

The Semantic and cognitive characteristics of metaphorically redefined vocabulary (on the material of 'building' vocabulary)

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Abstract. The study of metaphor is based on combining semantic and cognitive aspects of its functioning. Metaphor is viewed both as a semantic phenomenon, being special or derivative meanings of words, and as a cognitive phenomenon, being a method of perception of reality. In the framework of semantic and cognitive approach, the study of concepts is conducted by distinguishing and analysing the means of their linguistic objectivization. The modeling of the structure and the content of the concept implies its ordered, structured description with cognitive terms. A sphere of concepts is interpreted as an ordered set of concepts peculiar to a certain nation, information base of thinking, which is determined by a number of mental stereotypes in the consciousness of native speakers.

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Introduction

In contemporary linguistic research, the semantic and cognitive approach to studying language phenomena is developed in the framework of cognitive scientific paradigm. The study of processes of perception, categorization, classification, and understanding of the world has become the focus of cognitive science [1].

The main provision of semantic methodology states that through the study of semantic linguistic signs, one can describe an ordered set of concepts in the cognitive consciousness of native speakers [2]

The role of metaphor in forming the conceptual worldview cannot be overestimated. Metaphor is one of the most significant doorways to the conceptual worldview, since it is based on finding standards of analogy, and as noted by N.I. Sukalenko, it is the principal method of commonplace sense [3].

Conceptual metaphors, representing the universal human capability to structure new realms of knowledge while relying on the experience of human interaction with the world, are 'phenomena providing understanding' [4], including that of another culture.

The sphere of the concepts 'Construction of buildings'

In the focus of attention are metaphorically redefined lexemes of the semantic field of building vocabulary in the English and the Russian languages, considered as language representation of the sphere of concepts 'Construction of buildings'.

The metaphorical pattern embraces certain amount of basic conceptual semantically different

metaphors realizing associative and imaginative redefinition of a part of the sphere of concepts. In this way, if, for example, a lexeme is taken from the sphere of concepts 'Construction of buildings' and described by metaphorical transfer of the sphere of concepts 'Verbal and cogitative activity', then a number of conceptual metaphors is realized here, combined into the metaphorical pattern 'Verbal and cogitative activity is a building activity'. The presence of the metaphorical pattern while understanding concepts of the distinguished spheres of concepts is not necessary, its associative and imaginative perception can be limited by the distinguished conceptual metaphors.

The review of research literature testifies to the fact that the conceptual field 'Construction' and its subfields 'Edifice', 'Building', 'House', etc. or individual concepts quite often became the object of the research of cognitive linguists on the example of one or more languages. As stated by A.P. Chudinov, 'the conceptual field 'house' possesses all necessary conditions for metaphorical expansion 'House is the most important cultural concept in the human mind, it is a source of metaphorical expansion traditional for world culture' [5].

The metaphor of 'house' and its construction has been investigated in much detail in the area of political metaphor studies. A lot of researches testify that metaphorical representation of social and political realities and processes in the form of a house, including its construction, repairs, reconstruction, demolition, is a tradition for political discourse.

The comparative studies of the basic conceptual metaphor 'Europe is a house / building' on the material of the English and the German newspapers are presented in the work of A. Mussolf [6]. In this research, the author traces the development and change of conceptual metaphor for the last decade of the 20th century. Following the footsteps of a number of researchers [7], two concepts are modeled: the Russian concept 'house': an apartment house, and its Western European version: a fenced private house.

The study of metaphors from the cognitive sphere 'House/Construction' as a means of conceptualization of Europe in the Russian and the German newspaper discourse of the year 2000 was conducted by J. Zinken [8]. As the results of the research conducted by the author show, out of the two groups under analysis, 'Building' and 'Construction', productivity and frequency of metaphors of the second group in the Russian discourse come by far short of similar performance indicators in the German discourse.

In the course of studying the artifactual metaphor in the German political discourse, R.D. Kerimov distinguishes metaphorical sub-pattern 'Politics is a house', which puts knowledge about political processes and events in modern-day Germany and in the European Union in order to employ the terms of architectural structures and construction [9].

O. Santa Ana, studying the metaphorical potential of the American educational discourse, also notes productivity of metaphors 'Learning is construction', 'Learner is a knowledge builder', 'Knowledge is a house', 'School is a construction site', the source area for which is 'Nation is a house' [10].

In the course of studying the methods of metaphorical representation of presidential elections in Russia and the USA, A.A. Kaslova comes to the conclusion that the metaphorical pattern 'Presidential elections is construction' belongs to underproductive and showing low level of activity, it is also capable of evoking associations, actualizing additional connotations in the context of the presidential campaign, revealing peculiar, specific features of the national political worldview [11].

M.A. Simonenko conducted the research of functioning of architectural metaphors in two semiotic systems – in the architectural discourse and in the vernacular of architects on the material of the Russian language [12].

The source sphere of concepts represented by the metaphorically redefined vocabulary of the semantic field 'Construction of buildings' is a non-homogenous conceptual formation of the human

cognitive consciousness, systemically categorized and structured, reflecting human experience of dealing with this sphere in the objective reality.

Table 1. The hierarchical design of the source sphere of concepts 'Construction of Buildings'

Construction of Buildings					
Spheres of concepts					
Buildings			Building activities	Building instruments and materials	Building professions
Types of buildings	Rooms and locations	Parts of buildings			
		Inner parts	Outer parts		

The concepts representing metaphorically each of the spheres of concepts in the English and the Russian languages are verbalized with the help of lexical units incorporated into the structure of semantic fields. The combination of metaphorical meanings of the vocabulary of the semantic field 'Construction of buildings' forms a considerable segment of the conceptual worldview of native English and Russian speakers. The following data was engaged for the study:

1) data acquired by the method of componential analysis of dictionary entries from explanatory, English-Russian, collocations dictionaries of the Russian and the English languages;

2) data acquired by the method of continuous sampling from fiction literary works, advertising materials, popular scientific and publicistic hard copy and electronic periodicals.

The cognitive area of the source of regular conceptual metaphorical transfers is presented by 74 concepts. The conducted componential analysis of the dictionary definitions of the lexemes under study and their capability of forming idioms based on metaphorical transfer showed considerable quantitative predominance of metaphorical representation of concepts in the conceptual worldview of the native English speakers. The difference percentage makes 39%, which allows us to make a conclusion that building vocabulary is more frequent and productive for the purposes of metaphorical representation of a segment of the conceptual worldview of native English speakers.

The results of the comparative analysis of the ways of lexical representation of the concepts demonstrate that there are cases of equivalent metaphorical representation of the concepts, as, for example, in the cases with representation of the concepts *base*, *support* by metaphorically redefined lexemes *pillar*; the concept *marker of the course of life* by lexemes *lighthouse*, *beacon*, the concept *loss of physical and moral strength* by lexemes *collapse*, *ruin*, or the concept *head*, as the upper part of the

body, by lexemes *dome, thatch, garret, ceiling*; the concept *physique* by lexemes *build*. It is perhaps explained by similarity of physical and mental organization, likeness of world perception of native speakers, possible interpenetration and mutual influence of languages, determined by external contacts.

Identical in both spheres of concepts are the concepts *beginning of manifestation of feelings; eradication of emotion, disappearance of feelings; emotional barrier, consistent strengthening of feelings*. Partial equivalence is traced in the metaphorical representation of the concept *highest degree of manifested emotion* by idiomatic collocations *to drive/send up the wall* based on metaphorical transfer.

However, in a number of cases we found nonconformity and lacunarity of metaphorical perception of a number of concepts. So, for example, in the sphere of the concepts of native English speakers, there is no metaphorical representation of the concept *white skin*. While the concept *tallness* in the sphere of concepts of native English speakers is additionally represented by the metaphorically redefined lexeme *skyscraper*, the concept *no response* is represented by the lexeme *doorpost*, incorporated into the comparison idiom *as deaf as a doorpost*. In the conceptual worldview of native Russian speakers, there is no metaphorical representation of the concepts: *appearance, low stature, easy manageability, attractiveness and right proportions, importance, impressiveness, location inside the human body*. The concept *apply makeup*, besides identical metaphorical representation by the lexeme *paint*, is additionally represented by the verb lexeme *to plaster* in the conceptual worldview of the Russian language.

We should also note lacunarity of metaphorical perception in the sphere of the concepts of the Russian native speakers for such concepts as *tactless remark; flatter, exaggeration; sketch, rough draft*, which in the sphere of concepts of native English speakers are represented respectively by metaphorically redefined lexemes incorporated into an idiomatic expression *brick (drop a brick), trowel (lay it on with a trowel), roughcast*. Apart from these concepts, in the sphere of concepts of the Russian native speakers, there is no metaphorical representation of the concepts *refusal, disagreement; disruption of negotiations/discussion* either, which in the sphere of concepts of the native English speakers are represented respectively by metaphorically redefined lexemes *demolish; collapse*. In the sphere of concepts of the native English speakers, there is no metaphorical perception of the concept *complicatedness, transcendence, sophistication*,

which in the sphere of concepts of the native Russian speakers is represented by metaphorically redefined lexemes *granite, two-storied, three-storied*.

The partial similarity is seen in the metaphorical representation of a number of concepts. Thus, besides similar lexemes *wall; labyrinth*; the concept *life troubles, predicament* is represented by metaphorically redefined English lexemes *kitchen, in ruins*, the metaphorically redefined lexeme of the Russian language *cant*, as well as by the English idiomatic expression based on metaphorical transfer, *to pick yourself up off the floor*. From our point of view, similarity in the prototypical situation is also observed in metaphorical representation of this concept by the idiomatic expression *the roof falls* and the Russian verb lexeme *ruin*.

Thus, the lexis of the semantic field of building vocabulary is viewed here as linguistic objectivization of the sphere of the concepts 'Construction of buildings', which serves as a cognitive area of the source of the regular conceptual metaphorical transfers. Generalized spheres of concepts representing the cognitive area of the source and the cognitive area of the purpose of metaphorical transfer are non-homogenous in their semantic structure and are represented by a number of spheres of concepts in both languages.

Conclusions

The results of the comparative analysis conducted on the basis of componential analysis of the dictionary definitions of the lexis under study demonstrated that the semantic field of the building vocabulary, which is viewed here as linguistic objectivization of the corresponding sphere of concepts, is engaged in metaphorical representation of a wide range of concepts. On the whole, we observe quantitative predominance of metaphorically redefined lexemes of the semantic field of building vocabulary in the conceptual worldview of native English speakers.

The considered cases of identical metaphorical representation of a number of concepts testify to commonness of perception of objective reality by the native English and Russian speakers, closeness and interconnection of the languages, thinking patterns, cultural traditions, and historical experience of the nations. The presence of lacunary concepts, from the point of view of their metaphorical representation by the vocabulary group under study, testifies to the existence of specific, nationally determined ways of perception.

The comparative analysis testifies to the presence of a large number of metaphorically represented concepts characterizing the area of social

relations and reflecting socially significant characteristics of human life.

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