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ANTHROPOCENTRIC METAPHOR IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A FRAGMENT OF CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS[1]

Metaphoric extension: general considerations

The major aim of this article is to specify the cognitive mechanisms of anthropocentric metaphor. The present paper also attempts to spell out the general principles of conceptual analysis of the aforementioned metaphor in the political discourse.

The changing paradigm of the modern linguistics has brought to life new approaches to metaphor analysis. The traditional research into metaphoricity mechanisms within the framework of interaction and thematisation theory (for a detailed treatment see Telia (1988), Lipka (1990), Petrov (1990)) has been enriched by treating metaphorical expressions as manifestations of the basic principles of conceptualisation and categorisation of the world within the framework of cognitive linguistics. It has also been claimed that our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (see Lakoff and Johnson (1980:3)).

The idea of conceptual picture of the world and its verbal expression has always been in the focus of semantic research. Thus the primary concern of a semanticist is the specification of the relationship between semantic and conceptual analysis. The theory of universal language primes (Wierzbicka 1996) has become an efficient instrument for treating the semantic system of a language. Moreover, meaning is regarded not as a part of absolute 'language semantics' but of individual conceptual systems, which reflect cognitive verbal and non-verbal experience of a person. What differs conceptual analysis from the semantic one is the degree of abstraction where the latter involves a lower degree of generalisation. This degree basically depends on the types of meaning being

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considered – lexical, grammatical or textual. Structuring proves to be an important part of conceptual analysis through creating models with definitively interlinked elements making up a kind of "microsystem", which casts a new light on the inner, universal structure of language units.

Metaphor is one of the most powerful tools for creating different types of "innovations" in language, eventually its development. Even those linguists who place metaphor outside the scope of linguistic description acknowledge that an understanding of metaphor is indispensable for a linguist. For instance, Sadock (1979:48) claims that *figurative language is one of the most productive sources of linguistic change.* Its nature is traditionally defined as expansion of one word's meaning onto another object or phenomenon that creates similarity between them. Recently, "metaphor" has acquired an instrumental sense being defined as a cross-domain mapping /from a source domain onto a target domain/ in the conceptual system (see Lakoff (1993:203)).

The immediate consequence of the mentioned specification of metaphor is the assumption that in cognitive strategies the structure of such mapping can not then be simplified to a two component scheme "X is Y", but should include their cross-reference points. For instance, *the term "metaphorical expression" refers to a linguistic expression (a word, phrase or sentence) that is the surface realization of such a cross-domain mapping* (Lakoff and Johnson (1980:203)). Simultaneously, the new approach presupposes adequate descriptive devices, which could account for the conceptual processes underlying metaphoric extensions. As rightly noted by Cienki (1998:145), the metaphor structure TARGET-DOMAIN IS SOURCE-DOMAIN:

[…] should not be assumed as cognitively adequate description of how metaphors are actually processed. However, until more is known about this, these sentence-like characterizations of metaphors serve as a convenient descriptive device […].

Interpreting metaphor as a conceptual phenomenon suggests both modelling and revealing the principles of its expansion, as well as investigation of the links appearing in the process of metaphorisation. Comparative analysis has contributed greatly to the understanding of the aforementioned issue by interpreting the in-depth structure of metaphor through language universals and primitives. Another direction of research lies through the conceptual analysis of metaphor in different types of texts by spelling out both specific and universal characteristics including different bypassing elements.

Political discourse as a particular kind of texts

Metaphor in political texts appears to acquire its specific characteristics, where the author's subjective attitude manifests major influence of ideological,

cultural and ethnic attitudes or stereotypes. Political texts have been previously analysed basically from the viewpoint of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis (Corcoran 1979, Cohen 1983, Chilton 1985, Wodak 1991, Fiarclough 1995). As rightly mentioned by Corcoran (1979:145), *the language of politics is rather the language about politics and its functioning does not differ from the languages used in other social spheres.* The distinctive feature of the language of politics is that being manifested in speeches of states people, commentaries, news, and articles it always bears a political colouring (Chilton 1985, Dant 1991). On the one hand, it represents the author's ideological standpoint, on the other – it is aimed at conveying to the recipient some ideological tenets, i.e. it works as a tool in social techniques. Quite often, the author remains impersonal and is substituted by public institutions, mass media included. The above factors predetermine the specific content of concepts in political discourse.

Analysis of metaphor in political texts

Concept, as a unit of description in cognitive analysis, appears to have at least two major aspects: logical and eidetic, where the first one, which is our primary concern in this paper, reveals the patterns of its in-depth structure, defines its construing elements and models their interlinks. The central model interconnected with other models is a frame. The definition of frame used in the article is the one treating it as a data structure based on previous experience and reflecting knowledge of some stereotype situation and of the text describing this situation (Minsky 1986). This definition has been elaborated on in different directions, particularly by highlighting in frame models the elements of general knowledge, deeply rooted cultural beliefs and practices, i.e. prototypes (Taylor 1995). Frame models were used by van Dijk (1988) in the research of political discourse, and in conceptual analysis of newspaper news in different languages. However, the heuristic potential of frames has not been exhausted yet. Conceptual analysis has acquired new means after shaping typical frames as universal models of information processing in human brain (Zhabotinskaja 1999).

Metaphorisation, as a way of presenting and conveying information in political texts, being treated in terms of cognitive processes, exhibits the content of a message. But metaphor is not purely linguistic, as it was convincingly shown by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the whole of conceptual system in which we think and act is metaphoric by nature. This statement implies that sensory experience, which constitutes the basis of concrete notions, is indirectly manifested in abstract notions through metaphoric extension. It should be noted that metaphoric usages in covering facts by newspapers explicitly or latently reveal certain evaluation.

However, metaphorisation process is directly connected with the "presence" of a human-being in the language through engaging conceptual sources associated with humans. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), anthropocentric metaphors are most common in languages, as they allow to express the broad experience of handling notions and names in terms of human characteristics, motives and actions.

As has been mentioned, this article attempts to look into anthropocentric metaphors in the language of politics from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. The data are obtained from the articles published in *The New York Times* in 1999–2000 exploring conceptual fields of tenor and vehicle. I adopt the concept of typical frames, in particular object-centred frame model (Zhabotinskaja 1999), which maintains that the English language model-script illustrating the internal co-ordination of slots is as follows:

{SO[[(MUCH (of SUCH (SOMETHING)))EXISTS]SO]HERE-NOW]}.

Tenor in political discourse is a complex formation, as here metaphoricity covers different areas and subjects of political relations. Hence, the conceptual field of tenor can be graphically presented as:

Figure 1

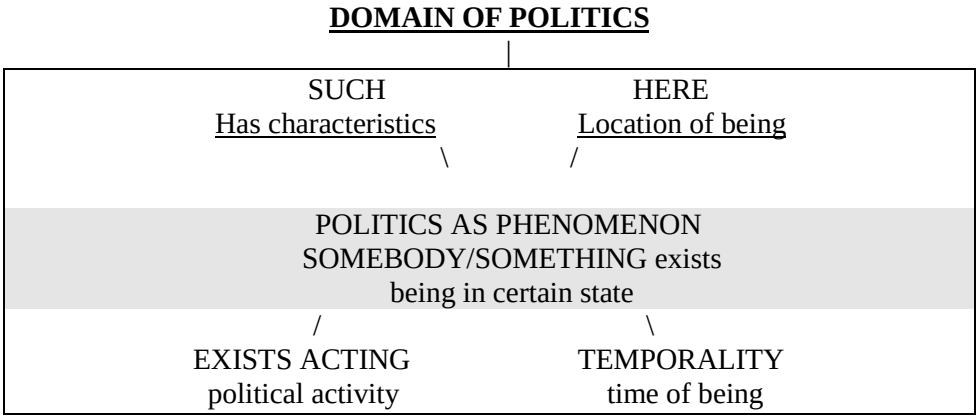

Figure 1 represents most general tenor structure and can be "copied" in subschemes manifesting a definite political concept (like foreign policy, economics, politics of a certain country, etc.). The scheme of vehicles correlating with tenor and laid down in conceptual field HUMAN is similar to the above-mentioned, as it is based on the development of object-centred frame. Here is a list of conceptual elements implemented in the present paper:

1. SUCH SOMETHING contains the following groups of concepts:
   1.1. Being in a state of (concepts of physical conditions of human beings)
   1.2. Having characteristics (concepts of emotional and intellectual domains)
2. SOMEBODY EXISTS DOING SOMETHING
   2.1. Physical activities
   2.2. Mental activity
   2.3. Social activity (concepts of certain professions, theatre and sport domains)

Each of the above elements acquires in the data material its conceptual specification.

1.1. "Being in a state" is expressed through concepts "sickness", "health", "weaning". SICKNESS – hard social problems *(trauma of dictatorship is becoming clear, have done little to heal wounds of the Balkans, it is paralyzing them as citizens, this is a country of scars, Europe's 20th-century convulsions)*, HEALTH – positive changes *(prospects are healthier than they appear)*, AWAKENING – transition from passive to active state *(partial amnesia is followed by awakening)*, WEANING – becoming independent *(before Eastern Germany weans itself from its dependence on money from the West).*

1.2. Emotional characteristics of people. Conceptual metaphors comprising vehicles of this group include emotions (positive or negative) and personal characteristics. EMOTIONS – "political system and its changes" – *(euphoria and emotional reunion, grim communist reality, it seemed a far lovelier war, the grim scenes of destroyed apartment house)*. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS (positive and negative) – "activity of political leaders, relations between states" *(she was taken with his can-do approach, an oversized lust for the campaign trial, a friendly bridge may well become a reality, harsh lessons of this war)*.

2. Person's activity is represented through a combination of three layers: physical, mental and social actions or activities.

2.1. Physical acts. Include concepts of gestures and physical efforts which are associated rather stereotypically. GESTURE – "attitude to political processes" *(Soviet leader M. Gorbachev gives nod to reunification)*, BODILY MOVEMENT – "political processes" *(idolised heroes of Communism's collapse have found themselves chewed apart, they can embrace their neighbours, Europe's attempt to muzzle a politician, NATO leaders were trying to push a diplomatic track, Ukraine's leadership is unwilling to grit its teeth and take the risk)*.

2.2. Mental processes. Vehicles of this group are rarely referred to and can be represented by concept INTELLECTUAL EFFORT – "understanding/non-understanding of reality, product of mental effort" *(they are trying to decipher Russia's new leader, NATO was a brainchild of a former trade-union leader)*.

2.3. Social life. Conceptual metaphors are numerous in this domain. They can be divided into several groups:

2.3.1. Professional activity, jobs – the speciality of each profession is associated with a definite political activity – *(real American midwife of new organization).*

2.3.2. Sports activity – COMPETITION "antagonisms" *(countries have wrestled in different ways, a runoff between two rivals),* GAME "roles in political processes" *(refugees have been made pawns in power struggle, Klaus is still a vital player in politics, Ukraine has played both cat and mouse with the West).*

2.3.3. Theatre/show. Frequent usages of this concept as a source domain can be explained by its ability to represent some aspects of the broader, well-established cultural model. PLAYING A ROLE, A SHOW – "to function as, act according to a scheme" *(too much the ironist to let himself be shoved into a role that better befits a soap opera; Clinton is playing a role, singing a song in an opera; he continues to act out the role of president).*

Discussion

The research provides evidence sufficient to determine the content of the slots SOMEBODY/SOMETHING, SUCH, EXISTS/ACTING and the features which compose the basis for comparison. Analysis of metaphors suggests applying another frame type – associative – illustrating the relationship of similarity mainly based on approximation of concepts in human thought:

SOMETHING 1
similar to
SOMETHING 2

If SOMETHING 1 is a conceptual tenor and SOMETHING 2 – a conceptual vehicle, their similarity can be grounded on one or several quantors of object-centred frame. The links between quantors of tenor frame (SOMETHING 1) and quantors of vehicle frame (SOMETHING 2) results in establishing an inter-frame network of various structures. The next stage in conceptual analysis of anthropocentric metaphor in political discourse is shaping the models of inter-frame networks in the structure of correlating concepts. This seems to be a challenging objective awaiting further investigation. At this stage I will confine myself to general outlines only. It is common knowledge in semantics that metaphors bring certain evaluative "charge" into language attaching positive, negative or neutral connotations to the related facts.

Conceptual approach allows the assumption that axiological meaning of metaphor in political discourse is determined by the choice of the vehicle

concepts and the structure of the engaged vehicle; for instance: POLITICAL ACTIVITY = THEATRE SHOW. The frames of vehicle concept and tenor can be referred to as SUCH SOMETHING. Their relationship can be patterned by associative frame SUCH SOMETHING 1 resembles SUCH SOMETHING 2.

However, slot SUCH in the vehicle frame splits into a range of concepts: SUCH 1, SUCH 2, and SUCH 3. In our case the theatre show is: 1) artificial – imaginary life; 2) external – acting against ones convictions; 3) pre-determined – activity according to the given plot. Depending on the slot chosen as a predicate, the metaphor displays variable evaluative connotations. This subject matter deserves a closer look in further investigations.

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