

# Enhancing Metaphorical Competence in the L2 Russian Classroom

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## **Abstract**

Although a significant role of metaphor in achieving an advanced level of second/foreign language proficiency has been acknowledged in the SLA research, insufficient attention has been paid to the development of FL learners' metaphorical competence. Learners of Russian as a foreign language has not been the exception in this respect. The reason for the neglect might be, in part, the scarcity of the pedagogical suggestions offered in the studies on metaphors exhibited in Russian and other less commonly taught languages that could grow into effective instruction materials aiming to foster a metaphorical capacity of FL learners. In the present article, I attempt to convince language instructors of the relevance of metaphorical competence to learners of Russian and present the sample materials developed to teach metaphors of emotions, colors, animals, tastes, and sports in Russian.

**Key words:** conceptual metaphor, metaphorical competence, linguistic metaphor

## 1. Introduction

Recent psycholinguistic studies have confirmed the tendency of second language (L2) learners to attach new words to the concepts available in their first language (L1) rather than linking them directly to the concepts that they elaborate in the L2 (Dagut, 1977; Jiang, 2002, 2004). This might mean that learners of foreign languages tend to rely on the conceptual system of the L1 to converse in the L2 and thus L1 negative transfer takes place. In theory, if the conceptual systems of both languages overlap, learners are more likely to produce acceptable discourse in the L2 and; conversely, divergences between the L1 and L2 conceptual systems might result in either grammatically incorrect or uncommon and strange discourse (Danesi, 2008, 2016; Wolter, 2006). This suggests that instructors of L2 languages face pedagogical challenges of equipping learners with strategies to override the conceptual system of their native languages each time when they are incongruous with that of the L2. To achieve this, Danesi (1995) proposes the introduction of conceptual fluency into second language instruction (SLI), which he defines as the ability to know how the L2 “encodes” concepts via metaphorical reasoning and to apply this knowledge to switch from the L1 to L2 conceptual system (p. 5). Hence, “to be conceptually fluent” means to be able to organize “common experiences into conceptually and linguistically appropriate models” in L2 discourse (Danesi, 1995, p. 12). Due to cross-cultural differences between metaphorical conceptualizations in the L1 and L2, this goal has been acknowledged to be challengeable for L2 learners without explicit instruction (Danesi, 1995; Low, 1988; Littlemore, 2001; Littlemore, Chen, Koester, & Barnden, 2011). In this article, I argue for the importance of developing metaphorical competence in Russian as a foreign or second language through explicit classroom instruction. In what follows, I will briefly discuss the theory of metaphor proposed by Lakoff and his colleagues, examples of cross-cultural variations in metaphors from different cultures, and present samples of the Russian pedagogical materials that I have developed in the metaphor project held by the Center for

Advanced Proficiency Education and Research (CALPER) at the Pennsylvania State University.

## 2. Conceptual Metaphor

In their seminal work *Metaphors We live By*, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) introduced the Conceptual Metaphor Theory asserting that our reasoning is mostly metaphorical. Metaphors we think and “live by” have been widely recognized as rather a matter of mind and reasoning than language. Being “deeply ingrained in cognitive processes, social acts, and verbal usage” (Dirven & Paprotte, 1985, p. viii), some metaphors have conventionalized into the conceptual structures that enable us to construe our daily interaction in and with the reality, to think about, understand, and talk about abstract phenomena (e.g., emotions or moral values) in terms of concrete bodily experiences with physical entities (e.g., containers, objects, space), even though we are not normally aware of the metaphorical concepts we rely on (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This means that conceptual metaphors organize the domain of our knowledge about abstract concepts (the target domain) in terms of our knowledge about concrete concepts (the source domain) by singling out and projecting salient similar features from the source to the target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). It is crucial to remember that Lakoff and Johnson (1980) employ the term metaphor to designate a conceptual metaphor as opposed to its linguistic manifestations, i.e., linguistic metaphors.

To give an example of the pervasive and unconscious use of metaphor in everyday life, consider one of the most frequently discussed and experienced emotions – love – though recognized as “a mysterious emotion which is notoriously difficult to pin down” (Kövecses, 1986, p. 61). Kövecses (1986) notes that one of the ways of structuring love in many cultures is a UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS,<sup>i</sup> which, he points out, is so natural that its linguistic manifestations do not seem metaphorical at all: We are *made for each other*<sup>ii</sup>. We are *one*. She is *my better half*. They are *a perfect match*.

We function as *a unit*. They are *inseparable* (p. 62). Perceiving love in a similar way, Russian speakers can say: Мы одно целое (my odno tseloe, literally: we are one complete), моя лучшая половина (moia lutshaia polovina, literally: my better half), мы созданы друг для друга (my sozdany drug dlia druga, literally: we are created for each other).

Kövecses (1986) explains that it is natural and obvious to understand love metaphors through the similarity between love experiences and the unity of physical, chemical, etc. elements or constituents. Similar to a perfect fit or match of automobile parts, or building blocks, or the parts of any modern appliance that enable them to function, the two loving parts form a unity maximally complementing each other in harmony (Kövecses, 1986, p. 63). The view that one half is incomplete without the other in the love experience and that true love is perfect harmony, as (Kövecses, 1986) emphasizes, are not something inevitable or that cannot happen the other way around (p. 63). We think about love relationships and converse about them as we do because the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS UNITY OF TWO COMPLEMENTARY PARTS governs our thinking about the emotion (Kövecses, 1986, p. 63). This conceptualization likely originates from the embodied experience of spatial proximity to caretakers in childhood, as when our parents embraced us, and separation from those same individuals as we grew up. The conventional ways of thinking and talking about love are structured by metaphors we are hardly conscious of because they are grounded in our, often unconscious, embodied experiences.

### 3. Cross-cultural Variations in Conceptual Metaphor

As a conceptual/mental phenomenon that structures daily life, metaphor is inseparable from culture (Kövecses, 2005). Metaphors of love allow Americans or Russians to think and talk about this abstract concept in the ways that originate in and are sanctioned by their cultures. Neither Americans nor Russians reason about the emotion of love as, for example, FLYING A KITE, because the metaphor LOVE IS FLYING A KITE is not available in their cultures. This way of thinking and conversing about love is, however,

sanctioned in Chinese culture (Kövecses, 2005 referring to Yang, 2002). By the same token, it would be highly unlikely for Chinese or Russian individuals to describe their love experiences as *getting to first base* or *making a big hit*, which arise from the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS PLAYING BASEBALL. Such expressions, of course are common in American cultural settings due to the popularity of baseball (Shore, 1996, pp. 88-89).

Even though two or more languages display the same source and target domains, cross-cultural variations in conceptual metaphors relate to markedly different construals or interpretations of the source domain (Kövecses, 2005, p. 118). This means that the general schema of the metaphor is filled out with culturally specific elements. Although the conceptual metaphor THE ANGRY PERSON IS A PRESSURIZED CONTAINER occurs in many cultures and languages, including English, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian, the instantiations of this metaphor differ with respect to the kind of container, the kind of substance that creates pressure, whether the pressure results in an explosion, etc. (Kövecses, 2005, p. 39). In English, the kind of container is not specified, but it is found pressurized with hot liquid: You make my blood *boil*. *Simmer* down! Let him *stew*. He was *bursting with* anger (Kövecses, 2005, p. 39-40). In Japanese, anger is also pressurized heated liquid; however, contrary to English, the container is specified. The pressurized heated liquid is contained in the *hara* (literally: belly), a concept unique to Japanese culture: *Ikari ga hara no soko o guragura, saseru* (literally: Anger boils the bottom of the belly) (Matsuki, 1995, p. 140).

Yu (1995) reports that the Chinese anger metaphor draws on the cultural concept of *qi*. *Qi* corresponds to a substance such as gas, meaning the energy that flows through the body (Yu, 1995, p. 63). Unlike English, where heated fluid exerts pressure inside the container, in Chinese, gas is indifferent to heat; however, it is also able to create pressure in the container specified as the heart, spleen, or liver, resulting in an explosion: *Ta pi-qi hen da* (he spleen-gas very big, literally: He's got big gas in his spleen, meaning 'He is hot-

tempered'), *Ta xin-zhong you qi* (he heart-inside have gas, literally: He has gas (anger) in his heart, meaning 'He is angry'), *Ta zuijin gan-qi yujie* (he recently liver-gas pent-up, literally: He's been irritated recently, meaning 'He's been in an irritable mood') (Yu, 1995, p. 64).

Russian also conceptualizes THE ANGRY PERSON as A PRESSURIZED CONTAINER. However, in this case, anger is located in the person's chest/breast or behind the ribs: Скрытый гнев разрывал грудь (Skrytyi gnev razryval grud, literally: Hidden anger was tearing the breast/chest), Нерастраченная злость давила на ребра (Nerastrachennaia zlost davila na rebra, literally: Unspent anger was pressing his ribs). Anger is likely viewed as a substance similar to air or gas that exerts pressure from the inside: Клим молчал, чувствуя, что его раздувает злость, а девушка недоуменно, печально говорила... (Klim molchal, chuvstvuia, chto ego razduvaet zlost', a devushka nedoumenno, pechalno govorila..., literally: Klim was silent, feeling that anger was inflating him). It should be noted that anger might also reside in the soul if it fills the container without exerting pressure. This marks the gradual growth of emotion: И я чувствовал, что ядовитая злость мало-помалу наполняла мою душу (I ia chuvstvoval, chto iadovitaia zlost' malo-pomalu napolniala moiu dushu, literally: And I felt that poisonous anger was filling my soul little by little).

To give another example of similar differences, consider the English expression: He *is on cloud nine* and the Russian expression: Он *на седьмом небе* (On na sed'mom nebe, literally: He is on the seventh sky). Even though, these expressions describe the concept of HAPPINESS in terms of the bodily experience of verticality, UP as a source domain, they differ in how English and Russian construe it. The differences relate to height (nine vs. seven) and the type of a phenomenon involved (a cloud vs. the sky). The source domain UP is not associated with happiness for Chinese speakers because in their culture being up and off the ground means being out of self-control and, therefore, contradicts the conventional virtues of modesty and steadiness (Yu, 1995). Thus, when someone is described as floating, as in *ta piaopiaoran* (literally: he is floating), or *ta you zai yunli-wuli le*

(literally: he *is again in the clouds and fog*), it means that the person is so smug that he has lost his senses (Yu, 1995, p. 64). On the other hand, Chinese culture has a source domain to express happiness that is not available in English, or Russian, e.g., FLOWERS IN THE HEART, instantiated in the linguistic metaphor: Ta xin-li le kai le hua (the heart-inside happy bloom, flower, literally: he's so happy that *flowers are blooming in his heart*) (Yu, 1995, p. 74).

If speakers of other languages (e.g., English, Japanese, Chinese, etc.) who learn Russian are not aware of the conceptual differences that Russian displays, they are unlikely to metaphorize about anger, happiness, or any other abstract concept in a native-like manner and might produce either literal discourse or make errors stemming from the differences discussed above. The goal of instruction should be to sensitize learners to cross-cultural variations in metaphors, teach learners of Russian to recognize metaphors, identify basic experiences (i.e., source domains) in terms of which abstract phenomena (i.e., target domains) are conceptualized in Russian, and help learners imbue their own Russian discourse with conceptually appropriate metaphors.

#### **4. Bringing Metaphor into the L2 Russian Classroom**

If learners are to develop a high level of proficiency in a language and if they are to understand the culture that uses the language, they will need to develop the ability to understand and use metaphorical language. Yet, it is only within the past ten years or so that educators and researchers have begun to pay attention to the importance of metaphor in language education. Numerous studies show that conceptual metaphor, as a pedagogical tool, facilitates the learning of vocabulary (Littlemore & Low, 2006; Boers, Demecheleer, & Eyckmans, 2004), grammar (Tyler, 2012; Tyler & Evans, 2001; Danesi, 2003; Tyler, 2008; Daiber, 2009), and enhances textual illocutionary, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence of L2 learners (Littlemore & Low, 2006a).

Most of the effort in metaphor instruction has focused on teaching English as a second and foreign language; very few publications have been undertaken to bring metaphor to Russian metaphor pedagogy-grammar and vocabulary instruction specifically. Janda (2004) proposes a metaphor model for teaching the grammatical category of aspect in Russian, associating the perfective aspect with A DISCRETE SOLID OBJECT and the imperfective aspect with A FLUID SUBSTANCE. Embracing Janda's (2004) model, Nessel (2009) complements it with metonymy arguing that, while metaphor links events to matter (objects and substances), metonymy ensures connections between their types. Janda's metaphor approach to the Russian aspect has been implemented in the interactive media textbook, the instruction materials of which include tutorials, activities, and exercises (Janda, n.d.). Moreover, Janda and Clancy (2002) have vigorously employed conceptual metaphor in a new way of explaining the Russian case system and proposed a set of interactive metaphor-driven instruction materials for teaching Russian cases.

Kalyuga and Kalyuga (2008) propose to use conceptual metaphor as a teaching and learning tool for the acquisition of the Russian vocabulary related to understanding, learning, and teaching activities. Through the detailed discussion of Russian words and metaphorical expressions used in the processes of teaching and learning, the authors explain how four systematic conceptual patterns, namely: UNDERSTANDING AND LEARNING ARE TAKING, TEACHING IS GIVING, UNDERSTANDING AND LEARNING ARE MOVING TOWARDS KNOWLEDGE, and TEACHING IS LEADING OR HELPING TO MOVE, might be employed to decrease a cognitive load and facilitate the acquisition of new Russian words (Kalyuga & Kalyuga, 2008, p. 252). In addition to explaining the connection between the conceptual metaphors and the words and expressions of leaning and teaching, Kalyuga and Kalyuga (2008) highlight the influence of the identified metaphors on the syntactic properties of the lexical items in question (p. 254). Although Kalyuga and Kalyuga's (2008) suggestions for employing metaphorical chunks are

not taken to the next step, i.e., instruction materials, similar to Janda (n.d.) and Janda and Clancy (2002), I believe that Kalyuga and Kalyuga's (2008) findings are important because they seek to convince Russian teachers of the relevance of conceptual metaphor for facilitating vocabulary acquisition.

While the metaphor scholarship aiding Russian pedagogy is scarce and has been generated mostly by Western scholars interested in second/foreign language acquisition, yet it is relevant to point out a growing body of Russian research addressing culture-specific metaphors e.g., metaphors of emotions (Apresyan, V. & Apresyan, Y., 1993), mental activities, human intellect (Balazs, 2009; Leont'eva, 2006), time (Balashova, 2007), and political activities (Kobozeva, 2001; Mammadov, 2010; Baranov, 2003; Koteyko & Ryazanova-Clarke, 2009; Shmelev, 2002) to mention a few that can inspire language instructors to develop metaphor-driven teaching materials. Attempting to contribute to the afford in designing metaphor instruction for teaching Russian as a foreign language, in the next section, I will discuss sample hands-on activities intended to foster L2 Russian learners' conceptual fluency and metaphorical competence for the relevance of which to mastering a second/foreign language I have argued above.

## **5. Sample Pedagogical Materials for Metaphor Instruction**

The Russian materials to be briefly explained here have been designed within the project that includes three other languages, Korean, Chinese, and Spanish. The Russian component of the project aims to provide language instructors with the pedagogical resources for teaching conceptual and linguistic metaphors encompassing one important target domain – emotions and three productive in Russian culture source domains – animal, color, sports, and taste. Though the project did not pursue the goal to cover a wide scope of metaphors, the account of the metaphor structure and metaphorical expressions will hopefully provide educators with

concrete ideas about designing their own materials to address particular needs of their learners.

The Russian resources encompassed in the project are an annotated bibliography on metaphor research in Russian, a metaphor dictionary that explains conceptual and linguistic metaphors, their meaning, the grammatical properties of their constituents, provides examples of use, and four teaching units intended for intermediate and/or advanced level learners if activities are carried out in Russian. Covering five metaphorical domains mentioned above, each unit includes awareness, categorization, grammar, and communication activities that encourage learners to explore the conceptual and linguistic metaphors grouped by a particular source or target domain. Each unit is complimented with a Teacher's Guide that highlights the links between conceptual and linguistic metaphors and guides teachers through each activity. The next two subsections illustrate the Russian materials, including the Russian metaphor dictionary and Teacher's Guide into which student activities are integrated. The annotated bibliography is not included here.

### **5.1 Russian Metaphor Dictionary**

The Russian metaphor dictionary encompasses 442 entries, 212 of which present the target domain of emotions, another half of the entries covers four source domains, namely colors: 96, tastes: 67, animals: 47, and sports: 20. The dictionary is designed to foster metaphorical awareness of L2 Russian learners by exposing them to the conceptual structure underlying the linguistic metaphors and their literal translations. In order to do this, the dictionary entries bring learners attention to the source domains making the origin of metaphorical expressions obvious, and thus enable learners to decompose the expressions into basic meanings which are salient for L2 learners (Littlemore, 2009). Known as etymological elaborations, this technique proposed by Boers and his colleagues, has been documented to be effective because, in addition to the general comprehension of figurative expressions, it promotes understanding

of their value judgements and acquisition (Boers, 2000, 2001; Boers, Demecheleer, & Eyckmans, 2004; Boers, Eyckmans, & Stengers, 2007). To advance grammar accuracy, as Kalyuga and Kalyuga (2008) recommend, the entries furnish the grammatical properties of each element the metaphorical expressions include and examples of their use adapted from the Russian National Corpus (2003-2017).

For an illustrative purpose, I will discuss four dictionary entries shown in Table 1 exemplifying HAPPINESS as the target domain. Although Russian and English share several happiness metaphors (e.g., HAPPINESS IS LIGHT, HAPPINESS IS UP, and HAPPINESS IS A VALUABLE OBJECT), the metaphors presented in Table 1 are not available in English. If L1 English learners of Russian are unaware of the associations of HAPPINESS with SICKNESS or INTOXICATION, they might infer wrong inferences because being sick or intoxicated typically involves negative rather than positive experiences. Besides, relating HAPPINESS to SICKNESS seems prominent in Russian as the Russian metaphor dictionary includes eleven entries two of which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *The dictionary entries for HAPPINESS as the target domain*

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**Conceptual metaphor:** HAPPINESS IS SICKNESS

**1. Lexical item:** потерять голову от счастья

**Literal translation of the lexical item:** lose the head from happiness

**Grammatical structure:** Verb + Direct Object + Accusative + from + Indirect Object + Genitive

**Metaphorical meaning:** experiencing a strong feeling of happiness that causes an individual to lose control

**Example:** После турнира тренер победителей, кажется, потерял голову от счастья.

**Literal translation of the example:** After the tournament the coach of the winners seemed to lose the head from happiness.

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**2. Lexical item:** заразительное счастье

**Literal translation of the lexical item:** contagious happiness

**Grammatical structure:** Neutral, nominative, singular

**Metaphorical meaning:** making someone happy by being happy oneself

**Example:** Счастье заразительно как и горе.

**Literal translation of the example:** Happiness is as contagious as grief.

**Conceptual metaphor:** HAPPINESS IS INTOXICATION

**1. Lexical item:** пьяный от счастья

**Literal translation of the lexical item:** intoxicated from happiness

**Grammatical structure:** Nominative + from + Indirect Object + Genitive

**Metaphorical meaning:** being oblivious by virtue of happiness

**Example:** Люди гуляли и пели, пьяные от счастья.

**Literal translation of the example:** Being intoxicated from happiness, people were having a walk and singing.

**2. Lexical item:** упиваться счастьем

**Literal translation of the lexical item:** get intoxicated by happiness

**Grammatical structure:** Verb + Indirect Object + Instrumental

**Metaphorical meaning:** experiencing and exhibiting a strong feeling of happiness

**Example:** И уже больше ничего не нужно делать, а просто жить и упиваться счастьем.

**Literal translation of the example:** Nothing needs to be done, but just live and get intoxicated by happiness.

The first linguistic metaphor, *потерять голову от счастья*

(*poteriat' golovu ot schastia*, literally: lose the head from happiness), signifies the consequence of a strong feeling of happiness, i.e., the inability to control oneself. The literal translation of the metaphorical expression is followed by its grammatical structure. Collocating with the verb *потерять*, the noun *голова* functions as a direct object marked by the accusative case designating a focus of the action. The preposition *от* collocates with *счастье* functioning as an indirect object used in the genitive case. The second lexical unit *заразительное счастье* (*zarazitelnoe schastie*, literally: contagious happiness) describes a property of happiness, i.e., quickly affecting those who are around a happy individual. It is given in the basic form, i.e., the nominative case, with the gender and number marked.

The metaphor HAPPINESS IS INTOXICATION is elaborated through two linguistic metaphors one of which *пьяный от счастья* (*piany ot schastia*, literally: intoxicated from happiness) indicates a high level of happiness causing the inability of an individual to notice anything that happens around her. The adjective *пьяный* is given in the basic form, i.e., the nominative case, masculine, singular. Collocating with the preposition *от*, the noun *счастье* takes the genitive case. The second linguistic metaphor, *упиваться счастьем* (*upivatia schastiem*, literally: get intoxicated by happiness), also relates the state of happiness to alcoholic intoxication, but, in contrast to the first metaphorical expression, it expresses agency of an individual through the verb *упиваться* collocated with the noun *счастье* in the instrumental case as it functions as an indirect object.

Though the composition of the most entries in the Russian metaphor dictionary consists of the components presented in Table 1, there are the entries that include one more category, namely a register, when the metaphorical meaning expresses an insult or humiliation. The indication of the register in the entries is intended to enhance the pragmatic competence of L2 Russian learners. The pejorative metaphorical units are mostly formed with animals as the source domain, two examples of which are presented in Table 2.

Though English exhibits a use of animals as a source domain, the entries in the table do not have English parallels.

Table 2. *The dictionary entries for ANIMALS as the source domain*

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**HUMAN IS EQUINE**

**Lexical item:** откинуть копыта

**Literal translation of the lexical item:** throw off hooves

**Grammatical structure:** Verb + Direct Object + Accusative

**Metaphorical meaning:** pass away

**Example:** Прошлым летом он откинул копыта.

**Literal translation of the example:** Last summer he threw off hooves.

**Register:** pejorative

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**HUMAN IS BOVINE**

**Lexical item:** бычьё

**Literal translation of the lexical item:** oxen

**Grammatical structure:** Nominative, collective

**Metaphorical meaning:** ignorant, ill-mannered, uncivilized people who attempt to dominate at any cost

**Example:** В России завелось бычьё нового поколения – культурное, гламурное и философски продвинутое.

**Literal translation of the example:** In Russia, the oxen of the new generation have emerged – civilized, glamorous, and philosophically advanced.

**Register:** pejorative

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## 5.2 Teacher's Guide

To assist instructors of Russian to apply the proposed pedagogical materials effectively in the classroom, the Teacher's Guide includes the explanation of conceptual metaphors each unit involves, student activities, and suggestions for implementing each activity. Table 3 illustrates the student activities for teaching emotion

metaphors incorporated into the Teacher's Guide.

The activities intend to encourage learners of Russian to consciously reflect on the conceptual metaphors of emotions in Russian and the native language and to discuss the links to their linguistic manifestations for encoding purposes. By categorizing the metaphorical expressions, learners become aware of the fact that a source domain can apply to several target domains as well as a target domain may be attached to several source domains. Being aware of these conceptual and thus linguistic variations at a conscious level might facilitate the comprehension of new emotion metaphors. The categorization activities call for cognitive effort whereby contributing to better understanding and remembering new expressions structured by the conceptual metaphors in focus. The comparison across languages should enable learners to compare Russian metaphors with those preferred in the L1 and thus to prevent negative transfer while increasing linguistic accuracy in learner production.

Table 3. *Sample materials for emotions as the target domain*

Emotion Unit	Teacher's Guide
<p><b>Suggested level:</b> intermediate/advanced (if all activities are carried out in Russian)</p>	
<p><b>Aims:</b> (1) to study metaphorical associations for different emotions in Russian and to explore how they differ cross-culturally; (2) to introduce students to Russian expressions connected with emotion words and their metaphorical meanings and practice the use of these expressions.</p>	
<p><b>Word list:</b></p>	
<p>(кто-либо) взрываться/взорваться; (грусть) охватить кого-либо; впадать в гнев; притягивать кого-либо к кому-либо; тянуть друг к другу; сохнуть по ком-либо; обжечься любовью; звереть; срывать</p>	

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злость на ком-либо; (счастье) кому-либо привалить; быть на седьмом небе от счастья; кипятиться; заразить кого-либо любовью к чему-либо; неровно дышать по ком-либо; (счастье) переполнять кого-либо; быть без ума от кого-либо; доводить до белого каления; погружаться в печаль

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**LOVE IS SICKNESS** – the behavior of a person in love is described the way that reminds of the behavior of a sick person. This metaphor is expressed by the following linguistic metaphors: сохнуть по ком-либо; заразить кого-либо любовью к чему-либо; неровно дышать по ком-либо.

**ANGER IS A DANGEROUS ANIMAL** – becoming angry is talked about as if becoming a dangerous animal. It is as dangerous to be around an angry person as to be around a dangerous animal. This metaphor is expressed by the following linguistic metaphor: звереть.

**HAPPINESS IS A FULL CONTAINER** – a person experiences positive emotions when he/she owns a container full of valuable things, e.g., rare books or gold. A similar emotion is experienced when a person is happy. This metaphor is expressed by the following linguistic metaphor: (счастье) переполнять кого-либо.

**Note:** The explanation of each conceptual metaphor involved in the unit is not included here due to the limit of space.

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### In Class

**Exercise 1.** Think of the words that collocate with the following verbs. Write them down.

**Teacher:** Students do this activity individually, before you do feedback with the whole class. During feedback, check whether students understand the literal meanings of the verbs involved in the activity.

Охватить; заразить; сохнуть; тянуть; срывать; взрываться;  
 быть на небе; впадать; привалить; обжечься; звереть;  
 притягивать; погружаться

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**Exercise 3.** Put the verbs from 1 into the correct category in the chart below.

**Teacher:** Before students do this activity, categorize several verbs and show the connection of the literal meanings discussed in 1 and the categories in the chart. Ask students to work individually.

FORCE	
CONTAINER	
PRESSURE IN THE CONTAINER	
SICKNESS	
HEAT, FIRE	
A DANGEROUS ANIMAL	
A PLANT	
BEING UP	

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**Exercise 4.** Put the expressions into the correct category in the chart below.

(кто-либо) взрываться/взорваться; (грусть) охватить кого-либо; впадать в гнев; притягивать кого-либо к кому-либо; тянуть друг к другу; сохнуть по ком-либо; обжечься любовью; звереть; срывать злость на ком-либо; (счастье) кому-либо привалить; быть на седьмом небе от счастья; кипятиться; заразить кого-либо любовью к чему-либо; неровно дышать по кому-либо; (счастье) переполнять кого-либо; быть без ума от кого-либо; доводить до белого каления; погружаться в печаль

**Teacher:** Before students do this activity, bring to their attention two things: (1) the left column includes concrete terms and the right column includes abstract terms; (2) one concrete term can be associated with more than one abstract term and vice versa. Ask students to work individually.

FORCE		HAPPINESS, SADNESS, LOVE
CONTAINER		SADNESS, HAPPINESS, ANGER
PRESSURE IN THE CONTAINER		ANGER
SICKNESS		LOVE
HEAT, FIRE		LOVE, ANGER
A DANGEROUS ANIMAL		ANGER
A PLANT		ANGER
BEING UP		HAPPINESS

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**Exercise 5.** Match the Russian emotion expressions with their English counterparts.

**Teacher:** Ask students to work in pairs. During feedback, check whether students match the expressions correctly and explain semantic nuances of the expressions that relate to the same abstract term.

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**Exercise 6.** Think of two ways of describing such feelings as love, happiness, anger, and sadness in your own language and write two sentences showing them. Are they the same or different from the ways these feelings are described in Russian?

**Teacher:** (1) Instruct students to work in groups. If the class is multilingual, group students with the same native language. (2) Discuss with students the emotional associations in their languages contrasting them with the associations in Russian.

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## 6. Conclusion

In this article, the multifaceted afford was made to illustrate to language practitioners that metaphor enables people to reason and communicate about abstract concepts as well as to emphasize the cross-cultural variability in metaphors stemming from the physical and socio-cultural experiences that each culture associates with particular abstract concepts, e.g., love, anger, happiness. My hope is that to convince language instructors of a significant role metaphor plays in the development of the learners' ability to articulate their thoughts precisely. I also hope to equip instructors to help their students avoid infelicitous linguistic metaphors through enhancing learners' awareness of L2 conceptual structures and appropriating metaphorical linguistic forms they underlie. Embracing the findings on the development of metaphorical competence (Boers, 2000, 2001; Low, 1988; Littlemore & Low, 2006 to mention a few), I advocate for explicit instruction as critical to help learners of Russian acquire

strategies for comprehending and generating metaphors. To this end, I have proposed the sample pedagogical materials that will, hopefully, help instructors of Russian develop a clear understanding of the theoretical principles required for designing their own pedagogical materials in order to meet particular needs of their learners. Moreover, it is crucial to note that the sample activities discussed in the article can also inspire instructors of other less commonly taught languages, e.g., Ukrainian, Belorussian, Arabic, Swahili, Japanese, to generate metaphor-driven instruction aiming to sensitize language learners to cross-linguistic and, more importantly, conceptual differences between L1 and L2 cultures and languages and thus enhance learners' metaphorical competence fostering their lexical and conceptual accuracy. The challenge practitioners might face in this respect might be a scarce number of both theoretical and empirical studies the goal of which is to identify and explore metaphors specific to the respective cultures. However, I hypothesize that the solid scholarship on metaphor fundamentals in general and the empirical research on conceptual/linguistic metaphors as well as metaphor dictionaries, e.g., the dictionary discussed in the present article, can effectively facilitate the development of instructional materials for less commonly taught languages and cultures.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Small capitals are used to mark conceptual metaphors in the paper. In American culture, love is also viewed as FLUID IN A CONTAINER, FIRE, HEAT, A NATURAL FORCE, INSANITY, MAGIC, RAPTURE, A VALUABLE COMMODITY (IN AN ECONOMIC EXCHANGE), A HIDDEN OBJECT, AN OPPONENT (Kövecses, 1986).

<sup>2</sup>Italics mark linguistic metaphors.

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