

CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS AND METONYMIES AS A CHALLENGE FOR CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The article discusses the role of conceptual metaphors and metonymies within the framework of cognitive linguistics and cross-cultural communication. Universal metaphors and metonymies are the basis of human reasoning. Furthermore, metaphors and metonymies are the effective tools for the investigation of the conceptual system of thinking in different cultures. The article suggests that these conceptual devices are essentially the coagulates of cultural experience which express the stereotyped historical knowledge, the collective wisdom of the world, as well as the wide semantic range of different cultural codes. Metaphors and metonymies represent the way of reality decomposition, the system of values, adopted in the ethnocultural community. Thus, metaphors and metonymies serve as a unified system of registering and transmitting the most significant cultural information. The studies on conceptual metaphors and metonymies can potentially reveal the representative features of different cultures; disclose the peculiarities of mentality and world-view, as well as the unique attributes of communication in national languages.

Keywords: *metaphor, metonymy, cognitive linguistics, cross-cultural communication.*

Problem definition in the context of modern philological science. The nature and peculiarities of human language have always been within the focus of increased attention among scientists. The relationship between language and thinking is one of the fundamental issues in linguistics. The hypothesis of linguistic relativity, developed by the American linguists Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir in the

1930s, has paved the way for the research in this direction. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggests that the structure of language affects the way of thinking and the reality cognition. It is assumed that people who speak different languages have different perceptions of the world and different thinking. According to Whorf, grammatical and semantic categories of language are not only the tools for transferring thoughts; they also shape the ideas and manage the intellectual activity. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has stimulated serious discussion and debates concerning the relationship between language and thought. As Barry Blake asserts, «our perception may not be constrained by language, but it is plausible to suggest that our perception is influenced by the categories of our language» [2, p. 51].

The obvious correlation between language and thought supposes the correspondence between their structures. In this context, Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green refer to the phenomenon of a conceptual domain, that is, a «body of knowledge» [5, p. 18] which encloses and arranges the related notions. The scholars analyze a number of conventional expressions («Christmas is fast approaching»; «the number of shares we own has gone up»; «Those two have a very close friendship») and conclude that they are related to the abstract conceptual domains, such as TIME, QUANTITY and AFFECTION correspondingly. At the same time, these expressions pertain to the physically feasible and concrete conceptual domains of MOTION, VERTICAL ELEVATION and PHYSICAL PROXIMITY respectively («Christmas is approaching»; «shares have gone up»; «very close friendship»). In doing so, the scholars adhere to the ideas of cognitive approach to the problems of language and thinking which was pioneered by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980. The scientists contend that «it is language which ultimately determines the world view of its speaker; only the words spoken give shape to the concepts of our mind» [3, p. 6]. The major findings of Lakoff and Johnson consist in the tendency of human conceptual system to systematically structure and conceptualize abstract concepts in terms of «our experience of the behaviour of physical objects» [3, p. 18]. Thus, the central place in the theory of Lakoff and Johnson belongs to the notion of metaphor.

In fact, the linguists assert that metaphor is not simply «a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish – a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language» [8, p. 3], but a crucial category of human reasoning. Lakoff and Johnson contend that the process of human thinking is essentially metaphorical. Ultimately, the scholars relieve metaphor from its peripheral position as an ornamental linguistic device and bring it to the foreground of human conceptual system. Metonymy, likewise, occupies an important place in the conceptual system; it is also an integral component of human reasoning. As Lakoff and Johnson observe, it is necessary to distinguish between metaphor and metonymy as essentially different kinds of processes. The scholars contend that «metonymy has primarily a referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity to stand for another» [8, p. 37] (for example, THE PART FOR THE WHOLE: «clear head» stands for an intelligent person). In fact, metonymy and metaphor perform the similar functions. Likewise, adjacency is not just a rhetorical device, but also a beacon of human reasoning peculiarities which structure our thoughts and speech.

The analysis of recent studies and publications. According to Zoltán Kövecses, there is a certain amount of the so-called universal, or at least «near-universal conceptual metaphors» [7, p. 208] which are shared by native speakers of all national languages in the world. Thus, the process of coupling between the metaphorical signifier and signified turns out to be similar across cultures. For instance, the TIME IS SPACE metaphor can actually be found in Mandarin Chinese, English, Hindi and other languages. Such metaphor as AN ANGRY PERSON IS A PRESSURIZED CONTAINER is also used «to various degrees in English, Japanese, Chinese, Hungarian, Wolof, Zulu, Polish, and other languages» [7, p. 208].

Ersu Ding also explores the universal and near-universal metaphors which are formed in the result of cultural overlapping across languages. In fact, such metaphors as HUMAN IS BIRD or HUMAN IS ANIMAL have become meta-metaphorical formulas. As a consequence, such metaphorical expressions as «she is a lark; he is a vulture; Lisa galloped through the book in two days» [4, p. 53] and the like can be found in different languages.

Zoltán Kövecses attempts to find the roots of such an outstanding similarity across cultures. Firstly, the scholar suggests that diverse nations could have possibly developed similar conceptual understanding of such universal abstract notions as «happiness, time, or purpose» [4, p. 207]. Secondly, such conceptual overlapping could take place due to the process of borrowing of certain metaphors. The scholar also suggests that this phenomenon can be attributed to some kind of universal conceptual basis inherent to different cultures and languages. For example, HAPPINESS IS UP metaphor is associated with a certain physical basis: «drooping posture typically goes along with sadness and depression, erect posture with a positive emotional state» [8, p. 16]. As a matter of fact, Zoltán Kövecses argues that «when we are happy, we tend to be physically up, moving around, be active, jump up and down, smile (i.e., turn up the corners of the mouth)» [7, p. 208]. In other words, this natural emotion proves to be universal to humanity. Hence, the condition of happiness constitutes a shared conceptual metaphor.

Thus, a number of metaphors represent the most fundamental values and concepts which can potentially be transferred from one culture to another. In such a way they constitute a basic framework of reasoning. However, most of metaphors are «culturally variable concepts, formed in a cultural-specific environment» [4, p. 11]. As Ersu Ding remarks, «the same life situation» can be «metaphorically semiotized in different ways across languages and cultures» [4, p. 55]. As a matter of fact, the contrastive study of figurative devices in different languages is a productive field of modern research. **The aim of the article** is to investigate the conceptual metaphors and metonymies in terms of their role in the cross-cultural communication.

The main body of the research. According to the recent studies related to metaphors, these linguistic devices mirror the processes of thinking and cognitive system of humans. Moreover, metaphors epitomize the salient features of a culture, and therefore reveal the characteristic aspects of an ethnic group, or of a nation. As a matter of fact, «the way metaphorical concepts are formed varies from culture to culture» [3, p. 9]. In other words, conceptual metaphors highly depend on the cultural background of individuals. Metaphors are culturally-laden expressions, culturally

specific scenarios which bear a strong charge of social identity. It is essential that their meanings can be disclosed as soon as one approaches the shared body of cultural knowledge and experience.

For example, the metaphorical concepts TIME IS MONEY, TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE and TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY are typical of the modern Western culture. In fact, these concepts are widely represented in contemporary English («you are wasting my time; this gadget will save you hours; I have invested a lot of time in her; you are running out of time» and so on). As Lakoff and Johnson observe, the modern Western culture tends to associate work with the time it usually takes; «it has become customary to pay people by the hour, week, or year» [4, p. 9]. Thus, the conceptual metaphor actually structures the life of the modern Western culture, involving hourly wages, yearly budgets and so on. In fact, the TIME IS MONEY metaphor is relatively new for humanity. An important point is that not all cultures conceptualize time as a limited resource or a valuable commodity. Hence, it is widespread in the industrialized societies, while «many people in cultures around the world simply live their lives without being concerned about whether they are using their time efficiently» [7, p. 253].

As Martin J. Gannon remarks, the cultural metaphor is an effective innovative technique for understanding «the cultural mindset of a nation and comparing it to those of other nations» [6, p. 7]. For example, as the scholar remarks, the key features of the Italian opera (spectacle, pageantry, externalization) are usually attributed to the cultural mindset of Italy. In this context, Martin J. Gannon observes that although metaphors by no means can embrace the entire conceptual pattern of a nation, it certainly can be a reliable guide on the way to understanding a different culture; «a good starting point for interacting effectively with it» [6, p. 10].

In fact, the knowledge of conceptual metaphors can help foreigners to avoid cultural mistakes and feel comfortable in the process of communication. The point is that metaphors which are well-defined in one culture can have absolutely different meanings in other cultures. For instance, in the Western world, dragon is a symbol of evil, while in the Oriental world it is the traditional image of royal power.

As Lily I-wen Su contends, «metaphors reflect different cultural information» [9, p. 589]. In this context, the scholar explores the conceptual metaphor THOUGHT AS FOOD in the Chinese culture. The scientist also investigates «the current Chinese view of marriage» [9, p. 588] which is conceptualized in metaphors MARRIAGE IS AN ONGOING JOURNEY, MARRIAGE IS BUSINESS, MARRIAGE IS GAMBLING, and MARRIAGE IS BONDING. The primary objective of Lily I-wen Su is to distinguish the specific features of the Chinese culture through the analysis of the culturally-loaded ways of conceptualization, i.e., metaphors. For example, the MARRIAGE AS AN ONGOING JOURNEY; MARRIAGE AS GAMBLING; MARRIAGE AS A BONDING and MARRIAGE AS BUSINESS metaphors display that «some features of the source domain (i.e., «gambling», «bonding», and «ongoing journey») are more prominent and more often mapped in Chinese» [9, p. 610].

By means of analysis of conceptual metaphors, particularly, their linguistic realizations in proverbs and sayings, the scholar discloses the cultural view toward the concepts of food and marriage in the Chinese language. For instance, the archaic sayings «Yinyuan tian zhuding» («Marriages are pre-arranged») or «Nan pa xuan cuo hang, nü pa jia cuo lang» («A man's disaster is to choose the wrong career; a woman's misery is to marry the wrong husband») indicate that marriage was essentially predetermined, divorces were forbidden, and Chinese women regarded marriage as the most crucial decision in life.

Moreover, the MARRIAGE AS BUSSINESS metaphor still prevails in the contemporary Chinese society, although its implications have been modified: «Husband and wife are considered partners working for the benefit of their enterprise» [9, p. 598] which is manifested in the expressions «marriage can be managed»; «the quality of marriage» and the like. Thus, the ordinary language contains the explicit representation of the perspectives on marriage in the modern Chinese society.

The scholar also considers the peculiarities of the THOUGHT AS FOOD metaphor (in particular, its variations THE FORMATION OF THOUGHT IS THE PREPARATION OF FOOD; THE COMPREHENSION OF THOUGHT IS THE

DIGESTION OF FOOD and the like). As a matter of fact, this metaphor indicates that the culinary art plays a prominent role in the Chinese culture; therefore, food has been chosen as a source domain for expression the abstract notions of thoughts and ideas. In other words, the cultural values of the Chinese society have been vividly reflected linguistically in the conceptual metaphors.

Likewise, Gladys Nyarko Ansah attempts to reveal the differences and similarities in the conceptualization of such emotions as love and anger across languages and cultures. More specifically, the scholar considers two conceptual metaphors (LOVE IS A JOURNEY and ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER) and their implementation in Akan and English. The scholar detects the metonymic and metaphoric conceptualization principles in the anger metaphors of both English and Akan: «the human body is a key source domain in how anger is metaphorically understood in both languages. The physiological effects of anger on the body are used metonymically to stand for the emotion of anger» [1, p. 16]. The LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor also involves the conceptualization of love in terms of travelling in both cultures.

Zoltán Kövecses, as an adherent of «cultural embodied prototype view» [1, p. 22] distinguishes between the physiological embodiment and non-physiological embodiment (also known as culturally specific embodiment) of metaphors. In this context, the similarities between metaphors in Akan and English are the instances of physiological embodiment (the body is conceptualized as a container in both cultures). By contrast, the differences in Akan and English can be explained by means of culturally specific embodiment: «while the skin colour (redness around the face and neck area) is used metonymically to conceptualize anger in English, Hungarian and Chinese – all languages of light-skinned cultures» [1, p. 22], this principle does not operate for dark-skinned cultures (for instance, Akan or Wolof). Thus, the cultural influence on the two metaphors in question is significant indeed.

As to the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY, it also reveals a number of differences which are determined by «specific cultural knowledge» [1, p. 23]. For example, land journeys, as well as overwater travelling are culturally appropriate for

the English (since England is an island), whereas land journeys prevail in Akan, since the home of the Akans is the rainforest, for the most part riverless. Hence, the culturally-specific experience determines the peculiarities of metaphorical reasoning to a great extent. The analysis of conceptual metaphors provides the scholars with the possibility to gain understanding of different cultures.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Thus, metaphor is not merely an ornamental phenomenon and a linguistic device as the ancient rhetoricians thought, but «more fundamentally, a conceptual and experiential process that structures our world» [9, p. 591-610], an integral component which reflects the peculiarities of a certain cultural thinking model. Basically, metaphors are the unconscious mechanisms of our interaction with the environment. Therefore, metaphors explicitly demonstrate the ways people of different nations tend to explain certain concepts, structure knowledge and experience, finally, the ways they develop their understanding of life. Metaphors are essentially the coagulates of cultural experience which express the stereotyped historical knowledge, the collective experience of the world, as well as the wide semantic content of different cultural codes. In fact, metaphors represent the way of reality dissection, the system of values, adopted in the ethnocultural community. Further, metaphors serve as a unified system of recording and transmitting the most significant cultural information. The studies on conceptual metaphors can potentially disclose the salient features of different cultures; reveal the peculiarities of mentality and world perception, as well as the unique attributes of communication in national languages.

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Бережанська Ю. Концептуальні метафори та метонімії як об'єкт міжкультурної комунікації.

У статті розглядається роль концептуальних метафор і метонімії у системі когнітивної лінгвістики та міжкультурної комунікації. Універсальні метафори та метонімії є основою людського мислення. Крім того, метафори і метонімії є ефективними інструментами для дослідження концептуальної системи мислення в різних культурах. Концептуальні метафори та метонімії концентрують культурний досвід, репрезентують стереотипні історичні знання, колективний досвід, а також широкий спектр різних культурних кодів. Метафори та метонімії вказують на шляхи концептуального «розтину» навколишньої дійсності, системи цінностей, прийняті у межах певної етнокультурної спільноти. Таким чином, метафори та метонімії утворюють уніфіковану систему запису і передачі найважливішої культурної інформації.

Дослідження концептуальних метафор та метонімії уможлиблює розкриття характерних рис мислення у різних культурах, виявляє специфіку менталітету та особливості сприйняття світу, а також унікальні формули комунікації в національних мовах.

Ключові слова: *метафора, метонімія, когнітивна лінгвістика, міжкультурна комунікація.*

Бережанская Ю. Концептуальные метафоры и метонимии как объект межкультурной коммуникации.

В статье рассматривается роль концептуальных метафор и метонимий в системе когнитивной лингвистики и межкультурной коммуникации. Универсальные метафоры и метонимии формируют основу человеческого мышления. Кроме того, метафоры и метонимии являются эффективными инструментами для исследования концептуальной системы мышления в разных культурах. Концептуальные метафоры и метонимии концентрируют культурный опыт, олицетворяют стереотипные исторические знания, коллективный опыт, а также широкий спектр различных культурных кодов. Метафоры и метонимии указывают на пути концептуального «рассечения» окружающей действительности, системы ценностей, принятые в пределах определенной этнокультурной общности. Таким образом, метафоры и метонимии образуют унифицированную систему записи и передачи важнейшей культурной информации. Исследование концептуальных метафор и метонимий обеспечивает раскрытие характерных черт мышления в разных культурах, выявляет специфику менталитета и особенности восприятия мира, а также уникальные формулы коммуникации в национальных языках.

Ключевые слова: *метафора, метонимия, когнитивная лингвистика, межкультурная коммуникация.*