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CURRENT PROBLEMS IN LINGUISTICS AND LITERARY STUDIES: A COGNITIVE APPROACH

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Abstract. This thesis explores the role of metaphor within the framework of cognitive linguistics, one of the most pressing areas of modern linguistics. The research aims to highlight that metaphors in literary texts are not merely stylistic devices but fundamental cognitive mechanisms that shape human cognition. Drawing on the conceptual metaphor theory of G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, the study analyzes the semantic transformation of linguistic units in literary works. The research concludes by emphasizing the significance of shifting from traditional stylistic analysis to a cognitive approach in interpreting literary discourse and provides practical recommendations for integrating these methods into the educational process.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, literary discourse, linguistic worldview, mental mapping, semantic analysis.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu tezisda zamonaviy tilshunoslikning eng dolzarb yo‘nalishlaridan biri bo‘lgan kognitiv lingvistika doirasida metaforaning o‘rni tadqiq etiladi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi badiiy matnlarda metaforalarning shunchaki badiiy tasvir vositasi emas, balki inson tafakkurini shakllantiruvchi kognitiv mexanizm ekanligini yoritishdan iborat. Ishda J. Lakoff va M. Jonsonning konseptual metafora nazariyasiga tayanilgan holda, badiiy asarlardagi lisoniy birliklarning semantik transformatsiyasi tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot yakunida badiiy matnni tahlil qilishda an’anaviy stilistik yondashuvdan kognitiv yondashuvga o‘tishning ahamiyati bo‘yicha xulosalar va ta’lim jarayonida ulardan foydalanish yuzasidan amaliy takliflar berilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: kognitiv tilshunoslik, konseptual metafora, badiiy diskurs, lisoniy manzara, mental proksiya, semantik tahlil.

Аннотация. В данной тезисной работе исследуется роль метафоры в рамках когнитивной лингвистики — одного из наиболее актуальных направлений современной науки о языке. Цель исследования заключается в освещении того, что метафоры в художественном тексте являются не просто стилистическими фигурами, а фундаментальными когнитивными механизмами, формирующими человеческое мышление. Опираясь на теорию концептуальной метафоры Дж. Лакоффа и М. Джонсона, в работе анализируется семантическая трансформация лингвистических единиц в художественных произведениях. По итогам исследования сделаны выводы о значимости перехода от традиционного стилистического анализа к когнитивному подходу при интерпретации художественного дискурса, а также предложены практические рекомендации по их внедрению в образовательный процесс.

Ключевые слова: когнитивная лингвистика, концептуальная метафора, художественный дискурс, языковая картина мира, ментальная проекция, семантический анализ.

Modern linguistics has undergone a significant shift from structuralism to functionalism and cognitivism. The problem of conceptual metaphors is deeply rooted in the way the human mind processes abstract information. As noted by D. Ashurova, literary language is not a closed system but a dynamic cognitive process that reflects the sociocultural identity of the author

[Ashurova,2018,56-b]. The fundamental issue in current literary studies is the "decoding" of these complex mental structures. We must understand that when an author uses a metaphor, they are not just "beautifying" a sentence; they are establishing a bridge between a concrete sensory experience (Source Domain) and an abstract concept (Target Domain).

The process of "mapping" or projection is central to our analysis. According to Fauconnier's theory of "Mental Spaces," metaphors create a conceptual integration network where two different domains blend to produce a new, emergent meaning [Fauconnier.2002,102-b]. In the context of Uzbek and world literature, this can be seen in the conceptualization of "Time." For instance, the metaphor "Time is Money" (Western culture) versus "Time is a River" (Eastern philosophy) illustrates how linguistic choices are governed by underlying cognitive models.[Lakoff,2003,28-b]

Recent research by G.To'xliyev suggests that the aesthetic impact of a literary work depends on the "novelty" of its metaphorical mappings [To`xtaliyev,2010,84-b]. If a metaphor is too conventional (e.g., "life is a journey"), it may lose its poetic force; however, if the author creates a unique mapping, it requires a higher level of cognitive processing from the reader, leading to deeper intellectual engagement.

Another crucial aspect is the existence of linguistic universals and culturally specific metaphors. While some metaphors like "Good is Up / Bad is Down" are nearly universal due to human physiology, others are strictly tied to a specific language.[Kövecses, 2010, 72-b] The problem arises in translation studies where a "conceptual mismatch" occurs. For example, a metaphor rooted in Uzbek nomadic or agricultural traditions might lose its cognitive weight when translated literally into English. Therefore, we propose that a "Cognitive-Contrastive Analysis" should be applied to study how these metaphors survive the process of inter-lingual transfer [Safarov,2006,145-b].

To address the current gaps in the field, we propose a more rigorous Integrated Discourse Analysis (IDA). This method should combine:

1. Contextual Analysis: Studying the environment in which the metaphor appears.
2. Frequency Analysis: Using corpus linguistics tools to identify how often certain metaphors are used by an author.
3. Cognitive Impact Assessment: Analyzing how these metaphors influence the reader's perception of the narrative reality.

Furthermore, it is recommended that modern textbooks for philology students include sections on "Cognitive Stylistics," focusing on the psychological aspects of literary reception.[Stockwell,2002,45-b] This would help bridge the gap between purely linguistic data and literary interpretation.

Based on the theoretical analysis and the comprehensive research conducted, the following scientific conclusions have been formulated:

First, Metaphor as a Foundation of Thought. The study confirms that metaphor is not merely a decorative element of language but a primary cognitive tool that systematizes human experience.[Lakoff,2003,115-b] When analyzing a literary work, relying solely on linguistic forms is insufficient for uncovering the true essence of the text. Instead, understanding the underlying conceptual structures allows for a more profound interpretation of the author's intent.

Second, The Necessity of Cognitive Integration. There is a critical need to further develop the school of "Cognitive Poetics" within Uzbek linguistics. By applying the theories of scholars such as G. Lakoff, Z. Kövecses, and P. Stockwell to national literary texts, we can scientifically explain the symbols and implicit meanings that define our cultural identity.[5,42] This approach facilitates a bridge between traditional philology and modern cognitive sciences.

Third, Practical Implications and Future Directions. Integrating cognitive methods into the philological education system will foster not only linguistic but also conceptual analytical skills in students. Furthermore, adopting this modern methodology in writing research papers for international databases will enhance the prestige of the Uzbek scientific school globally.

In conclusion, the transition from analyzing "what is said" at the surface level to understanding "how it is conceptualized" in the depth of the human mind represents the quintessential future of both literary and linguistic studies. This paradigm shift necessitates a departure from static descriptive methods toward dynamic cognitive-discursive models that account for the author's mental spaces. The research underscores that a literary work is not a mere collection of sentences, but a complex cognitive architecture where metaphors serve as the primary pillars.To further this scientific trajectory, we strongly recommend the formal introduction of specialized academic courses, such as "Cognitive Textual Hermeneutics" and "Conceptual Modeling in Philology," within higher education curricula. Such initiatives will provide future researchers with the sophisticated semiotic tools necessary to decode the intricate mental models inherent in world literature.

Ultimately, fostering an interdisciplinary approach that bridges the gap between traditional philology and cognitive neuroscience will empower the next generation of scholars to uncover the universal patterns of human creativity and the specific cultural nuances of national identity. This integration is not merely a choice but a necessity for the advancement of modern humanities in the global scientific arena.

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