Arabian Journal of Science

ISSN:2308-5703

Impact factor:13.5 *International Multidisciplinary Online Journal* May, 2026

STRUCTURAL AND SEMANTIC STUDY OF LINGUISTIC MEANS FORMING METAPHORS IN WORLD LINGUISTICS

Yuldasheva Rano Djurayevna,
Senior Lecturer at the Department of Uzbek Language and Literature, Karshi State Technical University

ORCID: 0009-0007-5220-0038, e-mail: rano_yuldasheva@umail.uz

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20498319

Abstract. This article examines the structural and semantic features of linguistic means that contribute to the formation of metaphors in world linguistics. The relevance of the research is determined by the growing interest in cognitive, semantic, and communicative approaches to metaphor analysis in modern linguistics. The study aims to identify the main linguistic mechanisms involved in metaphor formation and to analyze their structural-semantic characteristics in different linguistic contexts. The research methodology is based on descriptive, comparative, contextual, and semantic analysis methods, which enabled the classification and interpretation of metaphorical units from various linguistic sources. The findings reveal that metaphors are formed through lexical-semantic transformation, associative transfer, contextual reinterpretation, and conceptual mapping processes. In addition, the study demonstrates that structural models of metaphor formation differ according to language systems, cultural factors, and communicative purposes. The results also indicate that metaphor serves not only as a stylistic device but also as an important cognitive mechanism for conceptualizing reality and expressing abstract meanings. The scientific significance of the research lies in the expansion of theoretical approaches to metaphor studies and the clarification of the relationship between linguistic structure and semantic transformation. The practical value of the article is associated with its potential application in linguistic analysis, discourse studies, translation theory, and language teaching methodologies.

Introduction. In contemporary linguistics, metaphor has become one of the most significant objects of interdisciplinary research due to its close connection with language, cognition, culture, and communication. Traditionally, metaphor was mainly regarded as a stylistic and rhetorical device used to enhance the expressiveness of speech and literary texts. However, modern linguistic theories, especially cognitive linguistics, have demonstrated that metaphor functions not only as an artistic phenomenon but also as a fundamental mechanism of human thinking and conceptualization. As a result, the study of linguistic means forming metaphors has gained considerable importance in world linguistics.

The structural and semantic analysis of metaphorical expressions enables researchers to identify the linguistic patterns through which metaphorical meanings are created, transformed, and interpreted in different communicative contexts. Linguistic means such as lexical units, phraseological constructions, syntactic structures, semantic shifts, and contextual associations play a crucial role in metaphor formation. These mechanisms reflect both universal cognitive processes and language-specific cultural characteristics. Therefore, the investigation of metaphorical structures contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language structure, semantic development, and conceptual representation.

Recent developments in linguistic studies have expanded metaphor research into various scientific fields, including psycholinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, translation studies, and artificial intelligence. Despite the large number of studies devoted to metaphor theory, the structural-semantic characteristics of linguistic means forming metaphors in different

language systems still require comprehensive and systematic analysis. In particular, there remains a need to clarify how semantic transformation, associative transfer, and contextual reinterpretation influence the formation and functioning of metaphorical meanings.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the structural and semantic features of linguistic means involved in metaphor formation within the framework of world linguistics. The study aims to classify the principal linguistic mechanisms of metaphor creation, determine their semantic functions, and examine their role in communicative and cognitive processes. To achieve these objectives, the research applies descriptive, comparative, semantic, and contextual analysis [1] methods to metaphorical units selected from linguistic and literary sources.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the integrated approach to the analysis of metaphor-forming linguistic means from both structural and semantic perspectives. The theoretical significance of the research is associated with the development of modern approaches to metaphor studies and the expansion of knowledge concerning conceptual and semantic transformations in language. The practical significance of the article is determined by the possibility of applying its findings in linguistic analysis, translation practice, discourse interpretation, and foreign language teaching methodologies.

Methods. This research employs a qualitative linguistic approach to investigate the structural and semantic characteristics of linguistic means forming metaphors in world linguistics. The methodological framework of the study is based on contemporary theories of cognitive linguistics, semantic analysis, and discourse studies [2], which allow for a comprehensive examination of metaphorical constructions and their functional properties in language.

The empirical materials of the research consist of metaphorical expressions selected from scientific literature, literary texts, public discourse, and linguistic corpora in different languages. The selection of language units was carried out according to the principles of representativeness, semantic diversity, and contextual relevance. Particular attention was given to metaphorical expressions that demonstrate clear structural patterns and semantic transformations within communicative contexts.

Several interrelated research methods were applied in the study. First, the descriptive method was used to identify and classify linguistic means participating in metaphor formation, including lexical units, phraseological expressions, syntactic constructions, and contextual semantic shifts. This method enabled the systematic description of metaphorical structures and their linguistic features.

Second, the semantic analysis method was employed to examine the processes of meaning transfer, associative relations [3], and conceptual reinterpretation underlying metaphor formation. Through semantic analysis, the study identified the mechanisms by which literal meanings evolve into figurative and metaphorical meanings. Particular emphasis was placed on the interaction between denotative and connotative meanings in metaphorical expressions.

Third, the comparative method was utilized to analyze similarities and differences in metaphor formation across various language systems and communicative environments. This approach allowed the identification of both universal and language-specific features of metaphorical structures, as well as the influence of cultural and cognitive factors on metaphor usage.

In addition, contextual analysis was conducted to determine the role of communicative situations and discourse environments in shaping metaphorical meanings. The interpretation of metaphors was examined within broader textual and pragmatic contexts in order to reveal their functional and expressive significance.

The collected data were systematized and interpreted according to structural-semantic criteria, including grammatical organization, semantic transfer models, conceptual mapping, and functional characteristics. The reliability of the research findings was ensured through the integration of multiple analytical approaches and the use of verified linguistic sources.

In general, the chosen methodological framework provided an opportunity to comprehensively investigate metaphor-forming linguistic means and to reveal their structural organization, semantic mechanisms, and communicative functions in world linguistics.

Results. The results of the study demonstrate that metaphor formation in world linguistics is realized through a complex interaction of structural and semantic linguistic mechanisms. The analysis revealed that metaphorical meanings are primarily generated through lexical-semantic transformation, associative transfer, contextual reinterpretation, and conceptual mapping. These processes enable language units to acquire figurative meanings beyond their direct denotative functions.

The research identified several major linguistic means actively participating in metaphor formation. Lexical units were found to be the most productive source of metaphorical expression, particularly nouns, verbs [4], and adjectives that undergo semantic extension. In many cases, metaphorical meaning emerged through the transfer of characteristics from a concrete source domain to an abstract target domain. For example, physical phenomena and spatial concepts were frequently used to conceptualize emotional, intellectual, and social experiences.

The study also established that phraseological units and idiomatic expressions play a significant role in preserving culturally specific metaphorical models. Such expressions reflect collective cognitive patterns and demonstrate the influence of national worldview, historical development [5], and cultural traditions on metaphor formation. Comparative analysis showed that although many metaphorical concepts possess universal cognitive foundations, their structural realization differs across language systems.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that syntactic structures contribute substantially to the expressiveness and semantic depth of metaphors. Extended metaphorical constructions, parallel syntactic patterns, and contextual combinations intensify figurative meaning and increase communicative impact. In discourse contexts, metaphorical structures were observed to perform not only aesthetic functions but also persuasive, evaluative, and cognitive functions.

Semantic analysis revealed that metaphor formation is closely connected with the interaction between denotative and connotative meanings. During semantic transformation, literal meanings are partially preserved while acquiring additional conceptual associations. This dual semantic structure allows metaphors to function simultaneously as linguistic and cognitive phenomena.

The results additionally confirmed the importance of contextual factors in the interpretation of metaphors. The meaning and communicative effectiveness of metaphorical expressions depend largely on discourse environment, pragmatic intention, and sociocultural background. In scientific, political, literary, and media discourse, metaphors [6] were shown to serve different communicative purposes and exhibit varying degrees of semantic complexity.

The study further demonstrated that cognitive mechanisms such as analogy, categorization, and conceptual integration constitute the theoretical basis of metaphor formation. These mechanisms facilitate the transfer of knowledge from familiar conceptual domains to abstract or less clearly structured concepts. Consequently, metaphor operates not merely as a stylistic device but as an essential instrument of human cognition and knowledge representation.

On the whole, the obtained results confirm that the structural-semantic organization of metaphorical linguistic means reflects the interrelationship between language, thought, culture, and communication. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of metaphor as a multidimensional linguistic phenomenon within modern world linguistics.

Discussion. The findings of the present study confirm that metaphor is not merely a stylistic ornament of language but a multidimensional linguistic and cognitive phenomenon that reflects the interaction between conceptual thinking, semantic transformation, and communicative intention. The structural-semantic analysis of metaphor-forming linguistic means demonstrates that metaphorization is based on systematic linguistic mechanisms rather than accidental semantic deviation. This supports the theoretical assumptions of modern cognitive linguistics, according to which metaphor functions as a fundamental instrument for conceptualizing human experience.

The study revealed that lexical-semantic transfer remains one of the central mechanisms in metaphor formation. The transformation of literal meanings into figurative meanings occurs through associative and conceptual relations that connect concrete and abstract domains. Such results correspond with contemporary linguistic theories emphasizing that human cognition tends to interpret abstract concepts through more familiar physical [7], spatial, and sensory experiences. Consequently, metaphorical structures reflect universal cognitive patterns while simultaneously preserving language-specific and culturally determined characteristics.

An important aspect identified in the research is the role of contextual and pragmatic factors in shaping metaphorical meaning. The analysis demonstrated that metaphors cannot be fully interpreted outside discourse context because their semantic value depends on communicative purpose, sociocultural environment, and textual interaction. In scientific discourse, metaphors mainly serve explanatory and conceptual functions; in literary discourse, they strengthen emotional and aesthetic expression; while in political and media discourse, they frequently perform persuasive and evaluative functions. This multifunctionality indicates that metaphor acts as a dynamic communicative mechanism adaptable to different discourse environments.

The comparative analysis also showed that metaphorical models possess both universal and culture-specific features. Universal metaphorical patterns are associated with common human cognitive experiences, whereas structural and semantic differences emerge due to historical development, national mentality, and linguistic worldview. This confirms the close relationship between metaphor and cultural cognition and highlights the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches in metaphor studies.

Another significant observation concerns the interaction between linguistic structure and semantic complexity in metaphorical constructions. The research findings indicate that syntactic organization, lexical selection [8], and contextual compatibility influence the intensity and interpretative depth of metaphorical expressions. Extended metaphorical constructions and conceptual combinations increase semantic richness and allow speakers to express complex abstract ideas more effectively.

The obtained results contribute to the further development of structural-semantic and cognitive approaches in modern linguistics. At the same time, the study has certain limitations related to the scope of analyzed languages and discourse materials [9]. Future research may focus on cross-cultural corpus-based investigations, computational modeling of metaphorical structures, and the role of artificial intelligence in metaphor recognition and interpretation.

Altogether, the discussion confirms that the study of linguistic means forming metaphors remains an important direction in world linguistics because it reveals essential connections between language, cognition, communication, and culture. The results obtained in this research expand the theoretical understanding of metaphorization processes and create opportunities for further interdisciplinary investigations in linguistic science.

Conclusions. The conducted research has demonstrated that metaphor formation in world linguistics represents a complex structural-semantic process closely connected with cognitive, communicative, and cultural mechanisms of language. The study confirmed that linguistic means such as lexical units, phraseological expressions, syntactic constructions [10], and contextual semantic transformations play a decisive role in the creation and functioning of metaphorical meanings.

The analysis revealed that metaphorical meaning is formed through semantic transfer, associative reinterpretation, and conceptual mapping between source and target domains. These mechanisms allow language users to conceptualize abstract phenomena through concrete experience and to expand the expressive and cognitive potential of language. The findings further showed that metaphor serves not only as a stylistic device but also as a fundamental instrument of human cognition and knowledge representation.

The research established that structural organization significantly influences the semantic depth and communicative effectiveness of metaphorical expressions. Lexical choice, syntactic arrangement, and discourse context determine the degree of figurativeness [11] and the interpretative possibilities of metaphors. In addition, the study identified that metaphorical models possess both universal cognitive characteristics and language-specific cultural features shaped by historical, social, and national factors.

The results of the comparative and contextual analyses demonstrated that metaphors perform diverse communicative functions in different discourse environments, including explanatory, persuasive, evaluative, emotional, and aesthetic functions. This multifunctionality confirms the dynamic nature of metaphor within modern linguistic communication.

The theoretical significance of the research lies in the expansion of structural-semantic and cognitive approaches to metaphor studies and in clarifying the relationship between linguistic structure and semantic transformation. The practical significance of the study is associated with the possibility of applying its results in discourse analysis, translation studies, language teaching methodology [12], intercultural communication, and computational linguistics.

Taken together, the study contributes to the broader understanding of metaphor as an interdisciplinary linguistic phenomenon and highlights the importance of further investigations into metaphorical mechanisms within contemporary world linguistics. Future research directions may include corpus-based comparative studies, digital linguistic analysis of metaphorical structures, and the application of artificial intelligence technologies in metaphor recognition and interpretation.

References:

[1]. Lakoff G., & Johnson M. Metaphors We Live By. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1980 y.
[2]. Kövecses Z. Metaphor: A Practical Introduction (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2010 y.
[3]. Charteris-Black J. Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2004 y.
[4]. Steen G. J. The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor: Now New and Improved!. Review of Cognitive Linguistics, 9(1), 26–64. 2011 y.
[5]. Fauconnier G., & Turner, M. The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities. New York: Basic Books. 2002 y.
[6]. Gibbs R. W. The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1994 y.
[7]. Richards I. A. The Philosophy of Rhetoric. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1936 y.
[8]. Black, M. Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1962 y.
[9]. Ortony A. (Ed.). Metaphor and Thought (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1993 y.

[10]. Ullmann S. Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning. Oxford: Blackwell. 1962 y.
[11]. Lyons J. Semantics (Vol. 1–2). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1977 y.
[12]. Dirven R., & Pörings R. (Eds.). Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 2002 y.