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## CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS AS METHODS OF WORLD EXPLANATION

**Abstract:** this article covers conceptual metaphor studies and explains how metaphors influence on our world-perception. It describes three types of conceptual metaphors according to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's theory: orientational, ontological and structural. Examples, taken from the book «A beautiful Mind» by Sylvia Nasar, illustrate main metaphorical concepts.

**Key words:** conceptual metaphors, conceptual integration, structural, ontological and orientational types of metaphors.

From the very ancient times metaphors served as a constant object of human studies. The first definition of metaphor was given by Aristotle in his work «Poetics» and afterwards became a classic one [1]. In the course of time, our knowledge of metaphor became wider and more profound. Now we consider this figure of speech to be an inherent part of our language, necessary for communicative, nominative and cognitive purposes.

Nowadays the phenomenon of «metaphor» obtained new prospects for learning, mostly associated with cognitive linguistics. In the twentieth century Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner created *the theory of conceptual blending*, also called *conceptual integration*, which asserts metaphors as means of our perception and also as a part of subconscious processes, which undergo while we live and get to know this world [4]. In 1979 Max Black gave justifications for *the interaction theory*, in which he claims the reciprocal influence of source and target objects of conceptual metaphor [2]. But it was George Lakoff and Mark Johnson who created *the conceptual metaphor theory*, which says that a conceptual metaphor is one of the most important cognitive mechanisms, based on the establishment of relations between concepts (conceptual structures) related

to different areas of knowledge (domains) [3]. In their book «Metaphors we live by», the linguists assume that our life is figuratively permeated with metaphors that help us to understand the world. They identified *three kinds of conceptual metaphors*: structural, orientational and ontological ones.

Structural metaphors represent the conceptualization of abstract entities through well-known elements of experience [3]. In other words, one concept is metaphorically and structurally ordered in terms of the other. Lakoff and Johnson quote examples of comparing life with adventure, dispute with war, love with travelling, social organizations with plants. Let us draw some examples from the book «A Beautiful Mind» by Sylvia Nasar [5]. «*His insults were right on the target*» – often structural metaphors are used in the concept «argument is war». Thus, we compare dispute with the battlefield, it helps us to make an abstract notion more explicit through physical experience. Also, from the example «*it was a brilliant strategy, his genius life*», the word «strategy» is associated with war, and again we see another concept «life is battlefield». There are many examples, in which we associate our time with money. From the example «*At the end of the summer, he was forced to apologize to Truesdell for having wasted his time*», we see that we use the same verbs when speak about money also. So here time becomes material, though it is something abstract in our mind.

Oriental metaphors structure various objects and actions in space [3]. Generally positive concepts such as happiness and success are associated with something high, and here we see words *raise, peak, top*. Such words as *low, fall, bottom, decline* often imply negative sense. Oriental metaphors often contain both cultural and physiological elements. For example, the expression «he was on top of health» [5] illustrates that our mind has a scale, according to which the highest point is the best. Examples featuring some disease are also very common: «*she came down with pneumonia*». Other types of orientational metaphors have cultural origin: «*these people have very high standards*» or «*I tried to raise the level of discussion*». From the example «*it may be that her contact with Eleanor — including the evidence of Eleanor's lower-class origins, her lack of education*», we can see that the words «*high*» and «*low*» form a hierarchy, which represents levels of society. Thus, our mind identifies society with a ladder that, in its turn, could be associated with career.

Ontological metaphors represent properties, inherent to the objects of the real world (fragility, hardness, fluidity, etc.) projected to abstract concepts. Also, we can perceive the personification as a form of ontological metaphor, human qualities are attributed to objects, processes or abstract concepts. Personification as a form of this metaphor is most often found in literature, but it is also quite common in everyday discourse: «*Life cheated on me*», or «*at the end, the cancer caught up with her*». This technique helps people to perceive abstract concepts and process it better.

Linguists carry out new research in this area; therefore, this topic is promising for cognitive linguistics. Lakoff and Jonson emphasized that our mind is metaphorical in its nature, and there are examples to confirm this. Lakoff's idea about «the embodied mind» is still being studied.

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## КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНЫЕ МЕТАФОРЫ КАК СПОСОБ ОБЪЯСНЕНИЯ МИРА

**Аннотация:** в статье рассматривается концептуальная метафора, её функционирование в языке и роль в формировании картины мира. Приводятся и анализируются примеры разных видов метафор из книги «Прекрасный разум» Сильвии Назар.

**Ключевые слова:** концептуальные метафоры, концептуальная интеграция, структурные, онтологические и ориентационные виды метафор.

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