Applying the key ideas of the famous book *Metaphors We Live By* co-authored by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) [2] and findings of numerous investigations into metaphor that have followed the book to the practice of teaching English, this study aims at revealing the importance of metaphors in teaching-learning English and aspires to outline a number of propositions for working with metaphors in teaching English. In order to achieve this aim the following tasks were set: to provide a brief overview of the theory of conceptual metaphor, to summarize the findings of what metaphors are used in the teaching-learning context, to discuss the observations of how metaphors function in the educational environment, and to give a number of suggestions for employing metaphors while teaching English. Methodologically the study is based on the principle of application and integration of the achievements of the theory of the language to the practice of teaching a particular language.

The theory of conceptual metaphor has suggested and proved that metaphor is more than a stylistic device functioning of the level of language – it is a mental phenomenon, a way people think conceptualizing one thing in terms of another. A great number of metaphors – those ones that are conventionalized in the everyday language – are routinely used by people to comprehend that which needs understanding but is as a rule quite abstract in the light of that which is more concrete and more tangible. For example, the title of this Conference – *English Learning in the*
Context of the Long-life Education – exploits the metaphors IDEAS ARE OBJECTS and CONTEXT IS A CONTAINER. Since metaphors are mainly used unconsciously, they have a great power over people via structuring their perception of the world and of themselves.

There have appeared quite a few investigations into what metaphors are used for teaching and learning. Timothy Charles Rohrer has demonstrated that in the Western classroom “ideas are treated as objects, teachers as transmitters and students as passive receptacles”; this conceptual metaphor is materialized in the architectonics of the lecture hall [3]. An alternative metaphoric conceptualization of education is that of a journey with the teacher as a more experienced traveler and a guide for the student [3]. Alan Cienki has revealed that metaphors as a part of cultural models of behavior and evaluating behavior structure different types of teacher-student interaction in different cultures [1]. A number of researchers have described a scope of metaphors used for teaching-learning, e.g. LEARNING IS THE CONSUMING OF IDEAS, LEARNING IS A WAR WITH THE TEACHER etc.

An attentive look at the current literature on the teaching-learning issues reveals the coexistence (or the competition) of the two metaphors: TEACHING-LEARNING IS BRINGING LIGHT and TEACHING-LEARNING IS BUSINESS. The observations demonstrate that teachers and students typically give preference to one of the above mentioned metaphors. The discrepancies between these metaphoric models used by different participants of the education process may impede this process.

The ubiquity of the cognitive metaphor and its great power over the human conceptualization of the world and behavior makes the conscious treatment of metaphors by the teacher one of the indispensable aspects of teaching. Such a conscious approach to metaphors on the part of the teacher is especially important in the English classroom since language is the principal means of objectification and dissemination of metaphors. To recapitulate the argument, English teachers will get more understanding of and control over the teaching-learning process if they consciously select and/or construct metaphors for teaching-learning English and
consistently use these metaphors in the interaction with their students. For example, teaching-learning English may be metaphorically presented as a breathtaking journey, the more so that historically the process of learning a foreign language was described by the word *to travail* that is etymologically related with the word *to travel* (see Paxman D.V. *Voyage into Language: Space and the Linguistic Encounter, 1550-1800* (2003) for the details). The so much desired improvement of the efficiency of teaching-learning and relationships between teachers and students may be ensured by the consistent application of a conceptual metaphor that entails a positive atmosphere in the classroom (e.g. a teacher and students metaphorically conceptualized as doing a mutual quest for knowledge).

Since metaphors are indispensable from everyday language [2], teaching English inevitably runs into the question of dealing with metaphors. The pupils of high school and the university students have their cognitive skills developed enough to be taught to understand and treat metaphors consciously.

Instructing students of how to understand metaphors can be especially helpful for teaching English phrasal verbs (as a rule there is a clear metaphoric image behind a phrasal verb), some set expressions, proverbs, helping students to interpret pop songs (which are often a good stimulus for students to learn English) and popular movies. For students who take the English language and literature as their major, the skills of understanding metaphors are especially useful while doing linguistic analysis of the text and interpreting a literary text.

To teach students to understand metaphors one may start with revealing the structure of a metaphor behind the linguistic expressions where both the source and the target domains are verbalized explicitly (e.g. *time is money*: target domain is TIME, source domain is MONEY; *diamonds are a girl’s best friends*: target domain is DIAMONDS, source domain is A GIRL’S BEST FRIENDS) and proceed to the expressions where the metaphoric image of the source domain is indirectly verbalized by the verb that is used metaphorically (e.g. *his promise binds him to a good behavior*: target domain is PROMISE, source domain is A ROPE expressed by the verb *to bind*).
To make a metaphoric conclusion, the teacher of English will find it easier to work if he/she tames the metaphors and helps the students to become the masters of metaphors.

REFERENCES


3. Rohrer T. Ch. When Metaphors Bewitch, Analogies Illustrate, and Logic Fails: Controversies over the use of Metaphoric Reasoning in Philosophy and Science: A Dissertation Presented to Department of Philosophy and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy / Rohrer T. Ch. — 1999 // citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.112.8223.pdf