



University of Rijeka, Faculty of Maritime studies

PROJECT ACRONYM AND TITLE: Metaphors in Language: An Eye-tracking Study into the Effect of Metaphor Awareness on Intercultural Competencies of Future Seafarers (MetLa)

FUNDING PROGRAMME: Scientific-Research Project Initiatives of The University of Rijeka (ZIP UNIRI)

PERSON RESPONSIBLE: Jasmina Jelčić Čolakovac, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

FINANCIAL DATA

Project total cost	Overall funding assigned to PFRI
5.972,53 €	5.972,53 €

SUMMARY

The main goal of the present research is to investigate arguments in favor of utilizing metaphoric awareness in shaping competent language learners with envious levels of intercultural competencies to serve them in their everyday communicative situations on board. One way of raising awareness is by uncovering the underlying motivation which can be found behind many instances of L2 vocabulary, especially in the area of ESP (*English for Specific Purposes*; e.g., Maritime English or English for Engineering). Conceptual metaphors (CMs) (e.g., ANGER IS FIRE in burst with anger or HAPPY IS UP in be over the moon) and cultural knowledge (e.g. maritime knowledge in culturally-motivated (CS) language such as sail under false colors or batten down the hatches) are instances of background motivation in the case of figurative language, and many multi-word expressions (MWEs) such as idioms. Raising learners' awareness of CMs can facilitate their retention of the very vocabulary they motivate, whereas grouping vocabulary around underlying CMs can aid its retention. Various studies have examined CM facilitation and factors such as L1 transfer have been tested as a variable. The proposed research has placed focus on the following: 1. identifying and quantifying conceptual metaphors which are shared between learners' L1 (Croatian) and L2 (English); assessing the nature of the L1 transfer when it comes to the comprehension of figurative vocabulary; and test the effect of raised metaphoric awareness on the processing of both universal (CM) as well as culture-specific (CS) metaphoric vocabulary by means of an eye-tracking study. The research is expected to shed light on the nature of meaning transfer between L1 and L2 the nature of which will be bidirectional in nature, with a stronger connection exerted in the case of CMs shared between English and Croatian. We also expect for the eye-tracking experiment to reveal faster processing times for vocabulary motivated by shared CMs than culture-related vocabulary units. Furthermore, we expect to find beneficial effects of metaphor instruction upon vocabulary processing in both CM and CS conditions. The proposed project, if chosen for funding, will upgrade the existing LaCon laboratory (Laboratory for Language, Cognition & Neuroscience) established at the Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Rijeka, and supported in part by the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ) under the project number UIP-2019-04-1576, which will further the experimental and neurocognitive lines of research both at the Faculty as well as university-wide.

Start date	End date
01.06.2023.	31.05.2026.

WEBSITE: <https://www.laconlab.com/projects/metla>



University of Rijeka, Faculty of Maritime studies

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Members of the project team:

- **Jasmina Jelčić Čolakovac**, *Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Rijeka*
- **Irena Bogunović**, *Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Rijeka*
- **Eva Pavlinušić Vilus**, *Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Rijeka*
- **Bojana Ćoso**, *ISPP, International school of Phnom Penh, Cambodia*
- **Selma Elkasović**, *Faculty of Educational Sciences, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula*
- **Alenka Vrbinc**, *Academic Unit for Languages for Business and Economics, School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana*