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METAPHORICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS IN ITALIAN

1 INTRODUCTION

With the emergence of cognitive linguistics and numerous studies in this field, the notion of metaphor, one of the most studied phenomena of language, has changed fundamentally. It has become a way of thinking and understanding the world, i.e. a cognitive phenomena that is present both in thought and in the everyday language in which it is manifested, and represents one of its realizations (Ortony 1975; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1990; Gibbs 1994; Goatly 1997; Kövecses 2000a; Gibbs and Colston 2012).

1.1 Conceptual metaphor

Conceptual metaphor (CM) is defined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 24) as a basic structure of thought by which we conceptualize one experiential domain in terms of another. Kövecses (2010: 33) adopts Lakoff and Johnson's definition and defines CM as a *systematic set of mappings between a source and a target domain*.¹ Gibbs (2008: 3), on the other hand, defines metaphor as a *fundamental scheme by which people conceptualize the world and their own activities*. Furthermore, the same author (ibid: 4 and 5) emphasizes that for a good understanding of CMs, both linguistic as well as cognitive and cultural factors need to be included in the study.

Any CM can be generalized to the formula TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN. The source domain is a concrete domain (e.g. CONTAINER, FORCES, BUILDINGS, LIGHT, etc.) related to our understanding of our body and to our physical and subjective experience, which is why we usually have extensive knowledge about this domain. The source domain

¹ A domain is defined by Kövecses (2010: 4) as *any coherent organisation of experience*. Langacker (2008: 44) explains that a domain is any conception or area of experience. Domains provide the basic information based on which lexical concepts can be understood and applied. A word invokes a set of domains (from a domain matrix) which is the basis for the construction of meaning.

helps us understand the target domain, which is an abstract and complex domain (e.g., EMOTION, KNOWLEDGE, HUMAN RELATION, etc.) and is characterized by not being directly derived from physical experience. Target domains are usually complex domains and contain knowledge that relates to both concrete domains and some other abstract domains. The metaphorical process always proceeds in one direction only, namely from the source domain to the target domain, i.e. from the concrete to the abstract and not *vice versa*. The understanding of the target domain in relation to the source domain is possible because of the systematic, precise and unidirectional correspondences or mappings between the two domains, which take place at the level of the constituent elements of the two domains and occur automatically. Among the features is the systematicity that enables us to understand one concept in relation to another (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 29), and which is reflected in metaphorical linguistic expressions (MLEs). Lakoff (1993: 215) further argues that in mappings it is important to preserve the structure of the image schemas² underlying the source domains so that they match the structure of the target domain. Knowledge about the source domain is thus in some sense consistent with knowledge about the target domain, whose inherent structure constrains the mappings. Since each metaphor structures one or only some aspects of a particular concept, the concept can therefore only be understood on the basis of a combination of several metaphors, Kövecses (2010: 96) states: “*Since the concepts (both target and source) have several aspects to them, speakers need several source domains to understand these different aspects of target concepts.*”

1.2 Conceptualization of emotions

Previous research on emotion concepts in many languages shows that emotion concepts have a very complex conceptual structure (the most important authors in this context are Barcelona 1992; Matsuki 1995; Rull 2002; Soriano 2003; Będkowska-Kopczyk 2004; Stefanowitsch 2004 and 2009; Gibbs 2005; Oster 2010; Adamiczka 2011; Ogarkova and Soriano 2014; Kövecses, Szelid, Nusz, Blanco Carrión, Akkök and Szabó 2015; Tran 2019; Jelčić Čolakovac 2020; Yanti and Aziz 2021). Lakoff and Johnson, the founders of *Conceptual Metaphor Theory*, believe that some concepts, including emotions, are structured almost exclusively metaphorically. Moreover, they are convinced that no conceptual structure arises directly from emotional functioning (1980: 79). Emotional experiences, which are of great importance to individuals, are therefore less clearly defined than individuals’ experiences of their own bodies. Consequently, they are structured by better defined ones and perceived by the latter in an indirect way through metaphors.

2 The concept is introduced by Lakoff and Johnson in the context of their *Conceptual Metaphor Theory*. Lakoff (1987: 267) defines image schema as “*relatively simple structures that appear continuously in our everyday bodily experiences and in various orientations and relations*”, while Grady (2005: 34) defines them as “*mental representations of perceptual, including kinetic, experiences*” and emphasizes their role in structuring metaphor.

Many authors (Fainsilber and Ortony 1987; Fussell and Moss 1998; Gibbs 1994; Kövecses 2000a and 2014; Gibbs, Leggitt and Turner 2002) who have worked on the conceptualization of emotions make it clear that metaphorical language plays an important role in understanding the language of emotions, not only in describing and categorizing emotional experiences, but also defining them more precisely and even in creating them. They agree that there are systematic correspondences between emotions and our sensorimotor experiences that are reflected in metaphorical language. For this reason, the conceptualization of emotions is mainly explored through metaphorical or metonymic linguistic expressions, and there are an enormous number of such expressions for a given emotion. Kövecses (2002: 110) concluded, based on several studies in English, that in most cases there should be more than a hundred expressions for a single emotion, which proved to be true in our study (Table 2). Gibbs et al. (2002: 125, 133 and 134) argue that emotions themselves can often be understood through many, sometimes even contradictory, metaphors and that MLEs, their manifestations, reflect even very subtle differences in emotional experience, because metaphorical language allows for greater precision, directness and clarity and is therefore able to differentiate between the complex variations of a particular emotional state. It is also important to emphasize that people use linguistic metaphorical expressions not instead of literal expressions, but in addition to literal expressions (Fainsilber and Ortony 1987; Fussell and Moss 1998). Fainsilber and Ortony (1987: 247) describe the use of these expressions as necessary because they can express what literal expressions cannot, i.e. metaphorical language and literal language complement each other.

Kövecses, who has devoted much of his research to the study of CMs of emotions, has on the one hand examined the conceptualization of individual emotions, especially HAPPINESS (Kövecses 2008, 2015) and ANGER (Lakoff and Kövecses 1987; Kövecses 2000b; Kövecses et al. 2015), but on the other hand also tried to answer some more general questions, such as: Are there source domains that are specific only to emotions? Are there domains that are specific to all emotions? And what are the specific metaphors for each emotion? (Kövecses 1998, 2000a, 2002; 2014³). Comparing emotion concepts to other concepts he found that source domains for emotion concepts were not domains specific only to emotion concepts. When comparing emotion concepts with each other he first found that there is a whole range of domains that are typical of (almost) all emotion concepts, second that some source domains apply to a group of emotions, and third that there are very few source domains that are specific to a single emotion.

In general, the main source domains associated with emotions are the following: CONTAINER, FORCE and OPPONENT. In the conceptual metaphor *EMOTION IS A SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER*, we think of the emotion as a substance and the human body as the container in which the emotion is contained. One can also metaphorize individual parts of one's own

3 Kövecses (2014) studied the conceptualization of emotions on the basis of ten selected emotions: anger, fear, happiness, sadness, love, lust, pride, shame and surprise.

body, which means that one perceives the body as a container consisting of smaller containers – body parts (Będkowska-Kopczyk 2009: 30) – and these parts then become containers for emotions. In Western cultures, for example, the heart is usually the body part that is considered the seat of emotions in folk theory (Gibbs 2017: 39). Kövecses (2000a: 62) notes that the metaphor *EMOTION IS AN AUTONOMOUS FORCE* is based on the image schema *FORCE*, one of the most basic image schema of the conceptual system. Derived from our bodily experience, it plays a central role in the conceptualization of emotions. Individuals are confronted daily with the effects of various forces within and outside their own bodies, in nature and in the environment. Dixon (2003: 3) argues that throughout history emotions have been perceived as forces that work against the individual, i.e. against their will and reason. In most cases, these are forces over which the individual has no control, which is consistent with the notion of emotions as phenomena that the individual cannot resist. The conceptual metaphor *EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT* describes emotions as something that works against the individual and that must be kept under control (Rull 2002: 186). This source domain is often used to refer to negative emotions or very intense emotions, regardless of their valence.

1.3 Valence and the Conceptualization of Emotions

Kövecses (2000a: 4) argues that the source domains, and thus the MLEs that result from the mappings between the two domains, focus on different aspects (features) of emotion concepts, and it is these aspects that give us a more accurate insight into the conceptualization of emotions. He lists (ibid: 40-46) the following aspects: existence, intensity, passivity, control, positive – negative evaluation, difficulty, desire/need, non-physical unity, progress, and harm.

Since this article deals only with valence (positive/negative), we will discuss only this feature in detail. Valence is probably one of the most important dimensions of emotions by which they are classified and described. Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson and O'Connor (1987: 1068) and Keltner, Oatley and Jenkis (2014: 174) note that there is every indication that emotions at the higher level of categorization are divided into two clusters precisely on the basis of valence. According to Ogarkova (2013: 54), in Western cultures valence is perceived as a difference in the perceived (un)pleasantness of an emotional experience, Kövecses (2000a: 44) refers to this aspect as “positive – negative evaluation”. As for cultural differences, Karandashev (2021: 231) and Galati, Sini, Tinti and Testa (2008: 216) argue that the distinction between emotions with positive and negative valence is similar across cultures.

Kövecses (2000a: 44) lists the following source domains that focus on the aspect of valence: UP-DOWN, LIGHT – DARK, WARM – COLD, VALUABLE – NON-VALUABLE,⁴ noting that

4 The first listed domain in all examples refers to positive valence, the second domain to negative valence.

they can only be used with emotions that are inherently good or bad. Source domains, on the other hand, can also focus on the negative or positive aspects of each emotion, regardless of its valence. Other source domains associated with negative valence in the literature are ILLNESS (Kövecses 2002a), FORCE – its negative effects (Kövecses 2002a, Rull 2002), OPPONENTS (Rull 2002), WEIGHT (Kövecses 2020), FOOD – taste (Zhou in Tse 2020: 7, 9 and 11), OPPONENT (Rull 2002). Source domains associated with positive valence are RAPTURE/BEING DRUNK (Kövecses 2000a: 75, 2008: 136), LIGHT (Kövecses 2008: 136).

The following findings about positive and negative valence (Averill 1980: 7 and 9; Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer and Vohs 2001: 355) are also relevant and may influence the conceptualization of emotions: negative events have a longer-lasting effect than positive events; individuals remember emotions with negative valence more strongly; emotions with negative valence have stronger effects; and individuals experience emotions with negative valence twice as intensely as emotions with positive valence. Emotions with negative valence are also discussed more frequently and more thoroughly in the literature because they are considered ‘problematic’. The predominance of emotions with negative valence is also said to be reflected in language, where words describing emotions with negative valence are more common than words for emotions with positive valence (Averill 1980: 8). More recently, however, especially with the rise of positive psychology, interest has shifted to emotions with positive valence.

Since valence has proven to be an important feature of emotions, we expected that it would also influence the conceptualization of emotions in Italian and that there would be some significant differences between emotions with positive and emotions with negative valence, both at the level of CMs and at the level of MLEs. Following other authors (Kövecses 2002a and 2008; Rull 2002) we expected most of the differences in the following metaphors: *EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT*, *EMOTION IS AN ILLNESS*, *EMOTION IS FOOD*, *EMOTION IS AN AUTONOMOUS FORCE*. We have assumed that even in metaphors that seem to be shared by several emotion concepts, many differences arising from will emerge at the level of MLEs

2 METHODS

In order to determine the differences in the conceptualization of positive and negative emotions we focused on five emotions – three with negative valence (FEAR, ANGER, SADNESS) and two with positive valence (HAPPINESS and LOVE)⁵.

To identify the MLEs, and thus CMs, we opted for a corpus-based approach, which has proven to be one of the most suitable for the study of the conceptualization of

5 The selected emotions correspond to those that have been shown in various studies to be very good representatives of the category of emotions in Italian and English (Shaver et al. 1987: 1067; Frijda et al. 1995: 12; Zammuner 1998: 267–272; Kövecses 2000a: 3, 2002: 114).

emotions, as it allows us to systematically identify metaphors and metonymies in natural discourse (Oster 2010; Stefanowitsch 2006). Based on the assumption that each emotion is structured as a category, we selected from the target domain two (2) to six (6) keywords for each emotion (Table 1).

Table 1: Keywords for the five selected emotions

FEAR	ANGER	SADNESS	HAPPINESS	LOVE
<i>paura</i>	<i>rabbia</i>	<i>tristezza</i>	<i>felicità</i>	<i>amore</i>
<i>panico</i>	<i>bile</i>	<i>afflizione</i>	<i>gioia</i>	<i>innamoramento</i>
<i>sgomento</i>	<i>collera</i>	<i>disperazione</i>	<i>allegria</i>	
<i>spavento</i>	<i>furia</i>	<i>infelicità</i>	<i>contentezza</i>	
<i>terrore</i>	<i>furore</i>	<i>mestizia</i>	<i>rallegramento</i>	
<i>timore</i>	<i>ira</i>			

The 24 selected keywords are all nouns, i.e. the names of the selected emotions and their synonyms.⁶ Fussell and Moss (1998: 128–129) found that when expressing emotions, people do not use metaphorical expressions in place of literal expressions, but together with them. Metaphorical expressions are therefore used as an additional explanation to literal terms. For this reason, we have assumed that with well-chosen keywords from the target domain we can use this method to find many MLEs in which emotion concepts are manifested.

In addition to identifying CMs (and metonymies) that structure the concepts of emotion, the corpus-based approach gives us insights into the broader context and use of a single MLE, all of which allows us to describe emotion concepts using multiple dimensions. Another advantage of the corpus-based approach is the possibility to quantify data, i.e. to determine the frequency for each MLE.

We choose the *itWaC*,⁷ the *Italian Web Corpus*, a reference corpus of the written Italian that contains more than one billion words and is the largest corpus of modern Italian. Given the available Italian corpora, we considered the selected corpus to be the most appropriate in terms of its size and composition for the study of the conceptualization of emotions.⁸

In the corpus, we searched for MLEs using the keywords listed in Table 1. For each keyword, we first searched for all concordances in the corpus and then analysed the first

6 Oster (2010: 735) states that conceptual metaphors are most often expressed with nouns and verbs, while adjectives are used to describe individual emotions.

7 The corpus *itWaC* consists of online texts. However, the creators of the corpus emphasise that the corpus is constructed in such a way that, in addition to typical Internet texts, it also includes texts that are published on the Internet but were not originally created for publication on the Internet. It is therefore a collection of very different types of texts dealing with very different topics.

8 Oster (2010: 734) considers that the size of the corpus is more important for the study of the conceptualization of emotions than the composition of the corpus itself, since words denoting emotions are not very frequent.

10,000 random concordances. If a keyword has fewer than 10,000 occurrences, we analysed all the concordances we obtained for that word. We transferred the concordances for each keyword into MS Excel, where we then sorted and analysed them.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

With a detailed corpus analysis of more than 160,000⁹ concordances, we obtained:

- 1,862 different MLEs used 16,280 times for emotions with negative valence.
- 656 different MLEs used 5,949 times for emotions with positive valence.

The analysed concordances and the obtained MLEs allowed us to draw some important conclusions about the conceptualization of the selected emotions and about the conceptualization of emotions with positive and negative valence. In order to be as systematic as possible, and to be able to compare the emotion concepts and MLEs for all emotion concepts, we created a list of CMs for emotion concepts in Italian based on the analysis of all MLEs obtained in the corpus. The list is presented in Table 2, where the frequencies¹⁰ of the MLEs for each CM are also listed for a better understanding of the further discussion.

Table 2: Conceptual metaphors for emotion concepts in Italian with frequencies of different LMEs and the number examples of LMEs in the concordances

CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR		F	A	S	H	L
EMOTION IS A SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER (BODY)	MLE	94	179	62	109	14
	MLEe	575	1754	646	1105	73
<i>EMOTION IS A SUBSTANCE IN THE BODY (non-specifically located)</i>	MLE	24	55	19	24	2
	MLEe	164	498	202	396	29
<i>EMOTION IS A SUBSTANCE IN A PARTICULAR PART OF THE BODY</i>	MLE	17	8	8	17	2
	MLEe	91	48	113	100	10
<i>EMOTION IS A SUBSTANCE (LIQUID) THAT COMES INTO THE BODY FROM OUTSIDE</i>	MLE	17	5	7	9	2
	MLEe	78	23	44	223	8
<i>EMOTION IS A (HOT) LIQUID IN THE BODY</i>	MLE	4	47	5	20	5
	MLEe	11	193	6	109	9
<i>EMOTION IS A SUBSTANCE ((HOT) LIQUID) THAT RISES WHEN IT IS STRONGER AND FALLS WHEN IT IS WEAKER</i>	MLE	25	19	12	12	1
	MLEe	166	166	74	54	2

⁹ A total of 50,152 for *fear*, 11,745 for *anger*, 25,887 for *sadness*, 32,029 for *happiness* and 12,491 for *love*.

¹⁰ It is impossible to draw important conclusions from the frequencies alone, as the numbers are not directly comparable due to the different number of keywords and analysed concordances. However, from the overall analysis we were able to conclude that the number of MLEs does not depend only on the number of considered concordances. From this we can conclude that frequencies can be an additional piece of information that, together with the analysis of linguistic expressions, gives a more detailed picture of the conceptualization of emotions.

CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR		F	A	S	H	L
<i>EMOTION IS A SUBSTANCE (LIQUID) THAT CAUSES PRESSURE WHEN IT IS STRONG</i>	MLE	4	36	4	20	0
	MLEe	8	781	18	172	0
<i>EMOTION IS A SUBSTANCE THAT IS DEEP INSIDE A BODY</i>	MLE	3	9	7	7	2
	MLEe	48	45	189	51	15
<i>EMOTION IS A CONTAINER/BOUNDED SPACE</i>	MLE	47	6	10	16	8
	MLEe	630	654	646	569	148
<i>EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT</i>	MLE	205	191	76	35	21
	MLEe	1321	1318	417	92	52
<i>EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT</i>	MLE	83	122	52	22	13
	MLEe	781	1029	312	31	25
<i>EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT WE FIGHT</i>	MLE	59	44	14	8	4
	MLEe	324	252	56	24	19
<i>EMOTION IS A SUPERIOR</i>	MLE	55	18	10	5	4
	MLEe	181	30	49	37	8
<i>EMOTIONS IS AN EVIL FORCE</i>	MLE	8	7	0	0	0
	MLEe	35	7	0	0	0
<i>EMOTION IS AN ILLNESS</i>	MLE	94	41	36	46	23
	MLEe	267	83	84	263	65
<i>EMOTIONS IS A PHYSICAL ILLNESS</i>	MLE	57	1	31	8	11
	MLEe	173	1	78	107	33
<i>EMOTIONS IS A MENTAL ILLNESS (INSANITY)</i>	MLE	37	40	4	19	8
	MLEe	94	80	4	92	24
<i>EMOTIONS IS DRUGS A DRUG (ADDICTION)</i>	MLE	0	0	1	11	4
	MLEe	0	0	2	36	8
<i>EMOTIONS IS A MEDICINE</i>	MLE	0	0	0	8	0
	MLEe	0	0	0	28	0
<i>EMOTION IS AN AUTONOMOUS FORCE</i>	MLE	206	315	95	136	56
	MLEe	1939	2436	819	518	209
<i>EMOTION IS AN UNDEFINED FORCE</i>	MLE	49	81	15	16	11
	MLEe	351	827	246	47	44
<i>EMOTION IS AN NATURAL FORCE</i>	MLE	49	56	43	42	10
	MLEe	343	119	206	278	17
<i>EMOTION IS COLD</i>	MLE	16	4	0	0	0
	MLEe	25	10	0	0	0
<i>EMOTION IS HEAT</i>	MLE	0	13	2	0	0
	MLEe	0	31	3	0	0
<i>EMOTION IS LIGHT</i>	MLE	0	0	0	26	5
	MLEe	0	0	0	73	16
<i>EMOTION IS DARKNESS</i>	MLE	1	0	13	0	0
	MLEe	6	0	107	0	0

CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR		F	A	S	H	L
EMOTION IS FIRE	MLE	16	66	0	12	15
	MLEe	18	322	0	25	54
EMOTION IS A LIVING THING (PERSON OR PLANT)	MLE	41	30	14	30	9
	MLEe	463	98	107	78	64
EMOTION IS A WILD (CAPTURED) ANIMAL	MLE	34	65	8	10	6
	MLEe	758	1029	150	17	14
EMOTION IS AN OBJECT	MLE	93	46	66	133	30
	MLEe	1785	229	652	2185	264
EMOTION IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT	MLE	36	8	19	67	17
	MLEe	1467	51	460	1942	230
EMOTION IS A BUILDING	MLE	0	0	1	9	3
	MLEe	0	0	1	49	8
EMOTION IS FOOD	MLE	0	10	17	51	9
	MLEe	0	17	44	179	25
EMOTION IS A BURDEN	MLE	35	18	21	6	0
	MLEe	74	91	87	15	0
EMOTION IS AN OBSTACLE	MLE	22	10	8	0	1
	MLEe	244	70	60	0	2
EMOTION IS A GOAL	MLE	0	0	0	33	0
	MLEe	0	0	0	386	0

*The word *emotion* is used generically and can be interchanged with any or all of the emotions discussed

**F – fear, A – anger, S – sadness, H – happiness, L – love, MLE – number of different MLEs, MLEe – number of times the LMEs are found in the analysed concordances

Based on the obtained results, we can confirm that the emotion concepts analysed in Italian have a very complex conceptual structure. Since the selected concepts FEAR, ANGER, SADNESS, HAPPINESS and LOVE belong to the category EMOTIONS, similarities in the conceptualization of emotion concepts were to be expected. Many authors – Kövecses (2000a: 36, 2014: 16) in particular, but also Rull (2002: 180), Stefanowitsch (2006: 91) and others – have written about the source domains that apply to all or most emotion concepts in English, Spanish, German and other languages. The analysis of the linguistic material from the *itWaC* corpus has shown that all the selected emotion concepts in Italian share pretty much all the basic metaphors for emotions. The emotions under consideration are therefore conceptualized in Italian as a:

- SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER
- CONTAINER/BOUNDED SPACE
- OPPONENT
- ILLNESS
- AUTONOMOUS FORCE
- OBJECT

The similarities between the emotion concepts are also evident at the level of language, and we found many linguistic metaphorical expressions that apply to all or to most emotion concepts we analysed (examples 1 to 22).

Examples of *EMOTION IS A SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER*:

- (1) **pieno di** paura/spavento/timore/terrore/panico/rabbia/ira/tristezza/mestizia/felicità/gioia/amore
- (2) **riempire di** paura/terrore/timore/panico/rabbia/collera/furore/tristezza/disperazione/felicità/gioia/allegria/amore
- (3) **traboccare di** paura/timore/rabbia/ira/tristezza/disperazione/felicità/gioia/allegria/amore
- (4) *la paura/lo spavento/ti timore/la rabbia/la collera/la tristezza/ l'infelicità/ la disperazione/l'infelicità/l'allegria/la felicità/l'amore cresce*
- (5) *paura/terrore/panico/rabbia/furia/tristezza/disperazione/felicità/gioia/amore profondo(a)*

Examples of *EMOTION IS A CONTAINER/BOUNDED SPACE*:

- (6) **nella** tristezza/**nell'**infelicità/**nel** furore/**nella** felicità
- (7) **vivere nella** paura/**nello** spavento/**nel** panico/**nell'**amore

Examples of *EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT*:

- (8) *la paura/lo spavento/l'ira/la collera/la tristezza/la disperazione/la felicità/l'allegria/l'amore vince*
- (9) **sopraffatto dall'**amore/dall'allegria/dalla tristezza/dalla rabbia/dal terrore/dalla paura
- (10) *la gioia/la tristezza/la furia/la collera/il panico/la paura invade*

Examples of *EMOTION IS AN ILLNESS*:

- (11) **morire d'**amore/di terrore/di disperazione/di tristezza
- (12) *paura/terrore/rabbia/ira/felicità/gioia/allegria/amore folle/pazzo(a)*

Examples of *EMOTION IS AN AUTONOMOUS FORCE*:

- (13) *paura/gioia/amore forte, la forza della felicità/dell'amore/della disperazione*
- (14) *la paura/il timore/la rabbia/la disperazione/l'allegria spinge, spinto dalla disperazione/dalla rabbia/ dal terrore/dal timore/dalla paura*
- (15) *la paura/il timore/il terrore/l'amore muove, mosso dalla disperazione, dal timore/ dalla rabbia/dalla collera/dalla gioia*
- (16) **generare** paura/timore/ira/infelicità/gioia/amore
- (17) **in preda alla** paura/allo spavento/al terrore/al panico/alle rabbia/all'ira/alla tristezza/alla disperazione

Examples of *EMOTION IS AN OBJECT*:

- (18) *nascondere la paura/il timore/la rabbia/la tristezza/la disperazione/la felicità/la gioia/l'amore*
 (19) *portare terrore/tristezza/infelicità/felicità/gioia/allegria*
 (20) *creare panico/sgomento/infelicità*
 (21) *produrre felicità/sgomento/panico/timore*
 (22) *avere paura/timore/terrore/gioia/allegrezza*

If at the basic level there seem to be more similarities than differences between the emotion concepts, the differences between the emotion concepts considered and between emotion concepts with positive and negative valence emerge at the level of the specific metaphors and from the analysis of MLEs and their number.

For the metaphor *EMOTION IS A SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER (BODY)* the similarities between the emotion concepts seem to be obvious. There are some differences between emotions that are not manifested at the level of negative and positive valence but are the peculiarities of each emotion concept. For example, only ANGER and HAPPINESS are conceptualized as a LIQUID SUBSTANCE (examples 23 to 25) and only ANGER as a HOT LIQUID (examples 26 and 27):

Examples of *EMOTION IS A (HOT) LIQUID SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER*:

- (23) *sprazzo di allegria/felicità*
 (24) *goccia di felicità*
 (25) *sprizzare felicità*
 (26) *la collera/la rabbia/l'ira (ri)bollente*
 (27) *sbollire/bollire/ribollire di rabbia.*

Although the basic metaphor *EMOTION IS A CONTAINER/BOUNDED SPACE* is an important way of conceptualizing all the emotions in the study, the analysis of the MLEs reveals some interesting differences between emotions with different valences. MLEs for emotions with positive valence mostly refer to the existence and duration of the emotion (examples 28 to 32) and its intensity (examples 33 to 35). The latter is indicated as a *full container*. However, in the case of emotions with negative valence, there are many realizations that refer to the intensity of the emotion, which is understood as the *depth of the container* (examples 36 to 40). Negative emotions are also seen as a bounded space that we want to leave. The MLEs expressing this aspect refer to the end of the emotion (example 41):

Examples of *EMOTION IN A CONTAINER/BOUNDED SPACE*:

- (28) *essere nella gioia*
 (29) *vivere nella felicità/gioia/in allegria*
 (30) *giocare in allegria*
 (31) *in mezzo all'allegria*

- (32) *nell'amore*
 (33) *in piena allegria*
 (34) *la gioia è piena*
 (35) *la pienezza dell'allegria/della gioia*
 (36) *affondare nel panico*
 (37) *piombare nel panico*
 (38) *precipitare nello sgomento/nel terrore*
 (39) *sprofondare nello sgomento/nella paura*
 (40) *cadere nel terrore*
 (41) *uscire dalla paura/dal terrore/dalla disperazione.*

Valence as an important feature of emotions also influences conceptualization when we examine in detail the MLEs and the number of their frequencies for the metaphor *EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT*. The opponent in our metaphor is a very broad concept and includes an enemy (in war), an opponent, a rival or/and a competitor. The source domains *OPPONENT* and *ENEMY* are frequently mentioned in the literature in relation to emotions (Kövecses 1990a, 2000a; Rull 2002; Kövecses 2008, 2014). Our study has also confirmed that this metaphor is one of the most important in the conceptualization of emotions. Moreover, it clearly shows that while we perceive all five considered emotions as opponents, we perceive the negative ones as opponents or enemies to a greater extent. In the analysed concordances, we found 257 different MLEs and 2,122 examples of MLEs for negative emotions versus 35 different MLEs and 57 examples of MLEs for positive emotions. The realizations are shown in examples 42 to 50 and mostly refer to the intensity of the emotion.

Examples of EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT:

- (42) *la tristezza/la paura/il panico/la collera/il furore/la disperazione/l'allegria invade*
 (43) *vittima della paura/della rabbia/dell'ira/della tristezza/dell'amore*
 (44) *la paura/il terrore/il panico/il furore/l'ira/l'infelicità/la disperazione/la gioia colpisce*
 (45) *la rabbia/la collera/il furore/la furia violento(a)*
 (46) *la paura/il furore minaccia*
 (47) *sfuggire al panico/all'ira/al furore/alla tristezza/alla disperazione*
 (48) *la paura/la collera/l'ira/la tristezza/la disperazione vince*
 (49) *assalito dal timore/dal terrore/dallo sgomento/dalla rabbia/dall'ira/dal furore*
 (50) *cedere alla paura/al panico/alla rabbia/alla collera/all'ira/alla furia/alla disperazione*

Moreover, in Italian only negative emotions are seen as enemies that we must resist and fight (examples 51 to 59).

(51) *vincere la paura/il timore/il panico/l'ira/la tristezza/la disperazione*

(52) *combattere la paura/il panico/la rabbia*

Examples of *NEGATIVE EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT WE FIGHT*:

(53) *combattere la paura/il panico/la rabbia*

(54) *affrontare la paura/il timore/la rabbia/la collera/l'ira/la furia/l'infelicità/la disperazione*

(55) *lottare contro la paura/il terrore, lotta contro la paura/la rabbia/la furia*

(56) *sfidare la paura/la rabbia/l'ira/il furore*

(57) *(s)cacciare la tristezza/il timore/la tristezza*

(58) *proteggere dall'ira/dalla collera/dalla furia*

(59) *sconfiggere la paura/il timore/il panico/la tristezza*

This is in line with Rull's (2002: 186) findings, namely that we perceive emotions with negative valence as opponents, adversaries, and enemies because we must try or fight to gain control over them, whereas we do not have the need to fight emotions with positive valence. Ogarkova (2013: 54) believes that valence in Western cultures is perceived as differences in the perceived (un)pleasantness of an emotional experience, which explains why we fight the negative (unpleasant) rather than the positive (pleasant) ones.

Our study has shown that the source domain *ILLNESS* plays an important role in the conceptualization of emotions in general, but also shows significant differences between emotions with positive and negative valence. While the specific metaphors *EMOTION IS A PHYSICAL DISEASE* and *EMOTION IS A MENTAL ILLNESS (INSANITY)* are particularly important for emotions with negative valence, all specific source domains (*PHYSICAL ILLNESS*, *MENTAL ILLNESS*, *DRUG* and *MEDICINE*) are important for emotions with positive valence. In the case of emotions with positive valence, many interesting peculiarities emerged at the level of the MLEs.

Kövecses (2000a: 44) believes that the source domain *PHYSICAL DISEASE* is mainly used to conceptualize emotions with negative valence, but our research has shown that this is not entirely the case in Italian. The metaphor itself is very important for the conceptualization of *FEAR* and *SADNESS*, but we did not find any linguistic realizations for *ANGER* (examples 60 to 64). Furthermore, we found quite a lot of linguistic realizations for emotions with positive valence as well. The analysis of the MLEs provided us with further insights: we were able to establish that only one aspect of the source domain *PHYSICAL ILLNESS* is important for the conceptualization of *HAPPINESS*, and this aspect is its contagiousness (see example 65). For *LOVE*, which is also an emotion with positive valence, we found very similar linguistic realizations as for emotions with negative valence, and the analysis of the concordances led us to conclude that all these MLEs refer to cases of rejected, unrequited love, i.e. to the negative aspects (unpleasantness) of this emotion (examples 66 to 68).

Examples of *EMOTION IS A DISEASE*:

- (60) *soffrire di paura/per lo spavento/di timore/di tristezza/di amore/per amore*
 (61) *morire di/per spavento/di tristezza/d'amore*
 (62) **malato di** *tristezza/di infelicità, malattia d'amore/ammalarsi di tristezza*
 (63) **alleviare** *l'infelicità/la paura/la tristezza*
 (64) **guarire dalla** *paura/la tristezza/l'infelicità/dalla disperazione*
 (65) *felicità/allegria* **contagiosa, contagiare** *con l'allegria/di gioia*
 (66) **soffrire per amore, sofferenza** *d'amore*
 (67) **curare** *le ferite del cuore*
 (68) **sintomo** *dell'innamoramento*

The source domain RAPTURE/HIGH or more specifically DRUNKENNESS/BEING DRUNK is frequently mentioned in the literature in connection with various emotions, including LOVE and HAPPINESS (Kövecses 1986: 92; Apresjan 1997: 182; Kövecses 2000a: 26; 2018: 73), in various languages. Kövecses (1990a: 178, 2000a: 75) cites this source domain as typical of positive emotions and suggests that it has much in common with the domain INSANITY. The states of insanity and drunkenness overlap to some extent as the behaviour of the individual in both states is similar – irrational, and excessive – but the cause of this behaviour is different. However, when we speak of positive emotions the feeling of partial irrationality induced by drugs/alcohol is combined with a pleasant feeling. For Italian, our data show that this metaphor can only be associated with positive emotions, since we found MLEs for both positive emotions considered (examples 69 to 71) and not for the three emotions with negative valence.

Examples of *EMOTION IS A DRUG/DRUNKENNESS*:

- (69) **ebro** *di felicità/di gioia, ebbrezza di felicità/dell'amore*
 (70) **ubriaco** *di gioia/di allegria/di amore, inebriante allegria*
 (71) **sbronza** *di felicità*

In our study the specific metaphor *EMOTION IS MEDICINE* (examples 72-75) is characteristic of HAPPINESS and not for emotions with positive valence as we expected based on the literature where this metaphor is mentioned primarily for LOVE.

Examples of *EMOTION IS MEDICINE*:

- (72) **dose** *di allegria*
 (73) *l'allegria* **fa bene**
 (74) **effetti benefici** *dell'allegria*
 (75) **iniezione** *di felicità/allegria*

The metaphor seems to be consistent with the prevailing idea, particularly important in the last few decades, of the importance of non-physical factors, including happiness,

in disease. Happiness is understood in popular theories of emotion as something that has a positive effect on a person's health and more generally on their quality of life. Some correlations have also been scientifically proven: on the one hand the negative effects of depression and anxiety on physical health have been established, and on the other hand the positive effects of happiness have also been reported, especially with regard to the significantly longer life expectancies of happy people (Veenhoven 2008: 455).

The metaphor *EMOTIONS ARE AUTONOMOUS FORCES* is mentioned by most authors who have studied the conceptualization of emotions. Kövecses (2000a: 62) explains that this metaphor is based on the image schema *FORCE*, which is one of the most basic image schemas of the conceptual system. It has its origins in our bodily experience and plays a central role in the conceptualization of emotions. Every day a person encounters the actions of various forces within and outside their own body, in nature and in the environment. Dixon (2003: 3) notes that throughout history emotions have been perceived as forces that work against the individual, i.e. against their will and reason. In most cases these are forces over which the individual has no control, which is consistent with the folk theories that understand emotions as phenomena over which the individual has no control and cannot resist. This metaphor also proved to be very important in our study, for all the emotions considered: we found 808 linguistic realizations of this metaphor and 5,746 examples of these realizations. The metaphor is also important when we try to determine differences in the conceptualization of positive and negative emotions. The most obvious difference lies in the specific metaphor *EMOTION IS A NATURAL FORCE*, in which it becomes clear that, although all the emotions are conceptualized as *NATURAL FORCES*, emotions with positive and negative valence are conceptualized as different forces of nature: emotions with positive valence are conceptualized as *LIGHT* (examples 76 to 80), emotions with negative valence do not have a unique pattern, as *SADNESS* is conceptualized as *DARKNESS*, *FEAR* as *COLD* and *ANGER* as *HEAT* (examples 81 to 83).

Examples of POSITIVE EMOTION IS LIGHT:

(76) **raggiante** di felicità/di contentezza

(77) **brillare di** felicità/allegria

(78) **raggio di** allegria/di gioia/d'amore

(79) **irradiare** gioia/felicità/amore

(80) **offuscare** la felicità/l'allegria

Examples of NEGATIVE EMOTION IS DARKNESS/COLD/HEAT:

(81) **ombra di** tristezza/mestizia, tristezza nera, tristezza oscura, tetra disperazione, cupa disperazione, il tunnel della tristezza/disperazione

(82) **gelare di** spavento, spavento/timore gelido, ghiacciato dal terrore

(83) **covare** rabbia/la collera/il furore/l'ira, friggere di rabbia, la rabbia/il furore calda

An important difference between positive and negative emotions is also evident in the metaphor *EMOTION IS A WILD (CAPTURED) ANIMAL*. Kövecses (2000a: 62) notes that the behaviour of a person who is not in control of their emotions is often compared to the behaviour of a wild animal. The same author (2018: 76) makes the connection between this metaphor and the concept of emotions (of which Darwin is the most prominent representative) as instinctive reactions that humans have inherited from their animal ancestors over evolution. The desire to have an emotion under control is shown in the version *CAPTURED WILD ANIMAL*. Rull (2002: 185 and 186) makes the connection between the control of an emotion and a wild animal we keep in captivity because we see it as dangerous.

For this metaphor we found an extremely high number (107 MLEs used 1,337 times) of realizations for negative emotions (examples 84) and only a few (16 MLEs used 31 times) for positive emotions (examples 85), which correspond to the realizations we also found for negative emotions and which almost all refer to the aspect of intensity. So, as expected, in Italian negative emotions are seen as more dangerous and intense. The same MLEs are sometimes used to refer to a very strong positive emotion.

Examples of EMOTION IS A WILD (CAPTURED) ANIMAL:

- (84) *rabbia/collera/ira **feroce**, in preda alla paura/allo spavento/al timore/alla rabbia/all'ira/alla tristezza, ringhiare di rabbia, gli artigli del panico, controllare la rabbia/l'ira/la paura*
 (85) *gioia **feroce**, gioia/amore selvaggia(o), in preda all'amore/alla gioia, nido d'amore*

Interesting differences in relation to the various valences were also revealed in the basic metaphor *EMOTION IS AN OBJECT*, or more precisely in quite all its specific metaphors. For the conceptual metaphor *EMOTION IS A BUILDING* we found MLEs only for emotion concepts with positive valence. We found a few very different realizations (examples 86 to 90). At least some of them refer to the fact that it is possible to build or destroy happiness (and love) and that the individual plays an important role in this. The other MLEs refer to the aspect of the existence of emotions and to the intensity of emotions.

Examples of EMOTION IS A BUILDING:

- (86) *costruire la felicità/amore*
 (87) *distruggere la felicità, amore distrutto*
 (88) *felicità **incrollabile***
 (89) *la porta della felicità (si chiude/si apre)*
 (90) *i pilastri della felicità*

Smith (2020) believes that the concept of happiness as something that can be methodically constructed and controlled has only been present in Western cultures since the 18th century, before which happiness was seen as a matter of chance, fate or even the grace of God (Kövecses 2015: 166).

Also important for the conceptualization of negative emotions are the metaphors *EMOTION IS A BURDEN* and *EMOTION IS AN OBSTACLE*. Kövecses (2020: 49) mentions a source domain *WEIGHT*, which can be elaborated in *BURDEN* or/and in *OBSTACLE*. The realizations are of different types, but all refer on the one hand to the intensity of the emotion (examples 91 to 93 and 96 to 97), and on the other hand to our desire to control our emotions (examples 94 to 95 and 98 to 99). Since positively valued emotions bring pleasure, we do not regard them as obstacles and/or burdens.

Examples of EMOTION IS A BURDEN:

- (91) *lasciarsi schiacciare dalla paura/dal terrore*
- (92) *(stra)carico di timore/terrore/sgomento/d'ira/di tristezza/di mestizia/di disperazione*
- (93) *la paura/il timore **pesa, portare il peso della** paura/della collera/ dell'infelicità*
- (94) *far cadere la paura*
- (95) *reggere allo spavento/alla paura*

Examples of EMOTION IS AN OBSTACLE:

- (96) *la paura/il timore **blocca, bloccato** dalla furia/dal terrore/dal panico*
- (97) *la paura **insuperabile***
- (98) ***superare** la paura/lo spavento/il timore/il terrore/il panico/lo sgomento/l'ira/la tristezza/la rabbia*
- (99) ***affrontare** la paura/il terrore*

Although we found MLEs for the metaphor *EMOTION IS FOOD* for all the considered emotions (except *FEAR*), we found significant differences between emotions with positive and negative valence, especially in relation to taste. Other authors, for example Zhou and Tse (2020: 7, 9 and 11), also found a relationship between sadness and a bitter taste, and a bitter taste and negatively valenced emotions in general. Similarly, the analysis of the LMEs has shown that in Italian emotions with a positive valence are associated with a good and sweet taste (examples 100 to 101). and those with a negative valence (except fear) are associated with a bitter taste (examples 102 to 103).

Examples of EMOTION IS FOOD:

- (100) ***gustare** l'amore/l'allegria/la gioia, **deliziosa** gioia*
- (101) *felicità/amore **dolce, la dolcezza della** felicità*
- (102) ***l'amaro** dell'infelicità/dell'afflizione, rabbia/tristezza/afflizione/mestizia amara*
- (103) ***addolcire** la mestizia/la tristezza*

4 CONCLUSIONS

Valence, one of the most important properties of emotions, also influences their conceptualization. For Italian we found differences at the level of specific metaphors, but even greater differences emerged at the level of metaphorical linguistic expressions themselves. We found that the source domains OPPONENT, OPPONENT WE FIGHT, ILLNESS, DARKNESS, COLD, HEAT, CAPTURED WILD ANIMAL, FOOD (bitter taste), BURDEN and OBSTACLE were relevant for negative emotions. For emotions with positive valence, the initial domains are MEDICINE, LIGHT, DRUG/DRUNKENNESS, OBJECT, BUILDING, FOOD (good and sweet taste). In some cases, the source domains do not apply to the valence of the emotion, but to the positive or negative aspects of a particular emotion, regardless of its valence. For example, the source domain ILLNESS, which is typical of negative emotions, refers only to the negative aspects of LOVE (rejected or unrequited love).

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POVZETEK

KONCEPTUALIZACIJA ČUSTEV S POZITIVNO IN NEGATIVNO VALENCO V ITALIJANŠČINI

Namen članka je preučiti razlike v konceptualizaciji čustev s pozitivno in negativno valenco v italijanščini. V drugih jezikih je bilo ugotovljeno, da imajo čustva zelo kompleksno konceptualno strukturo. Številni avtorji (Fainsilber in Ortony 1987; Fussell in Moss 1998; Gibbs 1994; Kövecses 2000a; Gibbs, Leggitt in Turner 2002; Kövecses 2014), ki so se ukvarjali s konceptualizacijo čustev, so prepričani, da ima metaforični jezik pomembno vlogo pri razumevanju jezika čustev, saj ne le opisuje in kategorizira čustveno doživljanje, temveč ga tudi natančneje opredeljuje in celo ustvarja. Ker je valenca ena najpomembnejših značilnosti čustev, nas je zanimalo, kako vpliva na njihovo konceptualizacijo in kako se razlike v valenci kažejo na ravni konceptualnih metafor in metaforičnih jezikovnih izrazov. Analizirali smo več kot 150000 konkordanc iz korpusa *itWaC* in ugotovili, da imajo čustva tudi v italijanščini kompleksno konceptualno strukturo. S primerjavo rezultatov glede na valenco smo ugotovili, da se razlike med čustvi s pozitivno in negativno valenco ne pojavljajo na ravni osnovnih metafor, temveč na ravni nekaterih specifičnih metafor in še jasneje na ravni metaforičnih jezikovnih izrazov. Ugotovili smo, da, čeprav se vsa čustva do neke mere pojmovana kot NASPROTNIK/SOVRAŽNIK, to velja še posebej za čustva z negativno valenco. Samo čustva z negativno valenco so pojmovana kot NASPROTNIK, KI SE MU UPREMO, kar nakazuje na to, da jih je treba premagati in nadzorovati. Čustva s pozitivno valenco so pojmovana kot ZDRAVILO, DROGA, SVETLOBA in ZGRADBA. Pri metafori ČUSTVO JE HRANA metaforične jezikovne realizacije kažejo, da je pozitivna valenca jasno povezana z dobrim in sladkim okusom, negativna valenca pa z grenkim okusom. Če so čustva s pozitivno valenco pojmovana kot SVETLOBA, so čustva z negativno valenco pojmovana kot TEMA (ŽALOST), MRAZ (STRAH) in TOPLOTA (JEZA). Na ravni metaforičnih jezikovnih izrazov smo našli še nekaj drugih zanimivih razlik.

Ključne besede: konceptualna metafora, koncepti emocij, valenca, italijanščina

ABSTRACT

METAPHORICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS IN ITALIAN

The aim of this article is to discuss the conceptualization of negative and positive emotions in Italian. In other languages, emotions have been found to have a very complex conceptual structure. Many authors (Fainsilber and Ortony 1987; Fussell and Moss 1998; Gibbs 1994; Kövecses 2000a; Gibbs, Leggitt and Turner 2002; Kövecses 2014) who worked on the conceptualization of emotions make it clear that metaphorical language plays an important role in understanding

the language of emotions, not only describing and categorizing emotional experiences, but also defining them more precisely and even creating them. Since valence is one of the most important features of emotions, we were interested in how it influences their conceptualization and how differences in valence are manifested at the level of metaphors and metaphorical linguistic expressions. We analysed more than 150,000 concordances from the *itWaC* corpus and found that emotions in Italian have a complex conceptual structure. Comparing the results by valence, we found that the differences between emotions with positive and negative valence do not occur at the level of basic metaphors, but at the level of some specific metaphors and even more clearly at the level of metaphorical linguistic expressions. We found that while all emotions are perceived as OPPONENT / ENEMY, this source domain applies in particular to emotions with negative valence. Only emotions with negative valence are perceived as OPPONENT WE FIGHT, which means that we have to overcome and control them. In contrast, only positive emotions are perceived as LIGHT, MEDICINE, DRUG and BUILDING. As with the metaphor EMOTIONS ARE FOOD, positive valence is clearly associated with a good and sweet taste and negative valence with a bitter taste. If emotions with a positive valence are perceived as LIGHT, emotions with a negative valence are perceived as DARKNESS (SADNESS), COLD (FEAR) and HEAT (ANGER). At the level of metaphorical linguistic expressions, we found some other interesting differences.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, emotion concepts, valence, Italian