

МЕТАФОРИЧЕСКАЯ КОНЦЕПТУАЛИЗАЦИЯ COVID-19 В СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНЫХ МЕДИА

METAPHORICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF COVID-19 IN SOCIAL MEDIA IN ENGLISH

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Аннотация: Данная статья посвящена проблематике метафоризации концепта «Ковид-19» в текстах современной англоязычной прессы. Термин «концепт» имеет достаточно сложную трактовку в различных школах, как и «метафора». Ключевым аспектом здесь была компиляция различных терминологических систем и сравнение позиций по ключевым вопросам. Важным элементом стало изучение подходов к метафоре, рассматривалось риторическое понимание вместе с концептуальным. В результате анализа метафоризации концепта «коронавирус» в текстах современной англоязычной прессы были выявлены особенности представления метафоры коронавируса как войны и чумы. Рассмотрение проблемы в ключе преподавания позволяет говорить о возможности передачи информации о метафоре на различных уровнях для школьников и студентов в терминах стилистического анализа. Данная проблематика находит отражение в разных сферах лингвистики: функциональной стилистике, теории перевода, преподавательской деятельности.

Ключевые слова: концепт, метафоризация концепта, ковид-19, масс медиа, функции, реципиент.

Annotation: This article is devoted to the problem of metaphorization of the concept of "Covid-19" in the texts of the modern English-language press. The term "concept" has a rather complex interpretation in various schools, as well as "metaphor". The key aspect here was the compilation of various terminological systems and the comparison of positions on key issues. An important element was the study of approaches to metaphor, rhetorical understanding was considered along with the conceptual one. As a result of the analysis of the metaphorization of the concept of "coronavirus" in the texts of the modern English-language press, the features of the presentation of the metaphor of coronavirus as war and plague were revealed. Consideration of the problem in terms of teaching allows us to talk about the possibility of transmitting information about the metaphor at different levels for schoolchildren and students in terms of stylistic analysis. This issue is reflected in different areas of linguistics: functional stylistics, translation theory, teaching.

Keywords: concept, metaphorization of the concept, covid-19, mass media, functions, recipient.

The journalistic discourse in the analysis was chosen because it reflects the phenomena of reality most quickly, since journalism's main public function is directly related to informing the community. Since informational and analytical articles devoted to these problems have long been central to the attention of society, it is essential to pay attention to the advanced English-language media. This is significant because a good press works in a high-quality language, that is, the maximum number of metaphorical turns can be

seen in this kind of publications.

That is why The BBC, The New York Times, The Financial Times, The Economist, and so on were chosen.

In the course of the article, it is crucial to analyze metaphors from key English-language business publications that specialize in news and analytical articles of high-quality press. An algorithm for the study of metaphor has been developed, which must be presented in this part:

1. The choice of metaphor as the realization of the concept of coronavirus in its central or peripheral part;
2. Identification of metaphor as a systemic or individual unit;
3. Analysis of the origin of the metaphor;
4. Identification of metaphor semantics as a universal or specific Universality is understood as an analysis for a pan-European culture, the main sources of which are antiquity and Christianity;
5. Metaphor analysis within the framework of D. Arutyunova's approach[\[1\]](#);
6. Metaphor analysis within the framework of the Lakoff approach.

Thus, a complete analysis of the features of the implementation of the concept "Covid-19" in the modern English-language quality press, which systematically considers this phenomenon: from the point of view of economics, politics, and bioethics.

In order to analyze the implementation of the concept of "Covid-19," it was decided to consider the entire range of metaphors proposed by G. Lakoff[\[2\]](#). Structural metaphors played a key role in the analysis since the imposition of one experience on another axiological system makes it possible to create a synthesis, which in this part is already represented by a number of different manifestations in the media.

The Financial Times offers the following implementations of the covid metaphor as a war. *"Europe battles to contain surge in Covid-19 cases."* (FT) – the word "battles" means several economic and social measures. This type of metaphor, of course, is central, since it denotes the formation of a system to counteract the disease. According to the concept of N. D. Arutyunova, this metaphor is cognitive[\[3\]](#).

1. Lakoff also considers it cognitive, but it must be attributed to the structural type, since it is transferred on the basis of losses, the activity of actions, and mobilization of the community to solve the problem[\[4\]](#).

For example, the construction of hospitals, lockdown, restriction of active activity. Accordingly, since no one takes a weapon in their hands, there is a metaphorization of the meaning by similarity, since the actions are directed against an unpersonalized enemy who can cause significant harm.

Speaking about coronavirus measures, a game frame is often used, in which the coordinate system of the modern social situation in the world is competently integrated.

That is why the approach proposed in this excerpt of the article is considered within the framework of the game frame: *“To win, we need to attack the virus with aggressive and targeted tactics,” – he said.*

It should be noted that the specifics of this message are based on the terminology of a team game: win, attack, aggressive and purposeful tactics. The frame of the game includes consideration of measures that can be presented as a “tactic.” This is a vivid example of a structural metaphor that is implemented within the framework of the war frame since the term is used in this context initially.

There are several other statements that are primarily compelling in the military vocabulary. They have similar information messages:

–“countries fight Covid-19 resurgence.”

–“hospitals and intensive care units are struggling to cope.”

–“war on superbugs must follow defeat of Covid-19.”

–“In tents, emergency rooms and intensive care units, a war is taking place.” (USAT)

The direct mention of war vividly actualizes the metaphorical conceptual field. It is quite absorbing to realize that the word “war” is used quite sharply in the second case, that is, without a special context, you can imagine the wounded of any of the wars.

Accordingly, such a completely obvious comparison makes the picture more vivid. Moreover, in the second sentence, the author uses the frame perception of a typical representative of American culture who knows the experience of Iraq and Afghanistan. Such a stylistic technique allows to create a special picture in relation to the global problem of modern society.

It is substantial to note that people do not just talk about the problem of covid in terms of war: it is really possible to win or lose a “battle” for the life of an individual, the economy of a country, an entire state that will face a problem, for example, extinction if it is not adequately protected.

Society views the disease as an enemy that needs to be fought, so there is a personification of the virus, it is even given names in the English-speaking culture, for example, “Ronny”. Such a mockingly abbreviated name to some extent levels the image of the enemy reduces its significance.

Accordingly, based on their cultural experience, people as representatives of the collective unconscious strive to form their own ordered coordinate system, in which covid is perceived as a dangerous threat to life, therefore, the cure of the disease is called a struggle.

Moreover, if the designation of covid is considered as a war, it is clear that there is a time to attack or defend one’s own. Humanity either wins or loses, develops or uses certain

strategies.

The society mourns the defeated, "*wounded*" (the US states sound alarm on Covid-19 hospitalizations), applauds the soldiers, who are doctors. Many things that scientists work on in the field of coronavirus are partially structured by the concept of war.

Speaking about the sides of the confrontation, it is necessary to understand how they represent a modern threat in American society, which is quite curious to perceive: "*But for the moment, the virus has proved far more damaging than any recent encounters with traditional adversaries.*"

Accordingly, the disease is singled out as a new enemy, since there is a corresponding opposition, that is, the word "traditional." So, there is a reference, for example, to the fight against terrorism, which is a significant enemy for the American people. According to G. Lakoff's theory, this metaphor is structural, and N. D. Arutyunova would call it simply cognitive.

Moreover, in comparison, it occupies a more dangerous place, as indicated by the words "more damaging." In general, there is a completely understandable appeal to the image of the indigenous enemy, which appropriately "fits" into the metaphorical system of war.

Even more vividly, the theme of "soldier" is used in this context: "*Broadway star serenades front-line workers.*"

This is very engaging because it repeats the Russian classical experience, which is quite familiar for culture when cultural figures perform on a voluntary basis in front of a socially significant cohort of people. According to G. Lakoff's theory, this metaphor is structural, and N. D. Arutyunova refers to this type of metaphors as cognitive.

Again, it is difficult to imagine doctors without comprehending the context. Accordingly, journalists are actively trying to fit the topic of doctors and the virus into the frame of the collective unconscious "war." Thus, the importance of the current events is emphasized.

The position of "the place of military operations" is also being implemented, which in various ways forms a new aspect when considering this issue. The New York Times published an article with this phrase: "*We are on the battlefield. We are in the trenches and in the middle of a war.*" said Dr. Robert L. Klitzman, the director of the masters of bioethics programs at Columbia University.

Accordingly, the theme of trenches and battlefield is implemented in the usual context of military operations, which is quite symptomatic, since the three lexemes express the concept of a place, a special chronotope, in which the war is currently going on.

Again, it is incredibly difficult to recognize that this applies to the coronavirus without context. The coordinate system builds a complex systemic unity that allows to realize the complexity of the situation. A special role is played by the subsection, which can be

designated as the actions of the enemy. For example, *“the virus pummels the United States.”* This phrase again refers to the famous military events that were in the history of the United States.

This means that such a system introduces the collective unconscious of Americans into the dialogue, who build a new coordinate system in a given frame, based on old bases. The advance of troops is realized as the advance of the virus: *“The coronavirus has been slow to come to Haiti.”*

Accordingly, his “stay” on the island is recorded by the number of the first cases, that is, the first victims, which is also noted. *“The pandemic is making incursions into the nation’s state legislatures,”* – in this part of the phrase, noticing that the act of aggression on the part of the virus is clearly marked as part of the invasion.

There is also an idea of the need to counter the enemy, so there are theses related to the struggle, it is compulsory to give some vivid examples:

-“two superpowers need to work together *to suppress* the virus and resuscitate the global economy;” the idea of suppressing the coronavirus as an enemy is within the frame;

-a disadvantage in *confronting* the pandemic”;

-“This is how we will *defeat* it in the end.” It is necessary to include the idea of victory over the coronavirus since society must go to this circumstance because this is the only way the final part of the concept can develop since victory over a new world evil is an obligatory part of the system, which cannot be somehow downplayed;

-“*Ebola, MERS and COVID-19 repeatedly invade the community of civilized human beings,*” – the word “invade” implies a serious degree of involvement of the enemy in the “territory” of the defender. Accordingly, this nominative metaphor was formed as an indicator of the seriousness of the situation in which society found itself after the outbreak of the epidemic;

-Donald Trump says he now considers himself a “*wartime president.*” Thus, it is obligatory to observe that even the designation of oneself as a state administrator occurs within the framework of the concept of wartime.

It follows from this that a key change is taking place in society, as the concept of “wartime” appears, which, as it is known, restricts a number of freedoms, adding more power to executive structures.

A metaphor that assumes the strengthening of the image is transformed into an indication of the situation, then it turns from a figurative one into a nominative one, denoting the specifics of the work in a completely different way.

It should be noted that the metaphor is sociomorphic, accordingly, it takes as a basis the activity of society, forming a unique pattern of repetition of social development, which is quite interesting.

Moreover, according to the structural classification of G. Lakoff's metaphors, they all belong to the category of structural. According to the classification of N. D. Arutyunova, they can be considered cognitive, since it arises as a result of a shift in the compatibility of predicative words and creates polysemy.

Moreover, it is compulsory to understand that according to the main parameters, namely: the war, the battlefield, the soldiers (actors of events), the place of action, the specifics of the advance of troops, all this is repeated and copied since some sentences cannot be understood without context at all.

It seems that this is an absolutely typical metaphor of the cognitive type, which is based on the representation of the acute struggle of society against the threat that threatens the foundations of human life.

It is absorbing to compare the coronavirus with other viruses in the coordinate system. Such a zoomorphic metaphor will reflect the seriousness of society's attitude to the problems of biological safety. Very often, a whole complex of metaphors is formed on the comparison, which organically fit into a different frame[5].

So, the coronavirus is expected to be perceived as a "*plague of the 21st century*." Firstly, this name is already a metaphor, since the plague and the coronavirus are completely different phenomena. But there is a semantic sign of similarity, which is implemented to make the situation dramatic.

This is due to a fairly high risk, although the virulence and lethality of the coronavirus is much lower than the same characteristics of the plague. Accordingly, such a name is mandatory in order to increase the expressiveness of the text.

Moreover, not only the name itself is exploited for the metaphorical name of covid-19, but also a special system of terms that is characteristic of the concept of "*plague*." For the first time since the beginning of the epidemic, the phrase "*quarantine time*" comes into use. The word quarantine itself appeared in everyday life during the plague or the Black Death, as the coronavirus is also called in England.

The modern world forms new derived units that form a new field derived from the original one. These are terms such as "home quarantine," "work quarantine," "self-quarantine" and even "rolling quarantine."

Another image is closely related to the plague and is exploited in the context of the coronavirus is the plague doctor. This is written by the media "Sky News:" "*Person as 17th century plague doctor thought by Norfolk Police*."

Accordingly, typical attributes are tightly included in the media field, creating a special discourse in it that forms the consciousness of representatives of society in a particular culture.

Terminology from the past is used to represent the position of people in today's system, while the use of old vocabulary is characteristic. Thus, a pattern is formed again,

which is designed to combine the past situation and compare them. So, modern patients with coronavirus, due to the rather serious contagiousness of the virus, become *“lepers of the 21st century.”*

Thus, the term “leprosy” takes the meaning of outcasts. Moreover, the source word is just “located” in the sphere of influence of the history of the 17th century, which is quite painful for England: *“These individuals during disease outbreaks as outcasts and lepers”*.

This is quite unexpected, but the coronavirus is considered partly as a savior of the environment. It is quite unexpected and unusual that such a phenomenon, which has stopped the lives of a huge number of people, can be considered in such an original way. There are several examples confirming this thesis, which was revealed in the format of a cognitive metaphor[6].

“Mother Nature was waiting for a transformation process to revive her individual ecosystems. It seems that the social blockade in the fight against COVID- 19 gave it a long-awaited break for self-regeneration,” [M. Curie] – A. R. Paital wrote in 2020. Thus, it is significant to perceive the coronavirus as a blessing that can protect Mother Earth. According to G. Lakoff, these metaphors should also be classified as structural, since the new phenomenon is reinterpreted within the framework of old concepts.

Accordingly, the image is formed, or rather a new side of it. If earlier it was only an absolute evil, then in this interpretation it is worth considering the problem as something fundamentally new, that is, as a positive side of the process, thanks to which the environmental indicators of life in the country are improving.

“COVID-19 blessing in disguise is the fact for seed strategists.” Thus, the BBC publication forms a complex multi-layered metaphorical canvas that creates a key thesis of the metaphorical device of this system.

Accordingly, all these semes refer to the coronavirus as a phenomenon that has had a beneficial effect on the environment. Including seeds, which can also be considered as some allusion to the future, since in the same text, only in a different heading, the journalist asks a rhetorical question: *“Covid-19 a blessing in disguise for climate change?”*

It follows from this that this phenomenon should be perceived in the text as again a biblical allusion to the future in connection with the idea of “cultivated seeds of good.”

Often, the coronavirus is presented in this article as *“camouflaged blessing,”* which also suggests that humanity is trying to seek good in difficult situations, which is indicative in a world that is abruptly becoming “green,” as it thinks about the environmental factor[7].

The image of fire is used as a vivid cognitive metaphor. It is quite atypical, but it is quite interestingly implemented as a cognitive metaphor, the analysis of which will be given here.

“The virus, in addition to its real-world implications, was a match for financial markets that had become the equivalent of dry tinder. The ingredients for a conflagration were

there, and all it took was a spark." In addition to the standard approach *"a flame will ignite from a spark,"* which is a common stamp of natural- morphic origin, which has often been extrapolated to social realities.

But the combination is curious, the explanation of the fire that occurred. It is very meaningful to talk about the connection between the financial sector of life and the virus, which together have become a catalyst for serious social changes.

The seme of a successful outcome in a situation of surprise is also added. In general, there is an idea that this positive outcome is formulated as a kind of surprise in the coordinate system. The biblical terminology reveals a certain new level of perception of the system and the idea of the coronavirus, gradually embedded in this system.

Interesting in this framework is a hidden comparison of the financial market and "dry tinder," within which a cognitive metaphor is formed, representing an entire system of perception.

"When Wuhan began burning with infections in December, the U.S. government took only illogical, inadequate actions to stop the virus's spread: [...] When the sparks of this conflagration hit, Seattle was aflame before anyone at the CDC had started to reach for water." These two sentences, printed in the same article, have built a whole figurative system with a number of actants that are easily metaphorically solved in the concept.

The predicate of the cognitive metaphor, that is, the event to which it is necessary to further select actants is the phrase "burning with infections." Accordingly, in this case, the metaphor is the idea of fire in the sphere of the spread of the coronavirus. Perhaps the author is talking about the high speed of the spread of this problem, which is emphasized in the text in the future.

Expressions *"sparks of this conflagration hit"* and *"reach for water"* create a general picture of the perception of the pandemic as a fire that has flared up. That is, the peaks of morbidity have begun, and all those who appear as firefighters, that is, the authorities and doctors, have begun a period of finding water in order to "extinguish" these foci of infection. Again, the use of structural metaphor in the case of G. Lakoff's theory and cognitive, if viewed from the position of N. D. Arutyunova.

"In short, instead of accusing each other of playing with matches, these two powerhouse countries could help put out the fire" is a rather interesting play on words and metaphorical concepts, so it should be said that quarrels and attempts to accuse each other of artificially creating a virus are interpreted by journalists as a *"play with matches."* The cognitive metaphor is implemented in the structural plan according to the "fire" frame. Thus, a conceptual metaphor of a structural nature is formed.

Thus, two large countries are accused of infantile behaviour and inability to implement plans for a qualitative change in the situation and solving problems. *"Put out the fire,"* - in this case, the metaphor means solving the problems of high morbidity by joint efforts.

If you look at the combined situation, it seems that the two powers are not a collection

of sufficiently competent people who are able to make decisions. Children who cannot agree with each other, because in English-speaking culture there is a representation of *"Matches to children is not a toy."*

"The World Health Organization has stepped up its calls for intensified action to fight the coronavirus pandemic, imploring countries "not to let this fire burn" – again, the idea of kindling a bonfire becomes relevant. It is in such cases that not only the danger of the further spread of the coronavirus in the world is meant, but also the complexity of relations between key players in international politics.

Thus, the system-level concept of cognitive metaphors developed very quickly and efficiently. It is important to describe the metaphorical representation of actors: people are firewood or oil of a fire, doctors are firefighters, and quarrels and joint accusations can be matches since they do not improve the quality of work with the problem.

It should be said that all the metaphors presented in this part of the work are cognitive since a different systemic reality is created on the basis of known features and a discourse is organized based on the similarity of features.

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