

**Biljana RADIĆ-BOJANIĆ**

***Mental Images as a Metaphorical Vocabulary Learning Strategy***

The paper presents the results of a one-year investigation of how EFL students understand and interpret metaphorical vocabulary using the strategy of mental images. The theoretical background relies on the theory of conceptual metaphor (starting with Lakoff and Johnson 1980), especially its use and application in foreign language acquisition, and language learning strategies (Oxford 1990), particularly strategies of figurative thinking (Littlemore and Low 2006).

The research was based on the work with two groups of students (n=40), who were divided into an experimental group, exposed to the metaphorical structured input over one academic year, and a control group, who attended traditionally organized classes. The research methodology takes a qualitative approach, so the results presented in the paper were obtained through periodical interviews with the students from both the experimental and control groups. The three interviews conducted at the beginning of the research, at the end of the fourth month and at the end of the tenth month reveal notably growing differences in the way students from the experimental and control groups use the strategy of mental images in metaphor interpretation, because students from the experimental group increasingly rely on their personal experiences, which adds to the richness of mental images.

**Biljana RADIĆ-BOJANIĆ** is a teaching assistant employed at the Department of English, Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad. In 2005 she defended her MA thesis entitled *Discourse of the Internet in English and Serbian (With Special Reference to Electronic Chatting)* and she subsequently published a book entitled *anyone wanna chat?! Discourse of Electronic Chatrooms in English and Serbian*. She has finished her PhD thesis entitled *Application of Conceptual Metaphor in EFL Vocabulary Acquisition* and expects to defend it by the end of 2010. She has published a number of papers and presented her research at various conferences in Serbia and abroad. E-mail: radic.bojanic@gmail.com.

