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## THE METAPHOR IN THE PUBLIC (POLITICAL) DISCOURSE IN THE MACEDONIAN LANGUAGE AT THE TIME OF ELECTIONS

**ABSTRACT** Cognitive linguistic researches basically place metaphors as tool and as a cognitive ability to join the motivation and the real message they convey on one hand, and the textual analysis which serves to view metaphor as a result of the cultural and communication experience in expressing attitudes motivated by previously acquired knowledge. The use of the conceptual and conventional metaphor expressions in the public (political) discourse through examples in the Macedonian language portrays the conceptual integration as an inevitable approach in the interpretation of the metaphor in a minimal context. The examples of metaphors are increasingly present at time of elections. What is characteristic of the Macedonian political discourse is that during the last six years there is continuity in the dynamics. The appearance of the metaphors is integrated within the rhetoric strategy, which appears to be effective. There is a selection and a qualitative analysis of the metaphors in the Macedonian language which are used in the public (political) discourse.

**Key-words:** metaphor, conceptual metaphors, conceptual integration, cognitive linguistics, conventional metaphorical expressions, minimal context, public discourse, political communication

Cognitive linguistic research basically places metaphors as a tool and as a cognitive ability to join the motivation and the real message they convey on the one hand, and the textual analysis which serves to view metaphor as a result of the cultural and

communication experience in expressing attitudes motivated by previously acquired knowledge. The use of the conceptual and conventional metaphor expressions in the public (political) discourse through examples in the Macedonian language portrays the conceptual integration as an inevitable approach in the interpretation of the metaphor in a minimal context. The examples of metaphors are increasingly present at the time of elections. What is characteristic of the Macedonian political discourse is that during the last six years there is continuity in the dynamics. The appearance of the metaphors is integrated within the rhetorical strategy, which appears to be effective. There is a selection and a qualitative analysis of the metaphors in the Macedonian language which are used in the public (political) discourse.

The metaphors (conceptual and conventional) are an integral part of the cognitive language analyses. The metaphor may be analysed in different functional styles (artistic, conversational, parts of other styles) in the language. The basic terms have been defined according to the research by George Lakoff and John Taylor. The motivation of the agent to do an activity or the subjectivity of the person who composes the information during its composition and well as the motivation to choose one set of tools as opposed to another, have all been taken into consideration. Conceptual metaphors, i.e. their duality is expressed through the syntagmatic ability to connect the conceptual spheres. The metaphors in the public (political) discourse have had a different frequency depending on the spatial and temporal conditions. This is not about using metaphors for the personal cognitive experiences, moreover, the metaphor always instigates thought, it activates and alerts the listeners and urges them to look for the decoding system within themselves.

A part of the cognitive linguistic research is directed towards defining and analysis of the cognitive metaphors as a basis in the interpretation of the structure of the language situations which are present in the communication situations. Historically, the metaphor and the tools used for its construction are subject matters of literature research, and the attitude of the cognitive approach has been enforced not only by the question of the metaphor, metonymy, and modality in the textual researches to be viewed from a different perspective. This need stems from the possibility of different degrees of predictability and measurability of the communication situations only through the language tools. On the other hand, the metaphor used to be connected to certain functional styles (artistic, conversational, parts of other styles). Nowadays, the examples of conceptual metaphors are found in different functional styles, somewhere the sense of metaphorical use is lost and there are creolised forms which have lost the characteristic of metaphor over time and have transitioned to a new level in terms of semantics.

Therefore, in order to give a good explanation of the issue of the metaphors (conceptual and conventional) we need to place them as an integral part of the cognitive language analyses. This means that the language elements are placed in such a way in the structuring of the information that they signify and rephrase, as well as modify the spatial relations, since this is the only way they can meet the requirement in question. In fact, they are an integral, basic part of this spatial (cognitive) grammar, which imposes the use of certain language tools with a defined use. In this way we also get the same

way that the basic projection of the reality is gained through language expressions used in a certain space and at certain times which may be expressed explicitly or implicitly, as required by the situation.

The conceptual analyses which appeared in the 80s spread vertically, starting from the methods applied in the conceptual semantics. Here, we take into consideration all the analyses made thus far, which serve as a basis, which shows the unmarked situations which are countable and finite, as opposed to the others that found their place in the conceptual analyses. We are referring to the researches carried out by George Lakoff as a base for the cognitive linguistics, and John Taylor.<sup>1</sup> We are not talking about a symbiosis of theories in order to explain the majority of the exceptions to the rules presented in the semantic and syntactic descriptions, since although the semantic and syntactic analyses have been carried out separately, they showed that the isolated analysing leads to a wrong interpretation of the information and difficulties in the basic communication scheme, regarding the grammar and the accuracy of the information. For example, they did not take into consideration the motivation of the agent to perform an activity or the subjectivity of the composer of the information while it was being composed and the motivation to choose certain tools as opposed to other. Such and similar issues imposed the issue of the cognitive analyses.

More than 30 years ago, in his work *Metaforski lingvostilemi* Milorad Ćorac raised some questions regarding the definition of the language styles with measurable instruments, the choice of the lexis which determines a certain direction. Over time other aspects appeared in order to explain and define the examples in practice, as it has been done in the *Correlative syntax* [Корелациона синтакса] by B. Toshovich. Also there are works which include the examples of syntactic styles, situational contexts, conditioned contexts (through place, time, surroundings, etc.). All these analyses demonstrate the need of minimal contextual positions in order to determine the other qualifications of the used language tools. The parallel between the communication and linguistic situation and the characteristics of the different speaking acts create the quality of the information created for that purpose, i.e. to be unambiguously conveyed.

The subject matter of conceptual metaphors is directly connected to the adequate interpretation of some other terms. The conceptual metaphors contain two basic elements and one of them dominates in different contexts. The dual character of the conceptual metaphors is expressed by the syntagmatic ability to connect the conceptual spheres, which appear again in conceptual situations, which can be analysed from the aspect of psycholinguistics on the one hand, and on the another hand, the repeated use of the connections in the conceptual model leads to it becoming a sort of a conventional model of metaphors, thus they transform in an affirmative paradigm model of fixed knowledge which we use unconsciously in order to express or understand a given language expression. In fact, we are talking about a dual or combined or integrated model of conceptual metaphors. This allows us to understand the metaphorical properties of the information we receive and to transfer them, in the same way, in the relation from

<sup>1</sup> J. Taylor, *Cognitive Grammar*, New York 2002 (*Oxford Textbooks in Linguistics*).

conscious to unconscious and vice versa. The more frequently we use these strings, the more frequently the metaphorical expressions (sentences, constructions) activate in the language experience as fixed expressions for certain situations. This frequency in the use leaves the lexical element unmarked, resulting in the loss of the metaphorical feeling in certain styles, widening of the meaning to the degree of secondary adaptation and semantisation which stops being figurative meaning and becomes the basic meaning. At the same time, this results in the change of the semantic field and the vertical placement of the available meanings of a certain lexeme.

Regarding the metaphors, the conceptual is built in, in their basis. The basic division of conceptual and conventional metaphors is caused by the frequency of use at a wider level. The moment of transfer from one type to another is determined with difficulty, as it is difficult to determine the subjective motivation if one does not take into consideration the minimal context or situation or the broader previous information. Such experiences are built in, in the memory code (surface-active and deep unconscious code) which is used intuitively as a type of reflection of something familiar. The experience which causes this reflection can be physical, cultural, social, etc.

The need is imposed of adequate placement at a semantic level with an interpretation of the concepts through their representations. These representations stem from the mental thesaurus which is created from the experiences gained through perceptions. Naturally, the numerous factors, conditioned by time, space, the conditions, etc., which were at play when these perceptions were created should be taken into consideration. The language tools used to express them verbally, can be different, but their representation in the consciousness through the thought is the same or similar. In order to explain these processes more profound analyses of the associative relations are required, which are elaborated in associative grammars and dictionaries which give an answer about the connection and the appearance of the conceptual metaphors.

The minimal contexts do not appear as something essential in order to accurately interpret the conceptual metaphor. They appear in order to direct the analysis of the cognitive methods and to distinguish the comparative phrasal expressions or another type of phraseology. Naturally, the conceptual metaphors require both elements, the basic and the figurative, which the basic one is connected to, according to a surface semantic or an associative characteristic.

In order to make a good analysis of the cognitive metaphors, other analyses are required. The researches in lexicography, the descriptions which are given in the thesauruses can serve as good information regarding the placement of certain lexemes which appear in a certain context that includes the cognitive metaphor, for example, the lexemes drama, film and play are found in different contexts when it comes to the basic unmarked position. Some examples show the narrowing and some show the spreading of the semantic field, as a sign to which extent the context directs or limits or creates a larger image which is not concrete, yet allows space for a different interpretation.

The conceptual approach in the language research takes into consideration the different theories regarding the classification and the defining within the internal layering

of the metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson differentiate three types of conceptual metaphors, which are:

- **Structural** (when one concept structures the other), e.g.: *life is a journey, time is money*;
- **Orientational** (the composition is organised in such way that it confronts or creates a relation with another composition), e.g.: *health and life are up, sickness and death are down*;
- **Ontological** (their basis is in our physical or cultural experience – events, actions, activities and states become defined containers), e.g.: *the heart is a fragile thing*.

Regarding the public (political) discourse through the phrases when the frequency of the metaphor in the expression is increased, undoubtedly the times of elections are the most attractive to include the picturesque in the public appearances. Lakoff begins a paper from 1991 dedicated to the metaphors in politics with the statement “metaphors may kill”, thus igniting the need to create a corpus of metaphors in order to facilitate the understanding, as well as emphasise the need to study them more thoroughly and to understand the metaphor systems, from which some are common at a global level, and the less known part is connected to local defining factors.

The studies of the metaphor in the political (public) discourse in the Macedonian language have become a necessity since more significant analyses of the political metaphor in Macedonia have not been made, and this is a very illustrative language material. Macedonia has entered its third decade of political pluralism, and as a result of this we can see different forms and strategies for public speeches, rallies, debates, interviews and all the possible forms of public appearances and communication of the interested parties. The basic thing regarding the language analyses is the position of the already fixed conceptual metaphor. Thus, the associative properties are developed through several semantic fields which are dominant, but the creativity is great and it is mostly reflected by other experiences. The desire to leave an impression, to be noticed, to be interesting, concerned and to approach the people is obvious in the political discourse. The effectiveness of the rhetoric and the picturesque representation of the ideas is reflected through the choice of language tools with appropriate eloquence. Thus, the political competition is a sport competition, i.e. a type of war, therefore, all elements of the sport will find their place in the metaphorical system (arena, arbiters, judges, stadium, ball, pool, race, half-time, own goal, penalty, score, three point basket). Not all lexemes have the same capacity to form conceptual metaphors, as well as a wider range of semantic association, according to their lexical semantics, although they could be found in such positions. According to some research the metaphorical property can be developed anywhere, the expression will appear with unmarked elements which form the metaphorical semantemes in one functional sphere, and the same elements carry the metaphorical properties in other spheres. Isolating the possibility to develop a metaphor in the Macedonian language in predicative structures where the main element is a verb form could be seen in the intentional-syntactic dictionary of the Macedonian verbs where the basic and the figurative meanings of the verbs are presented, through

sentence structures. For example, the verb *to fall* (*naža*) develops constructions with metaphorical properties: *The standard is dropping* (*Стандардом нажа*); *The prices are dropping* (*Цените нажаам*); *The government is falling* (*Владата нажа*). As opposed to them, the unmarked minimal structures appear, e.g.: *Snow is falling* (*Паѓа снег*); *The leaves are falling* (*Паѓаат лисјата*). Other word groups offer different frequency for the possibility to form metaphors. Some metaphorical properties can also be developed with other word groups, such as conjunctions (but, and, or) or prepositions. The prepositions especially come into light with the spatial metaphors, which are used to determine the spatial orientation of the metaphors.

The issue about space is treated in language so extensively, that it involves parts such as spatial linguistics and the interpretation of space outside the linguistic frames. The orientation in space is directly connected to the perspective and the placement of the subject in relation to the surrounding, starting from defined places, through materialised spaces, real and imaginary spaces. An all-encompassing elaboration of the spatial metaphors in the political discourse is found in Predrag Piper who analyses the spatial metaphors in language and speech and classifies the metaphors from this sphere, through defining the tools used to express the space in the political metaphors.<sup>2</sup>

The matter of the political discourse in the Republic of Macedonia can be viewed from different perspectives, and generally speaking the language used in the Macedonian political scene is very creative when it comes to metaphors. The success is seen in the public appearances where the main goal is to attract the attention with a rhetorical strategy with the constant presence of metaphors, therefore we cannot maintain that the artistic literature is the home of the metaphor. Persuasiveness, as a characteristic of the public (political) discourse offers a wider possibility for classification of the metaphors. The analyses presented here are based on materials gathered from the tools for mass communication (press, Internet, television and public appearances at the political rallies in the Republic of Macedonia).

In order to make an illustration, we decided to separate one part of the entire process of election campaigns and the use of the Macedonian language at the time of elections (local and parliamentary). The technique to continue the pre-election and elective rhetoric in a time of no elections was accepted by all sides (parties at the top of the Macedonian political life VMRO – with the coalition partners and SDSM with their partners, but also by the Albanian parties in Macedonia). The illustrations cover the period from December 2012 to the spring (local) elections in 2013.

As a starting point we may take into consideration the conceptual metaphors (classic) which are characteristic for other languages as well, for example, taken from a similar research in Croatia (where politics is connected to war, fight, sport, theatre, etc., “Doing politics (might be) is: journey, participation in sports competitions, collision. The country, institution, party is a person. The elections are a sports competition, the entry into Europe > goal of the journey”).

<sup>2</sup> P. Piper, *Jezik i prostor*, Beograd 2001 (*Biblioteka XX Vek*, 91).



Here we will turn our attention to several examples of contextual metaphors in minimal contexts, semantically focused on a defined field, i.e. when there is a connection to a defined semantic field. We distinguished the metaphors with the semantic fields of sport, war and act.

**SPORT**, e.g.: *Race for a place in the political list. Race for Skopje (Struga, Kicevo, Cair...).* The candidates are running the last lap. Penalty in stoppage time. Penalty in the 91<sup>st</sup> minute. The race is in our hands. Let us play well in the first half-time. The elections are like *katas* (a fight with an imaginary opponent). From the forms with the verbs – swim (does not swim), drowns, hangs, stumbles, etc.

**WAR**: *A fight for a position in the parliament. A fight for the municipality. This fight is personal. A fight for Kocani (Stip, Strumica). It detonated like a bomb. We will open a front in the smaller municipalities. Democracy is asking us to fight. It is time for the deciding battle. Difficult battles like this one are won if there are people fighters. From the predicative forms (semantemes) the following verbs are found – beat, fight, make war, take down (on the back), crack (the coalition cracked, there are cracks in their block...)*

**ACT** (theatre, film): *The first act was dramatic, the curtain dropped. He sung his aria. Drama in Bogdanci. What happened could only be a scenario of the XX century. A ridiculous figure on the stage. Greek scenario, Bulgarian scenario, Serbian scenario, Balkan scenarios.* The following verbs are present in the semantemes (act, sings off key)

The original spheres of the metaphors may be created in this way (conventional, conceptual, hidden, etc.), starting from the examples we separated in the Macedonian public discourse during the last elections, starting from December, with a chronology in the small illustrative selection we made, here we will separate an illustrative part without mentioning the author: *Black Monday. He is politically dead. He will touch the bottom. We are giving them the power on a platter. We are invigorating the political battle on a platter. Step by step. Green light so he could do as it pleases him. The same questions are asked a hundred times. Justice is being manipulated. Gadafi style, he lives in his own world. They walked all over the Constitution in the rudest manner and thrown on the street. The police are people. He confronts the people to a boiling point. He (XX) has a low melting point. We broke the ice. The people are saving, the Government wastes on luxury. He is too small a fish to order something like that. The political squares have shown us. Bartering with one's own consciousness...*

So many metaphors in order to attract the attention, resulting in the conventional metaphors which do not attract the attention. That way, Macedonia from – *an oasis of peace* (twenty years ago) became a *country of possibilities, Balkan hot-spot, a country of mistaken politics, a country of champions*, etc. Here we present the metaphors used by various political representatives (position/opposition), as well as the parties from the Albanian block where it is customary for the communication to take place in Albanian language, but sometimes in certain situations, the conversation also happens in Macedonian, e.g.: *Political vassalage in shadow. Political ember which will keep the flame of democratisation lit.* All resulting in the notion that: “metaphor is transformed into barking in the statement that all Albanians fell for the Serbian kings”.

In this war of metaphors which is continuous we will end with the latest, from the daily newspaper *Dnevnik* from June 2013, that “a step forward has been made in the political dialogue, Gruevski and Zaev will make a consensus” and “regarding the ‘quarrel at home’: ‘again a nanny from abroad’”.

This is only a small retrospect to the metaphor in the political discourse from a textual, pragmatic, cognitive linguistic point of view. The metaphor appears as a sign of conscious and unconscious associations, they are the messages we need to follow in order to understand the attitude of the sender. The messages are hidden as codes behind the words, they unveil the mind and its strategy to convey the personal perception with a word.

Adequate results may be gained only if textual analyses are made, since even in the minimal contexts one can only discover a surface sign of the existence of a conceptual metaphor, since its nature can only be unveiled with more thorough language analyses and a wider language context which will include other elements, especially semantic lexis. This issue is neither easy nor simple, but much more complicated than what we established as an opening subject.

A certain number of metaphors has been borrowed from other languages in appropriate public discourses, especially where they have proven to be successful in winning over the voters. Gradually in the Macedonian political discourse, the experience for the use of the metaphor and its influence over the consciousness of the people increases, all the way to a new, different way of accepting the reality in which the individual perception enters as a basis for the collective one, and the developed collective perception always has a tendency to present itself as the truth and a definition of what is right. This is exactly why the metaphor should not be understood as a game of words or to be naively interpreted as an ornament of the expression, since metaphor reflects wisdom and wisdom reflects maturity.

Placing the researches of a cognitive aspect of the Macedonian language in the right position implies activating the processes at a pragmatic level. Although in the researches of this matter, the metaphor was in the science of literature, it has been demonstrated that there is a need of a linguistic aspect of placing the metaphor through the different spheres of use where the secondary, figurative meaning can become basic, and the basic can be placed in a different position resulting in a metaphor. Moreover, the system for these transfers appears to be a common one for different languages and people.

## SUMMARY

Cognitive linguistic researches basically place metaphors as tool and as a cognitive ability to join the motivation and the real message they convey on the one hand, and the textual analysis which serves to view metaphor as a result of the cultural and communication experience in expressing attitudes motivated by previously acquired knowledge. The use of the conceptual and conventional metaphor expressions in the public (political) discourse through examples in the Macedonian language portrays the con-



ceptual integration as an inevitable approach in the interpretation of the metaphor in a minimal context. The examples of metaphors are increasingly present at the time of elections. What is characteristic of the Macedonian political discourse is that during the last six years there is continuity in the dynamics. The appearance of the metaphors is integrated within the rhetoric strategy, which appears to be effective. There is a selection and a qualitative analysis of the metaphors in the Macedonian language which are used in the public (political) discourse.

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