

On Linking Fragments of Discourse to the Conceptual Metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY

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Abstract

LIFE IS A JOURNEY is one of the most popular families of metaphors explored by cognitive linguists. They usually concentrate on words which denote "vehicles", "ways", "movements", and "spatial references". A cognitive map of life, perceived as a journey, has been designed by Lakoff and Turner (1989), Gibbs (1994) and others. I would like to concentrate on unconventional expressions which can contribute to existing models of LIFE IS A JOURNEY. I will show how *eshelon* "echelon" (a Russian word for a special train which is usually used in war time) can be relevant for interpreting the way of life the hero chose to live. Examples have been drawn from modern Russian newspapers. I will also show how chains of metaphors in the context, may influence the processing of the Russian word *eshelon* "echelon". My major argument is that the source domain of metaphors often represents multiple layers of experience, e.g. *eshelon* "echelon" – means of travelling, special position of convoy vehicles in military time and "a mechanism". In the case of complex domains, a special procedure of blending semantic fields must be employed.

Keywords

Cognitive Linguistics, Conceptual Metaphor, Critical Discourse Analysis

1. Introduction

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY provides a rewarding field for cognitive metaphor researchers (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1987, Lipka 1988, Lakoff and Turner 1989, Lakoff and Johnson 1999, Charteris-Black 2004, 2005). It has been shown that a set of correspondences exists between our conceptualization of life and the experience of a journey which brings into view the stereotype of ideal development: to go as high, as far, and as fast in your life as possible. The focal points of travelling such as a starting place, a crossroad, and destinations correspond to the landmarks in our life (Lakoff 1993: 224).

Anthropological studies have provided the evidence of similarity between mythic tales in almost every culture on earth: myths incorporate various patterns of the metaphorical journey (Gibbs 1994:187-192). Some myths portray a goal-oriented travelling — the quest in which heroes pursue their mission and constantly get involved in struggles for realization of their destiny. They are the myths where the hero must kill a dragon, deliver people from perils, destroy hostile cities, or return to the starting point like Odysseus. A crossroad or a choice between a right or a wrong way is another popular journey motif, which has been embodied in the story of Heracles in Greek mythology and in Russian fairy tales. The directionality of travelling such as ascent, descent or spiral movements has been depicted in the myth about the tower of Babel, the literary work of Dante – Purgatorio, and also has become a part of a shaman's (a sorcerer in Siberia) spiritual training .

The various patterns of journey presented on the macro-level of text reveal themselves in our repertoire of everyday expressions. The terms which we use to conceptualize life experience indicate that our cognitive model of life may include the following correspondences (Ungerer & Schmid 1996:121).

The person leading a life is a traveller
The purposes are destinations
The means for achieving purposes are routes
Progress is the distance travelled
Difficulties in life are impediments to travel
Choices in life are crossroads

The mapping (set of correspondences between life experience and a journey) seems to be consistent across cultures and is reflected in a large number of conventional and novel metaphors. However, one problem with this mapping is that the target domain can be obscure. Other families of JOURNEY metaphors have to be accounted for – LOVE IS A JOURNEY and A CAREER IS A JOURNEY. According to Lakoff (1993), they share with LIFE IS A JOURNEY the same source domain configuration and a similar set of correspondences. The JOURNEY metaphors seem to possess a mutual crucial element or primary metaphor – GOALS ARE DESTINATIONS (Grady 1999, Lakoff

and Johnson 1999). Unfortunately, the source domain JOURNEY cannot be identified without additional analytical work which necessitates matching the semantics of a word or expression with the property of the primary metaphor GOALS ARE DESTINATIONS. In other words, metaphoric expressions do not carry identification tags of their cognitive origin. Figuratively speaking, communicators do not attach a metamessage regarding their intention to use a metaphor such as "Please consider my phrase as an instantiation of the system LIFE IS A JOURNEY". As Steen (1996:57) observes, "It has sometimes remained an act of faith that particular metaphors in language reflect particular metaphors in thought".

In this paper I would like to demonstrate procedures that I have had to develop so as to link a fragment of discourse from a Russian newspaper with the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY.

2. Metaphors in language and metaphors in thought: bridging the gap

When a cognitive linguist encounters a metaphor in a discourse, he or she faces a few problems regarding its classification. The first issue is whether the metaphor is a conventional metaphor or a novel one. Conventional metaphors are frequently occurring metaphors which are still linked with their literary meaning as opposed to dead metaphors whose source is no longer evident to language speakers. The innovative metaphors are those rarely used. (On the distinction between innovative, dead and conventionalized metaphors see Deignan 2005: 40-47). Another quality of novel metaphors is that they are created spontaneously (Gibbs 1994:123). Corpus frequency can be a rough guide as to whether the metaphor is conventional or innovative, but I will demonstrate some contingencies of quantitative analysis of metaphors further below. Conventional metaphors can be lexicalised, e.g. included in dictionaries as one sense of a polysemous word, but this is unfortunately not always the case.

Establishing whether a particular metaphor is a conventional one or a novel one prompts a better understanding whether the metaphor belongs to a conceptual system or is a one-shot metaphor (Deignan 2005:37,46). According to Lakoff (1993:245), "a conceptual system contains thousands of conventional metaphorical mappings which form a highly structured subsystem of the conceptual system". A novel metaphor also can be linked to a conceptual metaphor but the choice of the system is more subjective and requires additional substantiation. As Gibbs points out

what is frequently seen as a creative metaphoric expression of some idea is often only a spectacular instantiation of specific metaphorical entailments that arise from a small set of conceptual metaphors shared by many individuals within a culture (Gibbs 1994:252).

If a particular linguistic metaphor is an instantiation of a conceptual system, then it embodies a relevant set of correspondences which is associated with the system at

whole. The correspondences are semantic properties of the word that have been transferred from one category to another.

The linguist has to identify the tenor and the vehicle in order to substantiate the choice of the target and source domains. The vehicle is the meaning that the word has in its source domain, or its literal meaning (Deignan 2005:14). The topic is the meaning that the word has in the target domain, or its metaphorical meaning. However, the literal meaning of the word can be obscure. Words are often polysemous: relevant semantic properties are not always easy to determine. For instance, a metaphoric *plague* may derive either from the meaning **1**. A contagious disease... or **2**. An unusually and unpleasantly large quantity of insects and animals (OED). It is also possible that both meanings become fused when a metaphor is generated. Compare the following example.

- (1) **Plague of pimples blamed on bread.** Eating too much refined bread and cereal, rather than chocolate and greasy food, may be the culprit behind the pimples that plague many a youngster (Exclusive from *New Scientist Print Edition*)

The semantic structure of polysemous words in different languages is not equivalent. Therefore, a metaphor incorporating multiple meanings of a word does not have a counterpart if semantic spaces attached to the form (label) are unequal. For instance, the metaphor *plague* (1) may not be translated into Russian through the counterpart of plague as a contagious disease *chuma* because the second meaning "infestation" is not linked to the form *chuma* "plague" in Russian. Therefore, some features or correspondences are lost in translation.

The identification of the vehicle is as complicated as the topic identification. For instance, Chantril and Mio (1996) in their analysis of metonymy in politics noticed that Hitler and Churchill both used "blood" in a figurative sense. However, in doing so Hitler and Churchill were conveying different images and entailments. Hitler exploited "blood bath" image to portray a "violent death of enemy", Churchill referred to "blood" so as to show his personal commitment and the degree of his exertion.

Within Churchill's first speech to the House of Commons as the nation's Prime Minister, he declared that he had "nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat"(p.276). In those synecdoches he summed up a very human offering, a condensed version of his promise to give to the effort all that he was. Note that Churchill's reference to the "blood", in contrast to Hitler's, is benignly representative of human vigor, perhaps because it is the speaker's—and not the enemy's -- blood. (Chantril and Mio 1996:177)

Therefore, the interpretation of the same word in a metaphorical sense may vary from person to person and is often context dependent. As Deignan (2005: 39) observes, "...metaphoricity of a word may be perceived differently by different speakers, and according to the context in which the word is encountered". An attempt to link blood with a source domain and target domain may bring a different result in the case of Hitler's and Churchill's speeches. In the case of Hitler's speech, blood similar to head and heart and perhaps liver in some cultures, may stand for the death of the person or people. Compare the phrase "I want their heads, I want their hearts" (perhaps in a context of a Mafia meeting or a medieval internecine strife). Another possibility is to

place these words within a target domain of the initiation of war. Though in this instance, blood has to collocate with the expressions of volition. The source domain can be defined with some approximation as VITAL BODY PARTS. In the case of Churchill's speech blood, similar to sweat and tears creates a target category UTMOST EFFORTS or ABSOLUTE DEVOTION. The label for categories may vary. A vulgar definition such as PRODUCTS OF VITAL ACTIVITY or VITAL LIQUORS can represent the source domain for blood, sweat and tears.

I have used the "blood" example, as well as the "plague" example as an illustration of the ambiguity of metaphors and multiplicity of evoked meanings in different contexts and in different cultural settings. I have showed that the emergent semantic structure is a result of interplay between some of the senses of the vehicle (that can be culturally specific) and pragmatic information from the text. Classification of metaphors and the linking a metaphor to a particular conceptual system is not a mechanical process, neither is the identification of a mapping network.

Contextual cues affect the reading of metaphors, some metaphoric projections are strengthened or weakened by pragmatic information from the text. A separate issue arises when a metaphor is mixed with other metaphors or its meaning is extended within the discourse. The constellation of metaphors in a discourse is frequently represented by words from different source domains and therefore they enrich and enlarge the system of correspondences represented by a key metaphor. (See Semino and Mascio 1996 on creation and reinforcement of inferential chains). The blend of metaphors in the discourse often creates a hybridisation of both source and target domains when sets of correspondences are shared between different fields of experience. Then the linguist has to face a situation when there may be more than one source domain and the target domain has blurred boundaries as well.

At first glance the theory of blending (Turner and Fauconnier 1995; Turner 1996; Fauconnier and Turner 1998) can become a relevant linguistic instrument for handling issues with cross-domain mapping. Instead of two domains, the blending theory presents at least four mental spaces that incorporate an input structure, target domain, set of functional correspondences between them and an emergent structure of meaning. There are two frequently used examples of blending *You're digging your own grave* (Fauconnier 1997: 168-171) and *This surgeon is a butcher* (Grady et al. 1999: 103-106). The application of blending theory in both cases disregards the context of the utterance (Ruiz de Mendoza 1998; Pena & Santibanez 2005, Brandt and Brandt 2005). Ruiz de Mendoza (1998) and Pena & Santibanez (2005) have shown that construal of the metaphor by Fauconnier and Turner 1998 is procedural and automatic to such an extent that the way different mental spaces interact is difficult to analyse (Pena & Santibanez 2005: 220). Brandt and Brandt (2005) have argued that self-made data were used for the analysis of *This surgeon is a butcher* and therefore the example did not address problems of actually occurring communication. Therefore, blending theory as presented by Turner and Fauconnier, cannot be regarded as a panacea for making sense of all intricate cases of metaphoric exploitation. Blending theory enriches our analytical

procedure through introduction of input spaces and emergent structures, but it is sometimes a mystery to me how the input properties have been identified. In a stretch of discourse, the semantics of metaphors are affected by the discourse motifs and they evoke some particular mental spaces and suppress other potential input properties.

Charteris-Black (2005:46) argues over 75 per cent of the journey metaphors in Churchill's speeches had one of four metaphor targets. These were: the British war effort, human progress in general, military victory and the American war effort. It is possible to assemble all military domains in a single hyper-category of WAR and therefore, neglect the differences between subcategories. Therefore, details of the mapping are often a result of our choice of category level. If a superordinate level was selected, some elements would be lost. If we narrow the focus, then more detailed aspects of a described situation appear. The change in the level of domain categorisation may result in a departure from the traditional set of conceptual metaphors introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). See an enlargement of the target domain under the label "Complex system" by Kovesces (1996).

Charteris-Black (2004, 2005) has introduced the useful term of nested metaphors which he used to describe the practice of placing a metaphor from one source domain within a metaphor from another source domain. The phenomenon may indicate that the semantics of a single metaphor incorporate features of several fields of experience (for instance, rocket can represent a means of transportation or a sign of aggression – it often belongs to the military field). On the other hand, the metaphor is frequently used in a context which is filled with a blend of metaphors and therefore multiple domains co-exist within a single theme. The central metaphor within a system of metaphors in a discourse may encapsulate themes in an embryonic form. These themes are unfolded through the use of contextual cues. Such instances show how the effect of hybridisation of the source and target domains arises in cases of "nested" metaphors. Several conceptual metaphors often intermingle in a stretch of discourse and in this case the problem arises of how to determine a primary cognitive metaphor or in other words which basic preexisting mapping (Keysar 2000) has been modified in the text.

Establishing the meaning of metaphors that derive from a polysemous word in a context requires the adoption of relevance theory and ad hoc concept construction (Sperber & Wilson 1995, Carston 2002). Carston's (2002) view on the structure of concept is helpful in explaining how an ambiguous metaphor in a context can be accessed and how it evokes further associations elaborated by the text.

...'conceptual encodings' are (in many instances, at least) not really full-fledged concepts, but rather concept schemas, or pointers to a conceptual space, on the basis of which, on *every* occasion of their use, an actual concept (an ingredient of a thought) is pragmatically inferred (Carston 2002: 360).

Therefore, an accessed combination of 'pointers' to different conceptual spaces varies within different contexts and depends on the background knowledge of the reader. The hierarchy of 'pointers' is pragmatically inferred. However, in different languages 'pointers' in analogous words are culture-specific. Some 'pointers' enjoy salience due to

their cultural prominence and are retained even despite the absence of strengthening contextual cues (Giora 2002, 2003). It is hard or almost impossible to preserve such components in a translated version of the text. Mental spaces can originate from diverse properties of different constituents of the discourse. The graded salience hypothesis needs to be accounted for in the process of selection of linguistic input for recreation of the mental spaces involved in the blend.

The following case study addresses all the theoretical issues above.

3. How to translate the Russian *eshelon*?

In a relatively recent issue of a Russian newspaper there was an article on the life of a famous stage producer and director of the popular Moscow theatre *Sovremennik* (lit. "present day" or "a contemporary person") – Halina Volchek. The article started with the headline *Eshelon Haliny Volchek* "Echelon of Halina Volchek". According to Koller (2004), headlines often start from metaphors and such metaphors become the centre of a cluster of metaphors in a discourse. Headline metaphors frequently elaborate a theme of text. Therefore, it is worthwhile analysing the subsequent passage.

- (2) ***Eshelon Haliny Volchek***. *Vozglaviv posle uxoda Efremova teatr "Sovremennik", Galina Borisovna zayavila o sebe na ves' mir. I etot teatral'nyi eshelon, v kotorom Volchek i za mashinista, i za provodnika, i za bufetchika, letit na vsex parax uzhe ne odno desiatiletie. Letit, poroyu pribyvaia ne tuda, kuda nuzhno, poroyu opazdyvaia, a inogda podxodia k perronu ran'she vremeni. "Echelon of Halina Volchek*. Having become the head of "Sovremennik" [theatre – L.A.] after Efremoff's leave, Halina Borisovna made herself famous throughout the world. This theatre-echelon [military train – L.A.] in which Volchek is a driver, a conductor, a bartender, has been racing [flying in Russian – L.A.] at full steam ahead for a few decades. It is speeding and sometimes it arrives at wrong destination, it is sometimes late and sometimes it approaches the platform too early" (AiF N51, 2003).¹

The problem with the translation of the key word *eshelon* arises from the issue of different structure of Russian *eshelon* and its nearest English counterpart "echelon". The metaphoric sense of the *eshelon* above has not been glossed in dictionaries, therefore the meaning needs to be derived from the lexicalised senses of the word. *Slovar' russkogo yazyka v 4-x tomakh* "Academic Dictionary of Russian in 4 volumes" (ADR) glosses the meaning of *eshelon* as follows.

1. Military. A formation of troops in battle order or moving column where the position of a formation or subdivisions has formed in a wedge-shaped pattern or step-like, but not a frontline
2. A train for

¹ All Russian examples have been collected from the Russian weekly *Argumety i fakty* "Arguments and Facts". Headlines are presented in bold and metaphors in focus are underlined.

special assignments and mass transportation. A military echelon (train-L.A.) (My translation from the ADR)

In other words the Russian noun refers to a hierarchical structure of military formation which is pyramid-shaped, and to a military train with a certain mission. The example "Echelon of Halina Volchek" may be interpreted in Russian as an artistic circle of Halina Volchek which exercise some privileges or as a train on a special mission. The English counterpart of *eshelon* 'echelon' is glossed by OED as follows

- noun 1 a level or rank in an organization, profession, or society. 2 Military a formation of troops, ships, etc. in parallel rows with the end of each row projecting further than the one in front.

It is interesting to note that the metaphorical meaning of *echelon* has been presented first and the military term which the metaphor derives from, is given afterwards. It is worthwhile noting that in Russian *eshelon* is often used in a figurative sense *a level or rank in an organization, profession, or society*; however the ADR ignores this usage.

4. Detection of salient features

The interpretation of the metaphor in the headline "Echelon of Halina Volchek" prompts a search for salient components in the literal senses of the word most likely to be projected onto a given context. The study of the use of *eshelon* in a corpus may reveal the most common features of the word. A corpus search for the word *eshelon* in the site of the same newspaper (AiF) yields 175 occurrences of the word. The analysis of the first 30 instances has showed that in 4 examples *eshelon* was used as a proper noun (titles of films, books, programs), in 17 instances the word referred to trains of special missions in time of war, 8 examples cover the meaning *a level or rank in an organization, profession, or society* (see the example 3) and one example above refers to the vehicle in a metaphorical sense which also preserves some properties of the meaning "military structure".² Compare the common metaphoric meaning of *eshelon*.

² My sample size was small because the work was contingent upon the use of Russian corpora and the difficulties of the application of a Latin keyboard to the analysis of Cyrillic texts. If statisticians encounter contingencies in their work, they have to draw conclusions from a randomly selected sample. I have followed John Sinclair's suggestion (2004) on dealing with a small corpus -- I have picked up 10 examples from the beginning, 10 from the middle and 10 from the end of the search results. Even if the contingencies of work with the Russian corpora had been eliminated, my primary focus of research was on qualitative analysis of the metaphor that answers questions such as: "what are different *meanings* that are attached to particular words or phrases? Are senses literal or metaphoric? What type of evaluation do they convey? They are more complex because [it]... requires attention to the context of the target form" (Charteris-Black 2004:32).

The problems of quantitative analysis of metaphors were addressed by Koller: "tackling semantic issues by means of corpus analysis is anything but straightforward (2004:52)", "even checking the 66 instances... will prove to be very time-consuming indeed (2004:53)". My analysis of the 30 instances of *echelon* has been intended as an empirical check of the word's different meanings and whether all of them were discernible from my intuition as a native speaker of Russian.

- (3) *V tom, chto Galkin segodnia zvezda pervogo eshelona, somnevat'sia ne prihodit'sia...* "Galkin [a popular actor- L.A.] is a star of first rank [lit. first echelon – L.A.] today, there is no doubt about it..." (AiF N 5, 2005)

Various cliches, e.g. *generation, gradation of power level, privileged status* derive from this meaning. The literal meaning *a formation of troops in battle order* has not been found in the micro-corpus at all. A quantitative analysis of occurrences of metaphors does not always provide an answer to the question how frequently certain types of metaphors are deployed. First, it requires a detailed study of hundreds of examples. Second, even if a number of occurrences of a word in its literal and figurative meaning is identified, the count does not show which source domain the metaphors belong to (see examples with *blood* in politics). They often derive from different components of a polysemous word and therefore, they may represent different source and target domains.

My pilot study shows that the Russian *eshelon* frequently entails recollections of war time, trains on special missions, safe routes and priority destinations. Native speakers of English do not describe *echelon* in those terms. The military origin of the word in Russian, may have some impact on its reading even in cases of conventionalised metaphoric use (see example (3) in which it can be assumed that the actor (Galkin) is at frontline of cultural development and exercises some advantages and disadvantages of his position. *Eshelon* in the sense "a train on mission", often highlights the conditions of its functioning, e.g. transportation of products of primary necessity. Thus *being in the first echelon* allows for the interpretation "to be of extreme importance, regarded to be first-ranked".

As Giora (2002:497) argues "a polysemy need not to be disambiguated instantly, because the multiple senses it involves are not mutually incompatible". Her graded salience hypothesis provides assumptions in that salient meanings are accessed immediately upon encountering the linguistic stimulus via a direct lookup in the mental lexicon. One of the procedures for measuring salience is to ask native speakers to act as lexicographers and write down the meaning that came to mind first and that could illustrate the meaning of stimuli in the lexicon (Giora 2003:22). Following the suggestion of Rachel Giora, five Russian and five English informants were asked to present the meaning which was activated first upon encountering the word *eshelon*. Though informants used different language forms (words and clusters) to verbalise their linguistic experience, all the Russian informants referred to "war", "train", "priority". The informants were within the age range of thirty to sixty nine, which means that some of them remember the time of the World War II from personal experience, while some knew about that time from secondary sources (relatives, cinematography, literature). The image of a military train set against war scenery seems to be deeply entrenched in the collective memory of native speakers of Russian. (Though the sample size was small, the presentation of meanings was consistent within the group. As shown above, the image of a train in time of war was the most frequently occurring scene encountered in my brief corpus study). Almost all of the informants after a second thought gave

examples on social structuring – "high echelon", "first echelon", "echelon of power" and others. The experiment on identification of salient components shows that the ADR does not give a reliable picture on the hierarchy of meanings in the polysemous word.

Among the five English (Australian) informants there was the only one who linked the meaning of the word "echelon" with the war experience. He was a former military pilot. The rest of the informants persistently made a connection between the word and ranking of people or events (providing some speculations on stratification).

Therefore, the combination and the hierarchy of salient components constituting the meaning of *eshelon* in Russian is not the same as the components of its English nearest counterpart "echelon". The observation leads to the two important corollaries. First, some meaningful elements of the metaphor will be inevitably lost in translation. Second, in the case of Russian *eshelon* (2) the effect of nested metaphors has taken place. The semantics of the word includes references to three domains of experience at least. The word origin entails the military experience. The frequent referent – *train* activates the field of machines. The conventional metaphor is linked with the idea of structure, order or ranking. The meaning "train on mission" also evokes the goal-oriented activity which is an essential part of JOURNEY metaphors. A dominant source domain cannot be identified without an analysis of the context of its use. The pragmatic information from the stretch of discourse may strengthen or weaken and suppress some associations.

5. Matching contextual cues and focal points of conceptual metaphor

As a native speaker of Russian, I could not disambiguate the title of the article "Echelon of Halina Volchek". My first thought was that Halina Volchek was portrayed as a driver of a metaphorical military vehicle. Almost simultaneously I recreated another meaning – it is something about Volchek's generation of actors and her group of associates. Without a proper experiment it is impossible to speculate how the majority of Russian readers would reconstruct the meaning of the title. However, theoretical premises of graded salience hypothesis substantiate the claim that both meanings can be accessed at the same time. The perception of echelon as a military train is very strong among speakers of Russian due to its cultural prominence (fights with Germans, occupation of territory and *eshelons* as emergency vehicles of that time). On the other hand, the conventional metaphor *eshelon* is frequently used to refer to a group of people and their importance in society. Two types of salient meaning clash in the example. According to Giora (2002:490), salient meanings enjoy prominence due to their conventionality, frequency, familiarity, or prototypicality. Perhaps, the scene of an emergency train in the time of war is prototypic for Russian speakers. It is also in frequent use. On the other hand, the conventional metaphor *eshelon* is very common, though it is not as frequent as the first meaning. The ambiguity resolution without a contextual cues is idiosyncratic.

When metaphors are blended into a context, some aspects of their meanings are highlighted and some are hidden (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 163, Koller 2004:19). The context of the article is biased toward the meaning "train on a mission". The director of the theatre (Halina Volchek) performs all duties of the train service staff. She is a driver (there is a subtle difference between the Russian *mashinist* who is perceived as a technician, not only a driver according to the meaning of English word *driver*), she is a conductor and a bar tender. The set of occupations attributed to the theatre director implies that the train – theatre is on the move (which, in my opinion, implies that the theatre implements novel techniques and is susceptible to all contemporary issues). The director as a driver is responsible for a safe movement of the vehicle, its technical conditions and the choice of routes on the way to its major destination. As a conductor she is responsible for conditions of passengers and order in the train. As a bar-tender she has to look after refreshments and nourishment of both passengers (audience) and staff.

Another chain of metaphors highlight such aspects of travelling as speed, time, schedule and passed destinations. The train "has been racing full steam", which connotes substantial efforts involved in maintaining a proper speed. The concept of a fast move is strengthened by an supplementary metaphor "it (the theatre) is speeding". Though the train is speeding, it does not guarantee on time arrival. Perhaps, there can be many obstacles on the way and that is why the train "is sometimes late". It also often approaches the platform too early which may mean that the theatre's artistic style overtakes the contemporary arts standards. The metaphoric expression "it sometimes arrives at wrong destinations" may indicate that the director sometimes addresses a wrong audience and make an inappropriate choice. The two sets of metaphors – the service staff in the train and the chronology of travelling – reinforce aspects of the JOURNEY metaphor hidden in the semantics of the key word "eshelon" (military train on a special assignment, formation of a military convoy).

Now it is possible to demonstrate how discourse structural elements correspond with the preexisting conceptual mapping LIFE IS A JOURNEY. Metaphors "to speed up", "to race full steam ahead" correlates with the ideal development in life – "to go as far, and fast as possible" (Lakoff 1993). The vehicle for achieving that in the career of Halina Volchek is her theatre (the train on assignment). The peculiarities of Russian semantics blends the mission and the vehicle designated for its achievement. The starting point of her journey in that vehicle was the leave of Oleg Yefremoff – a former director and associate. During her journey she encountered several crossroads where she had to make her choices – her train "sometimes arrives at wrong destinations". "Wrong destinations" also indicate that her assessment of purpose was not always impeccable. Halina Volchek had difficulties in her life and career and she did not always manage to overcome obstacles smoothly – sometimes her train arrives late. Nevertheless, overall she has been successful, as she eventually arrives at scheduled places. Destinations in the conceptual mapping are purposes and means of their achievement are routes (they have not been always chosen by her correctly). The text cues imply that the progress has been made (the progress in the conceptual mapping corresponds to the distance travelled). The life of Halyna Volchek which is intertwined with her carrier of theatre

producer and director, has similarities with some themes in journey myths – she has a mission to accomplish and there have been crossroads in her journey.

The cognitive scheme has been enriched in this example with other details. "Echelon of Halina Volchek" activates another meaning – there is a group of people, companions in her journey, though she bears the ultimate responsibility for the travelling and comfort of her passengers and staff members. The additional chain of metaphors – a list of occupations of Halina Volchek during the travelling introduces the range of her commitments and involvements.

The effect of "nested" metaphors reflects an interaction of a few source domains. The underlying system of thoughts LIFE IS JOURNEY has been accessed through the analysis of the constellation of metaphors in the discourse. The semantic components of the key metaphor *eshelon* refer to the war experience in Russian. Strong associations with war, generate complementary semantic nodes in the structure of the conceptual metaphor. The evoked military tune narrows the gap between the journey and quest. The latter usually entails a conquest – a demonstration of power in battles. In my understanding, the conquest is a journey in that the military goals have been successfully accomplished. A further derivation of the meaning may lead to an inference about the imposition of strict military discipline, mobilisation of efforts and subordination among the staff members of *eshelon* and sacrifices for the sake of accomplishment. A war theme, according to Charteris-Black (2004) activates a higher level category STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL which refers to difficulties encountered on the way in the context. The *occupation* chain of metaphors, and *space and time* constellation of metaphors marginalise the theme of STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL.

Another "nested" source domain appears when we try to think about the class of objects to which trains belong. They are machines; therefore they need special treatment for exploiting their power in the most efficient way. The theme is reinforced through the use of the metaphor *machinist* "driver". Significance can be attached to the comparison of theatre with an engine or vehicle. The parallel evokes the metaphoric systems MINDS-ARE-MACHINES (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 27, Carston 2002) and related set of mapping.

JOURNEY metaphors portray a goal-oriented activity. The concept of goal is entrenched in the semantics of the central member of the of metaphors – the word *eshelon*. The theatre-train has been assigned for a special purpose but the question that remains, is what sort of mission its driver is required to perform? All metaphors are open-ended (Searle 1993:96) and readers are entitled to work out the answer to this question on the basis of their experience, values and perception of the situation. The only restriction on generating the reading of this mission is that the purpose must be very important. In time of war, *eshelons* enjoyed the privilege of being given way. Therefore, they must have delivered something essential for the survival of the nation.

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to bridge the gap between the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY and the constellation of linguistic metaphors assembled around the theme *eshelon*.

My technique has been to match "hidden" meanings in the text with the preexisting scheme of knowledge hypothesised by other scholars. The implementation of this technique revealed other problematic areas in the research of cognitive metaphors. The most complicated issue has been to find relevant semantic properties on the level of words and the level of discourse. Metaphors derived from polysemous words highlight and hide multiple aspects of meaning that are supported or suppressed and mitigated by the context. The consequential combination of semantic properties is certain to be lost in translation. The interplay between words' semantics and context often activate multiple domains of experience and therefore expand and camouflage the well-known cognitive schemes. The application of the concept "nested metaphors" has facilitated selection and distribution of relevant semantic properties. Nested metaphors reveal themselves through metaphoric chains and themes encapsulated in the text. One metaphoric group (arrival, departure, routs and others) reinforces the semantic properties of the central metaphor *echelon* indicative of travelling, another cluster of metaphors (occupations) supports the idea of comfort and companionship during the journey and therefore, is crucial for recognition of the sense 'group of people'. Other contextual effects activate items of information such as 'mission', 'priority', 'military discipline'. The outcome of my case study corroborates the claim of Gibbs (1994) that many novel metaphors refer to preexisting conceptual mapping and salient cultural features.

I have reached the final destination in my journey of understanding how metaphors unfold key topics in the text. It has been a two year quest and I have been following these leads: 1) what semantic components can be foregrounded in the metaphor that derives from a polysemous word; 2) how to find salient properties of the Russian word in which senses are incongruent with its English equivalent; 3) in which way the context strengthens or marginalises potential meanings of the word. I can foresee further destinations such as: what links in memory are created by clusters of metaphors in other texts and in different languages and how such links correlate with systematic sets of conventional expressions described by Lakoff and Johnson (the problem introduced in Keysar 2000); how novel metaphors can exploit preexisting conceptual mappings (see again Keysar 2000). Though there is a claim that "ultimately, only experimental psychology can determine when conceptual metaphors are activated" (Crisp 2003), I would not like to underestimate the value of linguistic facts deep-rooted in fragments of discourse. But I am neither ready for new trips, nor can I see vehicles that could take me to these destinations.

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