Research of metaphor in the Ural linguistic school

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Abstract. The article deals with the perspectives of metaphor theory development. The main aim is to present the results of metaphor research within the Ural linguistic school, known by its views on language as a dynamic process. We try to show the evolution of views on metaphor from the assumption that it is analogous to communicative syntax, to the conceptual and discursive views on metaphor. We suggest that metaphor is the main mechanism of discourse formation, since it provides professional knowledge development. Such view would differ from traditional ones by being dynamic, cognitive and anthropocentric. In this research we also set out to discuss the role of political metaphor as a type of knowledge transfer. We do not concern only with metaphor theory, but also with metaphor pragmatics, seen in persuasive character of political metaphors. The study of metaphor by means of cognitively oriented views makes it possible to enrich the subject of research and develop the foundation of metaphorology.
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1. Introduction

In the following introduction we shall try to discuss the idea of the peculiarities of views of the Ural linguists on metaphor, and on the development of metaphor theory on the basis of derivation theory, in particular. We shall sketch some of the historical background and the main theoretical assumptions of the Ural linguistic school.

The Ural linguistic school was founded in the middle of the XX century on the researches of scholars from the main Ural Universities of Perm and Yekaterinburg. At that time one of the primary approaches to language was dynamic. The main trend at that school was derivation, taken in a broad sense, as a general language theory, which was applied to natural language acquisition, methods of language teaching, textology, etc.

The research field of derivation theory was very wide and included different aspects: from speech practice to language history. In all the cases, derivatology, as a scientific trend, had to explain the production of language and speech units. Metaphor as a special language unit was in the centre of derivatologists interests. One of the main issues, discussed by the Ural scholars, was connected with the further development of metaphor theory.

The study of metaphor is one of the oldest branches of linguistics, tracing back to Aristotle who, basing on objects similarity, defined metaphor as transference of meaning from one word to the other. It is evident that Aristotle viewed metaphor on the basis of an isolated word. However, within derivation theory, metaphor was researched as part of text

formation process. This line of thought provoked an important change in metaphor study.

Investigation of metaphor led its way from language, via speech to cognitive perspective. The approach to metaphor we have been outlining is concerned with, as we call it, the second metaphor paradigm in the history of metaphor development. In our research, we shall discuss the three main stages in the development of views on metaphor within the Ural linguistic school: the birth of metaphor theory (derivation views), discourse analysis of metaphor (cognitive views) and the role of metaphor in political discourse.

Derivation theory of metaphor has reshaped Aristotelian theory of metaphor. The peculiarity of the Ural school of metaphor is that the researchers studied metaphor not in isolation, but within a broad frame. The study of metaphor within the Ural linguistic school was carried out in two stages, connected with two main discoveries: 1) the discovery of metaphor mechanism [1], [2]; 2) the research of metaphor as discourse formation [3], [4]; [5], [6], [7].

2. Derivational view of metaphor

The founder of metaphor theory at the Ural linguistic school was Professor Leonid Murzin (1930-1996) from Perm State University. Forty years ago the first work devoted to the derivation as the main trend in the research of language dynamics and language units production was published [8]. For the present, derivation views on metaphor are not

entirely known among European scholars. We believe our article will fill this gap.

Murzin and others offered their own views on classical metaphor theories by suggesting the latter being limited and straightforward, since metaphor was treated there as a simple shift of meaning. He followed a different course to find out how metaphor worked. In his analysis of metaphor production, he proposed a set of actions that explained metaphor mechanism. The basic idea was that derivation of metaphor was analogous to that of text-formation.

The initial view on metaphor at the Ural linguistic school was that metaphor was one of the linguistic universals. However, this idea was evaluated only with the development of cognitivism in linguistics. Leonid Murzin recognized the crucial importance of the nature of metaphor. He initiated a long line of assumptions about the mechanism of metaphor.

The basic tenets for metaphor research at the Ural school of metaphor were the following:

1)   metaphor should be viewed on two levels: surface and deep;

2)   the mechanism of metaphor is analogous to that of syntactical way of derivation of compound sentences ;

3)   metaphor model may be viewed as propositional, since proposition is the main content of utterance;

4)   metaphor is derived as a result of contamination of two sentences: basic and introductive;

5)   metaphor is predicative by its nature;

6)   metaphorization is connected with human activity.

The main goal of derivation theory was to provide metaphor with a proper theory, and the researchers argued that metaphor could be represented by a complex mechanism of sentences contamination. Investigating metaphor, Leonid Murzin suggested that his theory of metaphor was to be represented by a set of criteria dependent on the syntax. To make this suggestion clearer, consider the following sentence: *The evening is dark* (1). The elements of the sentence *evening* and *dark* are correlated with each other by means of adequate qualities, or meanings, which potentially belong to their semantic structures. Such kind of sentence is called a semantically nonproductive sentence. Consider: *The evening is blind* (2). The meanings of the words *evening* and *blind* are not correlated. Nevertheless, we do understand the meaning of this sentence. The sentence of this kind is called a semantically productive (derived) sentence. We may

affirm that sentences (1) and (2) reveal isomorphism of their syntactic structures, and at the same time, semantic productivity. In order to restore the semantic history of the second sentence, it is necessary to apply denotative and significative parameters. From the denotative point of view, the accent is put on the subject of the sentence. Leonid Murzin called sentence (1) *introductive*.

The subject of the sentence is always determined by the text content. In our case, the subject is *evening*. Its predicative is *dark*. As we have already noticed, sentence (2) is structured in analogous way to sentence (1) with regard to its actualized quality, expressed by the predicate of sentence (2). In this sentence the meanings of the subject and predicate are not coordinated. Sentence (2) provides the condition (or basis) for the meaning transfer. For this reason it is called *basic*. Derivation distinguishes a set of procedures for possible correlation of sentence (1) and sentence (2). The mechanism was recognized as derivational (or metaphoric).

We see, that the results of metaphor study from derivational perspective were encouraging: metaphor mechanism, witch is appeared to be analogous to text-formation, was discovered and described. What has been discovered about metaphor in derivatology is very striking. If we take into consideration the opposition of the definition of metaphor as a compressed simile, on the one hand, and its derivatives, or compressed descriptions, on the other, it may lead us to a better understanding of metaphor as a text formation process. In this sense, text formation may be viewed as the transition from the process of unfolding, or predication, to be more exact, rematisation (metaphorisation), subjected to the mechanism of contamination, to the process of text folding, or nomination, that is rematisation (metonymy), controlling by compression.

Thus, we show that, from derivational point of view, metaphor may be regarded as a secondary predication, in other words, as a derivative, or a compressate, of a simile. On this ground, metaphor is often defined as a compressed simile.

3. Metaphor in discourse

Within this approach to metaphor, we regard it as a subject of cognitive science, which borders with discourse analysis. For us, discourse is a verbally mediated activity in special sphere, which includes a hierarchy of levels, or stages of human semiotic activity. The most important stage of this functional system is metaphorization in its reference to the process of text formation.

It is well known that the foundation of discourse analysis was done by means of conceptual

and cognitive theories of metaphor [9]. In this respect, it is possible to consider derivation theory as the foundation of cognitive perspective of metaphor, since various grammatical constructions, derivation of which were studied in derivatology, are considered in cognitive science as mental space builders [10], [11]. As it was proved in cognitive science, people use language to talk about things only by virtue of having mentally represented them. It is "the result of an interaction between external input and the means available to internally represent it" [12]. It means that the semantics of any text correlates with the level of conceptual structure, which is subjective, individual, and construal. In this sense, verbalization of knowledge in the text is represented by means of quite new language mechanisms of modification of language units' semantics. Out of these mechanisms the most important is metaphorization. Thanks to these processes, the human, studying the world, adapts the language to the adequate way of depicting the reality.

We locate this theory within one of the most important spheres of modern cognitive linguistics where metaphor is studied as cognitive mechanism [13], or as part of innate human capacity. In this sense, we regard metaphor as a mental process, providing the crossing of several conceptual fields within a conceptual sphere.

The most essential claims of cognitive theories of metaphor, that have developed in our research of metaphor in discourse, and have guided us towards solving the issues of knowledge representation, can be summed up in the following propositions:

- in discourse the identification of metaphor with the mechanism of indirect thinking about the world takes place;
- metaphor is based on the mechanism of getting inferential knowledge by means of reliance on the attribute of attributes; in this case the important role plays a non-rigid (prototypical) categorization;
- categorization, one of the main processes taking place in discourse, is the outcome of the juxtaposition of the two conceptual structures; in this sense, categorization is realized by metaphor;
- cognitive basement of metaphorization provides its study as a cognitive mechanism of communicative processes.

All these claims were discussed in a set of monographs, written by the Ural linguists: "Term and Metaphor", 1998; "Metaphor in medical discourse", 2002; "Metaphorical Mosaics in Modern Political Communication", 2005; et al. In these researches various kinds of discourse have been discussed: medical [14], political [15], scientific [16], computer

[17], etc. They are concerned with the conceptual content of various kinds of discourse formed by metaphor. All the researches are aimed at the designing of structures of represented knowledge by means of metaphor.

As far as we define discourse as a verbally-mediated activity in a special sphere, which is characterized by the development, regarded within the cognitive paradigm as a source of conceptualization, we study metaphor dynamics by means of observing modification of concept structures. More than that, we suggest that any activity is characterized by the results. In this sense, referring to the theory of discourse, we believe that realization of those results is done directly in the language/texts, where each metaphor reflects modification of concept structure.

4. Metaphor in political discourse

The study of metaphor in political discourse is a pragmatically orientated trend. Most of the issues, referring to metaphor and discourse sphere, concern metaphor usage in speeches of social and political figures. It is a common knowledge that each epoch brings a new system of conceptual political metaphors. According to Jonathan Charteris-Black, "within all types of political system, from autocratic, through oligarchic to democratic, leaders have relied on the spoken word to convince others of the benefits that arise from their leadership" [18]. It follows from this, that in order to get a sufficient knowledge about the peculiarities of the vast sphere of life, it is necessary to present a specific mosaic of political life in various countries. This statement has been supported by the analysis of a large corpus of metaphors. A.Tchudinov has been especially concerned with the analysis of the corpus of metaphors of Yeltsin's epoch. As a result, he found out that the most frequently used metaphors were linked with conceptual vectors of inflexibility, aggressiveness and rivalry (slots: *war*, *crime*, *sport*, etc.), as well as with the vector of deviation (slots: *illness*, crime, *pervasion*, etc.) [19].

One of the tasks of political discourse analysis is to study national systems of political metaphors, which are constantly developing. In this vein, the regularities of metaphoric models in political discourse of the XXI century in Russia have been studied. The whole period was divided into two stages according to the principle of metaphor activity. The first period is referred to 2000-2003-s. It is characterized by the dominant metaphors related with aggression (the main source spheres: *war*, *crime*, *animal world*), as well as with the expression of insincerity (*theatre*, *game*). It was typical of the

speeches of opposition leaders. However, the used metaphors were regarded as trite, or banal, ones.

During the second period (2004 – 2008-s) other type of metaphors was discovered. Metaphors were associated with a more understandable for the Russian mind metaphor type, i.e. metaphor of nature. The amount of anthropomorphic metaphors also increased. A.Tchudinov has observed that metaphors with military semantics were substituted by less aggressive sport metaphors. All these changes witness the tendency of changing the ruinous meaning of war metaphors into the meaning, representing stability and a healthy rivalry. Criminal metaphors of Yeltsin's epoch, frequently used during the period of "a bandit" capitalism, became less popular, since they discriminated the leaders and ruined the effect of reliability, honesty and morality.

Thus, the analysis of the data provided to distinguish two tendencies in metaphor functioning: "metaphor storm" and "metaphor calm". The two divergent perspectives reflect the tendencies of social and political life development.

In recent years, several attempts have been made within the comparative analysis of metaphor functioning in Russian and American political discourses. The corpus of analyzed metaphors contained 1850 metaphors extracted from the US political discourse (50 %) and Russian political discourse (50 %) referring to internal presidential elections in the USA and the Russian Federation in 2000 and 2004. As the data showed, the majority of Russian and American metaphorical models, describing presidential election, were the same [ELECTION IS WAR, ILLNESS, SHOW, SPORT, COMPETITION, GAME, PATH]. Both American and Russian voters typically view politicians as 'warlords', 'movie heroes', or 'gamblers'.

The data suggests that there are culturally specific metaphorical models inherited especially in American mind (PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS SELECTION OF A MANAGER) (182 metaphor-models), and culturally rooted in Russian mind (PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS CORONATION) (207 metaphor-models). Such metaphorical preferences may be interpreted on the basis of historical and cultural traditions of these two nations. Thus, the comparative analysis has revealed that a metaphorical model not only constructs the strategies of political activity, it also reflects the way of conceptualization of a certain phenomenon within the *national* picture of the world.

5. Conclusion

The theory of metaphor has come a long way in the Ural linguistic school. We have attempted to show the development of metaphor theory within a definite linguistic school by means of observation of the common ground for the research of metaphor. We suggested that derivation, as one of the main linguistic theories, has a number of consequences for the further research of metaphor. After many decades of semantic treatment of metaphor, derivative views have been considerably favourable. Derivation theory of metaphor provided a sufficient foundation for further researching the inner mechanism of metaphor. It suggested ways for studying metaphor on a more extensive platform than it was done within the semantic theories, which were based on the hope that a thorough analysis of meaning transfer would reveal metaphor nature. In our research, we showed the derivation theory of metaphor as an alternative approach to semantic theory of metaphor. Derivatology proved that in metaphor, language and thought are combined syntactically.

Further solutions of the issues of metaphor were suggested by discursive approach to metaphor. The result was that it was possible to construct metaphoric models of the world on the basis of discourse. The heart of the matter is that humans make judgments about definite events by means of metaphors.

By comparing the approaches to metaphor during a long time period, we have tried to emphasize the integral goal and theoretical premises that integrate the Ural scientific school of metaphor. From this point of view, there seems to be a clearly defined sense of evolution of views on metaphor. The Ural metaphor researchers move from a purely linguistic paradigm (communicative syntax and text formation) toward a discourse paradigm that embraces the problems of conceptual representations of metaphor in various types of discourse.

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