

Metaphorically Redefined Vocabulary: Categorization and Systematization of Reality

Anastasia A. Kuznetsova*

Kazan Federal University, Kremliovskaya str, 18, 420008, Kazan, Russia

Aida G. Sadykova

Kazan Federal University, Kremliovskaya str, 18, 420008, Kazan, Russia

Luiza R. Zakirova

Kazan Federal University, Kremliovskaya str, 18, 420008, Kazan, Russia

Ed. Lazarini

Indiana University, 107 S Indiana Ave, Bloomington, IN 47405, USA

Abstract

The present paper aimed to determine the necessity to study principles of metaphorical representation of objective reality to reveal common and differential nationally specific features of the cognitive consciousness of native speakers with different languages. This research was conducted in a semantic and cognitive approach helping to identify an ordered set of concepts in the public minds and their concept spheres through the investigation of semantics of linguistic signs. The main methods included the component analysis, the conceptual analysis, the contextual analysis, the etymological analysis, the cognitive analysis, and the metaphorical analysis. The analysis of problems indicated that the metaphorically redefined vocabulary of the semantic field of construction vocabulary formed a vast area of the conceptual worldview of speakers with English and Russian languages. Anthroposphere is the most frequent and productive cognitive goal of the metaphorical shift with construction vocabulary – 91, 81%. We identified areas of regular and irregular metaphorical shifts indicating the potential of construction vocabulary in forming a fragment of the conceptual worldview of English and Russian speakers. Quantitative indices indicated the predominance of ontological and structural metaphors over orientational ones. The obtained results of research on the semantic field of construction vocabulary reflected an ordered and evident prototypical basis in the cognitive consciousness of native speakers. The method of investigating metaphorical shifts in this paper can be also based on materials of other concept spheres and semantic fields that represent them.

Keywords: Semantic and cognitive approach; Conceptualization; Metaphor; Categorization; Concept sphere; Semantics; Cognitive science.



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1. Introduction

The present research was innovative since it highlighted metaphorical models and conceptual metaphors that were formed by lexemes of the semantic field of construction vocabulary existing in the concept sphere of native English and Russian speakers. It solved the problem of structuring and ordering the fragment of the conceptual worldview of native speakers representing by metaphorically redefined lexemes of the semantic field. It seems necessary to resolve the issue of identifying main concept spheres as its essence is structured through metaphorically redefined vocabulary in the cognitive consciousness of native speakers of with analyzed languages (Abisheva *et al.*, 2018).

Cognitive science focuses on the study of processes namely the perception, categorization, classification and interpretation of the world, and knowledge representation and storage systems (Antúnez, 2001).

The research was conducted on the semantic and cognitive approach to study the linguistic phenomena. The focus was on processes namely the perception, categorization, classification and interpretation of world (Baranov, 2004).

According to W. Croft, categories have internal structures that are called prototype structures (Croft and Cruse, 2005). T. Klozner and W. Croft indicated the existence of an indisputable connection between mental representations and the world where people live (Geeraerts and Cuyckens, 2007) Intelligence is an active factor in understanding semantic structures and concentrates or explains the experience that is gained from the external world in a certain way. It is found that the metaphor helps to understand new concepts through their analogy with the old ones (Jakel, 2002)

From the point of view of information organization, processing and transfer, a language is considered as a repository of world knowledge, and a structured set of significant categories. It follows the primacy of semantics in linguistic analysis, deriving from the cognitive nature of a language itself, which predetermines its main purpose that is the categorization of the surrounding world, and is reflected in the linguistic meaning (Kireeva-Karimova *et al.*, 2017).

Metaphor is not a mere poetic or eloquent device, as people used to refer to it, and it is a general framing mechanism enabling people to explain a notion in terms of another notion (Klausner and Croft, 1999).

The present paper provided an analysis of the following language materials in the research: 114 lexemes of the English, 107 lexemes of the Russian that were selected by the continuous sampling from printed and electronic monolingual and bilingual explanatory, etymological dictionaries and phrase books, as well as over 2000 subjects, as a result of sampling printed and electronic fiction, publicist and scientific literature. The obtained data allowed us to systematize the fragment of the conceptual worldview of English and Russian that were represented by metaphorically redefined construction vocabulary, and identify the most common conceptual spheres (Lakoff and Johnson, 2004).

The selected concept spheres contained metaphorical models and basic conceptual metaphors revealing the structural and semantic content of the concept sphere.

Research materials can be used in designing teaching manuals on cognitive semantics in lectures, and on the theory of metaphor in specialized courses.

The issues which left unmentioned in the study can be further classified in terms of conceptualization processes and categorical structures in a study on fundamental units of structured knowledge.

2. Methodology

The research was conducted on the semantic and cognitive approach to the study of metaphor. The research aimed to investigate relationships of the semantics of language and the concept sphere of people, and the correlation of semantic processes with cognitive ones. The study on semantics of linguistic units, which objectify concepts, allows accessing to the content of concepts as cognitive units. The semantic and cognitive analysis method implies that we go from the content of meanings to the content of concepts at a special stage of describing the cognitive interpretation in the process of linguo-cognitive research. This determines the movement towards the consciousness: modeling concepts as units of a national concept sphere and national culture. The way of conducting the research “from semantics of language units to the concept” is significantly reliable.

In the present research, the focus was on main provisions of a semantic and cognitive approach, and representatives of which define the concept as a “discrete mental formation that is the basic unit of the human thought code possessing a relatively ordered internal structure” (Popova and Sternin, 2006).

Developed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, the classical theory of conceptual metaphor involves the shift of knowledge from one concept sphere to another. Metaphors are conceptual because they simultaneously exist in two concept spheres (Tulusina *et al.*, 2017).

Concomitant methods of semantic and cognitive approach in this work were as follows: analysis of dictionary definitions, component analysis, semantic field analysis, conceptual analysis, cognitive analysis, and the metaphorical modeling.

The idea of the semantic connection of words of language underlies our understanding of the semantic field. Recognizing the existing connections between language and culture, we consider it important to address the lexical and semantic level of language reflecting not only lifestyles, but also mindsets.

Linguistic units are often grouped into semantic fields, for instance, such lexemes as *house, bastion, castle, дом, бастион, замок, крепость*, etc. belong to the semantic group of names of buildings with common archaisms.

The construction vocabulary forms a subject and procedural semantic field. Its unity and systemic nature are due to the paradigmatic and syntagmatic connections of constituting words. We examined more than 200 lexical units that underwent a regular metaphorical redefinition in more than 2000 contexts of their use.

The connection between the cognitive sphere of the source of the conceptual metaphor and the final sphere of its realization is considered as a metaphorical model. We used the method of parallel comparative study on conceptual metaphors and metaphorical models, which were united by the cognitive sphere, as the source of the metaphorical shift “Construction of buildings”. It allowed us to identify the most common concept spheres with structured or restructured essence by means of metaphorically redefined construction vocabulary in the cognitive consciousness of native English and Russian speakers. It included such conceptual spheres as 1. “Human”; 2. “The Natural World”; 3. “The Physical World”; and 4. “Abstract Categories”.

Each identified concept sphere contains metaphorical models and basic conceptual metaphors revealing the structural and semantic content of the concept sphere.

3. Results and Discussion

While systematizing the fragment of the conceptual worldview of English and Russian, the study on the vocabulary was examined in four concept spheres as mentioned above.

I. Anthroposphere is the most particular and productive cognitive goal of metaphorical shift involving the construction vocabulary. The analysis of particular metaphorical shifts in the anthroposphere allowed us to divide the area of application of metaphorically redefined construction vocabulary into the following concept spheres:

1) “Human as a biological and physiological creature” is an aspect in which concepts about the human appearance, constitution, anatomy, development and health are metaphorically redefined. The analysis indicated the high activity and productivity of its use in constructing ideas about biological and physiological human characteristics.

2) “Verbal and mental activity” is an aspect in which the mental and speech activities of a person as well as their results are metaphorically redefined. The analysis indicated that the allocated sphere “Verbal and mental activity”

was a basic concept sphere of the aim of metaphorical shift that was quite productive, developed and structured in the conceptual worldview of native English and Russian speakers. Metaphorical shifts are characterized by the nominative and cognitive specificity. Being the only or one of methods to verbalize the represented concepts, metaphorical shifts create new concepts of non-subject essences basing on the already formed concepts.

3) "Psychoemotional sphere" is an area in which psychic and emotional features and states of the human are metaphorically redefined. Results approve the low productivity of a metaphorical model "Psychoemotional sphere", which is a building in the concept sphere of native English speakers, and even less of its productivity in the concept of Russian speakers. Quantitative analysis indicates that the cognitive consciousness of native Russian speakers is less pragmatic and more emotional.

4) "Society" is an aspect of metaphorical redefinition of social space, social institutions, phenomena and processes. The research results make it possible to identify the basic metaphorical model "Society is a building" that is quite productive for both languages and is associated with a positive pragmatic meaning.

5) "Human as a social animal" is an aspect of metaphorical redefinition of personal human qualities. Construction vocabulary is a productive cognitive sphere, a source of metaphorization of concepts of the sphere "Human as a social animal" that manifests itself in the existence within the allocated sphere of productive metaphorical models "Person is a building", "Life is a building", "and Relations are buildings". In English, we may trace a large number of metaphorical concepts with a pronounced negative pragmatic meaning, while a positive pragmatic meaning is observed in the conceptual worldview of Russian speakers. Through these models, it becomes possible to establish conceptual features of concepts (Zabavnova and Zamaletdinov, 2016).

II. Two spheres have been singled out within the generalized concept sphere "The Natural World": "The World of Wildlife" and "The World of Inanimate Nature". The studied linguistic material allowed us drawing a conclusion that in general the interrelation of concept areas "Construction of buildings" and "The natural world" was not significant based on metaphorical shift.

A common law in the perception of objects of wildlife and inanimate nature is their likening and structuring by the analogy with its building and structural features.

III. The concept of "Physical World" includes cases of metaphorical shift with the aim to represent material manmade essences. In other words, this is a metaphorical shift subject. This concept sphere is represented by artifact metaphors. It is numerically insignificant in its metaphorical representation and is presented only by few examples. As a cognitive field, aims of metaphorical shift are most often objects of the concept sphere "Religion", "Science", in other words, conceptual fields that are functionally designed to serve society, and enlighten it.

IV. The concept "sphere of abstract concepts" includes generalized concepts, attributes, qualities, features reflecting the most essential links and relationships between objects of the reality. The following categories were distinguished: 1) time, 2) form, 3) size, 4) evaluation.

The analysis indicated the high potential of construction vocabulary in representing abstract categories, performing the function of a standard or a prototype while categorizing the objective reality by the cognitive consciousness of a native speaker.

The quantitative analysis indicated the frequency of using considered metaphorical models in each analyzed language. The frequency of using metaphorical models in English and Russian is unevenly distributed: the predominance of metaphorical models (from 16% to 70%) was noted in English.

The comparative analysis of concept spheres of the metaphorically redefined construction vocabulary reflected main provisions of the modern cognitive theory of metaphor as generalized and formulated provisions (Zamaletdinov and Faizullina, 2015).

A wide range of represented concepts and generalized concept spheres approved the functional and typological diversity of metaphorization processes.

The following metaphorical models presented verbal forms of representation of the construction conceptual metaphor in the conceptual worldview of English and Russian speakers: "Human is a Building", "Verbal and mental activity" is the construction activity", "The Psychoemotional Sphere is a Building", "Society is a Building", "Relations are Buildings", "Subjects of Wildlife are Buildings", "Objects of Inanimate Nature are Buildings". Native English and Russian speakers use Construction conceptual metaphors in order to categorize the surrounding reality.

Results of the comparative analysis of concept spheres for the metaphorically redefined construction vocabulary reflect main provisions of the modern cognitive theory of conceptual metaphor.

4. Summary

The research results refer to structure of subject and procedural semantic field of the metaphorically redefined construction vocabulary in English and Russian that which are considered as the linguistic objectification of the existing concept sphere of native speakers' cognitive consciousness. The relative quantitative equality and primary semantic equivalence of studied lexemes demonstrates the common vision of this concept sphere by the cognitive consciousness of native English and Russian speakers.

Semantic and cognitive approach to the study of metaphorical representation of concepts allowed us using the linguistic data for constructing the system metaphorical models and conceptual metaphors based on a visual and figurative or functional association of concepts.

The research results indicate that the construction sphere is deeply rooted in the cognitive consciousness of native English and Russian speakers as the integral part and source of cognitive orientation of people in the surrounding cognitive space.

Semantic analysis of the orientation of metaphorical shifts indicates the positive pragmatic and creative

character of the cognitive consciousness in English speakers. Native Russian speakers' cognitive consciousness is characterized by being less pragmatic and more emotional.

5. Conclusion

The research convincingly indicated that native speakers' cognitive consciousness used the lexemes of the semantic field of construction vocabulary, which was regularly subjected to metaphorical redefinition, in order to name and characterize diverse concepts. The range of application of research results is quite wide (Zamaletdinova, 2017).

Various lexemes of the semantic field of construction vocabulary can represent identical concepts within the considered concept spheres. The data confirmed the hypothesis.

The study confirmed the theory by the American linguist, G. Lakoff, about the central role of the metaphor in the individual mindsets. The research indicated that metaphorical shifts involving the semantic field of construction vocabulary are carried out in certain directions from one sphere to another. This indicates the potential of construction vocabulary in the creation of a fragment of the native English and Russian speakers' conceptual worldview.

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