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## Conceptual Metaphor in the Literary Text

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**Abstract:** This article deals with the typical features of conceptual metaphor in the literary text. In fact, metaphor is not only a literary device, but a cognitive tool for the processes of human mind. Conceptual metaphors in the literary works describe the author's manner of understanding reality, the writing style as well as the features of author's thought. Moreover, conceptual metaphors can be used to give more profound knowledge and hidden description to the reader.

**Keywords:** Cognition, Perception, Domain, Ontological metaphor, mental construct.

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### Introduction

Cognitive Linguistics is a study of language that deals with cognition, mental processes, and mechanisms. It is argued that language relies on some cognitive skills such as perception, attention, motor skills, and visual and spatial processing.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it can be true that cognition is a route to the human mind. Although the root of Cognitive linguistics has been traced back to the 1970 years, this field gained its progress after a decade with the publication of a work that explores metaphor in a new framework, "*Metaphors We Live By*" (1980) by famous linguists G. Lakoff and M. Johnson. They found the metaphor not only a literary device but a way of thinking and the linguistic key to conceptual understanding of the world. "We understand our experience metaphorically when we use gestalt from one domain of experience to structure the experience in another domain"<sup>2</sup> the authors stated.

According to the sources and mechanisms used to represent the idea, there are several types of conceptual metaphors:

- structural metaphors in which one concept is understood in terms of another structured one;
- ontological metaphors in which abstraction is represented as something concrete;
- orientational metaphors that involve a positional relation.
- Conduit metaphors that are employed when talking about communication.

There is an interaction between the source domain and the target domain of the cognitive metaphor. The first includes some knowledge or experience in which new knowledge is defined. The second domain is that the area in which metaphor is employed. The structural connection between these two domains is conceptual mapping.

Cognitive metaphors possess a significant role in human life as they allow for the systematization of our experience, delineating the world and comparison of different things in our life. Moreover, they are crucial for the creative and cognitive development of humanity.

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<sup>1</sup>William & Alan, 2004. Cognitive Linguistics. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>2</sup>*Metaphors We Live By*. 1980. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### Problem development status

The theory of metaphor was investigated and enriched by many scholars and linguists like Aristotle, Ch. Fillmore, Black, Z. Kövecses, M. Freeman, E. Semino, M. Turner, R. Langacker, G. Lakoff, M. Johnson and many others. The continuous study of human perception naturally raises the question of how human thought processes are reflected in linguistic phrases, and especially in literary texts. Appropriately, modern linguists have already begun to study the role of cognitive metaphor as a mental construct.

According to Green, “Conceptual metaphors offer a window into the workings of the human mind, as they structure both general thought processes and the specific linguistic utterances that result from those thought processes”.<sup>3</sup>

Another research by Marlene Johansson Falck deals with the relation between metaphorical language and embodied cognition. She draws attention in what way technological inventions have helped people form language and thought metaphorically.<sup>4</sup>

According to Paul Martin, “the metaphor builds our conceptual operations and therefore views on the world through partial mapping of knowledge across ontological fields, generally from specific to abstract”.<sup>5</sup>

Metaphors are not considered as only basic aspects of thinking process, but properties of literary texts that make emotional simulations active as well. Some examples of studies of metaphor in literature deal with the role of metaphor in the style of the character or the narrator<sup>6</sup> and the impact of cognitive metaphor theory to narrative fiction.<sup>7</sup>

J. Lakoff and M. Johnson state that concepts of thinking extend to all activities of the person, structure his behavior, feelings, social relations, although the conceptuality of thinking is often somewhat misunderstood by the person.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, a conceptual metaphor having a mental nature encompasses a broad cognitive potential that can be employed by the author of the literary text.

Lakoff and Turner state that figurative schemas are the features of daily speaking, as well as they organize the literary discourse. Lakoff and Turner affirm that a conceptual metaphor in literary texts is able to expand its effects by providing deeper knowledge.<sup>9</sup> If cognitive metaphors, in the language show the conventional role, in the literary discourse they carry the author’s message.

### Discussion

Cognitive science proposes an approach to study language and literature that permits to discuss its speech and style. It bases its theories on a systematic method combining language and literature studies into one science. Lakoff and Johnson argue that conceptual metaphor

<sup>3</sup> Green, S.D. 1997. *KNOWING IS SEING: Conceptual metaphor in the fiction of Kate Chopin*. Denton, Texas.

<sup>4</sup> Johansson, F. M. 2005. *Technology, Language and Thought: Extensions of Meaning in the English Lexicon*. Umea University, Sweden.

<sup>5</sup> Martin, P. C. 2013. The exploratory and reflective domain of metaphor in the comparison of religions. *Zygon*, v. 48, p. 936-965.

<sup>6</sup> Steen, G. and Gibbs, R. 2004. Questions About Metaphor in Literature. *European Journal of English Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 337–54. P. 351.

<sup>7</sup> Fludernik, M. (ed. 2011). *Beyond cognitive metaphor theory: perspectives on literary metaphor*.

<sup>8</sup> Gubailovskii, V.; Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (2008). *Metaphors, we live by*. *Novyi Mir*. v. 10, p. 188-189.

<sup>9</sup> Lakoff, G. and Turner, M. (1989). *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

goes beyond mere language. Moreover, language is a demonstration of the conceptual formation of human cognition.

According to George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Mark Turner, conceptual metaphors structure the way we think. For naming a few expressive examples consistently, we conceptualise our feelings, emotions and relationships which are reflected by the everyday language that we use in order to express our ideas. Human thinking processes are reflected as conceptual metaphors in works of fiction. It is known from the modern theory of metaphor, cognitive metaphors are structural elements that are revealed through spoken language. As these cognitive structures are illustration of thinking and language of human being, they also exist in literary texts.

Green claims that “conceptual metaphors and the linguistic forms that result from them are so basic a part of our thinking that we automatically construct our utterances by means of them”.<sup>10</sup> Appropriately, we can say that conceptual metaphor reflects thinking processes of humanity.

Conceptual metaphors in the literary text are mostly employed to provide more hidden descriptions and specific information. This can be achieved by comparing and connecting the information in the contexts with one another. For instance:

#### DARKNESS IS UNIVERSE

*“he was lost in the eternal roar of an isotropic universe”;*

*“The secret goldfish draws close to the center of the cosmos”<sup>11</sup>*

In the examples above, darkness is compared to ‘universe’ and ‘cosmos’ and is connected to the objects found there.

#### BODY IS A CONTAINER

*“Saidningichibo ‘mbo ‘sh, yuragitashlandiquydekhuvillardi” (“Said’s heart was empty, it looked like an abandoned house”).<sup>12</sup>*

In this example “heart” is a container for the emotions, feelings like ‘loneliness’, ‘fear’ and others. Here the author uses the conceptual metaphor in order to give additional emotion to the reader.

#### Conclusion

To conclude, conceptual metaphors are used in the literary texts to provide deeper knowledge and hidden description. Mostly some literary works presents underlying conceptual metaphors. Recognizing them improves our understanding of that works. And this can be reached by comparing the information in the works. Also conceptual structures in the literary works can give additional insights in order to understand the author’s message, because conceptual metaphors describe the author’s individual writing style, the manner of understanding reality and feature of author’s thought.

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<sup>10</sup>Green, S.D. 1997. KNOWING IS SEAING: Conceptual metaphor in the fiction of Kate Chopin. Denton, Texas.

<sup>11</sup>Abbood& Mustafa. (2014). Metaphor in Political and Literary Texts: A Pragmatic Analysis AWEJ Volume 5, Number 1, Pp.277-289

<sup>12</sup>Hamdam, U. (1997). Muvozanat. “Sharq” publishing house. Tashkent.

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