

METAPHOR AND ITS ROLE IN REPRESENTATION OF THE
CONCEPTS IN THE LITERARY TEXT

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена исследованию художественного текста с позиции когнитивной лингвистики. Основной целью статьи является описание различных подходов к изучению когнитивной лингвистики, определение понятия когнитивной метафоры, а также раскрытие ее концептуальной информации в художественном тексте.

Ключевые слова: лингвистика, метафора, лингвистическая метафора, художественный текст, когнитивная метафора, когнитивные структуры, репрезентация знаний, когнитивные способности человека, стилистический прием, метафорические выражения.

Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of artistic text from the standpoint of cognitive linguistics. The main purpose of the article is to describe various approaches to the study of cognitive linguistics, the definition of the concept of cognitive metaphor, as well as the disclosure of its conceptual information in a literary text.

Keywords: linguistics, metaphor, linguistic metaphor, literary text, cognitive metaphor, cognitive structures, representation of knowledge, human cognitive abilities, stylistic device, metaphorical expressions.

From the position of the cognitive linguistics, metaphor is not the figure of the speech, figurative means, by which two meanings of words connected; but it is the key mental operation, which connects two mental fields and creates the possibility to use potential structure of source domain at the same time developing new area of the target domain. As George Lakoff states in his work “modern theory of

metaphor”: locus of the metaphor does not lie in the language rather how one mental domain is projected by the means of another mental domain. In other words, metaphor now is considered as projection of the mental areas in the borders of our conceptual system. [G. Lakoff 1993: 203]

Thus, in cognitive linguistics the study of the metaphor has changed its perspectives, namely abandoning traditional study of the metaphor, which goes back into ancient Greece as a figurative means “reduced simile”. Instead, now cognitive linguistics studies metaphor as a manifestation of the human thought capability. As A.P. Chudinova notes, cognitive science regards metaphor as a web model with joints, which are connected with each other in different closeness. [Cudinov 2004 : 104] It is worth to note that metaphor may be juxtaposed with, firstly, the mechanism or the process; with the result, specific or general; finally, with the form of cognitive thinking.

It is worth pointing out that metaphor in cognitive sciences is not merely a means of description of the objective reality but is the explicitation scheme, means of world formation. Metaphor provides epistemological access to concepts, in other words it explains vagueness of the concepts through more specific concepts. Analysis of the metaphor may give useful insights into how the human thought process works; additionally it may clarify the relationships between different concepts and their levels. [Sosnin: 157]

Metaphor forms concepts and the possessions of the conceptual systems allow cognizing the world around. As P. Ricker states that, the process of speech formation on the metaphorical level clears the borders of logic thanks to which it is possible to discover new similarities, which were undetected before. [Ricker: 442]

Metaphor provides connection between the layers, levels and dimensions of the concepts. Thus, metaphor might be seen as unexpected and shortly transition from one semantic level into another. However, if in every level functions the rules of formal logic, which correspond to the classical science laws then it is most likely that metaphor breaks those rules.

Furthermore, metaphor grants access to different levels of concepts and conceptual systems in general. In fact, metaphor is a tool for understanding the concepts in their very deep areas. Concepts that are well known to us, which are easy to comprehend grant the human cognition the access to remote and ephemeral concepts. Same function works for the specific components of the concept, in other words, with the help of metaphors might be realized potential conceptual features.

Metaphor provides the connection between concepts and distribution of the knowledge from one cognitive paradigm into another. As Minskij claims, metaphorical analogies allow conceiving the object or notion in the light of another object or notion, which in its turn serves to transfer the knowledge and experience gained in one area into another. That is how knowledge is extended from paradigm to paradigm. [Minskij: 291-292]

Metaphor as a concept has a dynamic nature. Dynamic nature of the concept is revealed by the spontaneity of the speech, in which it is verbalized. In the process of the verbalization of the concept unfolds its existential and meaningful possibilities, actualization of its implication and connected with them associations, furthermore, its embodiment in relation with other concepts. Besides, it is possible to observe the enrichment of the concept through increment of the meanings of the speech units in which it is verbalized. As we can see, the concept has a discursive and narrative character and in the process of its verbalization might be noticed dynamicity of the mental representation of notions or objects. [Григорьев: 54]

Considering metaphorical transfer not in terms of projections of the conceptual areas, it is assumed that the general features of the concepts correlated metaphorically form a high-level generalization (image-schema), the specific manifestation of which will be these concepts. In this case, the source domain and the target domain in traditional terms of Lakoff and Johnson will correspond to prototype concept and extension concept. [Gibbs: 349-350]

In linguistic literature, metaphor is divided into two types: linguistic metaphor and literary metaphor. There are no clear borders between these two notions and the problem. Correlation between linguistic metaphor and literary metaphor cuts deep

into the problem of common and literary languages. There are two different views regarding the problem, namely some scholars' study these two notions as different entities but some scholars on the other hand study them opposed to each other. Thus appears a question about the dual nature of the metaphor as it may be studied as a single object or several independent objects. Investigating linguistic and literary metaphors as a single entity brings us into the theory that semantic processes in both types are similar and both are used for similar purposes. Second statement claims that linguistic metaphors and literary metaphors are different and justification for that we can find in their lexical meaning. The lexical meaning of the linguistic metaphors, although their complexity, are possible to structure, can be differentiated by typical schemes and can be easily engaged in semantic relationships. Literary metaphors on the other hand are dependent on their context; furthermore, they are unique in usage and are lexically independent.

In linguistic metaphor, associative relationships represent the linguistic experience of the person, his personal world picture, thus they are subjective and random relative to general knowledge. [Телия: 192-194] Linguistic metaphor is a ready-made pattern of lexicon, it is created unconsciously, often we do not realize it as metaphor and it is easy to change some components of the linguistic metaphors.

As Sklarevskaya states, that linguistic metaphor represents a clear-cut feature. Linguistic metaphor suggests secondary nomination, which meets the following requirements: presence of the semantic duality, which serves as the means of comparison of the different denotes; next, presence of the figurative element of meaning, which provides full comprehension of the compared entities that while associating makes it possible to compare elements without providing logical operations. [Sklyarevskaya 1993:65] In literary metaphor appears juxtaposition of the distant entities, established by unprevail similarities. It provides a metaphor with unnatural peculiarity and creates the impression of the semantic anomaly. From this assumption, we can conclude that the difference between these two metaphors can be traced in semantic level: linguistic metaphor is strictly bordered by the definite direction of the processes - original denotation and derived denotation. These

associative relationships are robust and reproductive in the process of metaphorization. In literary metaphorization, on the contrary, these connections are free and not canonized. [Sklyarevskaya 1993:64]

Further will be analyzed the short story “The fly” by Katherine Mansfield. The short story was written in 1922 shortly after the First World War. Mansfield depicts two old men, the boss and old Woodifield, who communicate with each other. After drinking whisky, Woodifield reminds his friend the boss of his boy, who died in the war. Boss immersed in his thoughts about his son, notices the fly trapped in the inkpot. Being surprised by the courage of the fly, its desperate attempts to survive, he eventually kills the fly.

In the beginning, Mansfield reveals that Old Woodifield has a son Reggie and his son and the boss’s son lie quite near each other, their grave is in Belgium: “I thought you’d like to know. The girls were in Belgium last week having a look at poor Reggie’s grave, and they happened to come across your boy’s. They’re quite near each other, it seems.” It is a puzzle that the author challenges her readers. Katherine Mansfield never explicitly informs that boys died in the war, only small details inform the reader that both Woodifield’s and boss’s sons are the victims of war, “... *the photograph over the table of a grave-looking boy in uniform standing in one of those spectral photographers’ park...*”, “*The girls were in Belgium last week having a look at poor Reggie’s grave, and they happened to come across your boy’s.*”, “... *unblemished in his uniform*”, “... *the telegram ... “Deeply regret to inform you ...”*” signalize the reader that it is the result of war that they have lost their sons. The next detail pointing towards the war could be found on boss’s thoughts “... the boss never thought of the boy except as lying unchanged, unblemished in his uniform, asleep forever.” The certain usage of vocabulary as *grave-looking*, *spectral*, *uniform* informs the reader about boys’ death in a war. Besides, the last detail “... *learning the ropes for a year before the war*” which indirectly points at the war. According to the above-mentioned reasons, it is possible to claim that both died in a war, in a first world war to be precise.

In addition to certain use of war-like cruel lexicon as for example, the boss

flipped the magazine with a “*paper knife*”, He “*plunged his pen*” into the ink and “*lifted the corpse*” of the fly with it and threw it in the basket, which could be taken as an indicator of the cruelties of the war. The usage of the certain vocabulary “*Help, help, help said those struggling legs.*”, “*Then the front legs waved, ...*”, “*...ready for life again...*”, “*...horrible danger was over...*”, “*...cowed, stunned, and afraid to move...*”, “*Never say die;*” activates contextual knowledge, in this specific case this lexicon awakens our knowledge about the war. In this phase, we observe the concept of the war, which is not broadened by the fly yet. “*At that moment the boss noticed that a fly had fallen into his broad inkpot, and was trying feebly but desperately to clamber out again. Help! Help! said those struggling legs. But the sides of the inkpot were wet and slippery; it fell back again and began to swim. The boss took up a pen, picked the fly out of the ink, and shook it on to a piece of blotting-paper. For a fraction of a second it lay still on the dark patch that oozed round it. Then the front legs waved, took hold, and, pulling its small, sodden body up, it began the immense task of cleaning the ink from its wings. Over and under, over and under, went a leg along a wing as the stone goes over and under the scythe. Then there was a pause, while the fly, seeming to stand on the tips of its toes, tried to expand first one wing and then the other. It succeeded at last, and, sitting down, it began, like a minute cat, to clean its face. Now one could Imagine that the little front legs rubbed against each other lightly, joyfully. The horrible danger was over; it had escaped; it was ready for life again.*” Suddenly the author shifts the reader's attention to the fly, which was trapped in an inkpot. It desperately tries to get out; however, its efforts are without success. What is interesting is that Mansfield personifies the fly giving it such a human characteristic as for example, “*Help! help! said those struggling legs*”, “*waved*”, “*crying for help*”, “*The little beggar seemed absolutely cowed, stunned, and afraid to move...*”. Which are actually very similar to the actions of the soldiers, who face the difficulties of the war. Therefore, the narrator keeps going on the war theme by adding a new poetic detail, the imagery of the fly. The fly acquires new symbolic meaning for the soldiers who were unable to bear the difficulties of the war. “*At that moment the boss noticed that a fly had fallen into his*

broad inkpot, and was trying feebly but desperately to clamber out again. Help! Help! said those struggling legs. But the sides of the inkpot were wet and slippery; it fell back again and began to swim.” The fly represents here the soldier who is trapped in the hands of war, desperately struggling to live through, further actions of the fly more and more similar to those soldiers.

“Then the front legs waved, took hold, and, pulling its small, sodden body up, it began the immense task of cleaning the ink from its wings... The horrible danger was over; it had escaped; it was ready for life again.” this fragment from the short story represents a moment of joy as the danger was behind; however, soldiers' life is in constant danger. Thus, the next fragment reveals the next challenge the fly has to face: *“But just then the boss had an idea. He plunged his pen back into the ink, leaned his thick wrist on the blotting paper, and as the fly tried its wings down came a great heavy blot. What would it make of that! What indeed! The little beggar seemed absolutely cowed, stunned, and afraid to move because of what would happen next. Then, as if painfully, it dragged itself forward. The front legs waved, caught hold, and, more slowly this time, the task began from the beginning.”* It is possible to observe the metaphor between the fly and the soldiers here, their attempts to survive fatal challenges and their psychological state while dealing with the difficulties. At the first sight, it seems unnecessary to use such adjectives towards an insect *cowed, stunned, afraid, painfully* as we, humans are incapable to notice fly's emotion, and however, it is vital for the narrator to show the emotional state of the soldiers in critical situations.

Although soldiers feel stunt, afraid there is plenty of courage and heroism they demonstrate in the war, so that fly showed its courage in this fragment: *“He's a plucky little devil, thought the boss, and he felt a real admiration for the fly's courage. That was the way to tackle things; that was the right spirit. Never say die; it was only a question of... Nevertheless, the fly had again finished its laborious task, and the boss had just time to refill his pen, to shake fair and square on the new-cleaned body yet another dark drop. What about it this time? A painful moment of suspense followed. But behold, the front legs were again waving; the boss felt a rush*

of relief. He leaned over the fly and said to it tenderly, "You artful little b..."

As the boss flicks ink drops to the fly, war throws misery and sorrow to the soldiers. Moreover, at some point the fly could not bear the drops of ink and it died so the soldiers who could not bear the difficulties of the war died as well. *"All the same, there was something timid and weak about its efforts now, and the boss decided that this time should be the last, as he dipped the pen deep into the inkpot.*

It was. The last blot fell on the soaked blotting paper, and the dragged fly lay in it and did not stir. The back legs were stuck to the body; the front legs were not to be seen.

'Come on,' said the boss. 'Look sharp!' And he stirred it with his pen in vain. Nothing happened or was likely to happen. The fly was dead.'

Lastly, the boss takes the dead body of the fly and throws it to the basket, which is a clear symbolism of the grave in which dead bodies of the soldiers rest in peace: "The boss lifted the corpse on the end of the paper-knife and flung it into the waste-paper basket." Besides the use of the word corpse points towards the soldiers rather than the fly. By the end of the short story, we observe that the concept of the war is expressed by the fly through metaphor.

The title of the literary works in our opinion bears significant conceptual information, besides it has a symbolic meaning as well therefore we regard it as a conceptual metaphor. In some cases, it is possible to observe conceptual metaphor in the title of the text as in "The fly" by Katherine Mansfield. The title as a conceptual metaphor allows infer the metaphor "soldier is a fly". The title is associated with the concept of the war with its misery, sorrow, courage, heroism, pain, death and meaninglessness. As the narration goes on and the author implicitly depicts the setting of the war, the reader is baffled by the title, as the fly has nothing to do with the war. However, with the help of the title reader can draw similarities between the situations of the fly with the conditions of the soldiers. Thus, we can claim that title might be considered as a strong tool that bears conceptual information.

To summarize the points being made, it is possible to claim, that there are three efficient factors that led to the conclusion that fly has conceptual information and this information is given in the form of the metaphor. Firstly, the usage of the specific lexicon, in this particular case the vocabulary associated with the “war”; for example: *corpse, grave-looking, paper-knife, spectral, unblemished in his uniform etc.* Secondly, situational knowledge: these are contextual knowledge; extralinguistic factors, the knowledge of the reader about the war, his experience with the war; his world picture and other factors help to draw conclusions and find correlations between two factors (the fly and the soldiers). Finally, the title is conceptually meaningful as well as it helps to summarize the information gained by the whole text. First of all the symbolic meaning of the concept metaphor can be inferred from a linguistic context, describing the situation associated with war; next, by poetic detail, which describes the fly and its desperate efforts to survive; further, by the recurrent use of lexeme “fly”; lastly by extralinguistic factors including reader’s knowledge about the war.

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