

Theoretical Views on Cognitive Metaphor

Sotvoldiyeva Muattarxon Ikromjon qizi

PhD candidate at Fergana State University, Uzbekistan

Received: 10 April 2025; **Accepted:** 06 May 2025; **Published:** 08 June 2025

Abstract: The topic of metaphor has long been a focal point for linguists and has been deeply studied by both local and international scholars. Linguists worldwide have expressed their theoretical views and conducted thorough analyses on the main concepts of cognitive metaphor theory, its significance in language and thought, and its role in communication and cognition. This article analyzes the perspectives of the founders of cognitive metaphor theory as well as those linguists who have studied and interpreted it.

Keywords: Metaphor, cognitive metaphor theory, cognition, theory, concept, idea, perceive.

Introduction: Metaphor has long been one of the important directions of research in linguistics. Initially considered a stylistic device, metaphor later came to be interpreted as a significant cognitive phenomenon that reveals complex relationships between language and thought. Particularly in the second half of the 20th century, the emergence of the theory of cognitive metaphor opened the way to viewing metaphor not merely as a stylistic tool but as one of the main mechanisms of human cognition. One of the founders of this theory, George Lakoff, along with his colleague Mark Johnson, scientifically explained the role of metaphor in human consciousness, perception, and conceptual system. Metaphor has been studied as a key concept in linguistics, philosophy, and literature since ancient times. Aristotle defined metaphor as “the art of describing one thing through another”. Although it was initially viewed as a stylistic tool, it was later reinterpreted as a crucial model of thought.

While the traditional approach studied metaphor mainly as a literary-linguistic device, modern linguistics—especially cognitive linguistics—regards metaphor as a concept closely connected to human cognition. The founders of this approach, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in their famous work *Metaphors We Live By*, presented metaphor as a fundamental element of the conceptual system. From the perspectives of these linguists, metaphor enhances stylistic expression and imagery. In addition, many scholars have analyzed it from a cognitive angle, arguing that metaphor exists

within the human thinking system and serves as a foundation of thought. Through metaphor, people can understand complex concepts more easily.

METHODOLOGY

In the second half of the 20th century, a cognitive revolution occurred in Western linguistics. During this period, the approach to language changed, and it began to be viewed as a form of human thought. According to representatives of cognitive linguistics, language is not merely a means of communication but an integral part of the system by which humans perceive and comprehend the world. Against this backdrop, the theory of cognitive metaphor was developed, interpreting metaphor as a fundamental tool of human thought. This approach sees metaphor as the expression of deep conceptual connections that emerge through linguistic units.

The most prominent representatives of the theory of cognitive metaphor are American scholars George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. In their 1980 book *Metaphors We Live By*, they recognized metaphor as a core model of human cognition. According to them, many everyday phrases, thoughts, and concepts are metaphorically based. For example, expressions like “life is a journey” demonstrate that metaphor exists not only in language but also in thought. Lakoff and Johnson call such metaphors “conceptual metaphors,” and they argue that people use these metaphorical models to understand and make sense of the world. According to M. Black, “The role of language as a tool

of cognition is crucial in revealing the uniqueness of metaphor. Modern metaphors create not only similarities but also harmony and compatibility.” In Black's view, language is not only a means of expressing thought but plays an important role in the cognitive process itself. Metaphor, in its early forms, combines emotions and experiences. By doing so, it reveals the ambiguity and richness of language, thereby expanding the thinking process. Moreover, metaphor does not emerge from mere similarities between phenomena; instead, it creates harmony during the process of understanding. Metaphors provide balance and interconnection between events, fostering deeper comprehension.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The theory of cognitive metaphor has brought revolutionary changes to linguistics, allowing metaphor to be seen not only as a literary device but also as a vital part of human cognition. Compared to traditional approaches, the cognitive approach provides a broader and deeper understanding of the linguistic and cognitive functions of metaphor. According to this theoretical framework, metaphor actively participates in daily communication, thinking, and perception.

The conceptual metaphor model by Lakoff and Johnson serves as a fundamental scientific basis for explaining how metaphor shapes human thought. Moreover, conceptual metaphors appear in similar forms across different cultures and languages, reflecting the universal aspects of human experience.

However, the theory has certain limitations. For instance, not all metaphors can be classified into conceptual categories, and metaphorical structures may differ across cultures, leading to debates. Furthermore, the practical application of cognitive metaphor theory—especially in language teaching and learning—still requires deeper investigation.

Cognitive metaphor theory views metaphor not just as a literary tool but as a key mechanism for forming thoughts and perceiving the world. Similarities and differences in metaphorical structures across languages and cultures help identify both universal and localized features of human cognition.

CONCLUSION

This article has analyzed the main theoretical aspects of the theory of cognitive metaphor. While metaphor was traditionally considered merely a literary device, the modern cognitive approach accepts it as a primary model of human cognition. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* laid the foundation for this line of research by uncovering the vital role of metaphor in language, thinking, and perception

processes.

The conceptual metaphor model explains how metaphor functions in shaping thought, communication, and perception. At the same time, cognitive metaphor is significant in studying the interaction between language and culture.

Theoretical studies show that cognitive metaphor can serve as an effective tool not only for linguistic analysis but also in language teaching, translation, communication, and psychology. However, further research is needed to apply cognitive metaphor theory practically in these areas.

Thus, cognitive metaphor theory opens new directions in linguistics and cognitive sciences, enabling a deeper understanding of human thought and the functions of language.

REFERENCES

- Aristotle. *Poetics*. Translated by S. H. Butcher. Dover Publications, 1997.
- Black, Max. *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*. Cornell University Press, 1962.
- Kövecses, Zoltán. *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Lakoff, George & Johnson, Mark. *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Langacker, Ronald. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*. Stanford University Press, 1987.
- Evans, Vyvyan & Green, Melanie. *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006.
- Lakoff, George & Johnson, Mark. *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Ortony, Andrew. *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge University Press, 1993.