METAPHOR: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE, THOUGHT, AND CULTURE

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Annotation: *This article examines metaphor as a linguistic and linguocultural phenomenon. From a linguistic perspective, metaphor is understood as a means of meaning transfer that expands the semantic potential of language. From a linguocultural perspective, metaphor reflects the worldview of a people, their traditions, mentality, and cultural codes. Special attention is given to the analysis of universal and culture-specific features of metaphor, as well as its role in intercultural communication and translation.*

Keywords: *metaphor, language, culture, linguoculturology, translation, intercultural communication.*

Introduction

The linguistic and linguocultural study of metaphor occupies a significant place at the intersection of linguistics and cultural studies. In the language system, metaphor functions not only as a phenomenon of semantic expansion or imagery, but also as a conceptual mechanism that reflects a people's cultural values, national patterns of thinking, and worldview. Therefore, in order to fully comprehend the modern linguistic and linguocultural essence of metaphor, it is necessary to analyze its historical sources, which have been shaped since ancient times, from a scholarly perspective.

Literature Review

Metaphor has long been regarded as one of the central concepts in linguistics and literary studies. It has been extensively studied not only as a primary device of figurative language but also as a conceptual category of human cognition. Aristotle interpreted metaphor as a "transfer of a word" and considered it an ornament of rhetorical art [1: 56–78]. Later, Roman Jakobson and I. A. Richards viewed metaphor as a semantic process within the language system, emphasizing its communicative significance in discourse [2: 350]. The influential work Metaphors We Live By (1980) by Lakoff and Johnson established metaphor as a core concept of cognitive linguistics and explained it as a conceptual model of human thought [4: 3–32]. For example, metaphors such as "time is money" and "life is a journey" were scientifically substantiated as fundamental structures underlying human thinking. In Russian linguistics, N. D. Arutyunova analyzed metaphor from the perspectives of semantic structure and text pragmatics [6: 123].

Metaphor is closely connected not only with linguistic units but also with a people's worldview, traditions, and national culture. Yu. N. Karaulov interpreted metaphor as an expression of national cultural concepts [9: 144]. V. N. Telia, in turn, regarded it as a linguocultural phenomenon, emphasizing that it embodies a nation's mentality, historical experience, and value system [10: 90]. In Uzbek linguistics, scholars such as N. Mahmudov, D. Khudoyberganova, and Z. Otamurodova have investigated the linguocultural functions of metaphor and its role in creating national imagery [11, 12, 13]. In Eastern literature, particularly in the works of Alisher Navoi, metaphor is widely employed as a means of expressing national-cultural codes and religious-philosophical views. Metaphors such as "flower–nightingale" and "beloved–moon" function not only as aesthetic images but also as stable cultural symbols embedded in collective consciousness.

Today, cognitive, pragmatic, and linguocultural approaches to metaphor analysis complement one another. While foreign scholars primarily view metaphor as a model of cognition, domestic studies tend to emphasize its national and cultural dimensions. The synthesis of these two approaches provides broad opportunities for investigating both the universal and culture-specific features of metaphor.

Research methodology

This study employs a comprehensive approach to investigate the linguistic and linguocultural features of metaphor. First, using the descriptive method, the lexical, semantic, and structural characteristics of metaphorical units were analyzed. In addition, the cognitive-linguistic analysis method was applied to examine metaphors in relation to human cognition and conceptual models.

To reveal the national and cultural characteristics of metaphors, a linguocultural approach was employed, through which a people's worldview, mentality, and cultural values expressed by metaphors were analyzed. Based on the comparative-typological method, metaphorical units from different languages were compared, and their common and distinctive features were identified.

Furthermore, elements of text linguistics were used in the study to examine the pragmatic and aesthetic functions of metaphors in literary texts. The integration of these methods made it possible to provide a scientifically grounded analysis of both the universal and national-cultural aspects of metaphor.

Analysis and results

During the research process, the linguistic and linguocultural features of metaphor were thoroughly analyzed based on examples drawn from various sources. First, it was established that metaphor emerges as one of the most effective forms of semantic transfer within the language system. Through

metaphor, ordinary concepts acquire figurative, emotional, and aesthetic meanings.

1. Linguistic analysis

Metaphor creates new meanings through the internal potential of language. For example, the English metaphor “Time is money” [4: 7] conceptualizes time as a material value. This expression is closely connected with the development of language within economic and social contexts. In Uzbek, the expression “Time is like the wind” emphasizes the transience of time and the impossibility of grasping it. This example demonstrates that the same concept may be expressed through different metaphors in different languages.

In addition, metaphors influence synonymy in the speech process. For instance, in Uzbek, the expressions “the eye of the heart” and “the eye of the soul” denote spiritual perception, while in English “the eyes of the soul” and in Russian “глаза души” convey a similar meaning. Although these metaphors appear in different forms within language systems, they express a universal human concept.

2. Linguocultural analysis

Metaphor also plays a significant role as a means of reflecting a people’s mentality, values, and cultural codes. For example, in Uzbek folklore, the metaphor “flower–nightingale” symbolizes love [11: 220], whereas in Russian culture the expression “золотое сердце” (“golden heart”) represents generosity and kindness [17: 93]. In English culture, “broken heart” has become a universal symbol of the suffering associated with love [4: 15].

These examples demonstrate that metaphor functions as a cognitive model that reflects culture. Each language and culture expresses its way of life, values, and worldview through metaphor.

3. Comparative findings

Comparative analysis revealed that although common conceptual metaphors exist across different languages, their modes of expression differ:

In Uzbek, metaphors related to ko‘ngil (heart/soul) are widely used (e.g., “the sea of the heart,” “the bridge of the heart”).

In Russian, metaphors associated with the soul and inner world prevail (e.g., “душевная глубина” — “depth of the soul,” “широкая душа” — “broad soul”).

In English, heart functions as the primary concept (e.g., “deep inside the heart,” “open-hearted”).

These differences reveal variations in worldviews and value systems among cultures. For instance, in Uzbek culture the concept of ko‘ngil plays a significant role in socio-cultural life; in Russian culture dusha (soul) serves as the central concept; whereas in English culture heart represents individual personality and emotions.

4. Results

The analysis shows that metaphor is not merely a means of enriching figurative language but also a cognitive model of human thought and a phenomenon that expresses the semantic codes of culture. While its linguistic features enhance expressiveness in discourse, its linguocultural features reflect a people’s values, mentality, and historical experience. Therefore, metaphor constitutes a specific challenge in translation studies, as it requires the accurate transmission of national and cultural meanings.

Conclusion

Metaphor functions as a unique bridge between language and culture; it is not only an aesthetic device but also a linguocultural phenomenon that reflects a people’s worldview, values, and patterns of thought. From a linguistic perspective, metaphor expands the semantic potential of language through figurative usage and adds imagery to speech. From a linguocultural perspective, metaphor is closely connected with a people’s way of life, traditions, religious

beliefs, and social experience, and it develops as an integral part of national culture. Thus, the linguistic and linguocultural analysis of metaphor demonstrates not only its role in linguistics but also its significance in intercultural communication and the translation process.

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