COGNITIVE METAPHOR IN MODERN LINGUISTICS

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Abstract: The article outlines the basic notions connected with cognitive metaphor which has lately undergone a thorough examination. The contribution made by linguists resulted in the rise of cognitive linguistics. This science regards metaphor not as a linguistic phenomenon but as a mental one that establishes connection between language and mind in the form of understanding new notions in terms of notions and categories known due to the previously gained experience. The interaction of new and previous experience can generate three main types of metaphors: structural metaphors which imply the structuring of target domain in terms of source domain, ontological metaphors which view abstract notions as concrete objects with clear outlines and orientational metaphors which represent the ways to fix the experience of spatial orientation.

The classification of metaphors complemented with examples is presented below along with some controversial cases of determining the type of metaphor.

Key words: conceptualization, metaphorization, cognitive methapor

During the last decades linguists have been showing interest in various cognitive structures and mechanisms operating these structures, which consequently resulted in the rise of such science as cognitive linguistics, which examines language in the view of its usage by the human to carry out his cognitive activity.

The science focuses on the problem of the surrounding world categorization which heavily relies on metaphor as a mental but not linguistic phenomenon. The cognitive theory of metaphor is manifested in the idea that language units that are called metaphors merely reflect mental processes and meanings of metaphorical words and expressions are "are not decoration of thoughts but verbal representation of conceptual metaphors kept in the notional system of a human being and organizing his perception, mentality and activity"[1].

Obtaining direct experience of interacting with the world full of objects, ideas, notions, a person summarizes it in the course of the metaphorization process when he conceives new notions in terms of notions and categories known to him due to the previously gained experience. For instance, the adjective *wide* used literally to talk about spacial measurements in such word combinations as *wide road* or *wide river* can be used metaphorically with shifts to the sphere of social relations (*wide public*), legal sphere (*wide powers*), geology (*wide fraction*), etc.

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[1] Будаев Э.В. Метафора в политической коммуникации : монография. М, 2008. С.41.

The process of metaphorization implies interrelation of two knowledge structures, namely cognitive source domain and target domain as a result of which metaphorical mapping occurs. Such mapping manifests itself at the level of sentence and text meaning and thus conveys our vision of the world. For instance, the metaphor TIME (target) IS MONEY (source) in such expressions as *Don't waste your time on that silly thing* draws attention of the recipient to the idea of value and exhaustibility of this resource, the idea that stands as a part of MONEY cognitive structure, that is, our knowledge of the world shows that there exist numerous situations where time is directly connected with the money spent on it, e.g. time wage, taxi fare, etc. Some examples of metaphorical mapping illustrating the interrelation of MONEY source domain and TIME target domain are given below.

This gadget will *save* you hours.   I've *invested* a lot of time in her.

That flat tyre *cost* me an hour.   Do you *have* much time *left*?

The following features of conceptual metaphors can be defined:

1) metaphors serve as a transition from familiar to unknown, therefore, source domains compared to target domains are usually more precise, understandable through the direct experience and are easier to use in communication;

2) spheres connected with metaphors are asymmetrical and unequal: the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY exists, but there is no opposite metaphor JOURNEY IS LOVE as physical events are not conceived through abstract notions;

3) as a rule, metaphors emphasize certain aspects of comparison, e.g. the metaphor TIME IS MONEY highlights the function of money but not on the size of a note;

4) metaphors function at different levels of certainty, some at a higher, more general one, others at a more specific level; metaphors of a higher level have a more universal character which allows them to appear in different languages and cultures whereas metaphors of a lower level are rather culturally presupposed[1].

The above mentioned and other typical features are shown in G. Lakoff and M. Johnson's classification of conceptual metaphors which has been included in the book "Metaphors we live by".

According to the authors of the book all conceptual metaphors can be divided into three groups: structural, orientational and ontological.

Structural metaphors are defined as "cases when one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another"[2]. When a person empirically interacts with the surrounding world he compares such interaction experience with that gained before so that in the best way to understand it. Thus, he endows the unknown and strange with features and properties of the categories and concepts

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[1] ibid. P. 41 – 42

[2] Лакофф Дж., Джонсон М. Метафоры, которыми мы живём. М, 2008. С.35

already known and familiar facilitating the process of conception. Below an example of a structural metaphor is given complemented with the explanation of how one concept structures another.

In everyday life language the structural metaphor TO ARGUE IS TO FIGHT is exemplified in the following sentences:

- He *attacked every weak point* in my argument.
- His criticisms were *right on target*.
- I've never *won* an argument with him.

The sentences show that the vocabulary typical of fighting is not only used at the level of a language but also can give a clear idea on what happens when interlocutors prove their point of view on something. Equally with a fight argument may be won or lost; in the course of reasoning a speaker tries to "defend" his own positions and an attempt to make the opponent change his mind is seen as an "attack" on his standpoint. Even the interlocutors themselves consider each other as rivals when an argument takes place.

In contrast to structural metaphors structuring one concept in terms of another orientational metaphors form "a whole system of concepts with respect to one another" (ibid.) in order to capture the experience of space orientation such as "up – down", "inside – outside", "deep – shallow" etc. Such spatial relations occur due to the existence of the very human body which is involved in the interaction with the outside world. That is why the "up – down" orientation is grounded on the fact that when a baby grows up and develops it moves upwards and when learning to walk it tries to take a vertical position.

Below some examples of orientational metaphor are provided.

HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN

- He's really *low* these days.
- Her spirits *rose*.
- I'm feeling *down*.
- I *fell* into depression.

Experiential basis for such a metaphorization is the position of a human body, i.e. when a human feels depressed or sad his body is bent whereas upright position signifies positive emotional state.

Apart from metaphorization using spatial categories the human's experience of manipulating things forms another basis for experience conception which consists in the ability of a human to select parts of experience and treat them as uniform separate substances and things. Just as spatial experience gives rise to orientational metaphors experience of manipulating material objects, own body in particular, preconditions the occurrence of ontological metaphors, i.e. the forms of perception of events, emotions or ideas as physical categories.

The ontological metaphor HEART IS A CONTAINER represents such form of perception though it is worth noting that under the notion *heart* stands inner world of a human and his soul rather than a human body organ. This

metaphor relying on the orientation "inside – outside" manifests itself in the following sentences:

- *In my heart* I know that she is right.
- She doubted that I spoke *from the heart/from the bottom of my heart.*
- Fear can have no place *in his heart.*
- The news *filled her heart* with joy.

A human is a separate being parted from the rest of the world with his skin so he can be stated to part his internal processes and states from those taking place outside him. The same pattern is observed when he shifts his own "inside – outside" orientation to other material objects confined to a certain surface and sees them as containers within which abstract ideas and notions having no visible boundaries become constraint. In the above mentioned example of ontological metaphor *heart* is a container for emotions, feelings, sentiments which when needed a human takes out (*from the heart, from the bottom of the heart*), keeps (*in my heart*) or he can fill the container with something new (*to fill the heart with joy*) the same way as he fills a jug with water or keeps it in it.

Ontological metaphors also include cases when a material object is treated as a human being. Such treatment allows to conceive the experience of interaction with inanimate object from the point of view human motivations, states, feelings, i.e. to personify them.

FATE IS A PERSONALITY

- He *met his fate* on the battlefield.
- The fate is *cruel/unkind* to them.
- The fate is *blind*.
- Fate *willed it* that he should die young.

In the above given example it can be seen that inanimate abstract notion *fate* is imparted with human traits, both of character and body. As well as a human fate can be cruel/unkind and can have some corporal defects such as blindness. Fate can perform the same actions as a human, e.g. will, order, wait, etc.

Personification is a case of widening of ontological metaphor each of which is based on a specific feature of a human or on the way it is perceived "in terms of own motivations, goals, actions and qualities"[1]. When a human faces problems, be it bad health conditions or conflicts with no ways out, he feels that somebody or something interferes with his life putting various obstacles, and this is nobody or nothing else but fate. Consequently, personifying fate a human finds the reason for his misfortune and blames everything on "another person".

Lakoff and Johnson's classification of conceptual metaphors is based on various aspects of metaphorization of a human's notional system, namely structuring one concept in terms of another, forming a system of concepts with respect to another system and classifying abstract substances by means of

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[1] ibid. p. 59

imparting them with clear outlines in space. However, it should be pointed out that the criteria of metaphors classification are provided by the authors in a general way and if individual cases of metaphorization are analyzed more thoroughly, they can be claimed to belong to several types according to this classification.

The sentence *I've spent a lot of time to solve this problem* can serve as a particular language example for two types of metaphors. On the one hand, in this sentence the concept TIME can be viewed in the framework of the structural metaphor TIME IS MONEY. Target domain TIME in structured in terms of source domain MONEY and this structuring is based on such features of money as value or exhaustibility of this resource used as a unit of exchange or a means of accumulation. On the other hand, TIME can be considered as a material object thus becoming an example of ontological metaphor which allows an abstract notion to be seen as a tangible object which can be referred to, counted, i.e. be subject to all the actions that are performed with material things.

Another example of duality of the classification is the following sentence: *The time will come when…* This sentence can be viewed as an instance of the orientational metaphor TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT. A moving object is oriented in terms of "front" and "back" where front shows the direction of movement. In the given example the following pattern of time structuring is presented: time is moving and a human is still. From a human's perspective time moves from front to back putting future ahead and leaving past behind. On the other hand, the above mentioned example *time* is used with the verb *to come*, the verb which denotes an action mainly typical of a human. Therefore, it can lead to a conclusion that the sentence *The time will come when…* demonstrates the understanding of the experience of interaction with inanimate (in this case with abstract) substances through detection of features peculiar to a human thus turning into a case of ontological metaphor, in particular personification. There are various examples of conceptual metaphors which can be attached to certain types according to our perception of this or that concept which confirms the ability of a human to conceive his experience using different concepts and relating the experience to different spheres of life.

In conclusion it can be said that the studies in the field of language and mind interrelation lead to the emergence of a cognitive theory of metaphor which states that metaphor is not confined to the level of language but as a consciousness phenomenon manifests itself in the process of thinking and acting. To confirm this statement George Lakoff and Mark Johnson elaborated the classification of conceptual metaphor which includes structural metaphors (a source domain is used to understand a target domain), ontological metaphors (abstract notions are viewed as concrete objects with clear outlines) and orientational metaphors (ways to fix the experience of spatial orientation). Yet, such classification is subject to discussions as the examples illustrating a particular type of metaphor can be perfectly attached to another type.

The theory introduced by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson has obtained a wide recognition in the world science and has been adopted in practical researches.

Along with that the theory itself is being developed and in many ways interpreted bringing new information about language and mind interrelation.

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