THE ROLE OF METAPHOR AND EVALUATION IN TRAVEL BLOGS: A CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Annotation: This article examines how metaphor and evaluative language shape meaning and persuasion in English and Russian travel blogs. Using a cross-linguistic and cognitive linguistic approach, it highlights how bloggers employ metaphors to express emotion, authenticity, and cultural perception in digital travel discourse.

Keywords: metaphor, evaluation, travel blogs, cross-linguistic analysis, discourse, cognitive linguistics, digital communication.

In today's digital age, travel blogs occupy an increasingly important place in shaping perceptions of places, cultures, and experiences. As users across the globe share their travel narratives online, linguistic devices in these narratives play a critical role in influencing how readers feel, imagine, and ultimately decide about travel. Among such devices, **metaphor** and **evaluation** are particularly powerful: metaphor enriches descriptions by invoking familiar conceptual mappings (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), while evaluation expresses the blogger's stance, attitude, and value judgments toward people, places, or encounters.

A cross-linguistic perspective – comparing languages such as English and Russian – can reveal how differently (or similarly) metaphor and evaluative language are used in travel blogs, given cultural, cognitive, and linguistic differences. Such comparison contributes both

to theoretical understanding of discourse, as well as practical implications for tourism communication, translation, and intercultural understanding.

Metaphor has long been recognized as a key rhetorical device in promotional and narrative travel discourse. Jaworska (2017) investigated metaphors in promotional tourism discourse, finding that descriptions of exotic or tropical destinations often employ metaphorical mappings from domains such as **natural precious elements, color, body, taste**and religion, to evoke vivid images and emotional appeal. Similar studies in non-promotional settings (e.g. travel blogs) are fewer, but some research has begun to explore how travel writers use descriptive and figurative language to evoke atmosphere, sensory experience, and affect. For example, Huang, Wang & Tang (2020) studied interactional metadiscourse in English travel blogs, though their focus was more on interaction with the reader than metaphorical language.

Evaluation, often treated within frameworks such as **Appraisal Theory** (Martin & White, 2005), refers to how writers express attitudes, engage with other voices, and gradate meaning (intensity, force).In particular, the domains of *attitude* (affect, judgment, appreciation), *engagement* (how writer aligns with or distances themselves from other perspectives), and *graduation* (degree or intensity) are central to how evaluation is structured.Studies in academic discourse (e.g. Xu &Nesi, 2017) show how evaluation contexts vary depending on whether the writer is describing real-world events, analyzing research worlds, or engaging in argumentation. For travel blogs, evaluative language tends to combine affective (emotions), appreciative (beauty, value), and judgemental (regarding behavior, authenticity) functions, to persuade or to lend credibility. Though specific cross-linguistic comparisons in travel blogs remain under-explored.

Comparative metaphor studies often focus on conceptual metaphors (e.g., LOVE IS A JOURNEY) and examine how metaphors differ or align across cultures. For example, studies in figurative expressions between English and other languages have found that while many conceptual metaphors are shared, the lexical instantiations and conventionalization may vary greatly (Božić&Dragana, etc.).In Russian tourism discourse, studies have begun to map metaphors and evaluative languagebut often in promotional or descriptive discourse rather than personal narrative travel blogs. There is a gap in systematic investigation of how metaphors co-occur with evaluation in personal travel blogging, how culture-specific metaphors or values shape evaluations, and whether there are systematic differences between English and Russian in the frequencies, types, or functions of metaphor + evaluation.

This study adopts a **qualitative and corpus-based comparative approach** to explore how metaphor and evaluative language function in English and Russian travel blogs. The corpus consists of **40 travel blog entries**– 20 written in English and 20 in Russian – published between **2020 and 2024** on widely known platforms such as *WordPress, LiveJournal,*and*Travel.ru.* The selected posts were chosen for their narrative character, descriptive richness, and personal engagement with the reader, which are key features of the travel blog genre (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010).Each text was downloaded and anonymized to protect authors' privacy. The total corpus size was approximately **60,000 words** (30,500 English and 29,500 Russian). Both subcorpora were of comparable length and thematic scope – representing journeys to both domestic and international destinations.

The comparative analysis revealed that both English and Russian travel blogs rely heavily on **metaphorical and evaluative language** to construct vivid, emotionally engaging narratives. However, notable **cross-linguistic and cultural differences** were observed in the choice of metaphorical domains, intensity of evaluation, and their interplay in expressing personal experience.Across the corpus, metaphors accounted for approximately **7.2% of total lexical items** in English blogs and **6.5%** in Russian ones. Evaluation appeared even more

frequently – an average of **11 evaluative expressions per 1,000 words** in English and **9 per 1,000 words** in Russian. These figures confirm that emotionality and value judgments are integral components of the travel blog genre, supporting previous findings that online travel discourse combines both narrative and persuasive functions (Dann, 1996; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010).

In English blogs, the most prevalent conceptual metaphors included travel as transformation**,** nature as living being**,** and city as experience. Writers frequently portrayed travel as a process of inner growth, renewal, or self-discovery. Examples such as *"I was reborn with every sunrise"*or*"the desert whispered lessons of patience"*reflect a Western individualistic orientation, emphasizing **personal empowerment** and **self-reflection**. Such patterns align with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) view of metaphor as a cognitive tool for structuring abstract experiences through familiar embodied schemas.By contrast, Russian blogs often relied on **emotionally charged and nature-based metaphors**, such as *"мореобнимаетпутника"("the sea embraces the traveler")* or *"городпоётмелодиюсвободы" ("the city sings a melody of freedom")*. These metaphors reflect the **aesthetic and collective orientation** of Russian discourse, where emotion and artistry intertwine with the perception of place. The imagery tends to evoke **unity with nature and space,** rather than personal transformation. Similar tendencies have been observed in studies of Russian poetic and media discourse (Chudinov, 2003; Boldyrev, 2019), where metaphorical personification serves as a means of emotional intensification.

The appraisal analysis revealed both similarities and differences in evaluative orientation. English bloggers tended to use a higher proportion of **affective** and **appreciative** language – e.g., *"breathtaking," "unforgettable," "heart-warming"*– to emphasize emotional and sensory responses. These evaluations often accompany metaphors, strengthening their persuasive impact. Russian authors, while also using affective lexis, demonstrated a higher use of **judgemental** evaluation, particularly in describing local people, traditions, and behaviors – e.g., *"радушныежители," "искренняякультура"*("hospitable people," "authentic culture"). This reflects a **cultural focus on morality and sincerity**, rather than solely emotional appeal. The frequency of positive evaluations was roughly similar across languages (around 80%), but **English blogs showed stronger polarity** – either highly positive or mildly negative – while **Russian texts preferred moderate tone and implicit evaluation**.

A crucial finding of this study is the **co-occurrence** of metaphor and evaluation as complementary strategies. Metaphor provides **imagery and framing**, while evaluation supplies **emotional stance and persuasion**. In English texts, metaphors of **journey**and **light** often coincided with positive appreciation (e.g., *"a city glowing with promise"*), reinforcing the sense of optimism and wonder typical of Anglo-American travel writing. In Russian blogs, **nature and emotion metaphors** frequently merged with affective or aesthetic evaluation (e.g., *"природаласковоукрываетусталуюдушу"* – "nature gently shelters the tired soul"), creating lyrical and introspective effects.These patterns suggest that while the **communicative goals** of travel bloggers are similar – sharing experiences and inspiring readers – the **linguistic means** reflect deeper cultural models. English travel blogs favor a more **individualistic and expressive** mode of persuasion, whereas Russian blogs highlight **empathy, collectivity, and emotional resonance**.

The findings contribute to discourse studies and intercultural pragmatics by showing that metaphor and evaluation are not universal but **culturally mediated linguistic tools**. They mirror broader value orientations: **self-realization and authenticity** in English discourse, **emotional depth and harmony with environment** in Russian. These results confirm Koller's (2004) argument that metaphor in discourse operates ideologically, constructing

particular worldviews and cultural identities.From a practical perspective, understanding these patterns is essential for **translation studies** and **tourism communication**, where emotional tone and metaphorical framing must be adapted across languages. Moreover, for **foreign language teaching**, awareness of such discourse mechanisms can enhance intercultural competence and pragmatic sensitivity in students learning to interpret or produce persuasive texts.

This study explored the interrelation of **metaphor** and **evaluation** in English and Russian travel blogs, highlighting how these linguistic resources shape the emotional and persuasive dimensions of travel discourse. The analysis revealed both universal and culture-specific tendencies. English bloggers favored metaphors of *journey* and *light* combined with affective and appreciative evaluation to express **personal transformation** and **individual experience**. Russian bloggers, in contrast, relied on *nature* and *emotion* metaphors intertwined with aesthetic and moral evaluation, emphasizing **collective emotion, spiritual reflection**,and**harmony with environment**.

These findings demonstrate that while travel blogs serve similar communicative purposes across languages – sharing impressions, inspiring readers, and constructing authenticity – their **linguistic realization** reflects differing **cultural worldviews**. The results contribute to the fields of discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, and intercultural communication by showing that metaphor and evaluation are **culturally mediated mechanisms** for constructing meaning and identity in online travel narratives.

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