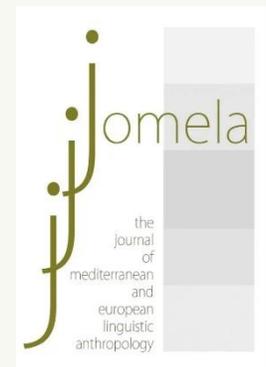


# Cinematography « sans frontières »: International Cultural Metaphors and Commonplaces in Romanian Cinema Terminology

Mediterranean and European  
Linguistic Anthropology  
2021, Vol. 3(2): 14-29  
(c) JOMELA 2021  
Article reuse guidelines  
[jomela.pub/permissions](http://jomela.pub/permissions)  
DOI: [10.47298/jomela/v3-i2-a2](https://doi.org/10.47298/jomela/v3-i2-a2)  
[jomela.pub](http://jomela.pub)



Melania Roibu  
University of Bucharest, Romania

Helga-Iuliana Bogdan Oprea  
University of Bucharest, Romania

## Abstract

The paper addresses cultural conceptions and framings of events as they are reflected in the cinematic lexicon. The paper has three main goals, which are followed throughout the paper: 1) to emphasize that the cinema-related vocabulary involves the same concepts when it denotes extra-linguistic realities specific to the world of film; 2) to illustrate the shift from culture specific, to cross-cultural events (and vice versa), and 3) to evidence that the cinematic lexicon metonymically reflects these complementary moves (globalisation / localisation).

In order to achieve these goals, we adopt the analytical tools of cultural linguistics, with an emphasis on cultural metaphors. We investigate the relationship between cultural conceptualisations and commonplaces, and reach the conclusion that patterns of thought trigger patterns of language, many of which are cross-cultural, as suggested by the fact that the structures used to convey such shared blocks of knowledge in different languages display either formal resemblance or shared semantic content. Another conclusion is that the cultural

conceptualisations within the cinematic field are closely connected with the Oscar Awards Ceremony, which has become a landmark in the film industry, and which is often replicated in other international film galas, exceeding the borders of a given culture as a result of multiculturalism and globalisation. Here, 'localisation' (the shift from cross-cultural to culture-specific events) is also possible. Yet, it should be regarded as an exception, since cinema illustrates interferences and identities which, from a cultural perspective, are common to geographic spaces that are located at significant distance from one another.

**Keywords:** *Cinematic lexicon, commonplace, cultural categories, cultural metaphors, cultural schemas*

---

## Introductory Remarks

Romanian cinema has given birth to a proliferation of work within Romania over the past century, and to a substantial number of prominent and highly respected filmmakers and directors.

In line with cinema trends globally, cinema had traversed its hey day in Romania, but has of late declined owing to new technologies and social designs. In 1965, the Arhiva Națională de Filme, that is, the National Film Archive of Romania has directed a tremendous amount of resource into salvaging the heritage of the Romanian film industry. Concurrently, the Archive has sought to develop and publish much non film work, such as archives and books describing the history of the industry in Romania. Irrespective of its fluctuations, Romanian cinema again experienced an explosion in quality and quantity, in the early 21st century, with the appearance of the film '4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days,' directed by Cristian Mungiu, which achieved the Cannes 2007 Palme d'Or award.

In the current paper, we address the issues connected to cultural conceptualisations of events as they are reflected in the Romanian cinematic field. To this, we draw on the use of the analytical tools within the domain of cultural linguistics, with a particular emphasis on cultural metaphors. We account for this choice of framework by noting that cultural linguistics has multidisciplinary origins and has consequently come to integrate cognitive linguistics with three traditions that are manifest in linguistic anthropology, i.e., Boasian linguistics, ethnosemantics, and the ethnography of speaking. Moreover, cultural linguistics also shares some features with cognitive anthropology, one of which is the interest in exploring cultural models associated with the use of language. The paper has a threefold purpose, to 1) indicate that cinematic vocabulary employs the same concepts as those appearing as extra-linguistic realities associated with the world of film; 2) illustrate the symbiotic relationship between events and states that are initially culture specific, but tend to become cross-cultural (and vice-

versa); 3) evidence that the cinematic lexicon mirrors this complementarity quite faithfully.

The analysis within this paper has resulted in a five-section organisation of the paper. The first section attends to the general presentation of the structure and of the main purposes of the study, followed by a theoretical overview of cultural linguistics as an umbrella term, along with the main concepts employed in this multidisciplinary area of research, namely, cultural metaphors, cultural schemas, and cultural categories. In the third section, we discuss the notion that patterns of thought and embodiment trigger patterns of language, in that, the structures used to convey such shared blocks of knowledge may display either formal resemblance or shared semantic content, though diverse in the emic shapings of all knowledge and language. In the fourth section, we discuss several case studies, and hence examples of cultural metaphors (and metonymies), cultural schemas, and cultural categories. In the final section, we intend to draw conclusions on the material analysed.

## Brief on Romanian Cinema

Romanian cinema dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, from which time, Romania has developed, directed and produced renowned filmmakers who have significantly given to the world of cinema. Despite the ongoing challenges, such as censorship during the communist era and financial discrepancies, Romanian cinema has flourish and has concurrently gained international recognition, particularly in recent years.

Of the most notable filmmakers in Romanian New Wave cinema, Cristian Mungiu was awarded the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2007 for the film "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days," depicting the difficulties of two women seeking illegal abortion. Romanian New Wave emerged in the early 2000s and showcases a unique and minimalist approach to realism, long takes, and minimal use of music and camera movement. Yet Romanian cinema is grounded in the legacy of communism and its impact on Romanian society, the difficulties faced by Romanians in the post-communist era, and the struggle for personal freedom and individuality, offering a poignant commentary on the challenges to a generation in the post-communist era.

Despite its many achievements, Romanian cinema has faced numerous challenges. During the communist era, filmmakers were quite subject to strict censorship, and many were forced to produce propaganda films that celebrated the achievements of the communist regime. Following the exit of communism, the Romanian film industry encountered a patent lack of funding and support, which began to recede in the early 2000s at which time, the Romanian industry achieved its international recognition in highly significant ways. At present, Romanian cinema has also become more inclusive, with an emphasis on diversity and representation.

## Theoretical Framework

As the present paper falls under the larger scope of cultural linguistics, it aims to evidence the act that many features of human language become entrenched in cultural conceptualisations, including those typical of cinema-related vocabulary, which metonymically reflects such a general tendency. This section discusses the relationship between cultural metaphors (as instances of culture) and commonplaces, which are dynamic and reversible, as the cinematic lexicon appears to illustrate two complementary forces, that is, those of and between culture specific and cross-cultural events and products. Here, the former corresponds to a tendency towards universalisation, in the form of cross-cultural metaphors by way of commonplaces (topoi), whereas the latter is associated with individualisation and is triggered by culture variation.

### *Cultural Linguistics as an Umbrella Term*

Despite the first appearance in of the phrase cultural linguistics in work by Ronald Langacker in 1994, it was not until 1996 that the role of culture in shaping conceptual levels of language and as a system of conceptualisation became explicitly dealt with, by Gary Palmer. In the latter, cultural linguistics focuses on meaning as conceptualisation, and hence on conceptualisations which are culturally encoded in and communicated through human languages. Central to his approach is the notion of imagery,<sup>1</sup> which corresponds to “what we see in our mind’s eye” (Palmer 1996, p. 3), or, in a less metaphorical fashion, to cognitive categories, schemas, and metaphors.

Boasian linguistics emphasizes the act that languages reflect people’s mental representations, where languages classify experiences and events differently to one another and tend to influence the thought patterns of the speakers. Here, language and cultural conceptualizations are seen as rather interdependent, in that the former largely contributes to the development of the latter and symmetrically, the latter is grounded in, and reflects, the former (see also Sharifian 2017b, p. 3). Ethnosemantics as a discipline mainly focuses on the study of “the ways in which different cultures organise and categorise domains of knowledge, such as plants, animals, and kin” (Palmer 1996, p. 19). In this view, cultural categories become prominent in relation to cultural schemas and metaphors. The ethnography of speaking, also referred to as the ethnography of communication, is largely associated with the works of Dell Hymes (1974) and John Gumperz (see, for example, Gumperz and Hymes 1972). This particular approach addresses the study of distinctive means and modes of speaking, and communication in general, with an emphasis on communicative competence, that is, the role of the sociocultural context in the way in which the speakers perform communicatively (Hymes 1974, apud Sharifian 2017a, p. 36). As regards cognitive linguistics, it is worth mentioning that it shares with the previous disciplines work on schema, understood as an abstract representation of

events and facts or as a recurring cognitive structure which establishes patterns of understanding and reasoning, often elaborated by extension from knowledge of our bodies complemented with our experience of social interactions.<sup>2</sup>

Cultural schemas can be referred to as the common ground, i.e., the knowledge shared by members of a speech community (Sharifian 2017b, pp. 7, 14), as they convey beliefs, norms, rules, values, and expectations of behaviour in relation to various aspects of experience. Cultural categories are mainly prototype-based and are culturally constructed, and reflect categories associated with language that are shared by members of a culture (p. 15). Cultural metaphors are to a large extent similar to conceptual metaphors, in that they are cross-domain conceptualisations<sup>3</sup> grounded in cultural traditions or in different spiritual belief systems (p. 7). A more detailed definition of cultural metaphors equates these with values that are shared by clusters of nations, with which most citizens identify, and by means of which the nations and their cultures can be best identified and described. For instance, in the cinematic field, such cultural metaphors could be Hollywood and the Oscars, which have acquired a quasi-universal status, and tend to be commonplace. Cultural categories can be approached in relation to different types of prizes awarded in the cinematic industry, whereas cultural schemas take into account the event of movie-award galas, with a special focus on the Oscar galas, which have set a standard throughout the vast majority of such events globally.

It is precisely this idea of behaving that evokes concepts of commonplace, cliché, and stereotype, which are sometimes used interchangeably, but may also present idiosyncratic feature.. The three are brought together through notions of oversimplification, standardization, and reproductibility of a certain model,<sup>4</sup> resulting in mechanized mental processes and textual fatigue (because reproductibility entails wear and tear) (Redfern 1989, p. 8). Although the terms cliché and stereotype are often used interchangeably as synonyms, dictionaries tend to distinguish between cliché, as a repetitive formula, and stereotype, as a more negatively loaded and oversimplified evaluative formula and mental attitude (Ilie and Hellspong 1999, p. 387). More to this, clichés refer to a linguistic expression, whereas stereotypes refer to non-linguistic entities, such as people, situations, etc. Even further, definitions indicate that the term stereotype displays a more apparent derogatory value load, which is not always the case with clichés. Another possible synonym for cliché is the compound commonplace, which translates to the Greek *topos* or rather its relevant meaning, i.e., a phrase or an idea known and accepted by many, which could be used in order to establish common ground, since it is taken for granted and is not subject to debate (Ibidem, p. 389). Of the three concepts (cliché, stereotype, and commonplace), we focus on the latter in what follows, as a result of its lesser ambiguity and greater neutrality than the other terms.

### *Shared Linguistic Structure (Formal Resemblance)*

More often than not, patterns of thought result in patterns of language, where, the linguistic structures used to convey such shared blocks of knowledge are quite similar across cultures. The similarity can be found at both formal and semantic levels, and is reflected in shared linguistic structures (formal resemblance) as well as in shared semantic content, including recurrent semantic changes, both fragmented and in sequences.

Within the cinema-related vocabulary, such formal repetitions can be found in the names of movie festivals and corresponding awards, and involve formulaic quasi-idiomatic two-word expressions comprising a nominal head belonging to the animal or vegetal field and a modifier belonging to the chromatic field. The latter is usually expressed indirectly, by way of a referential structure, that is, by chromatic terms obtained from the name of the referent via derivational means (gold + suffix *-en*, as in the case of the Golden Bear / Lion / Raspberry), or via grammatical means (as is the case with the French *Palme d'Or*). The 'Golden' pattern is cross-cultural, but may be subject to translations / free adaptations. Such is the case in Romanian, which has opted to translate the original German / Italian / American models, as evident in the equivalent expressions: *Ursul de Aur* ("The Golden Bear" < germ. *Goldenen Bär*) / *Leul de Aur* ("The Golden Lion" < it. *Leone d'Oro*) / *Zmeura de Aur* ("The Golden Raspberry" > eng.), where colour is conveyed by grammatical means (the prepositional phrase *de Aur*), quite similar to French and Italian. It is worth mentioning though that the name of the French award *Palme d'Or* is not subject to translation, and it is thus an international (stylistic / connotative) loan, the formation of which is motivated by the prestige attached to French and perhaps by its ambiguity, which is also maintained at the visual level: The image of the French award consists of a palm tree leaf (symbol of victory) placed in a palm.

The less productive "Silver" pattern is present in phrases such as *Silver Bear / Lion*, *Nastro d'Argento* (the Silver Strip), and tends to mirror a hierarchy which is normally used in sports, whereby gold points to the highest position (number one) and silver, to the second position. Surprisingly, no "Bronze" pattern can be found within this onomastic category. However, this "gap" is compensated by the existence of a "Crystal" pattern, illustrated by names such as the *Crystal Globes*. The "Best" pattern points to excellence in the film industry by way of the determiner 'best' and is also productive and cross-cultural (see categories such as *Best Movie / Actor / Actress / Director*), which is not the case with the "Grand" pattern, used to designate the second prize awarded within the Cannes Festival, after *Palm d'Or* (*Le Grand Prix*) and in some Romanian film festivals, where it indicates the highest distinction.

Apart from translations and free adaptations, as well as international loans, Romanian frequently draws on internal means, such as derivatives and compounds (acronyms), at times when the linguistic expression of festivals is related to historical, geographical, and ethno-cultural factors, that is, at times when they have a toponymic base, which renders them as

space-bound and culture-specific. The use of internal means suggests the tendency of language(s) towards using highly motivated signs, some of which are twofold motivated; extra-linguistically, by the fact that the denomination points to the space where the respective film festival takes place, and linguistically, by the derivational process that underlies the relationship between the denomination and the toponymic base. The derivational pattern can be illustrated by the Romanian Berlinala (obtained from a toponym followed by a suffix indicating origin, which is then subject to lexical conversion via ellipsis), whereas the compound is best accounted for by acronyms such as ASTRA<sup>5</sup> (an international film festival dedicated to documentaries which is held in Sibiu, Transylvania), or TIFF (“Transylvania International Film Festival,” built on English patterns, that is, without any visible marks of syntactic subordination).

The nomenclature of film festivals and awards combine characteristics of scientific terms, proper names, and common nouns (appellatives). The relationship with nomenclature is evidenced by their ability to unambiguously designate a unique entity (such as a festival or an award) as well as by the main denominating criteria underlying them, which tends to reflect an extra-linguistic classification (usually origin). Mono-referentiality draws on nouns or noun phrases used to refer to film festivals and awards in the proximity of proper names, as they serve to identify individuals or places (by means of either a toponym or an anthroponym), and their meaning is usually context-bound.<sup>6</sup> Yet, this category of names does not seem to fit into the usual bipartite configuration grounded in the opposition between appellatives that designate objects, and proper names, and which nominate these objects. Rather, they can be described as partially common nouns and partially proper nouns, as they differently combine appellative and onomastic properties (Sklyarenko and Sklyarenko 2005, p. 278), and can display various ‘degrees of onomasticity.’ Thus, onomasticity reveals itself as a scalar notion stretching from the highest degree of onomasticity (and the lowest degree of lexical meaning) to the lowest degree of onomasticity (and the highest degree of lexical meaning). The former situation points to noun phrases made up by primary (non-derived) proper names; toponyms which evoke the space where the respective festivals originated or are held (the Cannes / Venice Festival), or anthroponyms, which refer to a prototype-based categorisation (the name of a famous actor / director / creator; the César / Oscar Awards). A lower degree of onomasticity is displayed by words such as Berlinala, with a toponymic base, or acronyms such as BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts), and TIFF (Transylvania International Film Festival). Here, and quite significantly, motivation and onomasticity appear to be in a reverse ratio to one another, and more specifically, the higher the motivation, the lower the degree of onomasticity. Concerning the motivations underlying this onomastic category, one can find an overwhelming tendency towards naming the film festivals and awards by taking into account either the origin / city (toponyms), or an iconic figure within the respective field (anthroponyms).

### *Shared Semantic Content and Recurrent Semantic Changes*

Not only shared formal properties, but also shared semantic content, can account for the large spread of the cinematic lexicon across cultures (and languages). Expressions such as Eng. Golden Bear / Lion / Raspberry, Rom. Ursul de Aur/Leul de Aur/Zmeura de Aur, or Fr. Palme d'Or are all built on the positive connotations attached to the determiner. The choice of the noun 'gold' as a derivational basis for the adj. golden is an instantiation of an exemplar-based categorisation, as gold is perceived to be the most precious material and such phrasing thus indicates a superlative status and the highest distinction within a certain field. More to this, the idea of the superlative, yet in a negative way, is preserved within the metaphor the Golden Raspberr,<sup>7</sup> whereby the derogatory meaning originates in the use of some informal English expressions such as to blow a raspberry, intended to insult someone, to mock them, or to spitefully make fun of them, as it were.

Moreover, as Hollywood has long established itself as a landmark in cinematography, some words and linguistic expressions connected with it have come to reflect shared, 'common sense,' ways of talking and thinking about particular topics. Consequently, they are subject to a broadening of meaning, which is usually achieved by two major figures of speech; the metaphor and the metonymy (including antonomasia, which is now considered to be a subtype of the metonymy "PART FOR THE WHOLE," namely "A MEMBER FOR THE CATEGORY"<sup>8</sup>). The above-mentioned figures can be used either individually or in combination, that is, the same word / phrase can function – successively – metaphorically and metonymically. To illustrate the latter case, that is, the chain of figures, we focus on two words originating in the American space, but enriched with new broader meanings as a result of their being associated with different axiological values.

Hollywood, for example, has acquired the status of a cultural metaphor, as it is firmly and distinctly grounded in the American cultural tradition, and as it has become representative for this space. However, in time, it came to be associated with excellence in the cinematic field, which may explain some non-prototypical uses, such as the Romanian Hollywood, based on antonomasia, or Bollywood, obtained by blending Bombay and Hollywood, with the emergent meaning of "Indian Hollywood."

In its turn, the term Oscar has been subject to three successive figures of speech, the first of which is the metaphor, followed by the metonymy and the antonomasia. As a similarity-based conceptualisation, the metaphorical projection can be invoked in relation with two important names in the history of the American cinema: Margaret Herrick, the Academy librarian, and Bette Davis, the worldwide famous actress, both of whom found some similarities between the appearance of the statuette and people they knew and who were named Oscar (Levy 2003, p. 45). Then, by way of metonymy, the term Oscar began to be used in order to designate both the statuette and the trophy named after it (see expressions such as 'And the Oscar goes to...').

Eventually, the term 'Oscar' has come to symbolize the highest level of recognition, that is, excellence in the film industry, via antonomasia, which explains the use of expressions such as Césars, the French Oscar(s).

## Case Studies

In what follows, we intend to discuss a number of cultural conceptualisations that can be found in the cinematic field, in order to evidence the fact that many of these tend to cancel borders and spread throughout various languages and cultures. It is true, however, that some are open to intracultural variation by the cancellation of (a part of) the original features followed by a broadening of meaning and possibly by a depreciation of meaning.

### *Cultural Metaphors*

The cinematic lexicon provides numerous examples of cross-cultural metaphors. However, given that some cross-cultural metaphors such as *Hollywood* and *Oscar* have been dealt with previously (above.), we have now chosen to analyse in more detail the LIFE IS A PLAY / MOVIE / FILM / STAGE metaphor, which represents:

Examples	
a	a cultural metaphor: it originates in the British literature, yet it does not pertain to expert (technical) knowledge; it may be cult in that it refers to cultural values, but it is achieved by way of naïve understanding or folk theories, i.e., knowledge that laypeople use automatically and mainly unconsciously (acquire sans être apprise).
b	a metaphor based on image-schematic knowledge, which comes from our repeated and regular experiences of the world (Kovecses 2006, p. 128);
c	a multimodal metaphor (as it speaks of life in terms of a play / movie / film / stage);
d	a highly conventional conceptual metaphor (a cross-cultural metaphor), as evidenced by the numerous linguistic expressions that derive from it: it's curtains for him / her; to be in the spotlight; to steal / save the show; (not) to be in the script; to play a part; standing ovations; wait in the wings, casting, one man / woman show, etc.
e	a structural metaphor, in that the source domain (PLAY / MOVIE / FILM / STAGE) imposes some structure on the target (LIFE), by a series of mappings (Kovecses 2006, p. 145):

SOURCE DOMAIN: A PLAY/ MOVIE/FILM/STAGE	TARGET DOMAIN: LIFE
An actor	A person leading a life
Fellow actors	People with whom the person interacts
The way the actor acts	The way the person behaves in real life
The parts	The social roles the person plays in life (a son, a father, etc.) → in terms of kinship
The beginning of the play	The beginning of life (the birth)
The end of the play	The end of life (the death)
The script, in terms of <i>narrative imagining</i> (Turner 1996: 5): different “stories” can be used as mental instruments to convey an abstract notion.	The story of one’s life (the idea of narrative structure: a narrative line used to structure the target in terms of sequences of actions with a beginning, a middle and an end).

The LIFE IS A PLAY / MOVIE / FILM / STAGE metaphor displays a certain circularity. It is a cultural metaphor that originates in literature and evokes the British space, having been popularised by Shakespeare (*As You Like It*), in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe (Kovecses 2006, p. 144): All the world is a stage, / And all the men and women merely players. / They have their exits and their entrances / And one man in his time plays many parts.

However, it seems that Shakespeare has only mirrored the reality of his time, when public life very much resembled a performance, whereby people presented the self they wanted to be perceived by the others, which evokes the idea of masks (and the pragmatic concept of face) and role playing. The metaphor permeated the Romanian literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup> and undoubtedly spread out into many other literatures. The metaphor re-enters real life, and is revisited and reinforced in early 20<sup>th</sup> century America, along with a shift from a primarily “character-oriented” to a “personality-oriented” culture in the American context (Gabler 1998; apud Kovecses 2006, p. 145). Interestingly, English resorts to one word – or character – to designate both a moral trait (which comprises values such as integrity and courage, typical of the old Puritan production-oriented culture) and a part in a movie / play, whereas Romanian expresses the latter value by means of a French loan (rom. *personaj* > fr. *personnage*).

Moreover, in various English dictionaries, a character displays a semantic plethora, the basic meaning pertaining to psychology, where it is used to refer to the qualities of a person that combine so as to form their personality. This definition allows one to infer a relation of hyponymy between character and personality, which could explain other derived meanings, such as: identity, nature; reputation, good name; personality in relation to how honest and

reliable someone is (which corresponds to the first meaning of character in the Puritan era); strength; atmosphere (a special, interesting, and unusual quality of an object, which encourages one to notice or to enjoy it). The meaning which is relevant to the cinematic field occupies the ninth position in Collins Cobuild Dictionary, and is explained by reference to the people whom the film / play (or book) references.<sup>10</sup> The same meaning is further developed in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, which equates it with a part played by an actor, and continues by indicating the etymology of the word; it originates in Middle English (with the meaning of “distinctive mark,” later “feature or trait”), from Old French *caractère*, via Latin from Greek *kharaktèr* (“a stamping tool,” which seems to point to a salient trait / feature). *Personage* is used in English, too, yet with a different meaning than its Romanian counterpart, and more precisely, it refers to a famous or important person; a person expressing their importance or elevated status. It is worth mentioning that the French borrowing is monosemic in both dictionaries that we have used, and has its origin in Middle English from Old French, reinforced by the Medieval Latin *personagium* (“effigy”). The above-mentioned definitions seem to indicate the fact that English tends to cancel the difference that is preserved in Romanian between *personnage* and *personality*, the latter being used to designate a famous person. This is consistent with the second interpretation of character in the new consumerist era, which highlighted more frivolous traits such as charm, fascination, and likability, whereby a personality was considered to be a performer, or a performing self (Gabler 1998, apud Kovecses 2006, p. 146). Consequently, there should be no surprise that later on, the metaphor can also be found in the pop culture (Elvis Presley: Act one was when we met; Frank Sinatra: And now I face the final curtain).

### *Cultural Schemas*

Among the cultural schemas<sup>11</sup> within the cinematic vocabulary, we have chosen to focus on two image schemas; the dress-code and the red carpet schemas, respectively. The red carpet schema originates in the American space, but might develop local meanings. Its linguistic expression can be approached from two perspectives; in relation to the chromatic field, on the one hand, and to the source-path-goal schema, on the other. The choice of red has a threefold explanation; its being a primary basic colour (universally known), a salient colour (it stands out), and a colour with positive connotations, such as love and nobility. The source-path-goal schema evokes the ‘go’ scenario, where the carpet suggests movement towards a destination, which is conceived of in terms of goals. In this particular case, the goal corresponds to receiving a prize, as well as public recognition. Quite recently though, the expression has acquired additional connotations, which is mainly due to within-culture variation, and is associated with a broadening of meaning, since from a symbol of superlative artistry, the metaphor has come to be connected with certain events in people’s experience, namely weddings and funerals (in the latter case, the metaphor stands for a tribute to an actor, singer, etc.). The same is true for

the dress-code schema, which applies to film galas too, but has been subject to change, shifting from a symbol of elegance and class (long dresses, suits, hats, expensive jewelry), to unaesthetic clothes that can sometimes turn into kitsch.

### *Cultural Categories*

Cultural categories can be conceived of in terms of a twofold cultural categorization, which combines non-linguistic and linguistic criteria, by taking into account a certain section (such as Best Actor, Best Movie, Best Director, etc.), or the mechanisms of analogy underlying the transfer (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche), respectively. Within this field, one can distinguish between cross-cultural and culture specific, categories. The former class comprises categories such as Best Actor / Director / Movie, where the determiner best sets the standard of excellence in the film industry, whereas the latter refers to those categories evoking a certain area / space and the metonymic projections typical of them. That is the case of expressions such as Golden Bear, Golden Lion, Palme d'Or, all of which are based on iconicity, which is transposed in the metonymy "symbol for the object;" the bear and the lion are featured on the flags of Berlin and Venice, respectively, and have a symbolic value. Similarly, the palm tree is the symbol of Cannes and has then become the symbol of the Film Festival hosted there. The image of the French Award fructifies the ambiguity between palm1 (palm tree leaf) and palm2 (part of the arm). It is this very ambiguity which lies at the basis of a non-prototypical use of the expression Palme d'Or in a recent incident that involved French president, Emmanuel Macron, who was slapped by a man in the audience, and which resulted in cartoons depicting the president with a swollen eye. The image was accompanied by a short comment saying: Palme d'Or, whereby the humorous effects spring from the combination of intertextuality and polysemy. The former hints at the name of the prize, whereas the latter implies the diachronic reactivation of the literal meaning of the word palme (palm + a metonymy "cause for the effect," which is achieved by reconverting a figurative expression into basic mental representations of our sensorimotor experience; the act of slapping someone). The pun appears in the 'revitalisation of metonymy' by willingly blurring the boundary between the literal and non-literal meanings of a word or expression. In the case under discussion, the figure was both topic-triggered (evoked by the name of the award) and situation-triggered (activated by an element in the communicative situation).

## Concluding Remarks

The present study aimed to evidence that the cinema-related vocabulary involves the same concepts when it denotes extra-linguistic realities specific to the world of film. In order to achieve this goal, we have attempted to argue that patterns of thought trigger patterns of language, and that many of these are cross-cultural, i.e., spread over cultures and languages. Moreover, we have emphasized that the similarity that lies at the basis of these patterns involves both the form and the meaning(s) of the linguistic expressions that are being used. The formal resemblance refers to the use of either international loans (such as *Palme d'Or*, *Hollywood*, *Oscar*), which are cross-cultural, or translations that preserve the pattern of the original phrase (as is the case with *Ursul / Leul / Zmeura de Aur*, which transpose the structures *Golden Bear / Lion / Raspberry* into Romanian). More seldom are the cases where Romanian vocabulary resorts to internal means, that is, derivation (*Berlinala*) and compounds (acronyms: *TIFF*, *ASTRA*), in order to render names with a toponymic basis, which are context-bound and culture specific. As regards to the shared semantic content, the analysis attempted to evidence the fact that, although initially culture-specific, some cultural schemas, categories, and metaphors from the American space tend to acquire (near) universal status, as they reflect conventional patterns of thinking and acting. That is the case of cultural schemas such as red carpet or dress code, cultural categories like *Best Actor / Movie / Director*, and cultural metaphors such as *Hollywood* and *Oscar*.

We have argued that the extension of such words and phrases and the cancellation of geographical borders can be explained in terms of recurring correlations in experience or may have their basis in perceived similarities / resemblance (prototype-based categorisation), i.e., in the perception of common characteristics or structures between different cultures or areas of experience. Recurrence involves the use of different expressions relating to the same broad source domain, as in the case of the *LIFE IS A STAGE / PLAY / MOVIE / SHOW* metaphor, which enjoys global systematicity,<sup>12</sup> as it occurs not only across many genres and discourses, but also across cultures. This suggests that the cinematic field has become more salient in everyday experience and is open to lexicalisation, that is, to being used as a source domain for numerous metaphorical mappings. When particular uses of metaphors, schemas, and categories, become the dominant way of talking about a particular aspect of reality, it may be extremely difficult to perceive and challenge, since they come to represent the 'commonsense' or 'natural' view of things. In this point, we emphasize that the compound commonplace is not to be attached any derogatory load, but should be rather understood as a means of achieving group cohesion, as it is used over and over again, explicitly or implicitly, to convey a socially accepted common ground or shared belief among people, and thus acquires a quasi-apodictic character<sup>13</sup> (Ilie and Hellspong 1999, p. 388). Group cohesion can be established either intraculturally, i.e., within and between ethnic groups or individuals belonging to the same culture or discourse community, or interculturally, i.e., between ethnic groups or individuals belonging to different

cultures. All the above-mentioned examples endorse the main move which is typical of the cinematic lexicon, more precisely, from culture specific, to cross-cultural, events / products, whereby group cohesion is established interculturally. The paper has also attempted to illustrate the complementary move, that is, the shift from cross-cultural to culture-specific events, by way of recontextualisation, understood as 'localisation,' as a circulating cliché / commonplace tends to develop semantic 'density,' by becoming permeated with additional connotations, which allows for wider acceptability (see the case of the red carpet schema and its particular developments in the Romanian space). These are nevertheless to be regarded as exceptions, as neither cultural boundaries, nor several marked linguistic differences, are relevant in terms of cinematography. Hence, the discussion centred largely on interferences and identities which, from a cultural perspective, are common to geographic spaces that are located at a significant distance from one another and that have settled in the collective subconscious as various forms of one and the same cinematic show.

## References

- Brook, G.L. (1981). *Words in Everyday Life*. London: Macmillan.
- Cameron, L. (1999), "Operationalising 'metaphor' for applied linguistic research". In L. Cameron and G. Low (eds.), *Researching and Applying Metaphor*, pp. 3-28. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fauconnier, G. (1997). *Mappings in Thought and Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gabler, N. 1998, *Life: The Movie: How Entertainment Conquered Reality*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Gumperz, J. and Dell Hymes (eds.). (1972). *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*. New York and London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Guțu Romalo, V. (ed.) (2005, I). *Gramatica limbii române, I, Cuvântul (The Grammar of Romanian Language, I, The Word)*. București: Editura Academiei Române.
- Howard, P. (1986/1984). *The State of the Language*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Ilie, C. and Hellspong, L. (1999). "Arguing from Clichés: Communication and Miscommunication", in Frans van Eemeren, Rob Grootendorst, J. Anthony Blair, Ch. A. Willard (eds.), *Proceedings of the fourth international conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation*, pp. 386-392.
- Johnson, M. (1987). *The Body in the Mind. The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*.

- Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 20–38.
- Kővecses, Z. (2006). *Language, Mind and Culture. A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). The metaphorical structure of the human conceptual system, *Cognitive Science*, 4, pp. 195–208.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lapaire, J.-R. (2002). The Conceptual Structure of Events: the *go-*, *make-* and *get-/ give-/ have-* Scenarios. *Anglophonia*, 12, pp. 7–28.
- Levy, E. (2003). *All about Oscar: The History and Politics of the Academy Awards*. New York: Continuum.
- Palmer, Gary, 1996, *Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Redfern, Walter. (1989). *Clichés and Coinages*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Ricks, C. (1980). Clichés. In: L. Michaels and C. Ricks (eds). *The State of the Language*. Berkeley: University.
- Semino, E. (2008). *Metaphor in Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sharifian, F. (2017a). Cultural Linguistics. *Ethnolinguistic*, 28, pp. 33–59.
- Sharifian, F. (2017b). *Cultural Linguistics*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Sklyarenko, A. and Sklyarenko, O. (2005). "Interrelationship between common nouns and proper nouns". In *Proceedings of the 21<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Onomastic Sciences Uppsala, August 19-24, 2002: Vol. 1*, E. Brylla and M. Wahlberg (eds.), pp. 276-282. Uppsala: Språk-och folkminnesinstitutet.
- The Cambridge International Dictionary of English*. (1995). Ed. P. Procter, Cambridge University Press.
- The Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* (1993), The University of Birmingham, Harper Collins Publishers.
- The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. (2006). Eleventh Edition, Oxford University Press, 2006.
- The Longman Webster English College Dictionary*. (1985). 2nd edition, Harlow: Longman.
- The Oxford English Dictionary*. (1989). 2nd edition. Eds. J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Turner, M. (1996), *The Literary Mind*, New York, Oxford University Press.

---

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Sharifian (2017a: 35) prefers to use the term *conceptualisation*.
- <sup>2</sup> The embodied nature of many conventional metaphors has been emphasised by the representatives of the so-called “embodiment strand” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Johnson 1987, among others), as well as by Sharifian (2017b: 25–39), who identifies a vast array of *embodied cultural metaphors*.
- <sup>3</sup> Unlike conceptual metaphors, which involve cross-domain conceptualisation, conceptual metonymies are intra-domain (Sharifian 2017b: 11).
- <sup>4</sup> The word *cliché* originates in the technical jargon of the French printers in the nineteenth century, where it denoted a cast obtained by dropping a matrix face downwards upon a surface of molten metal on the point of cooling (Howard 1986). Also, it may be interpreted as an echoic word since it imitates the plopping sound that the matrix made as it fell into its hot bath, which is rendered in English by ‘click’ and ‘clack’ (Redfern 1989). In time, the word has been subject to laicisation, and only the most prominent features were preserved of the original definition, such as imitation or identical reproduction, which brings them close to commonplaces and stereotypes. Actually, a *cliché* is defined as “a *stereotyped* expression, a *commonplace* phrase” by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), “a hackneyed phrase or expression; also the idea expressed by it; a hackneyed theme or situation” by the *Longman Webster English College Dictionary* (1985), “a form of expression that has been so often used that its original effectiveness has been lost” by the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995), “an idea, expression or way of behaving which has been used so much that it is no longer original or effective (platitude)” by the *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* (1993), “a phrase or opinion that is overused and shows a lack of original thought; an unoriginal thing” by the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2006). In its turn, *stereotype* is defined as “something continued or constantly repeated without change; a preconceived and oversimplified idea of the characteristics which typify a person, situation, etc.; an attitude based on such a preconception” by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), as “somebody or something that conforms to a fixed or general pattern; esp. a standardized, usu. oversimplified, mental picture or attitude that is held in common by members of a group” by the *Longman Webster English College Dictionary* (1985), as “disapproving (a person or thing that represents) a fixed set of ideas that is generally held about the characteristics of a particular type of person or thing, which are (wrongly) believed to be shared by all the people and things of that type” by the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995); “a fixed general image, characteristic, etc. that a lot of people believe to represent a particular type of person or thing” by *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* (1993) and “an image or idea of a particular type of person or thing that has become fixed through being widely held” by the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2006).
- <sup>5</sup> Builds on homonymy with an older acronym, used to refer to *Asociația Transilvană pentru Literatură Română și Cultura Poporului Român* (“The Transylvanian Association for the Romanian Literature and the Culture of Romanian People”), which was created in 1861 in Sibiu, Romania.
- <sup>6</sup> See Guțu Romalo (ed.) (2005, I: 118-119), who addresses the problem of proper names, previously referred to in terms of either lack of meaning or richness of significance.
- <sup>7</sup> The name of a category awarded to worst movies.
- <sup>8</sup> For a taxonomy of metonymy, see Kovecses (2006: 100-104).
- <sup>9</sup> It can be found in Mihai Eminescu’s work.
- <sup>10</sup> Dictionaries point to some other meanings that are not relevant for the discussion, that is why they do not appear in the body of the text.
- <sup>11</sup> A sub-class of schemas that are culturally constructed, in that they are based to some extent on shared experiences of a cultural group (Sharifian 2017b: 40).
- <sup>12</sup> Cameron (1999, *apud* Semino 2008: 34, 106-107).
- <sup>13</sup> Apodictic knowledge is certain and conclusively proved, so it cannot be doubted.