

## METAPHOR AS A TOOL FOR REPRESENTING KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURES

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**Annotation:** The article is dedicated to examining the role of metaphor in the formation and representation of knowledge structures in light of the linguocognitive approach. It is argued that metaphor is not only a stylistic device but also an important tool for a deeper perception of literary text. Based on the analysis of examples from English-language literary texts, it is concluded that metaphors activate universal and culturally specific representations of reality through the prism of images and concepts characteristic of different cultures; contribute to the creation of associative-image models that reflect human feelings and emotional states, and the interpretation of complex abstractions.

**Keywords:** metaphor, cognitive linguistics, knowledge structures, concept, literary text, interpretation.

Metaphor plays a key role in the formation and representation of knowledge, being not only a linguistic unit but also an important tool that structures the perception of the world. Linguists (Lakoff D., Johnson M. [2], Li Yan [6], Ashurova D. U. [1], and others) rightly emphasize that metaphor contributes to the activation of both universal and culturally specific representations of reality, serves the transmission and reflection of knowledge, influences perception, activates various layers of information, and contributes to the formation of new conceptual structures.

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, knowledge is perceived as the result of cognition and categorization of the surrounding world, as a reflection of reality in a person's consciousness, as a product of processing verbal and non-verbal experience, creating a "worldview" on the basis of which personal judgments and conclusions are formed (Gerasimov V. I., Petrov V. V. [3]).

A metaphor is a special form of expressing a thought. In essence, it is a deviation at the semantic level, that is, a disruption of the usual interconnections of words, which evokes new associations in the reader or listener and more deeply engages them in the perception and interpretation of the literary text. The effect of foregrounding in a metaphor is achieved by a word or image going beyond the standard context, provoking a new, deeper understanding in the person. For example, in the essay "Time is a thief," Kathleen Adams repeatedly uses the metaphor "time is a thief," insightfully expressing the fleeting nature of life and the inevitable passage of time. Adams emphasizes how quickly moments pass, leaving behind memories that are dear: «From the second we opened our eyes were held in our mothers' arms with smiles, tears, and pictures. Those pictures hold memories that will last a lifetime, but in the moment, they're only so short. Time is a thief!».

As the figures of foregrounding metaphors encourage a deep and multi-layered perception of a literary text, providing the opportunity to recognize hidden, sometimes invisible aspects of reality. We will illustrate this with the example of the poem "Fog" by American poet Carl Sandburg (1878–1967).

The fog comes  
on little cat feet.  
It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
on silent haunches  
and then moves on.

Here, the image of fog is created through the metaphorical depiction of a stealthy cat. The main figure of foregrounding is the cat, embodying silence, the softness of movement, the ability to slip into narrow spaces, and to appear unexpectedly. Fog possesses similar characteristics: it has no clear shape, moves smoothly, and envelops everything around. This reflects how fog slowly and silently shrouds the landscape. The metaphor of a stealthy cat makes the description of the fog vivid and expressive. It helps the reader feel the atmosphere of mystery.

Metaphors play a key role in conveying information, embodying both the structures of old and new knowledge. In this context, a metaphor becomes a kind of bridge between the familiar and the unfamiliar.

Old information is knowledge that a person already has, and a metaphor serves as a way to connect new, more complex, or abstract knowledge to something already familiar. For example, in the metaphor "heart of stone," a physical sensation is transferred to an emotional perception, based on the familiar meaning of the word "stone" as something cold and unyielding. We can observe this in the work of Robert Service (1874-1958) "The Ballad of the Black Fox Skin." The author writes:

"She made no moan—her heart was stone—she read his smiling face,  
And like a dream flashed all her life's dark horror and disgrace;  
A moment only—with a snarl he hurled her into space."

Here, the metaphor "her heart was stone" expresses the heroine's emotional closure. The comparison of the heart to stone emphasizes that the character has lost the ability to feel emotions—love, suffering. The heart has become hard, cold, and lifeless, reflecting deep inner emptiness and alienation. In this context, "stone" expresses the psychological state of the lyrical hero, the inability to experience pain or joy. Metaphorically, a stone is a symbol of the unchanging and motionless. In the context of a work of art, the image is associated with the state of a person who has lost the ability for inner transformation.

A metaphor can also be used to represent a completely new concept or idea, translating simple images into more complex abstractions. For example, in the poem "Hope is the thing with feathers" by American poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), hope is metaphorically represented as a bird.

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -

And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -

And sore must be the storm -

That could abash the little Bird

That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chilliest land -

And on the strangest Sea -

Yet - never - in Extremity,

It asked a crumb - of me.

The abstract understanding of hope is connected with the structure of knowledge about a living being that "sings the tune without the words - And never stops - at all." This expresses the continuity and constancy of hope, independent of external circumstances. Even in the most difficult moments, when life is a "storm" ("And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard"), hope does not abandon a person.

Metaphors can operate on a universal level, conveying universal human ideas and feelings, and on the level of national specificity, reflecting cultural stereotypes, historical realities, and traditions. In different cultures, the same images can carry different meanings, highlighting the diversity of metaphorical models of the world.

As L.A. Kozlova [5] and V.Z. Demyankov [4] claim, the national-cultural specificity of a metaphor stems from the source domain—realities captured in the images of consciousness. In one or another linguocultural community, they serve as a model image. For example, in the novella "Of Mice and Men," John Steinbeck (1902 – 1968) describes a woman as an object of desire and beauty through metaphors that express the stereotypical views of people living in the southern United States: "She's got the eye of a pigeon and the hips of a young mare."

Here, the metaphors ("the eye of a pigeon" and "hips of a young mare") emphasize the heroine's physical attractiveness, creating an image of a lively yet simultaneously vulnerable being. The given metaphor is nationally specific.

The source domain for creating nationally specific metaphorical images can be the names of representatives of flora and fauna, the names of animals common in a particular region, the most frequent natural phenomena, and attributes of everyday life. The peculiarities of the realities of a specific culture manifest the specificity of such metaphors. For example, in Alice Roger's poem "Kudzu," the metaphor "kudzu seed" reflects the specific American perception of this plant as aggressive:

A glance from you is a seed of kudzu.

The madness spreads,  
wrapping around each tree,  
gripping it in a panic...

Kudzu becomes a metaphor for the emotional state that gradually overtakes the lyrical hero. This image is understandable to readers familiar with the problems that kudzu creates in certain regions of the USA.

The above allows us to assert that it is in metaphor that language and culture most vividly demonstrate their inseparable connection. This allows us to speak of the national-cultural specificity of the metaphor, which has various ways of manifestation.

Thus, metaphor plays a key role in representing knowledge structures, allowing the transmission of both old and new information, activating various areas of knowledge. In different cultures, it can be used to convey both universal and specific, nationally colored knowledge, making it an effective means for conveying complex concepts and emotions. Metaphors not only enrich the text but also give the reader the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the world by recognizing the connections between phenomena, concepts, and images.

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