

# Studies on the Teaching of Asian Languages in the 21st Century



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in the 21st Century

Edited by

Ali Küçükler and Hüseyin İçen

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

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# INTRODUCTION

Asia's significance, as a vast continent spanning through the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Indian sub-continent, and the Far East, has ascended markedly in the last few decades. Such significance is not only a result of the region's military, political, and economic potential but also of its cultural variety and richness in terms of embracing ancient civilizations and languages. Therefore, academic research and enquiries on Asia are increasing and diversifying.

The First International Symposium on Asian Languages and Literatures (ADES), organized by the Erciyes University Faculty of Letters in 2011, is important in this respect. The second of this symposia series was organized by the same Faculty on 3-4 May 2012. The second symposium, themed The Teaching of Asian Languages in the 21st Century, incorporated a number of papers analysing the issues of learning and teaching Asian Languages such as Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Farsi, and Malay. These two symposia undoubtedly created an environment of academic exchange for the attendees of various countries. The symposia are good indications of the level and the variety of academic research on Asian languages and literatures. These symposia, together with many others, surely are valuable contributions to the understanding and promoting of the cultural and linguistic richness of Asia.

Publishing selected papers from the International Symposium on the Teaching of Asian Languages in the 21st Century by Cambridge Scholars Publishing aims particularly to serve this purpose.

Prof. Dr. A. Mete Tuncoku  
*Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University*



CHAPTER ONE

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES  
IN CONCEPTUALIZING “HEART” IN CHINESE  
AND SERBIAN AND THEIR PRACTICAL USE  
IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

ANA JOVANOVIĆ<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract**

Generally conceptualized as “the seat of both emotional life and mental abilities” (Yu, 2009), “heart” has been discussed in Chinese philosophical works and traditional medicine for thousands of years, thus becoming one of the most interesting and prominent concepts in Chinese culture. The word 心 xīn (heart) is considered to be one of the most productive words in Chinese (Hou, 2001), with almost 400 compounds, phrases and idioms composed by it, as the results of the present study show. Serbian language might not be that rich in vocabulary containing the word “srce” (heart), but nevertheless, this concept plays no lesser role in Serbian understanding of the complex and abstract ideas such as love, courage, etc. In this paper I concentrate on the similarities and differences in the ways “heart” is conceptualized in these two cultures, and possible ways in which they can be put to practical use in teaching Chinese to the native speakers of Serbian. I first give a brief account of the findings regarding conceptual metaphors at work in conceptualization of “heart” in both Chinese and Serbian individually. Secondly, I present the results of my contrastive study with special attention paid to human bodily experience as the source of similarities, and specific cultural models as key to understanding differences. Lastly, I offer a proposal as to how both similar and different mechanisms of conceptualization can be put to use in language teaching in order to facilitate the acquisition of new words and phrases.

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**Keywords:** Concept, conceptualization, conceptual metaphor, cultural models.

## 1. Introduction

Chinese, a Sino-Tibetan language and Serbian, which belongs to the South Slavic branch of the Indo-European languages, are polar opposites as far as linguistic typology and structure are concerned. Serbian is inflectional, with a highly developed system of morphological changes which influence word meanings. Chinese on the other hand is an analytic language in which it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make a clear distinction between a word and a morpheme, and the two are often equated with the notion of 字/zi.<sup>2</sup> Given the different nature of these two languages it would be almost impossible to find similarities related to form and morphological rules that would help facilitate the acquisition of Chinese as a second language for the ordinary speaker of Serbian. That is why we must turn to the realm of thought and cognitive processes as it is the only domain where we can set ourselves free from the strict rules of surface language representations and find astonishing commonalities even between the languages that differ so greatly as the case in point.

As a relatively new trend in linguistic research, cognitive linguistics in general, and especially its theory of conceptual metaphor, deals with the mechanisms of thought that lie behind linguistic representations and can be used to explain them. Its major tenet is that meaning is embodied, i.e. arises from the basic human experience of body in space as well as from the interaction with other entities in it. Meaning arises from just a few basic concepts that humans become aware of very early in their development, which are further developed via figurative thought, i.e. conceptual metaphors and metonymies. These mechanisms of figurative thought thus become crucial for an understanding of all the complex and abstract notions we come across in life. Conceptual metaphors are mappings from one, usually more basic cognitive domain to another, often complex or abstract domain which is impossible to grasp literally or directly. Among the basic domains that serve as most common sources of metaphoric transfers are: spatial orientation, experience with our own bodies and its functions as well as interactions with other entities in the

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<sup>2</sup> On the morphological structure of Chinese, see Packard, J. L. (2001) *The Morphology of Chinese: A linguistic and cognitive approach*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, (originally published by Cambridge University Press, 2000:14-15.

world around us.<sup>3</sup> In the following discussion I will concentrate on the metaphoric use of 心/xīn/in Chinese and “srce” in Serbian. I will try to show that there are similarities in the ways this body part is conceptualized, which are the products of universal human experiences. Furthermore, I will also point out the differences resulting mainly from the specific cultural models that gave rise to some unique understanding of the role this body part, which consequently lead to differences in its usage.

In my research of the ways this bodily organ is conceptualized in Chinese and Serbian I used the following dictionaries: monolingual *Dictionary of Modern Chinese language* (中国社会科学院语言研究所词典编辑室编 (2005) 现代汉语词典[第 5 版]. 北京: 商务印书馆), in further text *DMC*; *A Chinese – English Dictionary (Revised edition)* (外研社: 汉英词典[修订缩印本] (1997/2006). 北京外国语大学英语系辞典编辑组编. 北京: 外语教学与研究出版社), in further text *CED*; 5th volume of the *Dictionary of Serbo – Croatian literary language* (Rečnik Srpskohrvatskoga književnog jezika, [drugo fototipsko izdanje], 1990, Novi Sad: Matica srpska, tom 5), in further text *RMS*; *Serbian – English Phraseological Dictionary* (Živorad Kovačević: *Srpsko – engleski frazeološki rečnik, 2002, Beograd: Filip Višnjić*) in further text *SEFR*, and *Small Phraseological Dictionary of Serbian language* (Dr. Đorđe Otašević: *Mali srpski frazeološki rečnik, 2007, Beograd: Alma*, pgs. 655-656.), further on referred to as *MSFR*. The sources of all individual examples as well as explanations of their meanings (apart from the literal meaning of each word-morpheme) are clearly marked throughout this paper.

The discussion will run as follows: In Section 1 I will give a brief introduction of the paths of semantic extension for the Chinese word 心/xīn/(heart), as well as the major findings regarding the most common conceptual metaphors behind those extensions. Section 2 brings an overview of the most common semantic extensions of the word “srce” (heart) in Serbian language as well as metaphoric transfers related to it. Section 3 gives a review of similarities and differences in conceptualization of 心/xīn/in Chinese and “srce” in Serbian along with the common and different metaphoric transfers in these two languages. Section 4 is a proposal of how these similarities and differences in conceptualization can be employed in second language (L2) teaching in

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<sup>3</sup> For further reading on cognitive linguistics and theory of conceptual metaphor see Lakoff G. & Johnson, M. (1980, 1999), Lakoff, G. (1987/1990); Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980, 1999), Kövecses, Z. (2002) etc.

order to facilitate acquisition of new words and phrases by an ordinary Serbian student. Section 5 brings a short conclusion.

## **2. The Conceptualization of 心/xīn/(heart) in the Chinese Language**

The word 心/xīn/(heart) in Chinese is one of the most productive words as far as the formation of compounds is concerned, for which reason it is considered to have the highest (i.e. sixth) level of productivity.<sup>4</sup> My own research shows that the total number of compounds, phrases and idioms composed by it and appearing in MCD and CED numbers 399.

According to the dictionary explanation, body part word 心/xīn/(heart), apart from its original meaning as an organ in the human body, has three other meanings, two of which are particularly important for the present study as they are metaphoric in nature. The first extended meaning is MIND and HEART as a seat of cognitive abilities and emotions, but also THOUGHT, FEELING and INTENTION as its main functions. The second extended meaning is CENTER or CENTRAL PART (of something). The fourth listed meaning of this word is “the fifth of the twenty eight constellations” which is of no interest for our present research, as is the case with its use as a surname. In this paper I will concentrate on the first two semantic extensions and the ways 心/xīn/(heart) is conceptualized in these situations.

### **2.1. Conceptualizing 心/xīn/ as a center of emotions and cognition**

The most thorough investigation of the way Chinese people conceptualize 心/xīn/(heart) has been conducted by Yu Ning.<sup>5</sup> In his paper “Heart and Cognition in ancient Chinese philosophy” (2009) he gives a detailed explanation of the common cultural model behind the conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS THE RULER OF THE BODY, which is dominant in Chinese understanding of this bodily organ. A precondition for the existence of this metaphor is, as he explains, an understanding that “heart” is a locus of both mental abilities and feelings, that it is a combination of the concept of HEART (i.e. center of emotional

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<sup>4</sup> Hou L.W. (2001). “Xin” yi wenhua tansuo. *Hanyu xuexi*, 3: 54.

<sup>5</sup> Yu, N. (2009). *From body to meaning in culture*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company:263-283.

life) and the concept of MIND (center of cognitive abilities) that in the Western world are very often mutually exclusive. This unity can be exemplified through the following compounds: 痴心/chīxīn/(CED, lit. idiotic/crazy about something – heart; i.e. “infatuation”); 欢心/huānxīn/(CED, lit. joyous/merry – heart; i.e. “favor”, “liking”, “love”); 焦心/jiāoxīn/(CED, lit. scorched – heart; i.e. “feel terribly worried”); 松心/sōngxīn/(CED, lit. relax – heart; i.e. “feel relieved”, “have ease of mind”, “feel carefree and happy”); 痛心/tòngxīn/(CED, lit. ache – heart; i.e. “pained”, “distressed”, “grieved”); 会心/huìxīn/(CED, lit. understand/know – heart; i.e. “understanding”, “knowing”); 慧心/huìxīn/(CED, lit. intelligent/bright – heart; i.e. “wisdom”); 决心/juéxīn/(CED, lit. determine – heart; i.e. “determination”, “resolution”); 潜心/qiānxīn/(CED, lit. hide – heart; i.e. “with great concentration”); 三心二意/sān xīn èr yì/(CED, lit. three – hearts – two – thought; i.e. “be of two minds”, “shilly – shally”, “be half-hearted”) etc. In the first five examples, 心/xīn/appears as a center of emotions, while in the last five it has the meaning of MIND, as typically understood in the West.

Conducting a rough analysis of 399 compounds and idioms composed by this body part, I have discovered that 36% of those are lexical items in which we can be sure that 心/xīn/appears in the sense that could be equated with the notion of MIND in Serbian (as an example of the Western way of conceptualization), while there is only 21% of those in which it refers strictly to EMOTIONS. In all other cases (16%), where 心/xīn/appears in the abstract sense, it either simultaneously refers to both of these two notions, or to some feature of man’s inner life that falls between these two domains (such as tolerance, piety, loyalty etc.).

## 2.2. Other conceptual metaphors for 心/xīn/(heart)

Wu Enfeng<sup>6</sup> believes that 心/xīn/as a “center of emotional life” is conceptualized via the THE HEART IS A CONCRETE OBJECT metaphor as well as various SPATIAL METAPHORS.<sup>7</sup> The conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS A CONCRETE OBJECT maps a number of

<sup>6</sup> Wu Enfeng (2004b). Zai lun “xin” de yinyu – Jian yu Qi Zhen Hai xiansheng shangque. *Waiyu yanjiu*, 6, 18-23.

<sup>7</sup> For different explanations of these metaphors see also Qi Z.H. (2003). Lun “xin” de yinyu – Jiyu Ying Han yuliaoku de duibi yanjiu. *Waiyu yanjiu*. (3); Qi Z.H., & Tan X.G. (2004). “Xin” yinyu ciyu de fanchouhua yanjiu. *Waiyu yanjiu*, (6).

physical characteristics of inanimate objects to the abstract concept of “heart” as “seat of emotions and intellect”. Those features include: hardness and softness, as in 心软/xīnrǔǎn/(CED, lit. heart – soft, i.e. “be softhearted, tenderhearted”); 心硬/xīn yìng/(CED, lit. heart – hard, i.e. “hard-hearted”, “stony – hearted”, “callous, unfeeling”); color as in 心黑/xīnhēi/(DMC, lit. heart – black, i.e. “being sinister and vicious” or “insatiable”); size, as in 小心/xiǎo xīn/(CED, lit. small – heart, i.e. “take care”, “be careful, be cautious”); material it is made of as in 铁心/tiěxīn/(CED, lit. iron – heart, i.e. “be unshakable in one’s determination”); possibilities of various physical manipulations, such as “carrying on the shoulder” in 担心/dānxīn/(CED, lit. carry on shoulder – heart, i.e. “worry or feel anxious”); “damaging” as in 伤心/shāng xīn/(CED, lit. wound/injure – heart, i.e. “sad, grieved, broken – hearted”); “tugging” as in 揪心/jiūxīn/(CED, lit. pull/tug – heart, i.e. “anxious, worried, agonizing, gnawing”); “hanging” as in 挂心/guàxīn/(CED, lit. hang – heart, i.e. “be on one’s mind”); “engraving on it” as in 铭心/míngxīn/(CED, lit. engrave – heart, i.e. “be engraved on one’s heart, be remembered with gratitude”); or “hide” as in 潜心/qiánxīn/(CED, lit. latent/hidden – heart, i.e. “with great concentration”) etc. Clearly, none of these expressions means what it literally says, but instead they all refer to abstract concepts. As this particular metaphor has been already widely discussed in the related literature, we will not make further explanations of it.

Another set of conceptual metaphors that has been discovered and discussed in detail<sup>8</sup> are the so called SPATIAL METAPHORS, that map spatial features (such as width, length and depth) onto the abstract domain of 心/xīn/(heart) as a seat of emotional life and mental abilities. There are two major spatial metaphors involved in the conceptualization of “heart” in Chinese, namely THE HEART IS THREE DIMENSIONAL SPACE – A CONTAINER, and THE HEART IS TWO DIMENSIONAL SPACE – A PLANE. The first conceptual metaphor maps our basic knowledge of “containers” (i.e. that it has clear boundaries, certain depth, can be opened and closed, empty or full, that we can put some sort of content in it, etc.) onto the abstract domain of “heart”. These mappings then render a plethora of expressions which are used to comprehend abstract and complex concepts. Here are some of the most famous examples that came

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<sup>8</sup> Wang W.B. (2001) Lun Hanyu “xin” de kongjian yinyu de jigouhua. *Jiefangjun waiguoyu xueyuan xuebao*, 24 (1), 57-60; Wu E.F. (2004b); Qi Z.H. (2003, 2007), etc.

into existence via this metaphoric transfer: 心底/xīndǐ/(CED lit. “heart – bottom”, i.e. “the bottom of one’s heart”); 心里/xīnli/(CED, lit. heart – inside, i.e. “in the heart, at heart, in the mind”); 满心/mǎnxīn/(CED, lit. full – heart, i.e. “have one’s heart filled with”); 心虚/xīnxù/(CED, lit. heart – empty, i.e. “with a guilty conscience”, “lacking in self-confidence”, “diffident”); 开心/kāixīn/(CED, lit. open – heart, i.e. “happy, joyous, elated”); 关心/guānxīn/(CED, lit. shut/close – heart, i.e. “be concerned about”, “show solicitude for”, “be interested in”) etc. Obviously, the reason why we can join up words such as “full”, “empty”, “open”, “closed” and alike with the word 心/xīn/(heart) is a consequence of the above-mentioned conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS THREE DIMENSIONAL SPACE – A CONTAINER, which exists at subconscious level. It is also interesting to note that “positive” concepts related to containers, such as “open”, “full” etc. are mostly used in metaphorical understanding of positive feelings or psychological states, while concepts which are perceived as “negative”, such as “empty” and “closed” are mapped onto negative emotions and feelings.<sup>9</sup>

Another spatial metaphor used in conceptualization of 心/xīn/(heart) is THE HEART IS TWO DIMENSIONAL SPACE – A PLANE<sup>10</sup>. Planes are defined by two dimensions, length and width, and a number of features, such as “wide”, “broad”, “narrow”, as exemplified in the following compounds and idioms: 心田/xīntián/(CED, lit. heart – field/farmland, i.e. “heart”, “intention”); 心地/xīndì/(CED, lit. heart – land/field; i.e. “a person’s mind, character, moral nature” etc.); 心旷神怡/xīn kuàng shén yí/(CED, lit. heart – vast – spirit – cheerful; i.e. “relaxed and joyful”, “carefree and happy”); 宽心/kuānxīn/(CED, lit. wide – heart, i.e. “feel relieved”); 心窄/xīnzhǎi/(CED, lit. heart – narrow; i.e. “narrow-minded”), etc.

Some authors (Wang, W.B., 2001) believe that apart from the above-mentioned three dimensional and two dimensional space metaphors, there

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<sup>9</sup> Even though features of any entity are supposed to be neutral, they are not perceived as such. Due to our common experience with all sorts of containers (houses, rooms, boxes, cans etc.), features like “open”, “full”, “big” and alike are usually perceived as positive (i.e. If the door of a house or a room are opened, we can get inside, instead of staying outside of it; if the can of Coke is bigger, the more content we will find in it, etc.). Accordingly, “closed”, “sealed”, “small”, etc. are considered negative features of containers in general.

<sup>10</sup> For further information on this metaphoric transfer see Wang W.B. (2001), Qi, Z.H. (2003), etc.

is yet another one through which 心/xīn/(heart) is conceptualized as ONE DIMENSIONAL SPACE, that is A LINE, which can be illustrated with: 心弦/xīnxián/(CED, lit. heart – string; i.e. “heartstrings”); 动人心弦/dòng rén xīn xián/(CED, lit. move – person – heart – strings; i.e. “tug at one’s heartstrings”, “be deeply moving”); and 心路/xīnlù/(CED, lit. heart – road; i.e. “wit, intelligence”, “motive, intention”, “tolerance”). I do not agree with this as “strings” are not one-dimensional lines drawn on a piece of paper, but concrete objects. Since “roads” are also not “lines”, I don’t think there is a legitimate proof for the existence of this particular metaphoric transfer. Although Wu E.F. (2004b) offered some examples as proof for the existence of yet another “heart” metaphor, i.e. HEART AS ZERO SPACE – A DOT, I do not think that the lexical examples he offers are eligible proofs that can back up this claim.

The word 心/xīn/(heart) in Chinese is also conceptualized as a “human being”, i.e. it is being personified<sup>11</sup>, as can be seen from the following examples: 虔心/qiánxīn/(DMC, lit. pious/sincere – heart, i.e. “devotion”, “pious, devout”); 善心/shànxīn/(CED, lit. good/virtuous – heart, i.e. “mercy, benevolence”); 闲心/xiánxīn/(CED, lit. idle – heart, i.e. “leisurely mood”); 邪心/xiéxīn/(CED, lit. evil – heart, i.e. “an evil thought”, “a wicked idea”); 心急/xīnji/ (CED, lit. heart – impatient/anxious, i.e. “impatient, short tempered”); 孝心/xiàoxīn/(CED, filial – heart, i.e. “filial sentiments”, “filial devotion”); 死心/sǐxīn/(CED, lit. die – heart, i.e. “drop the idea forever”, “have no more illusions about the matter”); 心惊胆战/xīn jīng dǎn zhàn/(CED, lit. heart – be frightened – gallbladder – shiver, i.e. “tremble with terror”, “shake with fright”, “quake with fear”); 心疼/xīn téng/(CED, lit. heart – ache, i.e. “love dearly”, “feel sorry”, “be distressed”); 心醉/xīn zuì/(CED, lit. heart – drunk, i.e. “be charmed”, “be enchanted”, “be fascinated”). Needless to say, “heart” itself can not be “pious”, “virtuous”, “idle”, “evil” or “impatient”, it can not “show filial obedience”, “be frightened”, “ache” and “die”, let alone “get drunk”, as it is literally said in the above examples. The fact that Chinese join these inherently human features and actions with the abstract notion of “heart” is proof enough for the claim that it is personified in the minds of ordinary users of language.

All of the above-discussed metaphoric transfers are related to the conceptualization of 心/xīn/(heart) in its extended meaning of “heart,

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<sup>11</sup> For further elaboration of the personification of 心/xīn/in Chinese, see also Hou, L.W. (2001:58).

mind, feeling, intention” etc. In the next section I will discuss another common way of understanding it as the most important, central part of inanimate objects.

### 2.3. 心/xīn/(heart) understood as the CENTRAL PART of an entity

Another metaphoric use of 心/xīn/is CENTER<sup>12</sup>, which is easily explainable given the prominent role this bodily organ has in the organism, and the fact that people see it as a center of the human body. It is then metaphorically transferred onto inanimate entities (concrete objects, streets, rivers etc.) to denote their central parts (either in spatial or in functional sense). This kind of metaphoric transfer is based on the similarity in position, or similarity in function, and is again related to the primal human experience in space and our basic image schema “CENTER – PERIPHERY”. Let us first take a look at the following examples: 核心/héxīn/(CED, lit. nucleus – heart, i.e. “nucleus, core, kernel”); 街心/jiēxīn/(DMC, lit. street – heart, i.e. “central part of the street”); 圆心/yuánxīn/(CED, lit. circle – heart, i.e. “the center of the circle”); 莲心/liánxīn/(CED, lit. lotus – heart, i.e. “the heart of a lotus seed”); 球心/qiúxīn/(CED, lit. sphere/ball – heart, i.e. “centre of sphere”); 手心/shǒuxīn/(CED, lit. hand – heart, i.e. “the center of the palm”); 书心/shūxīn/(CED, lit. book – heart, i.e. “type area [of a book page]”); or even 祖国的心脏/zǔguó de xīnzàng/(CED, lit. homeland – heart, i.e. “the central, most important part of the country”) etc. In all of the examples above 心/xīn/has been transferred metaphorically onto the central part of an inanimate object due to the perceived similarity in position. In the example 灯心/dēngxīn/(CED, lit. lamp/lantern – heart, i.e. “lamp wick”), however, the perceived similarity is not only in terms of position, but function too, as “lamp wick” is the most important functional part of an oil lamp, just as heart is the most important organ on which the whole body depends.

## 3. The Conceptualization of “srce” in Serbian

For the purpose of this paper I conducted a rough analysis of the compounds and phrases containing a root morpheme “src-/srč-” or a

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<sup>12</sup> See also Qi, Z.H., Wang, Y.N. (2007), etc.

lexeme “srce” (heart) in the above-mentioned dictionaries of the Serbian language. My analysis, which involved one hundred and forty words derived from the name of this organ, shows that major metaphors employed in the conceptualization of this organ are: THE HEART IS A CONCRETE PHYSICAL OBJECT, THE HEART IS THREE DIMENSIONAL SPACE – A CONTAINER, PERSONIFIED HEART and THE HEART IS A CENTRAL PART OF SOMETHING. Furthermore, I discovered some examples that prove that even in Serbian the dichotomy between the notions of MIND and HEART is not as sharp as it is believed to be. In this section I will use my research findings and try to explain this concept in detail.

### **3.1. Conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS A CONCRETE PHYSICAL OBJECT**

The analysis of phrases and idiomatic expressions containing the lexeme “srce” (heart) in Serbian shows that the above-mentioned ways of conceptualization that exist in Chinese exist in this language, too. “Heart” in Serbian is also conceptualized as a “concrete object” with typical physical characteristics, that is hardness (soft, hard), weight (light, heavy), size (big), material (gold, stone) and a number of actions that can be done with it, such as “offering as a present”, “conquering”, “breaking”, “stealing”, “tearing”, “engraving on it”, “burning” and “hardening”. That is why we can conclude that the conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS A CONCRETE PHYSICAL OBJECT exists in Serbian too, which can be exemplified with the following phrases: meka srca (SEFR, lit. soft-heart, i.e. “soft-hearted”, “tender-hearted”); tvrda srca (SEFR, lit. hard – heart, i.e. “as cold as ice”); laka srca (SEFR, lit. light-heart, i.e. “with a light heart”, “light-hearted”); teška srca (SEFR, lit. heavy-heart, i.e. “with a heavy heart”); veliko srce (RMS, lit. big-heart, i.e. “good person”); zlatno srce (SEFR, lit. gold-heart, i.e. “a heart of gold”); imati srce od kamena (SEFR, lit. to have – heart – of – stone, i.e. “to have a heart as hard as a stone”); pokloniti srce kome/čemu” (SEFR, lit. to give as a gift-heart, i.e. “to lose one’s heart to someone/something”); osvojiti nečije srce (SEFR, lit. conquer – someone’s – heart, i.e. “to win/capture someone’s heart”); slomiti nečije srce (SEFR, lit. to break – heart, i.e. “to break someone’s heart”, “to cause someone heartbreak”); ukrasti nečije srce (SEFR, lit. to steal – heart, i.e. “to steal someone’s heart away”); urezati se u srce (RMS, lit. engrave – in – heart, i.e. “be object of constant thought and desire”) etc.

It is important to note that researchers have already asserted that metaphoric transfers THE HEART IS A SENSITIVE MATERIAL, THE

HEART IS A VALUABLE OBJECT, HEART AS A HARD OBJECT or HEART AS AN OBJECT WITH A CERTAIN WEIGHT are responsible for such or similar usages.<sup>13</sup> I believe that all these metaphoric transfers are just subcategories of the general view of “heart” as a concrete physical object (which has different features including size, material and hardness, as well as certain objective or subjective values). Given that human mind categorizes things at different levels, I believe that the above mentioned metaphor THE HEART IS A CONCRETE PHYSICAL OBJECT is more likely to exist as a general cognitive mechanism with all further modifications at different specific levels of conceptualization.

### **3.2. Conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS THREE DIMENSIONAL SPACE – A CONTAINER**

Apart from being conceptualized as a concrete physical object made from various materials and having different features, which we can manipulate or even destroy by applying physical force, “srce” (heart) in Serbian is also conceptualized via spatial metaphors, especially THE HEART IS THREE DIMENSIONAL SPACE – A CONTAINER.<sup>14</sup> This metaphor maps features of a typical container onto “heart” as a “center of emotional life”, or “emotions” and “feelings” themselves, which is exemplified with the following phrases: “iz dubine srca” (SEFR, lit. from – bottom – heart, i.e. “from the bottom of one’s heart”); otvorena srca (SEFR, lit. open – heart, i.e. “with an open heart”); od punoće srca (RMS, lit. from – plumpness – heart, i.e. “from the abundance of feelings”); puno mi je srce (RMS, lit. full – my – heart, i.e. “being very pleased, very satisfied”) etc. Clearly, features like “depth”, “openness” and “fullness” are not something that “heart” itself has, but are metaphorical features enabled by the conceptualization of this center of human emotional life as a typical container. What needs to be noted though is that conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS THREE DIMENSIONAL SPACE – A CONTAINER, is very similar to the previous metaphor THE HEART IS A CONCRETE PHYSICAL OBJECT (additional proof for this assertion can be found also in Wu, E.F. 2004b). Difference between the two lies in the fact that not all concrete objects are in fact containers (for example, a

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<sup>13</sup> Prodanović – Stankić, D.(2009). Pojmovna metonimija i metafora u značenjima lekseme srce u srpskom jeziku. *Godišnjak Filozofskog fakulteta u Novom Sadu*, 34, (1):83-84.

<sup>14</sup> For further reading on THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS AND MOODS metaphor and its metonymic basis see Prodanović – Stankić (2009: 82-83).

rock isn't), and the second important fact is that the first metaphor concentrates on the spatial features of a container, while the latter concentrates on outside features and the ways we manipulate three-dimensional objects of all kinds.

### 3.3. Personification of “heart” in Serbian

Another extremely important way of conceptualizing “heart” in Serbian, as far as linguistic data show, is seeing it as a completely independent entity with the ability that only human beings have. More concretely, “heart” can be “evil”, “happy” or “lonely”, it can “want”, “desire”, “cry”, “hurt” or “dance”, it can even have “it’s own will” or “it can give us advice”. In other words, “srce” (heart) is seen as a human being, it is “personified”, as can be seen from the following examples: *biti zla srca* (RMS, lit. to be – evil – heart, i.e. “to be evil, malicious”); *veselo srce kudelju prede* (SEFR, lit. happy – heart – hemp – spins, i.e. “not a long day, but a good heart rids work”); *usamljena srca* (SEFR, lit. lonely – hearts, i.e. “lonely hearts”); *koliko ti god srce želi* (SEFR, lit. as much as – your – heart – wants, i.e. “to one’s heart content”); *što oči ne vide, srce ne plače* (SEFR, lit. what – eyes – not – see – heart – not – cry, i.e. “what” eye doesn’t see, the heart doesn’t grieve over”); *srce boli* (RMS, lit. heart – hurts, i.e. “extremely uneasy, grieved, worried etc”); *srce igra* (RMS, lit. heart – dances, i.e. “extremely happy”, “extremely content”); *ispitati svoje srce* (SEFR, lit. to question – one’s own – heart, i.e. “to search one’s heart/soul”); *poslušati svoje srce* (SEFR, lit. to listen – one’s own – heart, i.e. “to follow one’s heart”), etc.

It is important to note here that in regard of this type of conceptualization I agree with Prodanović-Stankić (2009: 84), who implied that personifying heart is part of the conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS A LIVING BEING. However, personifying heart is just one of the specializations of this generic metaphor, as it further on develops through another mapping, namely THE HEART IS A PLANT, as exemplified by the phrase “*srce vene*” (RMS, i.e. heart – withers, i.e. “longing for someone”). I would like to point out also that I believe this specific metaphoric transfer is closely related to conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS.

### 3.4. “Heart” as opposed to “mind”

As far as my understanding of my mother tongue extends, Serbian “*srce*” (heart) is understood mainly as the “seat of emotions”. This is also

backed up by the RMS dictionary explanation which gives “spiritual and emotional state”, “the feeling of love” and “love” as well as “courage” as the extended meanings of this word. There are plenty of examples to support this claim, and I will hereby offer just a few in addition to the majority of lexical items that have already been discussed in previous sections: *nemati srca* (RMS, lit. not have – heart, “be insensitive”); *iskaliti srce na koga* (RMS, lit. to vent – heart – onto – someone, i.e. “to vent one’s fury, anger on someone”); *prirasti za srce* (SEFR, lit. to grow – on – heart, i.e. “to grow on someone”); *srce mi se cepa* (SEFR, lit. heart – mine – tear, i.e. “it breaks/wrenches my heart”) etc. None of the extended meanings of this body part term given in RMS is related to “thought”, “thinking” or “ideas”. And indeed, the best proof of the assertion that in Serbian culture “heart” is usually considered as the opposite of mind or reason (traditionally believed to be in the brain or head) is the common saying: *dopustiti da srce nadvlada razum* (SEFR, lit. to allow – heart – to overwhelm – reason, i.e. “to allow one’s heart to rule/govern one’s head”), where “heart” stands for emotions, as opposed to rational thought which is believed to take place in the mind, i.e. the head. Unfortunately, things are not as clear-cut as we would want them to be for the sake of lexicography and linguistic analysis. As soon as we delve into the analysis of concrete linguistic expressions we will come across, albeit just few cases where “srce” (heart) becomes in charge of “mental activities”, too, as can be seen from the following examples: *biti (ležati) kome na srcu* (RMS, lit. to be/to lie – at – someone’s – heart, i.e. “be object of someone’s worry or constant thinking”); *biti brat po srcu* (RMS, to be – brother – by – heart, i.e. “to have same thoughts, wishes and feelings”); *iščupati koga iz srca* (RMS, lit. to pull out – someone – from – heart, i.e. “to forget about someone”, “to stop thinking about someone”); *primiti k srcu* (RMS, lit. to accept – to – heart, i.e. “take something to heart”). Even though not pervasive, this type of conceptualization still exists, probably as a remnant of some traditional understanding of the role this organ has in human body.

### 3.5. Conceptualizing “heart” as a central part of something

I agree with Prodanović-Stankić (2009: 84) that yet another very important conceptualization of “heart” in Serbian is “center” or “major part”, “crucial part” of something (a state or territory, a concrete object, or an abstract thing like philosophy etc.), which is typical for the lexeme “srce” (heart) used in collocations with other words (and not idiomatic expressions and proverbs) or independently used in sentences. Such use can be seen in the following sentences: “Stara prestonica .....srce Srbije,

Kragujevac (...)” (RMS, lit. old capital – heart – of – Serbia – Kragujevac [name of town], i.e. An old capital city of Kragujevac was the central part/the main part of Serbia...); Treba samo prodrijeti u samo srce stvari (RMS, lit. it needs – to penetrate – to – heart – matter, i.e. “you need to get to the heart of the matter”), etc. What needs to be added though is that this type of conceptualization, the same as in Chinese, is based on the common image scheme CENTER-PERIPHERY. The use of “srce” as a “functional center” of a thing is also present in Serbian and is based on the perceived similarity in function, which can be exemplified by the use of “srce” to denote “lead in a pencil” (srce olovke).

#### **4. Similarities and Differences in Conceptualization of “Heart” Between Chinese and Serbian**

The separate analysis of Chinese and Serbian examples given above clearly shows an extreme degree of similarity at conceptual level between these two typologically very different languages. Speakers of both languages tend to conceptualize “heart” as “a concrete physical object” that has various characteristics. For the sake of clarity I will give a table of the most common expressions in both languages (table 1 below)<sup>15</sup>, that employ similar (and in some cases identical) ways of understanding “heart”, its features and relations between them and the abstract concepts they represent. Looking at this table we will see that in some cases identical features are metaphorically transferred onto the abstract domain of “heart” in both languages, representing the similar meanings, as is the case with 心软/xīnrnuǎn/and “meko srce”, 心硬/xīn yìng/and “tvrda srca”; or 铁石心肠/tiěshí xīncháng/(CED, lit. iron – stone – heart – intestine, i.e. “have a heart of stone”) and “srce od kamena”. In some cases, however, the expressions are not the same, but nevertheless, the conceptual strategy responsible for their existence is identical, and therefore, easily understandable.

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<sup>15</sup> All the tables show only the original Chinese word written in characters and its pinyin transliteration. Serbian examples are also given just in original. Explanations for both languages are omitted due to the limitations of space and the fact that they have already been offered earlier in the text.

**Table 1. Similarity between Chinese and Serbian based on the conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS A CONCRETE PHYSICAL OBJECT**

Conceptual metaphor	Chinese	Serbian
<b>THE HEART IS A CONCRETE OBJECT</b>	<p><b>hardness:</b> 心软/xīn ruǎn/ 心硬/xīn yìng/ <b>color:</b> 心黑/xīnhēi/ <b>size:</b> 小心/xiǎo xīn/ <b>material:</b> 铁心/tiěxīn/ 铁石心肠/tiěshí xīncháng/ <b>actions:</b> 担心/dānxīn/ 伤心/shāng xīn/ 揪心/jiūxīn/ 挂心/guàxīn/ 铭心/míngxīn/ 潜心/qiánxīn/</p>	<p><b>hardness:</b> meka srca tvrda srca <b>weight:</b> laka srca teška srca <b>size:</b> veliko srce <b>material:</b> zlatno srce srce od kamena <b>actions:</b> pokloniti srce osvojiti nečije srce sloiniti nečije srce ukrasti nečije srce urezati se u srce</p>

High degree of similarity between the two languages exists also in conceptualizing 心/xīn/and “srce” (heart) as a three dimensional space, i.e. a container. Table 2 below gives a list of expressions in both languages based on this metaphoric transfer. It is interesting to note that not all of the “features” of a container are employed in both languages. Chinese, for example, as far as our linguistic data show, exploits this metaphoric transfer much more than Serbian, but the existence of at least some expressions based on this metaphor proves that this transfer is alive in Serbian too, and that some mappings, although not currently used, are latent, and could be employed later on for some new expressions. The cause of this similarity is, I believe, universal human experience and understanding of the function “heart” has in the body. As “heart” in both languages is understood to be a seat of “our inner life” that “contains emotions” (and “cognitive abilities”), parallels have been established with the basic human experience with anything that “contains something else in itself”. The existence of this metaphor in Serbian also facilitates the

acquisition of such phrases in Chinese, as some mappings, although may not be present in Serbian, are still quite understandable due to subconscious comprehension of the way this metaphoric mechanism works.

**Table 2. Similarity between Chinese and Serbian based on the conceptual metaphor THE HEART IS THREE DIMENSIONAL SPACE – A CONTAINER**

Conceptual metaphor	Chinese	Serbian
<b>THE HEART IS THREE DIMENSIONAL SPACE – A CONTAINER</b>	心底/xīndǐ/	Iz dubine/dna srca
	心里/xīnli/	Od punoće srca
	满心/mǎnxīn/	Puno mi je srce
	心虚/xīnxù/	Otvorena srca
	开心/kāixīn/	
	关心/guānxīn/	

Another astonishing similarity between the two languages is that both show a tendency to personify “heart”, i.e. give it features and abilities typical for a human being. Table 3 below shows the most common expressions in both languages that are based on this cognitive strategy. What needs to be pointed out here is that although not “all and the same” human qualities are employed, the very existence of this tendency is important for it proves the universality of human cognitive mechanisms which could be exploited for the benefits of students in L2 teaching.

Finally, similarity exists in the way the speakers of these two languages employ “heart” in the meaning of the “center of some entity” (a thing, a state, an abstract entity, etc.) or “the most important functional part”, which can be seen in Table 4 below. This similarity is again based on the universal human experience with their own bodies. The human “heart” is considered to be a “center” of the body, the main organ on which the body as a whole depends. It comes then as no surprise that given such an understanding, this bodily organ has been mapped onto those elements of inanimate entities that are considered to be central either in the spatial or the functional sense.

**Table 3. Similarity between Chinese and Serbian based on the personification of Heart**

Conceptual metaphor	Chinese	Serbian
<b>PERSONIFICATION OF HEART</b>	虔心/qiánxīn/ 善心/shànxīn/ 闲心/xiánxīn/ 邪心/xiéxīn/ 心急/xīnjí/ 孝心/xiàoxīn/ 死心/sǐxīn/ 心惊胆战/xīnjīngdǎnzhàn/ 心疼/xīnténg/ 心醉/xīnzùi/	Biti zla srca Veselo srce kudelju prede Usamljena srca Koliko ti god srce želi Što oči ne vide, srce ne plače Srce boli Srce igra Ispitati svoje srce Poslušati svoje srce

**Table 4 Similarity between Chinese and Serbian based on the conceptual metaphor THE HEART AS A CENTRAL PART OF AN ENTITY**

Conceptual metaphor	Chinese	Serbian
<b>THE HEART AS A CENTRAL PART OF AN ENTITY</b>	核心/héxīn/ 街心/jiēxīn/ 圆心/yuánxīn/ 莲心/liánxīn/ 球心/qiúxīn/ 手心/shǒuxīn/ 书心/shūxīn/ 祖国的心脏/zǔguó de xīnzàng/ 灯心/dēngxīn/	srce Srbije srce stvari srce olovke

All the similarities shown above are results of the universal bodily experience of human beings regardless of their nationality, race or culture. Similar experiences render similar metaphoric transfers, and, therefore, similar surface language representations. But, languages in general, and Chinese and Serbian in particular, also differ even at a conceptual level due to the influence of specific cultural models to which fact I turn in the remainder of this section.

In his paper Yu has already conducted an analysis of the ways the concept of HEART is understood in Chinese and English, where he highlights that, unlike the Western man, who mostly sees HEART as the opposite of MIND, for the ordinary speaker of Chinese, such a dichotomy does not exist.<sup>16</sup> Are we then to suppose that Serbian, being genealogically closer to English than Chinese, shares this dichotomy? The answer is, yes, but only partially. First of all, even for a Western mind, it is not at all that easy to make a clear distinction between those abilities of human beings that should be demarcated as strictly “cognitive”, or strictly “emotional”, as these two realms of human mentality are closely related, and the borders between them are mostly fuzzy or vague. Nonetheless, we will easily mark those functions such as “thinking”, “calculating”, “planning” or “attention” as clearly mental abilities that cannot be confused with emotions. But what about “desire”, “loyalty”, “intimacy”, “partiality”, “piousness” or “consciousness”, which not only show our “psychological outlook” but also have certain “emotional basis”? Putting such questions aside, we can however say that one closer look at the concrete language data shows an immense amount of words, phrases and idioms in Chinese in which 心/xīn/(heart) clearly represents an “organ of thought”. In Serbian on the other hand it is far from being obvious, and although such examples exist, their number is extremely small (mostly confined to just few examples mentioned above). It is therefore acceptable to say that, similar to English, the majority of native speakers of Serbian will see “srce” (heart) as a locus of someone’s emotional life. This difference becomes very obvious in L2 teaching and that is why we need to explain why it should exist in the first place.

It has already been explained (Yu, 2009a:104) that the reason why 心/xīn/(heart) is seen as both the center of human mental as well as emotional life in Chinese lies in the several thousand years old beliefs of Chinese traditional medicine which sees heart as the most important organ that dominates all mental and psychological functions in the human body. The ancient theory of 五脏六腑/wǔ zàng liù fǔ/ (five major and six supplementary organs) puts heart as the “emperor” ruling over the four other most important organs, i.e. liver, lungs, spleen and kidneys, and their “subordinates” in the form of stomach, bladder, gallbladder, small intestine, big intestine and three visceral cavities. Obviously, the brain, as organ, does not appear in this theory, and as Yu (2009a:104) has pointed out, was in fact recognized much later, during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Even though ordinary native speakers of Chinese might not be

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<sup>16</sup> Yu, N. (2009a:105), according to Lin 2001:104.

very well acquainted with this theory, it has obviously left a mark on their way of understanding the human body, which is shown in the ways they talk about it. Serbian culture, on the other hand, as far as I am aware of it, nowadays is not at all influenced by its traditional medical theories (although some sort of “peoples’ medicine” must have existed in it too). “Glava” (head) has been traditionally understood as the place “where thinking occurs”, while heart was specialized in emotions. Few examples of expressions with “srce” (heart) denoting not only emotional but also mental abilities of heart, I believe, show that conceptualization similar to that of Chinese possibly existed in the past, but is now lost due to the influence of rationalism and modern medicine. In order to answer the question when and to what extent it existed requires a thorough research of Serbian traditional medical practice, something that I am unable to achieve for the present purposes.

Apart from the obvious difference in the scope of cognitive phenomena it denotes, 心/xīn/and “srce” differ also in the above mentioned spatial metaphors, i.e. while Chinese 心/xīn/is understood as a two-dimensional plane, such conceptualization has not been detected in Serbian.

## **5. Implementation of Similar and Different Ways of Conceptualization in L2 Teaching**

Experiments conducted by some linguists<sup>17</sup> showed that acquiring a foreign language vocabulary is much easier if guided by explanations of conceptual metaphors that lie underneath linguistic expressions. The acquired vocabulary is not only much broader, but the percentage of expressions memorized in such a way is also much higher than when traditional vocabulary teaching methods are used. In this sense, and according to the vast amount of evidence given above on conceptual similarities between Chinese and Serbian, I propose that the teaching of Chinese vocabulary as L2 vocabulary should be organized in a similar fashion. For that purpose tables 1-4 given above can be used as valuable accessories, but the teaching itself should not be limited to just those. I believe that thorough explanations should be given as to the sources of commonalities (much in the same fashion as they have been explained in this paper), as well as differences, with a special attention drawn to the explanation of cultural models as one major cause of differences. This

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<sup>17</sup> Li, F.Y. (2004). *Applied cognitive linguistics – Conceptual metaphor and image schemas in English learning*. Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe.

would provide the students with “conceptual fluency”<sup>18</sup> in the target language which they usually do not have. We also believe that during the teaching process, students should, for certain lexical items, be asked whether they can infer the meaning if they are given the metaphor that lies behind it. In this way teachers can actively include students in the process of teaching, and also, gather valuable information about the advantages as well as the shortcomings of this strategy, since only through positive interaction with students can this strategy be further developed.

Apart from this, I also agree with Prodanović-Stankić (2009:85) that dictionaries should be compiled not so much as in alphabetical order, but rather in “conceptual order”, and that all the items belonging to one cognitive mechanism (be it metaphor or metonymy) should be placed together. What I would like to highlight here is that, much more than the monolingual dictionary for which her conclusion was made, this strategy would be useful in bilingual dictionaries as well.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper I have given an overview of the most important conceptual metaphors which are applied in the process of conceptualization of 心/xīn/in Chinese and “srce” in Serbian and are responsible for their meaning extensions towards abstract domains of emotions and mental functions, as well as central parts of concrete objects. The contrastive analysis that I have conducted shows a high degree of similarity between these two languages on a conceptual level. The source of similarity is the basic human experience in space and with their own bodies, just as the sources of difference are specific cultural models that influence the human understanding of the world. I believe that conceptual similarities, if used in teaching Chinese as a second language, can significantly facilitate the acquisition of new words and phrases. Tables of lexical items based on similar and in some cases identical metaphoric mappings that are offered in this paper, as well as thorough explanations of what causes these similarities and differences, can be a very useful tool in L2 teaching.

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<sup>18</sup> Danesi (1993, 1995, 1999), Danesi and Mollica (1998), seen in Yu (2009c):299.

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