METAPHOR AND COGNITIVE MODELS IN MODERN ENGLISH

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Abstract. This article examines the role of metaphor in shaping cognitive models within modern English. Drawing on the principles of cognitive linguistics, particularly the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the study explores how metaphors reflect and influence the way speakers conceptualize abstract domains such as time, emotion, and social relations. By analyzing authentic examples from contemporary discourse, media, and literature, the research demonstrates that metaphors are not merely stylistic devices but fundamental mechanisms of thought. The study concludes that understanding metaphorical conceptualization is crucial for linguistic analysis, foreign language teaching, and intercultural communication, as metaphors reveal deep cultural and cognitive patterns.

Keywords: metaphor, cognitive models, cognitive linguistics, modern English, conceptualization.

Introduction. Metaphor has traditionally been studied as a rhetorical device, employed for aesthetic or persuasive effect. However, the emergence of cognitive linguistics in the late twentieth century shifted the understanding of metaphor from ornamentation to cognition. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphors are central to human thought, shaping how individuals conceptualize abstract phenomena. Phrases such as time is money or argument is war reveal that metaphorical mapping underpins much of everyday language use. In modern English, metaphors pervade not only literature and creative writing but also political discourse, advertising, journalism, and everyday conversation. This article explores how metaphors contribute to the construction of cognitive models in contemporary English and why their study is essential for linguistic analysis, language teaching, and intercultural communication.

Literature Review. Lakoff and Johnson's seminal work Metaphors We Live By (1980) introduced the idea that metaphors are not linguistic embellishments but conceptual

structures. Their Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) identifies systematic mappings between source domains (concrete experiences) and target domains (abstract concepts). Kövecses (2002) expanded on this framework, emphasizing cultural variation in metaphorical patterns.

Cameron and Low (1999) highlighted the pedagogical implications of metaphor, showing that awareness of metaphorical language enhances comprehension and interpretation in foreign language learning. Charteris-Black (2004) analyzed metaphor in political discourse, illustrating its persuasive power. Recent research (Semino, 2008; Gibbs, 2017) has further demonstrated that metaphors play a role in framing public understanding of issues such as health, economy, and social relations.

These studies collectively affirm that metaphor is both a linguistic and cognitive phenomenon with profound cultural implications.

Methodology. This research adopts a qualitative approach, drawing on discourse analysis and examples from contemporary English. The sources include newspapers, online media, literary works, and conversational English. Metaphorical expressions were identified and classified according to Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The analysis focuses on three major domains: time, emotion, and social relations, as these are among the most metaphorically rich areas of English.

Results and Discussion. The findings indicate that metaphorical language structures fundamental aspects of how English speakers perceive reality. One of the most prominent domains is time, frequently conceptualized through economic metaphors. Expressions such as spending time, wasting time, and investing time reveal that time is framed as a valuable commodity. This cognitive model reflects capitalist and efficiency-driven values in contemporary English-speaking societies, where time management is equated with success.

Emotion is another domain rich in metaphorical conceptualization. Emotions are often described in terms of physical forces or containers, as in bursting with joy, bottling up feelings, or overcome by anger. Such metaphors make abstract psychological states more tangible, allowing speakers to communicate inner experiences in relatable terms. They also suggest a cultural tendency to externalize emotions as objects that can be controlled, suppressed, or released.

Social relations are likewise structured metaphorically. Hierarchical relationships are often conceptualized spatially: climbing the corporate ladder, a high-ranking official, or falling in status. Conflict and cooperation are also expressed metaphorically, with building bridges or breaking ties serving as common idioms. These metaphors shape how individuals interpret social dynamics, highlighting the cognitive function of metaphor in constructing collective worldviews.

Overall, the results confirm that metaphors in modern English are integral to cognitive models, providing speakers with conceptual frameworks for navigating abstract aspects of life. Their prevalence in media and everyday speech underscores their role in shaping thought and social reality.

Conclusion. Metaphor in modern English is not merely decorative but a fundamental mechanism of cognition. By conceptualizing time as money, emotions as objects, and social relations as spatial hierarchies, English speakers make sense of abstract domains through familiar experiences. The study confirms that metaphors reflect and reinforce cultural values, playing a vital role in linguistic expression and thought. For foreign language teaching, awareness of metaphorical structures is crucial. Learners must go beyond literal comprehension to grasp the cultural and cognitive models embedded in metaphorical language. Similarly, in intercultural communication, recognizing the differences in

metaphorical conceptualization across languages helps prevent misunderstandings. Future research may further explore how digital communication and global English influence metaphor use, as well as how metaphorical models evolve under cultural and technological changes.

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