

# Abstract

The opening of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is abundant in metaphors: river stones transfigured into prehistoric eggs, Melquiades' sparrow hands, the gypsy tent planted on the outskirts of the village. However, metaphors not only exist in literature: they have made language their home and it subsists on them. The common, everyday language is brimming with metaphors: stones, knives, and bullets are avoided, and so are *insidious questions*, one defends that which gives shelter, for example, a strategic square or *a point of view*. Of course, some metaphors have nested so deep into the language that they are barely noticed. Probably a native Spanish speaker takes it literally when a tent is planted in a place, because tents, camps, and bunks really are *planted*.

Before a new reality, the human being metaphorize. The novelty is covered with a varnish of familiarity that dissipates the disturbing vision of the unusual. In this sense, the metaphor is a universal epistemological strategy. However, though every human being is a metaphorizer, each culture favors some cognitive domains, to the detriment of other cognitive domains that may be preferred by a different culture. They integrate a conceptual system of language, from which they derive their metaphors, such selected cognitive domains.

Among culturally and linguistically distant languages such as Spanish and Mandarin, conceptual differences seem evident and worthy of study. For teachers of Spanish as a Foreign Language to Chinese speaking students, knowing the conceptual differences and similarities between the language that he teaches and the native language of his students may turn out useful.