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Ontological Metaphor in Verb and Abstract Noun Collocations in Serbian: A Sample Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses ontological metaphors in a sample of verb and abstract noun collocations in Serbian, in order to explore lexical patterning as a realization of conceptual metaphor. We examine the ideas a) that we conceptualize abstract entities as persons, containers, concrete physical objects or substances for which our experiences with physical objects provide the basis (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), and b) that the collocations selected reflect the metaphorical mapping of a concrete domain onto an abstract one. The sample selected includes collocations, the content of which indicates that the process of mapping involves the domains of negative experience in the world of matter. More specifically, the domains of painful or injurious physical experience are mapped onto negative emotions and states of mind, which suggests that the experiential basis, on which the speakers rely in forming the collocations is negative.

KEYWORDS

ontological metaphor; personification; container metaphor; substance/entity metaphor; collocation;
Serbian

0. Introduction

In this paper we explore ontological metaphors in a sample of collocations with verbs and abstract nouns, which have a high degree of conventionality in the Serbian language. The structure of the collocations is threefold: a) abstract noun + verb (*српак хвата*), b) verb + abstract noun (*кројити судбину*) and c) verb + preposition + abstract noun (*унасти у заблуду*). The collocations are habitually used in ordinary language by Serbian speakers and are not the effect of lexical creativity or figures of speech. In the sample, we have explored the conceptualization of negative events and situations which involves the mapping of the domains of negative physical experience onto the domains of mental/emotional suffering or hardship. This suggests a negative experiential basis, since metaphors reflected in the collocations stem from conceptual correspondences with negative events and actions, while the aspects of source domains chosen are negative. The examples studied include a) personifications with abstractions in which negative states of mind are mapped onto pain in a physical act of cruelty, b) container metaphors in which negative states of mind and hardships are containers within whose boundaries one is confined, and c) entity/substance metaphors in which negative situations are conceptualized as objects/matter.

1. Theoretical considerations

1.1 Ontological metaphor

Within the conceptual metaphor theory, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 26–27) differentiate between three main kinds of metaphor – orientational, structural and ontological. Ontological metaphors are used for a variety of purposes, such as referring (e.g., *My fears are driving me crazy*), quantifying (e.g., *You've got too much hostility in you*), identifying

aspects (e.g., *His emotional health has deteriorated*), identifying causes (e.g., *He did it out of anger*), setting goals and motivating actions (e.g., *He went to New York to seek fame and fortune*) (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 26–27). Via ontological metaphors, as Kövecses (2010, 38) notes, a new ontological status is given to general categories of abstract target concepts and undelineated experiences receive a more delineated status.

In Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 26–33) it is held that personification is the most obvious ontological metaphor, which makes it possible to conceptualize a wide variety of experiences with nonhuman entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics, and activities, as in *Life has cheated me* and *The dollar has been destroyed by inflation* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 33). Although personification can be coded as X IS A PERSON, the source component PERSON can be additionally specified as ENEMY, COMMANDER, COMPETITOR, etc. A common trait of personifications is that they are tools for making sense of phenomena in the world in human terms, since we best understand all phenomena if we relate them to our own motivations, goals, actions, and characteristics (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 26–33).

Ontological metaphors may also be based on the image schema of containment. According to Johnson (1987, 21–23), containment schema is an image schema that involves a physical or metaphorical boundary, an enclosed area or volume, or an excluded area or volume. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 26–33) explain, we experience the rest of the world as outside us; such an orientation is projected onto bounded physical objects, viewed as containers.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 26–33) observe that the basis of entity/substance metaphors is our experience of physical objects and substances, which helps us refer to experiences, categorize them, group them, quantify them, and reason about them. In

certain cases, entity/substance metaphors are elaborated, since conceiving of a non-physical thing as an entity or substance does not necessarily help us comprehend it completely. The elaboration is explained in Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 26–33) by THE MIND IS AN ENTITY metaphor, as in THE MIND IS A MACHINE (*I'm a little rusty today*) and THE MIND IS A BRITTLE OBJECT (*Her ego is very fragile*).

1.2 Collocations

With regard to the content of collocations, Manning and Schütze (1999, 184) describe two salient properties of collocations. First, the meaning of a collocation is not a straightforward composition of the meaning of its parts. This non-compositionality means that either the meaning is completely different from the free combination or there is a connotation or added element of meaning that cannot be predicted from the parts. Second, other words cannot replace the components of a collocation even if they have the same meaning, since the aforementioned added element of meaning rests entirely on the interaction of two specific collocates.

For the definition of collocation we shall refer to Stojičić (2010, 80–83). Collocation is defined as a syntagmatic combination of two compatible words in their literal or figurative senses; a collocation is conventional if the words habitually co-occur as a pattern in language use. In order for the content of a collocation to be logical, intelligible and not contrary to the knowledge of the world, the words combined must be semantically compatible. The formation of collocations complies with morphosyntactic rules of a language and rests on its lexical and semantic potential. Along that line of thought, the formation of collocations normally complies with three kinds of norms, which may be designated as i) explicit, such as the rules of morphology and syntax, which determine the structural properties of collocations; ii) implicit, such as criteria based on

the semantic properties of words, which sustain the semantic compatibility of the collocates; and iii) conventional, which arise from the standards and naturalness of lexical patterning in language use (Stojičić 2010, 80–83).

2. Ontological metaphors in ‘verb and abstract noun’ collocations in Serbian

2.1 The sample and methodology

We explore ontological metaphors within a sample of collocations with verbs and abstract nouns with a high degree of conventionality in the Serbian language. We follow Manning and Schütze’s (1999, 151–53) claim that collocations are a conventional way of saying things; the conventionality is evident in the regularity and naturalness with which the collocations recur in the language in use. With reference to Kövecses (2010, 34), we hold that the conventionality in the case of the metaphors examined is sustained by the fact that Serbian speakers use the ontological metaphors examined naturally and effortlessly for everyday purposes.

Due to a lack of a machine-readable corpus of the Serbian language, we compiled the sample manually by referring to two dictionaries of standard Serbian, namely *Rečnik glagola sa gramatičkim i leksičkim dopunama* (*Dictionary of Verbs with Grammatical and Lexical Complements*, 1989) and *Rečnik srpskoga jezika* (*Dictionary of the Serbian Language*, [2007] 2011); the number of entries in the dictionaries is over 300,000 in total. In the process of compiling a sample which would include collocations which common action verbs denoting physical action form with abstract nouns, we have chosen the following verbs for the final data selection: *zupati, izazivati, izyubiti, isnyustiti, isnyustiti, jesti, krojiti, muyiti, odvresti, osuditi, pasti, peћи, pozaziti, pougrati se, prљati, staviti, taloziti se, uvући, unasti, хватати* and

уирити се. The sentences provided to illustrate the use of the collocations in standard Serbian have been collected from the texts written in Serbian which are listed in Resources.

The collocations in the sample are of a threefold structure: ‘verb + abstract noun’ (*кројити судбину*), ‘abstract noun + verb’ (*страх хвата*) and ‘verb + preposition + abstract noun’ (*унасти у заблуду*). We have classified the collocations into three categories of ontological metaphor discussed above: a) personification, b) container metaphor and c) entity/substance metaphor. In the course of data collection, we excluded patterns which we found to be idiomatic, such as the pattern *живети у облацима* (lit. live in the clouds; ‘have one’s head in the clouds’), the conceptual motivation of which may not be explicable in terms of cross-domain mapping, since we assume that aerosols do not constitute a domain of everyday physical experience which is so dynamic that it can be effectively mapped onto an abstract domain. Furthermore, we have come across a number of collocations the content of which is not overtly negative, but which have negative implications. For instance, this is the case with the pattern *живети у мајми* (lit. live in a fantasy). We hypothesize that this is a containment metaphor, in which the constraint of the container reflects being out of touch with the everyday world and being enclosed in one’s unrealistic private thoughts.

2.2 The analysis of the sample

2.2.1 Personification

The collocations in the sample involve patterns in which abstractions are personified in such a way that the domains of cruel behaviour or attitude, physical pain and being on

trial in a court of law (e.g. *мучити, хватати, осудити*) are mapped onto inner turmoil, anxiety, distress, etc.

The source domain of causing physical or mental pain is reflected in two collocations with the nouns *савест* (conscience) and *сумња* (doubt), as in the following:

(1) *Савест је и у сну мучи. Бог је тешким сном кажњава.*
(‘She has a bad conscience even in her sleep. God punishes her with bad dreams.’)
(Ćosić 1954)

(2) *Тешко је, ипак, да ће се неко упецати на ову удицу. Копка га и једе та сумња.*
(‘Still, hardly anyone will swallow the hook. The doubt haunts him.’)
(*Književni magazin* 2004)

The collocation *савест мучи* (lit. conscience tortures; ‘have a bad conscience’) in (1) realizes the metaphor BAD CONSCIENCE IS A PERSON; guilty conscience is personified as a cruel person inflicting pain as a punishment. In the collocation *сумња једе* (lit. doubt eats; ‘eaten by doubt’) in (2), the metaphor DOUBT IS A PERSON conceptualizes the experience of a feeling of uncertainty which causes strong distress or anxiety as if one were being eaten out.

The verb *хватати* (grab), which denotes seizing someone suddenly and roughly is frequently used with abstract nouns to describe an experience in which a strong negative emotion is felt suddenly, as in the following examples:

(3) *Хоћу сад све од чега ме **страх хвата** и бол уздржава — полако, тврдо, стопу по стопу [...]*
(‘Now I want everything over which I am seized with fear and restrained by pain – slowly, confidently, step by step...’)
(Lalić 1965)

(4) *Селјаке нека **језа хвата** и чини им се да је време већ прошло и да се оно момче није одмакло од Липљана ни за један час пута.*
(‘The villagers felt a chill and it seemed to them that it was already the time and that the boy had not travelled an hour away from Lipljan.’)
(Nušić 1902)

In the collocation *страх хвата* (lit. fear grabs; ‘be seized with fear’) in (3) the surge of unpleasant emotion caused by the threat of harm, pain or danger is conceptualized as a person who takes hold of one suddenly and forcibly. Such personification is also at work in the collocation *језа хвата* (lit. chill grabs; ‘feel the chill of’), in which a sudden feeling of fear or worry is personified in the same manner. In these two instances it may be possible to specify the personifications as FEAR IS A CAPTURER and CHILL IS A CAPTURER to accentuate the source domain experience of being taken and controlled by force.

As the sample indicates, fate is an abstraction which is personified very often. The personification mechanism is evident in the following examples:

(5) *Чак мислим да ако Келте **судбина одведе** и на друга удаљена места, ово морамо задржати за себе макар му се под оружјем морали враћати.*
(‘I even think that if destiny brings the Celts to other distant places, we must keep this to ourselves even if we should return to it armed.’)

(Bajac 1998)

(6) *Судбина се **поиграла** с њим: својевремено страх и трепет за интелектуалце, тада је он морао да живи у бризи и неизвесности.*
(‘His fate has played with him: he used to be the terror for the intellectuals, but now he had a life of worries and uncertainty.’)

(Bošković 2003)

(7) *Тако од природе нарочито обдарена створења често **изазивају судбину**, смело и несмотрено.*
(‘Such naturally endowed creatures will often tempt fate, boldly and carelessly.’)

(Andrić[1945] 2009)

(8) *Судбина ме **је**, изгледа, **осудила** да будем увек подалеко од предмета својих мисли и жеља.*
(It seems that fate has condemned me to being far from the objects of my thoughts and wishes.)

(Milanković [1928] 2008)

The metaphor in the collocation *судбина одведе* (lit. fate takes) in (5) is FATE IS A PERSON, through which fate is conceptualized as a person who leads or commands in order to delineate a situation in which one’s fate determines their course of life. In (6), the

metaphor FATE IS A MANIPULATOR is reflected in the collocation *судбина се поигра* (lit. fate plays with); this may suggest the idea that the development of events in one's life may be in the hands of fate, which is therefore conceptualized as a person who tricks one and treats one as a source of amusement. In the collocation *изазивати судбину* (lit. challenge fate; 'tempt fate') in (7), fate is personified through the metaphor FATE IS A RIVAL, indicating that doing something risky is experienced as a competition with an opponent. Finally, in (8), the collocation *судбина осуди* (lit. fate condemns to) refers to a situation in which one is forced to endure difficulties and reflects the metaphor FATE IS A JUDGE; this conceptualization may imply that the speakers experience such unfortunate circumstances as a court ruling.

2.2.2 Container metaphors

Container metaphor rests on the containment schema. This schema may have some additional characteristics; for example, there may be the restriction of forces inside the container or a relatively fixed position of an enclosed object (Johnson 1987, 21–23). In the sample, we have noticed that negative states of mind and hardships are conceptualized as containers within whose boundaries one is located and confined.

The verbs used to refer to a situation in which one passes into an unfavourable state or condition are *унасти* (fall into) and *насти* (fall), as in the following examples:

(9) *Али се тако исто и при синтетичном методу одређења материје позитивног права може унасти у заблуде, ако се при синтези, која има да доведе до одређења те материје, нема стално на уму проблем његовог узрока и циља [...]*

(‘Yet, one can also fall into fallacy in the synthetical method of determining the matter of the positive law, if at the synthesis, which should lead to the matter, one does not consider its cause and effect...’)

(Radonić 1951)

(10) *И мене би то обрадовало — признаде командир. — Пазите само да не упаднете у какву невољу.*

(‘It would please me too – the commander admitted. – Only remember not to get in trouble.’)

(Ćopić 1983)

(11) [...] *Мек Ајвер пада у заборав и беду, Мокрањац остаје без инспирације за стварање врхунских уметничких дела [...]*

(‘[...] McIver has been forgotten and has fallen into poverty, Mokranjac is left with no inspiration for creating unsurpassable works of art [...].’)

(Đorđević 2009)

(12) *Поново у Зимоњићевој улици, пао је у искушење да потражи капију проверену у чекању претходног дана, и да из ње настави да осматра кућу с два наблизу постављена прозора.*

(‘Again, in Zimonjić street, he was tempted to look for the gate he had inspected while waiting the day before, and to go on to surveil the house with two closely set windows.’)

(Tišma 1987)

The collocation *упасти у заблуду* (lit. fall into fallacy) in (9) conceptualizes a pitfall of faulty reasoning as a pit into one falls due to a loss of balance. This conceptualization is also at work in the collocation *упасти у невоље* (lit. fall into trouble; ‘get in trouble’), in (10), in which being liable to blame for the problems one causes may be associated with falling into a pit. Through the collocation *пасти у беду* (lit. fall into poverty) in (11), the speakers seem to associate the situation in which one is limited by the lack of means of subsistence with, for instance, falling into the abyss. The collocation *пасти у искушење* (lit. fall into temptation; ‘be tempted’) in (12) conceptualizes the situation in which one is obstructed by an inclination to do something unwise. Accordingly, the metaphors realized in the collocations discussed may be said to reflect the metaphorical mapping of the confinement of containers onto mistaken belief (FALLACY IS A CONTAINER), wrongdoing (TROUBLE IS A CONTAINER), loss of wealth (POVERTY IS A CONTAINER) and urge (TEMPTATION IS A CONTAINER).

The sample indicates that situations in which something detrimental to one's welfare is imminent are frequently conceptualized as containers within whose limits one is confined. For example:

(13) *Својим непримањем државне службе ова три духа ставила су у опасност цео систем ...*
(‘By their rejection of the civil service these three ghosts put in danger the whole system...’)

(Vinaver [1921] 2002)

The collocation *ставити у опасност* (lit. put in danger) reflects the metaphor DANGER IS A CONTAINER, and refers to a situation in which one is limited in action when faced with harm.

The verb *гурати* (push), for instance, used with the prepositional phrase with *у* (in) denotes the action of pushing someone into a confined place. The metaphor at work in the collocation *гурати у пропаст* (lit. push into downfall; ‘lead to the downfall’) is DOWNFALL IS A CONTAINER; it refers to the situation in which one becomes limited by the loss power or prosperity, as in the following:

(14) *Кад му је скупштинска већина предала адресу, кнез Милан је одржао један говор у коме је рекао: Радикална странка својом унутрашњом и спољном политиком гурала земљу у сигурну пропаст.*
(‘When the council majority had handed over the address to him, prince Milan gave a speech in which he said: “The Radical Party leads the country to its inevitable downfall with its domestic and foreign policy.”’)

(Baranin 1977)

Similarly, the verb *вучи* (drag into) denotes pulling someone forcefully and roughly into a space, despite their reluctance. The collocation *вучи у сукоб* (lit. drag into conflict) reflects the metaphorical conceptualization CONFLICT IS A CONTAINER, through which being involved in a dispute or struggle for supremacy is associated with being forcibly confined in a space. For example:

(15) По маорској легенди, угашени вулкан *Какепуку* заљубио се у такође угашену вулканску купу *Каву* (*Kawa*), што га је увукло у сукоб са неколико супарника, међу којима је био брег *Карева* (*Karewa*)...

(‘In a Māori legend, the extinct volcano *Какепуку* fell in love with an extinct volcano cone *Каву*, which dragged him into a conflict with several rivals, among whom there was a hill *Карева*...’)

(Loma 2008)

2.2.3 Entity/substance metaphors

As explained above, entities and substances are vehicles in the rational dealing with the experiences in metaphorical coding. In the sample examined, abstractions are conceptualized either as physical objects or matter. More precisely, negative situations, states and events are metaphorically coded in the process of conceptualization in which concrete entities or substances are mapped onto attitudes, aptitudes, judgment, expectations, resentment, etc.

The sample indicates that the source domains in entity/substance metaphors may be quite diverse. Two collocations, for example, demonstrate that unpleasant emotions tend to be conceptualized as substances. Furthermore, the verbs in the collocations refer to the increase in the space the substance takes up or in its volume. First, the verb *ширити се* (spread) in its intransitive usage denotes the event in which matter is distributed or dispersed over an area. The collocation *страх се шири* (lit. fear spreads) is the realization of the metaphor FEAR IS A SUBSTANCE and refers to the conditions in which fear is inspired in many people, for example:

(16) *Страх се шири Европом. Нису само грађани СР Немачке и земаља у којима ће бити инсталиране ракете «изишли на улице» 22. октобра да протестују...*

(‘Fear spreads through Europe. It was not only the citizens of Germany and the countries in which the missiles will be stationed who “went out to the streets” to protest on October 22nd.’)

(Blečić 1987)

Second, the verb *таложити се* (settle) is used to denote an event in which particles sink in a liquid to form sediment. The collocation *горчина се таложу* (lit. bitterness settles; ‘bitterness simmers’) may be metaphorically interpreted as BITTERNESS IS A SUBSTANCE. The collocation refers to the constant feeling of bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly, which is viewed as particles forming a residue. For example:

(17) *Горчина која се дотле таложила у њему изненада се узбуркала кад је зачуо како неки мушкарац и жена што су застали недалеко од клупе настављају свој раније започет бестидни разговор [...]*
(‘The bitterness which had simmered in him until then suddenly became agitated when he heard a man and a woman near the bench continue their shameless conversation they had started earlier...’)

(Milankov 1981)

As we have noticed in the sample, very many abstractions are conceptualized as physical objects. In some instances the harmful effects of objects are highlighted in the mapping. In the following example, the noun *савест* (conscience) is used in a collocation with the verb *пећи* (burn), which in its literal sense denotes the event in which a part of body feels hot and sore as a result of illness, injury or exposure to the sun:

(18) *Зна се, кад човек направи неку грешку, па почне да га пече и једе савест, може за пар месеци да утањи тако да га у иглу уденеи.*
(‘The truth is when a man makes a mistake and starts having a guilty conscience, he can lose so much weight that he can become a bag of bones.’)

(Andrić 1968)

In the collocation *савест пече* (lit. conscience burns; ‘have a guilty conscience’) a feeling of guilt over a wrongdoing is metaphorically conceptualized as BAD CONSCIENCE IS A BURNING BODY PART to suggest that being tormented by guilt is experienced as being injured by heat or fire.

Similar adverse effect an object may have on a person is noted in the collocation *кривица падне (на)* (lit. blame falls on). This collocation embodies the metaphor BLAME

IS A LOAD and refers to a situation in which one is assigned the responsibility for an unfortunate event, which is experienced as carrying a weight, as in the following:

(19) *После две-три недеље неко ће га изударати и то ће учинити тако “спретно” да ће сва кривица пасти на испровоцираног Витора, који ће, том приликом, бити оптужен да је окинуо нешто гадно против Троскога, дакле против Партије.*

(‘In a few weeks somebody will beat him and it will be done so “skillfully” that the whole blame will fall on the provoked Vitor; on that occasion, Vitor will be accused of telling something nasty against Troskot, namely against the Party.’)

(Davičo 1969)

In a number of collocations in the sample we have noticed conceptualizations in which abstractions are metaphorically represented as objects with which a person interacts. For instance, the verb *кројити* (tailor) is used with nouns for fabric or articles of clothing to denote making clothes. The metaphor DESTINY IS FABRIC in *кројити судбину* (lit. tailor one’s destiny; ‘decide one’s destiny’) indicates that determining one’s destiny is experienced as the process of designing and cutting out clothes for one to wear:

(20) *Вилем се саркастично насмејао: Будите уверени да свако сам себи кроји судбину.*

(‘William laughed sarcastically: Rest assured that everyone decides their own destiny.’)

(Baranin 1972)

A few collocations involve verbs which indicate that some damage is caused to the object. Such is the verb *прљати* (make dirty), which denotes covering or marking something with an unclean substance, as in the following:

(21) *Зар није то био просто живот једног младог несрећног човека, коме сам чак и ја прљао част јер сам био љубавник његове веренице.*

(‘Wasn’t that simply the life of an unhappy young man, whose reputation even I had stained because I was a lover of his fiancée.’)

(Čiplić 1960)

The collocation *прљати част* (lit. stain reputation) reflects the metaphorical conceptualization DIGNITY IS A CLEAN OBJECT and refers to the situation in which the damage to one's pride and other's admiration for one is experienced as making an object dirty.

Similarly, The verb *погазити* (trample on) is used with nouns for physical objects which can be trod upon and crushed. The metaphor in the collocation *погазити обећање* (lit. trample on a promise; 'go back on one's promise') can be defined as PROMISE IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT. This collocation refers to a situation in which a promise is broken, which is experienced as an event in which an object falls into pieces underfoot, for example:

(22) *Јеленче: Господине, Радоване. У мојој породици, за хиљаду година, нико није погазио обећање. Молим вас, да испијемо отров.*
(‘Jelenče: “Mister Radovan, in my family of thousand years no one ever went back on their promise. Please, let's drink up the poison”.’)

(Kovačević 1994)

The verb *исцрпнати* (drain off) in Serbian is usually used with nouns such as *вода* (water), *храна* (food) and *ваздух* (air) to denote an action in which water, food or air is used up completely. The metaphor reflected in the collocation *исцрпнати снагу* (lit. drain off strength; 'exhaust strength') is STRENGTH IS AN ASSET and refers to a situation in which one is made excessive demands on or forced to make an unusually great effort as if one's supplies of assets were exhausted, for instance:

(23) *Рат против Турске, који је трајао осам месеци, исцрпео је привредне снаге малих и неразвијених балканских земаља.*
(‘The war against Turkey, which lasted for eight months, exhausted the industrial strength of the small and underdeveloped Balkan countries.’)

(Skoko 1968)

In some instances, the conceptualization of abstractions as objects involves a failure to gain or retain the objects. This is evident in the following example:

(24) *Ако треба и за општинске управе, могу да се потргну мртви, али ни у ком случају неће да се испусти прилика.*
(‘If the need arises, the dead can be summoned for the council affairs, but in no way shall we miss the opportunity.’)

(Vitorović 1990)

The situation in which one fails to take an advantage of an opportunity seems to be experienced as dropping an object from one’s hands so that it falls and breaks; the collocation *испустити прилику* (lit. drop an opportunity; ‘miss an opportunity’) may be interpreted as the realization of the metaphor OPPORTUNITY IS A FRAGILE OBJECT. In the same manner, the collocation *изгубити наду* (lit. lose hope) depicts a situation in which one is no longer disposed to believe that something good may happen, which is experienced as being deprived of something valuable, for example:

(25) *Када сам већ изгубила и последњу наду, посетио ме је господин Шлајермахер, пословни пријатељ мога оца и саопштио да је током свог боравка у Истамбулу, јула ове године, видео Ернеста у друштву сумњивих типова.*
(‘When I had already lost the last hope, I was visited by Schleiermacher, a business partner of my father’s, who told me that he had seen Earnest in a bad company in Istanbul, in July this very year.’)

(Basara 2013)

The verb *изгубити* (lose) denotes being deprived of or ceasing to have or retain a valuable, useful or precious object, so that the collocation *изгубити наду* may be metaphorically interpreted as HOPE IS AN OBJECT.

3. Discussion and conclusions

Considering the subtypes of ontological metaphor we have examined in the sample, our findings would seem to demonstrate that, first, in personification, the mechanisms of conceptualization indicate that Serbian speakers frequently associate negative states of mind and emotions with experiences of physical suffering (*савест мучи, сумња једе*). A lack of control over certain phenomena or the course of one's life is reflected in the mechanisms of personification, since fate is depicted as a person who exerts power over and directs human behaviour (*судбина одведе, судбина се поигра*). Certain emotional/mental conditions are experienced as a set of circumstances with an unforeseeable outcome (*изазивати судбину*) or agony endured when in a court of law (*судбина осуди*). Second, in container metaphors, the body/mind is viewed as the contained. The container is a state or emotion, such as discomfort, uneasiness, misfortune or displeasure, within which the body/mind is confined or into which it falls (*зурати у пропаст*). Third, entity and substance metaphors in the sample demonstrate that certain states, emotions, social standing, feelings of expectation, virtues, etc., are viewed as objects whose value or quality can be destroyed (*прљати част*) or which cause pain or injury to a person (*савест пече*), or as assets lost in the given circumstances (*изгубити наду*), etc. In such a mapping process, human fragility is associated with the fragility of matter and physical objects, which may dissolve, become wasted, distort, or yield on impact.

In line with the description of the two semantic properties of collocations by Manning and Schütze (1999, 184) above, we have noticed that the literal meanings of the verbs and abstract nouns do not contribute to the interpretation of the content of the collocation. The evidence from the sample may support the idea that the content does not depend entirely on the meaning of the collocates, but on the interpretation of the cross-

domain mappings. Furthermore, with regard to Manning and Schütze's (1999, 184) claim that the components of a collocation cannot be replaced by their synonyms without any loss in content, the idea which may be put forward for consideration is that the literal meaning of a particular collocate in a collocation in which metaphorical conceptualization is at work could be viewed as a vehicle in the mapping across specific domains. To give an illustration, putting aside the conventionality of the collocation, the verb *исцурнѣти* in *исцурнѣти снагу* could not be replaced by the synonym *извыћи* (pull out; **извыћи снагу*, lit. pull out strength) as it would not suggest the association between the process of dissipating and wasting material resources and the experience of draining someone of their strength and vitality. As Lakoff (1993, 202–252) has argued, the extended lexicalized sense of a word in the target domain sense is characterized by the mapping (which in conceptual metaphor theory seems to be underlying rather than psychologically active). In the sample examined, the denotation of the verbs includes actions which involve matter and tangible entities, with which one can physically interact. However, the nominal collocates are not concrete but abstract nouns, so that the meaning of the verbal collocates is extended accordingly through the mechanism of mapping.

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