. So we have expressions such as “he stood tall as he received the prize”, “after winning the race, he swelled with pride”, “she was beaming/glowing with pride”, “he ran home to tell his mother about his success”, “he was bloated with pride”, “why is he so chesty?”, “stop bragging”, “you like talking big, don’t you?”, “he is a bit uppish”, etc. Regarding the conceptual metaphors of pride, there is clearly the container metaphor: “his good performance filled him with pride”, “he was full of pride”.

**Respect.** Our conceptualization of respect has very much to do with our metaphorical notion of the value of a person. The notion of respect is also linked to that of power. The respected person or object is conceptualized as being up or high. This conceptualization receives partial motivation from the behavioural reactions when showing respect, for instance, taking the hat off, bow, kneeling. That is the reason why there are expressions such as “I think very highly of her”, “he is a very highly regarded artist”, “young children look up at older ones”, “she is an out standing performance”, “she stands out among them”, “he is the greatest”. Some behaviour regarding respect is related to high social positions and the use of forms of politeness: “I take off my hat to him for his courage”, “everyone bowed as the Queen walked into the room”, “he brought their enemies to their knees”, “the ambassador paid respects to the Queen”. Two notions are linked to the concept of respect in our culture: self-overcoming and power. Self-overcoming, in its turn, often requires “moral strength”.

**Love.** Love is conceptualized in terms of its inherent concepts such as sacrifice (benefit), affection (cherish), longing (be with), intimacy, interest and some related concepts such as happiness, friendship, respect, admiration, etc. Some conceptual metaphors used to express love are as follows:

1) The object of love is expressed in terms of food because love is a need and one of the most important needs for human beings is food. (“Hi sweetheart”, “honey, you look great today”, “she is the cream of my coffee”)

2) Love and sexual desire are related concepts (sexual desire is hunger): “she had him drooling”, “he is sex-starved”, “you have a remarkable sexual appetite”, “I hunger for your touch”, “I thirst for your kisses”, “she is quite a dish”, “he is a real hunk”. However, the relationship between love and intimate sexual behaviour is metonymical. “Sally went to bed with John” does not imply that Sally is in love with John, but “being in love with John” presupposes the concept of sex. The nonsexual version of love is called “platonic love”.

3) The attitude of the lover to the beloved involves gentleness and tenderness (“soft-hearted, tender-hearted”)

4) The object of love is a valuable object: “Hello, my precious”, “we have to leave, my dear”, “you are my treasure”.
5) The object of love is a deity: “I adore you”, “he loves the air she breathes”, “he puts her on a pedestal”, “she devoted herself entirely to him”. Nevertheless, there is an element of undeserved or undue love in these last examples because in our culture only one God can be praised.

Further metaphors.

8) Emotions are natural forces (e.g. there was a groundswell of emotion, a whirlwind of emotion, there were stormy emotions, she was engulfed by her passions).

9) Emotion is fire (e.g. the reverend inflame the crowd with his passionate speech, he was all burnt out, she was consumed by passion, time extinguishes passion).

10) Emotions as opponents (e.g. she struggled in vain against her emotions, he was prey to his emotions, I could not control my emotions, he did everything to appease her emotions, she gave in to his emotions).

11) Emotions are objects (e.g. she gave me all her love, he lost all his emotions, I’m talking about my emotions).

12) Emotional disturbance is physical disturbance (e.g. the speech stirred everybody’s feelings, I’m all shook up, he was slightly ruffled by what he heard).

13) Bodily agitation stands for emotion (e.g. I stood there trembling with emotion, the experience made him shake, he quivered all over).

14) Emotion is insanity (e.g. she was crazed with emotion, his emotions drive him out of his wits, I was wild/crazy with emotion, he is mad with desire, frenzied emotion).

15) Emotions are in the heart (e.g. Just listen to your heart, don’t take it to heart, she is heartless. There was passion in his heart).

16) Eyes are containers for emotions (e.g. I could see the fear in his eyes; his eyes were filled with anger).

17) Emotion is an animal (e.g. he unleashed his emotions, she had a wild emotional experience, he has some fierce emotions, we can tame his emotions).

3. APPLICATION OF METAPHORICAL CONCEPTS INTO THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

Introducing some metaphors in the curriculum of the English subject is something that teachers do in almost every lesson. Metaphors occur in every unit when teaching vocabulary and expressions which is something that students usually have to memorize. It would be interesting to stop for one or two lessons and explain the students how language and our mind work when using metaphors, mainly when talking about emotions. Being able to talk about themselves and about their emotions is part of the English curriculum which is set up in the objectives of the English subject (RD 1631/2007, and decree 231/2007) and in the Andalusian order of 10th August 2007 which establishes the evaluation of the Compulsory Secondary Education and the contents of the English subject, (i.e. what and how to listen, what and how to speak, what and how to read and what and how to write). Emotions are something that students feel and experience greatly during the teenage years, so it is a motivating topic to show them how we construct the language to speak about them. Explaining our students that emotions are conceived as being inside our bodies and are conveyed
because of their physiological aspects is a way to encourage the study of new vocabulary.

Let’s see how we could teach some metaphors to students of Secondary Education. For the lower levels, it would be better to introduce the subject with the emotion concepts. Love in the first place as it is something they are discovering during their teenage years; then in the second place, they may learn how to express anger. Here are some tips to follow when dealing with this topic in the English class:

1) Explain first how the container metaphor works when expressing emotions.
2) Explain then the metaphorical difference between the cognitive self and the emotional self, and the superiority of the cognitive self over the emotional self.
3) When talking about love, explain the students how the terms of food are used to talk about the loved person. Choose love songs and analyse their vocabulary. That is something that students like very much.
4) Explain the students the Metonymic Principle that says the following: “the physiological effects of an emotion stand for the emotion”.
5) Explain how the physiological effects of anger and mention some expressions related to talk about anger.

For higher levels, teachers may introduce more theory about metaphors, apart from introducing as well emotion concepts. This theory about metaphors may contain notions such as how we organize our thought by means of metaphors, and how stereotypes and categories define ideal abstract cases. Teaching some conceptual metaphors such as orientational and ontological metaphors, personification, metonymy and synecdoche are also something that students of higher levels can easily understand because they have already seen some of these concepts in the subject of Spanish Language. In order to make this theory more entertaining, teachers should find funny and curious examples to make the topic more motivating. To finish with metaphors, it is interesting to present the concept of image-schemas (e.g. container schema, part-whole schema, the source-path-goal schema and the link schema). The most important is finding examples that appeal their attention and encourage them to learn the new vocabulary and the new concepts.

These are only some examples of how to introduce the topic of the emotion concepts and the use of metaphors in the English class, but teachers may find some more interesting ways to teach the students this topic.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Metaphors are pervading in our daily life. We use them, we create them and we experience real things by means of them. It is important to highlight some of the most useful metaphors in order to teach them to our students. That way they can think over the linguistic system they use and how they organise their thoughts.

As we pointed out in the introduction, metaphors are part of sets 5 and 6 of the English syllabus contents, according to the Andalusian order of 10th August 2007. Set 5 has to do with knowledge about the linguistic system and learning awareness and set 6 has to do with sociocultural awareness. Both sets contribute to develop linguistic competence which is one of the main objectives of the Compulsory Secondary Education. According to Canale and Swain (1980), linguistic competence is a sub-competence of the most important one, communicative competence. In order to develop communicative competence, these linguists recognise five sub-competences: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, strategic and sociocultural. These sub-competences are also compiled in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), published by the Council of Europe in 2001 under the surveillance of David Little and Radja Perklova. Following the CEFR, the attainment and development of linguistic competence is established in the Andalusian Law of Education 17/2007 and
the RD 1631/2006. Both laws specify the attainment of the following eight key competences by the end of the Compulsory Secondary Education: 1) Linguistic competence, 2) mathematical literacy, 3) knowledge and interaction with the natural world, 4) cultural and artistic competence, 5) civic and citizenship competence, 6) entrepreneurship, 7) learning to learn competence, and 8) digital competence.

All throughout this article we have indicated how our mind works using metaphors, and mental schemas to describe our reality, and how this topic can be very motivating for our students. In order to contribute to the process of learning English and the development of the linguistic competence, it is important to teach how language works and how we use metaphors to organise our experiences and our thoughts.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY