

Is Business Life a Journey or RAFTING ON THE RAGING RIVER RAPIDS? Lee Iacocca's Story

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Abstract

In today's business world, our activities have turned into RAFTING ON THE RAGING RIVER RAPIDS where the dynamic flow shapes our identity, aspirations and future, creating a cyclical pattern driven by our desire for success and fear of failure. To make abstract concepts like time, success, and failure more tangible, we translate them into "semantically grounded" concepts based on physical experiences reflected in conceptual metaphors. A business career, often conceptualized through the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, becomes a framework for analyzing Lee Iacocca's notable career at Ford and Chrysler in this paper. Since metaphorical mappings are rarely identical across languages, we investigated the English original metaphors and image schemas in Lee Iacocca's autobiography and their Croatian translations. The autobiography discusses success and failure, the ups and downs of business where UP always carries positive attributes, and DOWN represents negative trends and failure. Therefore, Iacocca uses image schemas such as Climbing UP to depict the start of his prosperous business career, being ON TOP of the World to describe his enormous success, and a FALL from MOUNT EVEREST to depict his failure.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is seen by many cognitive linguists as one of our most important windows into the workings of the mind. It is not the only window, but it is the source of a vast majority of the evidence we have about cognition (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 440; Chomsky 1975; Lakoff 1987; Pinker 2007). In order to have the *language window* wide open, as working linguists our major concern is what a Croatian student has to learn to *fully* master, for example, English for business and academic purposes.

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These days, when everybody is talking about the war in Ukraine or the Israeli crisis when the world seems to be coming to the point of no return, why do we expect our students of economics to read and analyze Lee Iacocca's Autobiography first published in 1984? Why have we chosen this book to analyze the primary metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, previously researched in the doctoral dissertation of Juretić (2006)?

The answer is simple. When the book was published, it was commented on by John Barkham Reviews: "Apparently the age of American industrial heroes in the computer age is not dead – at least not while there is a Lee Iacocca story like this one..." (Iacocca 1986). In this era of information revolution, when everything is expected to be just-in-time, what was true for Lee Iacocca almost four decades ago, is still true: he is more than just-in-time, he is evergreen. No wonder, his book published in 2007 is entitled "Where Have All the Leaders Gone?". The title itself, not to mention the content, inspired us to elaborate on a previous study of *Success* and *Failure* on the example of Lee Iacocca and analyze the impact it has on our students, i.e., future business people.

"Unless we can measure something, science won't concede it exists, which is why science refuses to deal with such 'nonthings' as the emotions, the mind, the soul, or the spirit." (Pert, 1997: 30). Similarly, linguistics did not deeply explore meaning until cognitive linguistics emerged on the scene with a wider and deeper perspective by including cognitive and cultural models in their research. Cognitive linguistics approaches *meaning* experientially rather than objectively (Lakoff 1982, 1987; Johnson 1987). Whereas in objectivist approaches *meaning* is defined in abstraction from the nature and experience of human beings, in experientialist approaches meaning is embodied (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 197ff; Lakoff 1987: 12ff). Nowadays, while management gurus are speaking of mission and purpose, the concept of *Success* in business is reduced to maximization of profit. Still, if your company does not *knock spots off* your competitors, it relates to the concept of *Failure*. The students might learn the definitions of *mission* and *purpose*, but their meaning, in most cases, is defined in abstraction from the nature and experience of human beings. Thus, the starting point of our research is our main hypothesis: If political and economic ideologies are based on metaphors, then, students need embodiment of meaning that can be found in authentic but primarily meaningful texts where *mission* and *purpose* are truly embodied and grounded in human experience.

In this paper, we describe the process, main objectives and results of our action research based on the key findings of cognitive linguistics and Lee Iacocca's books *An Autobiography* (1986), *and Where Have All the Leaders Gone?* (2007). The former is based on a conceptual metaphor that forms the consciousness of individuals, social groups and nations, and the latter is based on Lee Iacocca's experientialist approach to business career and leadership. In order to conduct our research, out of 100 students in the class, 20 % were involved in action research on Lee Iacocca's life and business career at Ford Motor Company and the Chrysler Corporation. Later on, they presented the collected data to the other 80 % who were active listeners participating in evaluation and debate.

The three main objectives of this paper are to review the concept of action research i.e., learning-by-doing, to review the concept of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY contrasted to its modern elaboration of RAFTING ON THE RAGING RIVER RAPIDS, and

to propose a specific application of pre-conceptual image schemata and the most common metaphors in the teaching of international business concepts. The paper concludes with recommendations for further development of this teaching methodology.

2. Cognitive and Cultural Model Lido Anthony “Lee” Iacocca in the context of “Those Americans”

We have chosen action research primarily because it is “practice to theory rather than theory to practice” (Burns 2003) as also proposed by Lakoff and Johnson in their book *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999). Therefore, in this paper, we have reduced the meaning of a cognitive and cultural model (two-in-one) to a cognitive structure that captures relevant material within the context of what our students used to know and what they have learned about Lee Iacocca’s life and business career:

- A son of Italian immigrants, Princeton University; car industry;
- Started his career at Ford Motor Company, moved through the ranks to become President of the Ford Division in 1964, eventually became the president of the Ford Motor Company, but clashed with Henry Ford II and ultimately, was fired by Ford in 1978, despite the company posting \$2 billion profit for the year. (Marketing campaign “56 for 56”, Ford Mustang, Ford Fiesta, Lincoln Continental Mark III, Mercury Cougar and Mercury Marquis);
- Known for the revival of the Chrysler Corporation, being the President and CEO from 1978 until his retirement in 1992. At the time he joined Chrysler, it was “a sinking ship”, on the verge of bankruptcy, when he decided to work for 1 dollar during the period of rebuilding the company (K car and minivan, Mini-Max project, the front-wheel drive Omni and Horizon);
- Appointed by Ronald Reagan to head the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation to raise funds for the renovation and preservation of the Statue of Liberty.

We raised the questions for discussion to motivate our students to become aware of who “those Americans” are, far too often blamed for all the *troubled waters* in Europe and the world: How important are Lee Iacocca, a son of Italian immigrants, the Statue of Liberty, the Ford Motor Company and the Chrysler Corporation in the context of “American nation” and “American Dream”?

For this purpose, we chose two quotations from *An Autobiography* (1986). The first deals with the “American nation” concept of who “those Americans” are.

Except for the American Indians, we’re all immigrants or the children of immigrants. So that’s important that we go beyond the stereotypes we’ve lived with. The Italians brought more to this country than pizza and spaghetti. The Jews brought more than Bagels. The Germans brought more than knockwurst and beer. All the ethnic groups brought their culture, their music, their literature. They melted into the American pot – but somehow they also managed to keep their cultures intact as each rubbed off on the other. (Iacocca 1986: 356)

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The second quotation is dealing with the American symbols – the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. What do they stand for? They are closely connected with the “American Dream” (pursuit of happiness, freedom and road to success):

Those seventeen million people who passed through the gates of Ellis Island had a lot of babies. They gave America a hundred million descendants, which means that close to half of our country has its roots there. And roots are what this country is yearning for. People are aching to return to basic values. Hard work, the dignity of labor, the fight for what's right - these are the things that Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island stand for. (Iacocca 1986: 355-356)

Those elements in the quotations that we particularly pointed out during the discussion are underlined. We do not have space in this paper to analyze students' discussion, but the conclusion was: If we are aware that American immigrants had to plough a lot of energy into hard work and struggle to survive, then, it is natural that their descendants inherited a more proactive approach to life and business than anywhere else. As Americans are known as a “nation on wheels”, the auto industry plays one of the leading roles. Therefore, such a business environment is the right place to give birth to Lee Iacocca, one of the most famous businessmen in the world. He is an American hero and the embodiment of the American Dream.

Instead of theorizing on Cognitive and Cultural models, we give a few more examples to support their meaning (the USA vs. Croatia). It is interesting to point out that some magnates in the USA followed Lee Iacocca's example of A One-Dollar Man per Year. Conversely, in Croatia, quite a few businessmen might have heard about Lee Iacocca, but, as to our knowledge, very few of our leading people, either in politics or business, are ready to turn into "A One-Dollar Man per Year" to boost workers' morale to get out of crises.

Another cultural model behind the mirror is that the USA's democracy has turned into a billionaire democracy:

With the erosion of the middle class in recent decades, people who judged themselves in terms of worldly success have sustained a perceived loss of worth. The promise of the middle-class dream has largely evaporated, to the distress and deep anger of many. (Maté 2022: 293)

When the *Quality of Working Life*, *Social Responsibility*, and *Success* are reduced to being measured only by *Profit*, the consequences of multi-billion corporations' addiction to *Power and Profit* "begin to shade toward addictions that go well beyond individual habits into the realm of collective fixation. (...) But even people perched atop the economic pyramid can experience a devaluation of self, for the simple reason that materialistic values run counter to the need for meaning, for purpose beyond self-serving endeavors" (Maté 2022: 292-293).

In a small country like Croatia, which has a population only half the size of New York City, both its leaders and ordinary citizens can only dream of the uncontrollable multi-billion-dollar corporations in the USA. With a GDP of approximately \$82 billion (HNB, 2023), Croatia cannot compete with the immense wealth of the world's richest individuals; for instance, Elon Musk boasts a staggering net worth of \$195 billion (LaFranco et al., 2024). Despite facing limited resources, the people of Croatia are making significant contributions to humanitarian

and charitable work. Their dedication to helping those in need reflects a strong spirit of generosity and community resilience, highlighting the unique strength of their society.

3. Conventional metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY and time metaphors on the example of Lee Iacocca contrasted to nowadays' constant acceleration of time where the Journey path turns into RAFTING ON THE RAGING RIVER RAPIDS

After sketching the real-world context of the American business environment, compared to the Croatian one, we can continue to a conventional metaphor *LIFE IS A JOURNEY*. A conventional metaphor is a metaphor in which one concept is understood and expressed in terms of another structured, sharply defined concept. It is called “conventional” because it is commonly used in everyday language to give structure to some portion of that culture’s conceptual system (see Lakoff 1987, Johnson 1987, Kovecses 1986, Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

In this metaphor, a person is a traveller, purposes and goals are destinations, difficulties are obstacles, achievements and some ‘special’ events are landmarks, while choices are crossroads.

As you go through life, there are thousands of little forks in the road, and there are a few really big forks – those moments of reckoning, moments of truth. (Iacocca 1986)

Human perception and understanding of life and death are intertwined with the perception of time and space. Therefore, a conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY cannot be imagined without time and time metaphors: time as a container; time as a precious commodity and space-time metaphors. The beginning of our journey – birth; a limited time that each of us has been given - a container with events occurring within that *span of time*, and the end of our journey - death. The *Moving Observer* metaphor arises spontaneously as part of the cognitive unconscious in conceptual systems around the world because the motion situations that give rise to that metaphor occur every day in virtually everyone’s experience. Events *Occur in Time* (container) and *at Times* (location) (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 153). In Iacocca’s flashback of his lifetime, his *span of time* is considerable, and ‘special’ events serve as landmarks. *The Great Depression, World War II, The Korean War*, are temporal locations that he had *gone through* on his LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor:

In my lifetime I’ve had the privilege of *living through* some of America’s greatest moments, I’ve also experienced some of our worst crises – the Great Depression, World War II, The Korean War, the Kennedy assassination, The Vietnam War, the 1970s crisis, and the struggles of recent years culminating with 9/11. (Iacocca 2007: 5)

Thus, as we cannot imagine life without time, we cannot imagine time without motion and space, “without a landscape you move over and without objects or substances moving toward you or away from you” (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 166). In the space-time metaphor, according to the *Moving Observer* metaphor, times are locations in space. At any present time, the

observer is moving ahead toward locations that are future times. In the source domain of the metaphor, any locations you are moving toward must exist before you get to them (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 159). In cognitive linguistics this can be explained with the *Understanding Is Seeing* metaphor. An entailment of space-time metaphor, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 159), is that the past and the future exist at the present, which is supported with their example: We can *see* far enough into the future to *see* that it looks bleak.

In leadership theories, it is called *vision*.

The last fifty years can *give you a vision* for the next fifty. What the last fifty *taught* us was the difference between right and wrong, that only hard work succeeds, that there are no free lunches, that you've got to be productive. Those are the values that made this country great (Iacocca 1986: 350).

In *Lifecycle* and *Business Cycle* metaphors, the conventional linear conceptualization of *Time* shifts to *TIME IS A CIRCLE*, as the cyclical exchange of day and night, so are some events: birth and death, economic boom, recession, crises, etc. It is an additional support of Lakoff and Johnson's explanation that future locations must exist, as must the past locations that we have already gone over, i.e., the past and the future exist in the present. We can conclude that a series of events and space metaphors serve as signposts on our *Journey* path. Therefore, we subconsciously and automatically experience *Time* as a physical experience of our body and mind. Whether experienced as the cyclical exchange of events or linear conceptualization in *LIFE IS A JOURNEY*, we take our time to do things. Compared to the twentieth century, when the speed was high, like flying on a plane, we got used to the steady speed of the flight except for the periodical taking off or landing, the twenty-first century marks the constant acceleration of time as if taking off and landing constantly. Global digitalization and perpetual connectivity have accelerated the flow of information to all corners of the world. The frantic pace of modern technological advances caused the feeling of time compression. Instead of *having a good time*, a *Journey* path becomes the metaphor of *RAFTING ON THE RAGING RIVER RAPIDS with compressed events without intervals*.

4. Pre-conceptual Image Schemata in PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY Metaphor

The central point of Lakoff and Johnson's experiential approach is the human act of cognition. Our experience is made possible and structured by pre-conceptual structures. They divide them into basic-level structures and kinesthetic image schematic structures. Basic-level structures arise as a result of our capacities for gestalt perception, mental imagery and sensory-motor movement and manifest as basic-level categories and prototypes (*tree, bird, stone, water* stand for all types of trees, birds, stones, waters etc.). However, it is the kinesthetic image schematic structure (Lakoff 1987: 267; Johnson 1987: 208 ff; Santibáñez 2002) that gives rise to abstract concepts through metaphorical projections from physical to abstract domains analyzed in this paper. Among these schemata are *containers, paths, links, forces, balance* as well as such orientations as *up-down, front-back, part-whole, centre-periphery*, etc. Krzeszowski (1993: 310) claims that all pre-conceptual image schemata proposed by Johnson and Lakoff must

incorporate an additional parameter which he called *plus-minus* that serves as a vector built into each image schema.

The *source-path-goal* schema is connected with the concept of oriented motion, i.e. changing position in space from an initial place called *source* to a destination called *goal* along a *path*. The schema underlies the abstract metaphorical positively valued concept of *purpose*, which is grounded in our experience of reaching a goal. The schema also involves a number of implications which have axiological relevance (Krzyszowski 1993: 310).

For example, a PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor is directly projected from the *source-path-goal* schema as presented in the following diagram:

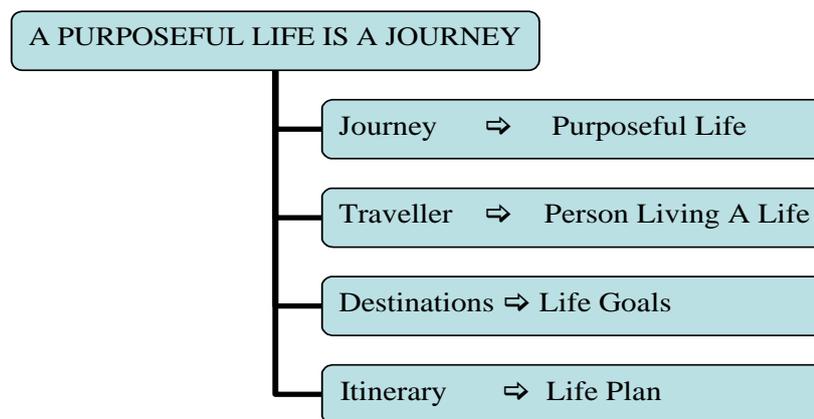


Diagram 1: A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY. (Source: adapted from Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 62))

have a purpose in life; the primary metaphors *purposes* are *destinations* and *action is motion* and a long trip to a *series of destinations* is a *journey* (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 62). Since our *life is a journey*, it requires constant course directions to reach our goals (*life goals* are *destinations*), a lot of planning (*a life plan* is an *itinerary*), anticipating obstacles (*difficulties* are *obstacles*, *obstacles* are *burdens*) and so on.

As oriented motion is a necessary condition for reaching a goal, purposeful motion is positively valued, while motionlessness is usually described in negative terms. *Being out of action*, *without purpose in life* can be supported by the saying that most men's tombstones should read: Died at 25 and buried at 75, a quote often credited to Benjamin Franklin.

On the other hand, the physical experience of the image schema *RAFTING ON THE RAGING RIVER RAPIDS* may have the same negative effect as being motionless with its frantic movements and activities to stay in control. *Rafting* itself implies excitement and balance between holding on and avoiding to fall into the raging waters and can be positive as a short-lived experience. However, without intervals for slowing down and resting, the risk of falling into the river and drowning becomes imminent.

While a repetitive onomatopoeic sound *R* in *Rafting on the Raging River Rapids* pinpoints a noisy environment of roaring waters rolling endlessly, this metaphor symbolizes *constantly* coping with rapid-paced changes, increasing work pressures, multitasking, frantic activities, severe competition, news updates, and status-driven inner values. It also includes spending free

time surrounded by overwhelming noise from television screens, loudspeakers at social gatherings, movie theaters, celebrities, cell phones, tablets, and other entertainment sources. The paradox is that the more sophisticated information technology we have, the more we lose the ability to have a meaningful conversation and listen to each other in a noisy environment, being lost in thoughts, dislocated from ourselves, and distracted by the overflow of information. Having no time to waste, we save to buy the latest '*time-saving*' devices, only to use them to '*kill*' time. Awareness of the present moment has become something to fear quoted from *The Myth of Normal*:

Alienation is inevitable when our inner sense of value becomes status-driven, hinging on externally imposed standards of competitive achievement and acquisition, and a highly conditional acceptance—I should say “acceptability”—in others’ eyes. (Maté 2022:293)

5. Why is Success UP and Failure DOWN?

It is out of pre-conceptual image schemata that more complex cognitive models of reality are constructed, most commonly reinforced by corresponding metaphorical projections. Orientational metaphors are metaphors in which concepts are spatially related to each other, as in the following ways: *up-down*, *in-out*, *front-back*, *on-off*, *deep-shallow*, and *central-peripheral*. For the most part, these are the metaphors where the source domains are basic human experiences such as: *more*, *powerful*, *successful*, *healthy*, *happy*, *alive* and their meaning is UP, while *less*, *helpless*, and *unsuccessful*, *ill*, *miserable*, *dead* is DOWN. Examples from Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 15) state: “I’m feeling *up*. That *boosted* my spirits. Thinking about him always gives me a *lift*. I’m feeling *down*. I *fell into* a depression.” But, why is UP positive and DOWN negative? The *up* orientation is directly related to the structure and functioning of the human body, which is directed upwards, when we are healthy, happy, successful, powerful and, of course, alive. Even a smile as an expression of happiness, joy or politeness involves *upward* curving of the mouth.

The *down* orientation is charged with negative values because our body is directed downwards when we are ill, unhappy, depressed, unsuccessful, miserable or dying. Our thumb pointing *downwards* means that things have assumed a bad turn; when our head sinks down, we are sad, we feel defeated and miserable. Grimaces and crying as expressions of pain and sorrow involve *downward* curving of the lips (Krzyszowski 1993: 320).

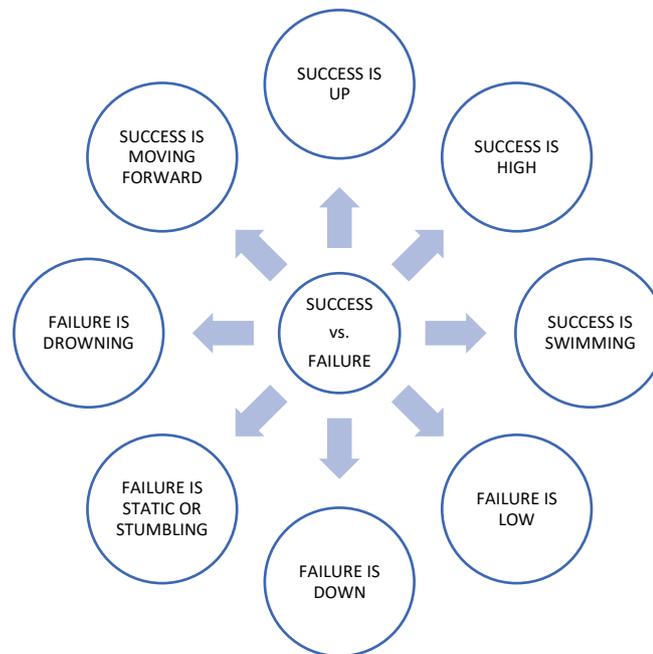


Diagram 2: *Success and Failure Metaphors* (Source: Authors)

Different people experience success differently depending on their expectations, lifestyle, profession, cultural background etc. However, what is universal in all cultures for the concept of *Success* is that it is UP: He *climbed his way to the top*. She worked *her way up from the bottom*. Conversely, the concept of *Failure* is connected with the *down* orientation. However, what is a failure for some people, may still be considered being quite successful for others, depending again on their expectations, lifestyle, profession or cultural background.

One of the central images of achievement is the ladder – *climbing the career ladder*. The top of the ladder represents the ultimate success, while the bottom is for those who have failed or are just starting out or starting again, as a prominent economist put it: Failure is not *falling down* but *staying down* (Samuelson 2010).

In contrast, the thrill of *river rafting* is vastly different from *climbing the career ladder*. *Climbing a career ladder* takes time, while in the twenty-first century, the "Not-Having-a-Time" syndrome, with all its time-saving devices, involves the ultimate rush of adrenaline, forcefully moving UP and DOWN the raging river of life. If the human nervous system and brain are constantly highly engaged without a break, we risk breaking down, collapsing, experiencing burnout, or feeling drowned. Many of today's American billionaires, such as Bill Gates and Elon Musk, used to and still work over 18 hours per day. Similarly, young Croatian business highfliers, entrepreneurs, and those working abroad appear to be working tirelessly, *rafting on river rapids*. However, in contrast to the Protestant Work Ethic intertwined into the American attitude of achieving a prosperous life by being married to one's work or company, when you walk along Croatian cities on workdays, it looks like a prolonged public holiday as if you were floating on the calm sea, a "bonanza."

6. Success and Failure Metaphors in Lee Iacocca's Autobiography

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In order to conduct our research, out of 100 students in the class, 20 % were involved in action research on Lee Iacocca's life and business career at Ford Motor Company and the Chrysler Corporation and later on as presenters of the collected data. The other 80 % were active listeners participating in evaluation and debate. First of all, they were divided into two groups. One group (10 students) had the task to read the book *An Autobiography* (Iacocca 1986), to analyze his life and business career and to find expressions that best describe his success and failure. The other group (10 students) was supposed to read an article that was published in 2002 by Walter Gmelch carrying the same title as Iacocca's book *Where Have All the Leaders Gone?*

There is a long list of complex *Success* and *Failure* metaphors and other conceptual metaphors in economics discourse, previously analyzed and studied (Juretić 2006), and quite a number of examples in the book *An Autobiography* that students collected and analyzed. As we propose *practice to theory*, our students were given just a few notions of primary metaphors and pre-conceptual bodily experiences that would increase their awareness of how languages function, both universally and specifically. The purpose was to give students an opportunity while being involved in the research, presentation, active listening and debate, to experience the importance and *meaning of true-to-your-word* Language and Communication in a real-world business environment. That is the reason why we have focused in this paper on just a few examples of *Success* and *Failure* metaphors in the original text and their translations by Hodanić (1987), shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Metaphors from the English original and Croatian translation in Lee Iacocca's Autobiography

No.	METAPHOR	ORIGINAL	TRANSLATION	ENGLISH	CROATIAN
1.	<i>Success is UP</i>	I worked my way up to the presidency of the Ford Motor Company.	<i>vlastitim radom sam se uzdigao do predsjednika tvrtke Ford Motor</i>	worked my way up to	verb <uzdići se> <i>rise, go up, from the bottom up to</i>
2.	<i>Success is UP</i>	I was on the top of the world.	Čitav svijet je bio moj.	spatial location <i>on the top</i>	concept of possession <moj>
3.	<i>Failure is DOWN</i>	Now you're going to find out what it feels like to get kicked off Mt. Everest!	(...) Sad ćeš otkriti kako se čovjek osjeća kad padne s Mt. Everesta.	<i>get kicked off</i> (intentional)	<pasti> <i>fall down</i> (non-intentional)
4.	<i>Failure meaning away from the center, periphery</i>	For me, this was Siberia. It was an exile to the farthest corner of the kingdom.	<i>to je bio Sibir. (...) izgnanstvo u najudaljeniji kutak kraljevstva.</i>	Siberia = <i>in the middle of nowhere, the furthest corner from the center</i>	corresponds with English
5.	<i>Failure meaning feeling down, miserable...</i>	I did start to drink a little more – and shake a lot more. I really felt I was coming apart at the seams.	Počeo sam malo više piti – i mnogo više sam se tresao. Stvarno sam osjećao kako	physical experience of Failure = <i>fall into depression</i>	corresponds with English

			<i>mi popuštaju šavovi.</i>	<i>/ill/apart, break down, drop dead: go through hell, fall on bad times, sink low</i>	
6.	<i>The Failure Paradox</i>	In times of <i>great stress and adversity</i> , it's always best to keep busy, <i>to plow your anger and energy into something positive...</i> There are times when things seem so bad that <i>you've got to grab your fate by the shoulders and shake it.</i>	U razdobljima velike napetosti i nedaća uvijek je najbolje baviti se nečim, <i>upotrijebiti bijes i energiju za nešto pozitivno...</i> Ponekad stvari izgledaju tako loše da morate <i>sudbinu zgrabiti za ramena i protresti.</i>	Proactive approach: viewing failure as a necessary part of the journey to success: <i>to plow into sth. positive (intentional), plow into = to invest (money, profits.)</i> Personification of Fate = fate as a person	verb <upotrijebiti> (to use) corresponds with English

Examples 1 and 2 from Table 1 are based on the *Success is UP* metaphor. The English original *worked my way up to* is very similar to the Croatian translation of the verb <uzdići se>, which means *rise, go up, from the bottom up to*. In the second example, we have the English spatial location *on the top*, whereas the Croatian translation shows the concept of possession <moj>. The physical experience of *Success* means to be in high spirits, fit, healthy, active, dynamic, enthusiastic, full of energy, bursting with energy: *be in seventh heaven, on cloud nine...*

The metaphors connected with *Failure* are found in examples 3, 4 and 5 in Table 1. Example 3 meaning *Failure* is DOWN shows how differently *Failure* is conceptualized in English and Croatian, where the English: *get kicked off* is an intentional action, whereas the Croatian translation: <pasti> *to fall down* is a non-intentional action.

Meanwhile, the concept of *Failure* meaning *away from the center, periphery* is found in example 4. The English original corresponds with the Croatian translation. The metaphor *Siberia* stands for *in the middle of nowhere, the furthest corner from the center*. It is directly based on the *centre-periphery* schema. As an example of a positively loaded schema we can find that he is *in the spotlight*, he occupies *the central position* in the company, whereas as negatively loaded schemas the following can be perceived: *peripheral/ marginal position, social margins*.

In example 5 there is also the physical experience of *Failure* meaning *feeling down, miserable, inactive, static, fall into depression, fall ill, fall apart, breaking down, dropping dead: go through hell, fall on bad times, sink low, sink into the gutter*. Once again, the Croatian translation corresponds to the English original.

Example 6 leads us to the most important difference between the two cultural models based on the business environment: The Failure Paradox. Thomas A. Edison's statement (Hendry, 2013): "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work" highlights the American proactive attitude to inventions and business environment as those who quit never win. Failure is not the opposite of success but a crucial part for achieving it: *you plough /plow your anger/ mishap and energy into something positive; you grab your fate by the shoulder and shake it.* The Croatian mentality, though there are exceptions among individuals, tends to be reactive, which often leads to conformity and groupthink. Many still exhibit remnants of the so-called "ex-Socialism with a Human Face". This includes a tendency to wait for favourable circumstances to arise, to blame fate for their unhappiness, and to fear failure. As a result, there is a prevalent avoidance of risk and disappointment. The Croatian business environment penalizes failure instead of viewing it as a learning opportunity, which fosters a culture of risk aversion that impedes innovation and growth. This issue can be illustrated through the term COMPETITION, which has two translations in Croatian:

- In a business context, it is translated as KONKURENCIJA, thus students often mistakenly translate it from Croatian to English as "concurrence." The definition provided in the Dictionary of Foreign Words (Klaić, 1984: 726) is indicative of this misunderstanding: it defines competition (from the Latin "concurrere") as the mutual struggle among capitalists for higher profits, markets, and sources of raw materials, highlighting the intensifying contradictions within capitalism. Given that business in the socialist era was not market-oriented, competition in capitalism was often viewed negatively and private enterprises received little support.
- In a sports context, the term COMPETITION is translated literally to NATJECANJE, which carries a highly positive connotation. This is evident in championships for either individual sports, such as tennis and skiing, or team sports like football and handball. The remarkable achievements of sportsmen are celebrated and praised by the entire nation. Since sports terminology is increasingly used in the business world, it would be beneficial for Croats to apply their competitive spirit from sports to the business arena.

Students have come to understand how we react to certain situations on a subconscious level dictating our cognition within a cognitive model shaped by the cultural model we belong to. Thus, merely knowing the words is insufficient for effective translation. The translation goes beyond just the lexical or semantic aspects; it also requires interpretation and a wider perspective and cultural background.

7. In a way of conclusion: Where have all the leaders gone?

The objectives of this research are to review the concept of action research – learning by doing, to explore the conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A JOURNEY, and propose a specific application of pre-conceptual image schemata along with the most common metaphors in the teaching of international business concepts.

We all have pre-conceptual bodily experiences of being happy, healthy, active, dynamic, and successful with *up* orientation that is positively charged and being ill, without energy, helpless, miserable, depressed, inactive, static, and unsuccessful with *down* orientation is negatively

charged. Orientational metaphors, as well as other primary metaphors, where the source domains are basic human experience, in some cases, are universal and in others, specific to a language and culture. In both languages *up/ down, in/ out, center/ periphery* concepts are, as expected, similar. Some metaphors have a direct equivalent, some similar, some parallel (with different metaphorical mapping and others have no figurative equivalents). But even apparent equivalents may have slight differences in meaning and usage. To enhance their understanding of how language operates - both in the language they are learning and in their first language - students were introduced to basic concepts of primary metaphors and pre-conceptual bodily experiences. They participated in the research, presentations, active listening, and debates. Their level of engagement and motivation was high, largely due to the thought-provoking style of Iacocca's writing. Notably, both texts - from 1984 and 2007 - appear equally relevant and contemporary.

The concept of just-in-time learning is prominent in Lee Iacocca's book *Where Have All the Leaders Gone?* (2007). One of the key questions he raises is: Where are the curious, creative communicators? Where are the individuals with character, courage, conviction, competence, and common sense? As educators of Language and Communication, we pose a counter-question: Do we not have a responsibility to teach future economists and business professionals how to become curious, creative communicators who understand the importance of being aware of the meaning *true to your word*? We believe this is achievable if we provide them with authentic and *meaningful* texts that go beyond a mere set of rules and tips on a set subject. By focusing on the conceptual metaphor *A Purposeful Life Is A Journey*, we argue that Lee Iacocca is the true embodiment of its meaning: *He Is A Philosophy in the Flesh*.

Each question that he raised in *Where Have All the Leaders gone?* motivated them for a feverish discussion and they immediately learned the difference and the meaning of *proactive vs. reactive*. Here we shall mention just a few to support the idea of developing critical thinking and what a true leader does in times of crisis in the real business environment:

- Name me a leader who has a better idea for homeland security than making us take off our shoes in airports and throw away our shampoo? We've spent billions of dollars building a huge new bureaucracy, and *all we do is react to things when they happen*.
- Name me one leader who emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic (...) Everyone's *hunkering down, fingers crossed hoping it doesn't happen again*. Now, that's just crazy. *Deal with it. Make a plan. Figure out what you are going to do next time*.
- Name me a government leader who can articulate a plan for paying down the debt, or solving the energy crisis, or managing the health care problem. *The silence is deafening*. But these are the crises that are *eating away our country and milking the middle class dry*.
- (...) What is everybody so *afraid of*? – That a bobblehead on Fox News will call them a name? Give me a break. Why don't you guys *show some spine* for a change.

To elaborate all the ideas mentioned during their discussion, the time and space are too limited. The point is that they have used all their communication and presentation skills, as being highly motivated to be engaged in the discussion. It has given us an insight into our students' capacities, behaviors, beliefs and motivation. It has revealed their team spirit, and this topical issue can open up new questions that would lead to new directions of research and acquiring further language competence.

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For future research the question still remains: What is the purpose of teaching business students about metaphorical mappings and metaphors? We believe it can be summed up by the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." In our experience, each metaphor acts as a picture, condensing complex ideas into a single expression, conveying meaning and essence more effectively than verbal descriptions.

Starting with the fact that conceptual metaphors are 'principle vehicles for understanding' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) which reflect how we function in our physical and business environment on subconscious level, the point is to raise awareness how cultural models as a framework influence the shaping of our knowledge, development and cognitive models within a specific cultural context. Let's sum up with the image schema of HEDGING A RISK within the context of the Failure Paradox. In the English language <a hedge > means a dense row of shrubs or low trees, or bushes forming a boundary serving as a live fence around a house. Thus "hedging a risk" renders a picture of a risk-taker being in control of a risk. A risk is within the boundary, we can trim, shape, and water it: in a word, we supervise it. We are in control! It indicates that in the American cognitive model proactivity of taking a risk and embracing a failure as a part of the journey to success is an opportunity to learn and develop. On the other hand, in the Croatian language translation of <hedging a risk> as <zaštititi se od rizika > proves a reactive attitude of Croats toward risk-taking. We protect ourselves from the risk. We are not in control and fear of risk is closely connected with the fear of failure which is subconsciously conceptualized as fatal, final and should be penalized.

Each cultural model has its advantages and drawbacks, and raising awareness can help bring the balance. While the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY emphasizes quality time, the constant RAFTING ON THE RAGING RIVER RAPIDS of modern life can have negative consequences on the human mind and body. The latest theories in Time Management can be summarized as follows: *Go with the flow, raft one rapid at a time*, take breaks to slow down and rest, isolate yourself from the noisy environment, and filter the flood of information to better understand yourself and your true goals and purpose. A combination of American proactive progressiveness and the Croatian "take-your-time" mentality can provide balance to the frantic pace of contemporary life. Economic discourse is filled with metaphors from various domains, such as the stock market (often likened to an animal farm), money matters, strategic management (using sports metaphors), time management, and management theories. We propose that all aspects of language should be studied. In this regard, we agree with Lakoff and Johnson (1999) that learning a language must include understanding the meanings of words and constructions, as well as the pragmatic, semantic, and discourse constraints on their use. This should also cover classifier systems, politeness systems, evidential systems, spatial-relation systems, aspectual systems, processing differences, and attention to various distinctions, to truly open the windows of language and the workings of our minds.

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