

**METAPHORICAL MOTIVATION IN THE SEMANTICS OF IDIOMS:
A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY BASED ON A COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC
APPROACH**

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Abstract: *This article is aimed at analyzing the issue of metaphorical motivation in the semantics of phraseological units using a comprehensive cognitive-semantic approach. The main goal of the research is to study the mechanisms of meaning formed in idioms through conceptual metaphors, to study the direct connection of metaphorical motivation with linguacultural and pragmatic factors. The research was conducted using methods of semantic analysis, cognitive mapping, linguacultural and contextual analysis. The results substantiate that the semantics of phraseological units are often formed on the basis of metaphorical motivation, and this process is inextricably linked with human experience, physical perception, cultural models, and cognitive structures. The research confirms the effectiveness of the cognitive linguistic approach in the study of the semantics of phraseological units.*

Keywords: *idioms, metaphorical motivation, conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics, phraseology, semantics, linguoculturology*

Introduction

In linguistics, phraseological units, especially idioms, are of particular importance as linguistic units with a semantically complex structure. Phraseological units have a common figurative meaning that differs from the literal meaning of their constituent parts, and explaining their semantic nature is one of the extremely important theoretical issues [1]. In the interpretation of the semantics of idioms, along with traditional structural-semantic approaches, the theory of metaphorical motivation based on cognitive linguistics began to be widely used [2]. The cognitive shift that has occurred in linguistics in recent decades has created new opportunities for explaining the meaning of phraseological units. While traditional approaches often viewed idioms as arbitrary language units, the cognitive approach shows that the semantics of idioms are connected with human experience and conceptual thinking. According to this approach, the



meaning of idioms is not random, but is motivated by conceptual metaphors [3].

The concept of metaphorical motivation is an important theoretical basis for explaining the mechanism of the emergence of the meaning of phraseological units. According to the theory of conceptual metaphor, a person perceives abstract concepts through concrete, concrete physical concepts. For example, conceptual models such as knowing time as a resource, associating emotions with temperature, or imagining thought as an object are manifested in language units, especially idioms [2]. For example, in the phrase "under pressure" mental pressure is reflected through physical pressure, and in the phrase "see the point" the process of understanding is explained using visual activity. In the phrase "carry a heavy responsibility" responsibility is expressed as a heavy burden, and in the phrase "fall into depression" emotions are interpreted using spatial action. Such metaphorical models demonstrate the motivation of the semantics of idioms [4]. From the point of view of cognitive linguistics, metaphorical motivation demonstrates a certain connection between language and thinking. Such metaphors are based on the experience accumulated by a person throughout life and are a normal state with universal and cultural characteristics. Some metaphors have a universal character, leading to the emergence of similar idioms in different languages. For example, expressing human emotions through temperature is normal in many languages. Moreover, some metaphors acquire a specific cultural character and can only arise in certain linguocultural situations. [5]. The study of the metaphorical motivation of phraseological units leads to the intersection of the disciplines of phraseology, semantics, cognitive linguistics, and linguoculturology. This, in turn, shows that the research being conducted has an interdisciplinary nature. Metaphorical motivation, along with the semantics of phraseological units, also helps to explain the processes of their assimilation, translation, and integration into the speech process. For this reason, this issue has not only theoretical but also practical significance [6]. Moreover, the semantics of phraseological units shows the interrelationship between language and culture of a particular language. The cultural experience of language users directly influences the emergence of the metaphorical model. For example, idioms that rely on historical, mythological, or religious grounds in the process of formation indicate a certain linguocultural context. This explains the linguocultural component of



metaphorical motivation [7]. The exceptional importance of this research is determined by the need for a deep analysis of the semantics of phraseological units based on metaphorical motivation. In recent years, the study of the semantics of idioms based on a cognitive approach has become widespread in international scientific literature, but we cannot say that comprehensive systematic research in this direction has yet to be conducted. In particular, the joint study of the conceptual, linguocultural, and pragmatic components of metaphorical motivation is of great importance [8]. The main goal of this study is to study the role of semantic motivation in the semantics of phraseological units and to analyze their semantic structure using conceptual metaphors.

Research objectives:

- Theoretical analysis of metaphorical motivation;
- Research of idioms based on the model of conceptual metaphor;
- Identify the mechanism of metaphorical mapping;
- Study of the effect of linguocultural causes;
- Determine the significance of the pragmatic context.

Results

The research results prove that the semantics of phraseological units are often formed as a result of conceptual metaphors. The most frequently encountered metaphorical models in languages are:

For example:

- waste time
- at a crossroads
- defend an argument

boiling with anger

- fill your head with ideas

These idioms express abstract concepts through concrete experience.

[2].

The basis of the conceptual metaphor includes mapping between the domain and the target domain. For example: "grasp an idea" - the process of understanding is conceptualized through grasping.

Source domain: physical activity. Target domain: understanding [5].

Metaphorical motivation based on physical experience:

Many phraseological units are based on human sensory experience:

- warm relationship
- cold reaction



- heavy responsibility
- bright idea

These examples show that emotions and vague, abstract concepts are expressed through physical experience. [6].

Spatial metaphors:

Spatial metaphors play an important role in the semantics of idioms:

high spirits

- low mood
- fall into depression
- rise to power

In this model, emotions are conceptualized through a vertical space[3].

Linguocultural metaphorical motivation

Some phraseological units arose on the basis of cultural experience:

- white elephant
- Achilles' heel
- Pandora's box

These phraseological units require cultural information, and semantic motivation goes back to a historical source. [7].

Ontological metaphors

Ontological metaphors show abstract concepts as objects:

- in trouble
- out of danger
- full of ideas
- empty promises

Discussion

The results show that the semantics of phraseological units are interconnected with metaphorical motivation. Conceptual metaphors are considered the main basis of the meaning of idioms. This situation shows that the semantics of phraseological units are connected with the processes of perception. Metaphorical motivation is also important in the study of phraseological units. Motivated idioms are quickly retained in the subconscious and easily memorized, moreover, they are semantically more understandable to language users [8]. In addition, the influence of linguocultural factors on metaphorical motivation is strong. It is natural that metaphorical models differ in different cultures.

The research results showed that the semantics of idioms consists of the following components:



- conceptual metaphor
- physical experience
- linguocultural model
- pragmatic context
- cognitive mapping

Conclusion

The results of this study show that metaphorical motivation plays an extremely important role in the emergence of the semantics of phraseological units. Analysis shows that phraseological units are not just random word combinations, but a linguistic process that arose and developed as a result of existing conceptual metaphors in human thinking. Metaphorical motivation makes it possible to explain abstract concepts clearly and concretely, through images based on intuition and personal experience, which further simplifies the process of perceiving the meaning of language units. At the same time, linguocultural reasons directly influence the choice and use of metaphorical models, revealing specific semantic features of idioms in different cultures. The cognitive approach serves as an effective methodological basis for a deeper analysis of the semantics of phraseological units, the identification of their conceptual factors, and the expression of the mechanisms of meaning formation. In addition, the presence of metaphorical motivation further accelerates the process of researching and assimilating idioms, since it allows language learners to understand the meaning through logical connections. In general, the research results confirm that the cognitive linguistic approach has an important theoretical and practical place in the study of the semantics of phraseological units, in particular idioms, and show the need for further expansion of linguocultural and cognitive research in the future.

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