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The metaphorical conceptualisation of love as fire in Russian and Polish languages

Summary

The subject of this dissertation is the metaphor of fire in the conceptualisation of love in Russian and Polish linguistic and cultural circles. The dissertation's topic aligns with the current focus of contemporary linguistic research on conceptual metaphors and emotions in language.

Metaphor is a specific linguistic unit, so it was necessary to use different methods and research tools. In the analysis of metaphorical utterances, both lexical-semantic as well as functional-syntactic characteristics of the units studied. The research is confrontational in nature. The comparative method made it possible to reveal similarities and differences in the metaphorical expression of love using lexemes semantically related to fire. The conceptual apparatus of cognitive linguistics was also used when discussing the empirical material. Metaphors were interpreted as a tool for conceptualisation and cognition of the human mind. In addition to the descriptive method and confrontational analysis, a frequency analysis was also carried out.

The research material consists of original prose texts extracted from the National Corpus of the Russian Language (*Национальный корпус русского языка – Корпус Основной*) and the National Corpus of the Polish Language (*Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego – wyszukiwarka PELCRA*). Analysed were 1320 Russian and 880 Polish fragments containing the noun name of love and lexemes semantically related to the element of fire, as well as temperature. First of all, common, i.e. colloquial, metaphors were selected for description (Borek 2012; Wróblewski 1998). An additional criterion for the selection of material was the semantics of the lexeme *любовь/miłość*: love as a feeling or an interpersonal relationship (the subject/object of love is a person or God).

The aim of the research is to present the linguistic image of love contained in Russian and Polish metaphorical constructions with the source domain of fire and in the corresponding temperature metaphors, taking into account similarities and differences on the semantic and structural level.

The dissertation consists of five chapters. The initial three are theoretical considerations, while the other two form the empirical part. The first chapter includes reflections on the definition of love by specialists in psychology (Iljin 2001; Izard 1999; Berscheid 2007; Lee 1973; Shaver, Collins, Clark 1996; Sternberg 1988; Wojciszke 2002), philosophy (Aristoteles 1981; Fromm 1997; Galarowicz 2011; Platon 1975), and theology (Benedykt XVI 2006; św. Augustyn z Hippony 1977, 1996; św. Jan od Krzyża 1998; św. Tomasz z Akwinu 1967; Wojtyła 1964). The reference to works from different disciplines enables a multifaceted analysis of the concept and helps to show the diversity of love: its types (e.g., short- and long-term love; active and passive love; parental love, love of man and woman, love of neighbour) and its complexity (elements of affection, romanticism, sexuality, attachment, friendship, attitude, etc.). Particular attention has been paid to the meaning of the Greek terms *eros* (Platon 1975), *philia* (Aristoteles 1981), and *agape* (Philippe 1995).

The next chapter reviews research on the linguistic conceptualisation of feelings by Russian linguists (J.D. Apresjan 2000; J.D. Apresjan, V.J. Apresjan 2000) and Polish (Bierwiazzonek 2002; Borek 2012; Wierzbicka 1971, 1999; Nowakowska-Kempna 1986, 1995, 2002; Zaron 1985), as well as researchers from other linguistic circles (Kövecses 1986). The focus was mainly on semantic explications of lexemes naming feelings and on the analysis of the metaphorical representation of emotions in the current of cognitive linguistics. A separate place was devoted to research on the conceptualisation of love using such cognitive tools as metaphor and metonymy (Bierwiazzonek, Kövecses).

The third chapter presents the most important assumptions of conceptual metaphor theory. The structure and types of individual conceptual metaphors are discussed. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1988) spread the claim about the universality of metaphors in our thinking and the language we use every day. According to the scholars, we not only speak but also think in metaphors, which in turn affects our behaviour. In this dissertation, metaphor is understood as understanding one thing in terms of another. Conceptual metaphor consists of two domains: *the source domain* and *the target domain* (Kövecses 2005). The former is more physical and the latter abstract. The source domain therefore enables an understanding of the target domain. For example, in the metaphors FEELING IS HEAT, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, LOVE IS A JOURNEY the target domains, i.e., feeling, life, love, are conceptualised through the source domains warmth and journey.

Three conceptual metaphors can be distinguished:

1. orientational,

2. ontological,
3. structural (Lakoff, Johnson 1988).

Oriental metaphors are based on the physical experience of the body's movement through space, e.g., *This lifted my spirits. / I feel nailed down.* (HAPPY IS UP / SAD IS DOWN). Ontological metaphors are based on the perception of physical objects. We perceive various events, actions, feelings etc. as things and substances, e.g., *Something is jamming my mind today.* (THE MIND IS A MACHINE). A characteristic ontological metaphor often used in the conceptualisation of feelings is the container metaphor. Structural metaphors, on the other hand, to which the studied metaphor of fire belongs, are created on the basis of similarities. The use of one highly structured concept to give structure to another concept allows us to explore and understand the latter in more detail, e.g.: *You are wasting time.* (TIME IS A NATURAL RESOURCE).

In addition, such key concepts in cognitive linguistics as *mapping, image schema, frame* and *Idealized Cognitive Model* are also explained.

The fourth chapter constitutes the essential part of the dissertation. It contains an analysis of metaphorical constructions with the lexeme *любовь/ miłość* and with lexemes whose meaning, according to lexicographical sources, is directly or indirectly related to the element of fire. The extracted material was grouped into metaphors based on the combination of the name of love with verbs, nouns, adjectives, and participles semantically referring to fire. Additionally, in the chapter with the verb, expressions with the meaning of the phase of feeling (beginning, duration, end) and constructions representing the metaphor 'love is a destructive force' were extracted.

In the last section, structures with a temperature source domain are presented and discussed. The section completes the work. The listing of temperature metaphors gives a more complete picture of the conceptualisation of love by Russian and Polish speakers. When describing temperature metaphors whose target domain is love, a division into two groups was made: HEAT – COLD. In each of these categories, metaphorical expressions with verbs, nouns, adjectives, participles, and predicates semantically referring to temperature were separated. The metaphor of fire mainly corresponds to expressions relating to the category HEAT.

Cognitive analysis of Russian and Polish metaphorical expressions made it possible to indicate which elements of the source domain structure of fire and temperature are mapped into the target domain of love.

Through the metaphor of fire, three main aspects are highlighted in the texts of both languages. Firstly, love is not something permanent, it can have a beginning and end (initial, ongoing, final phases), e.g.: *любовь загорается, искра любви, угасшая любовь / rozpalająca się miłość, iskra miłości, miłość wygasła*. Secondly, love has different degrees of intensity, e.g.: *любовь теплится, костер любви / rozpalając miłość, miłość przygasa*. It turns out that many Russian and Polish metaphorical expressions representing the metaphor of fire characterise love as a powerful phenomenon. And thirdly, love is a destructive force, e.g.: *любовь жжет, испепеляющая любовь / spalając w miłości, spalająca miłość*. It is worth noting that in the excerpted Russian- and Polish-language material, the expressions formally representing the metaphor *love is a destructive force* do not always have a pejorative meaning. Affection can 'destroy' something undesirable, limitations, obstacles (*любовь, которая сжигает страх / miłość uschybienia spaliła*); it is a purifying force (*в любви сгорает все; остается чистое и светлое / spalany płomieniem przekształcającej miłości*); in love it is possible to "burn oneself", i.e. to sacrifice oneself completely for the loved one (*все самозабвенно до пепла сожгли вы в любви к ним / pragnę spłonąć (z miłości) w służbie dla szczęścia ludzkości*).

The three qualities mentioned above appear most frequently in the excerpted material. Other characteristics of love reflected in Russian and Polish metaphors with the source domain of fire are passion (e.g. *сгораю от любви, жар любви / płomienna miłość, ognista miłość*) and unexpected appearance with great force – love as an explosive charge (e.g. *вспыхнувшая любовь / wybuch miłości*), volcano (e.g. *вулкан любви / lawa miłości*) and lightning (e.g. *молния любви / piorun miłości*).

On the other hand, Russian and Polish metaphorical constructions with the source domain of temperature in the conceptualisation of love, apart from exposing different degrees of its intensity (e.g., *горячая любовь, любовь охладела / ciepła miłość, miłość ostygła*), signal the fact that love is passionate (e.g., *любовь согревала / gorąca miłość*) and contains such aspects as friendship, kindness and cordiality (e.g. *тепло любви, греющая любовь / ciepła miłość, ogrzać się miłością*).

In addition to the above-mentioned characteristics, which are most often exposed through the temperature domain in the conceptualisation of love, single exemplifications signalling that love can end (*любовь охладела, любовь растаяла, любовь остыла / miłość wystygła*) appeared in the material studied, as well as examples indicating that affection can remove obstacles (*любовь растопила, растопить любовью / topić miłością*).

The analysis shows that Russian and Polish temperature metaphors with the target domain of love are mainly used to describe the characteristics of the feeling. The metaphor of fire, on the other hand, which is represented by more diverse constructions, points not only to the characteristic properties of love, but also to other aspects of it, such as the fact of its occurrence, duration, or disappearance.

Observation of the research material revealed an overlap of the source domains of fire and temperature with each other and with other domains, through which the target domain of love is conceptualised, as illustrated in the table below:

Target domain	Source domain	Russian exemplification	Polish exemplification
love	fire + temperature	<i>самая пылкая любовь может простыть</i>	<i>tym gorętsza rozpalala się w Bogu miłość</i>
	fire + container	<i>загорелась во мне любовь</i>	<i>w ich oczach dostrzec można iskry miłości</i>
	fire + destructive force	<i>сгораю от любви</i>	<i>miłość spaliła mnie</i>
	fire + destructive force + container	<i>сгораем в любви</i>	<i>spala się w miłości</i>
	fire + light	<i>непритушенная временем любовь</i>	<i>pochodnia miłości</i>
	temperature + solid	<i>любовь тает</i>	<i>miłość roztopia się</i>
	temperature + container	<i>сердце охладело в любви</i>	<i>ogrząć się w miłości</i>
	fire + purifying power	[...] в этой Божественной любви сгорает все, что не может жить вечно; остаётся чистое...	–
	temperature + destructive force + container	–	<i>roztopia w swojej miłości</i>
	temperature + colour	–	<i>ciepłe barwy miłości</i>
	temperature + liquid + volcano	–	<i>gorąca lawa miłości kipi</i>

In addition, the following source domains were included in the material analysed:

Target domain	Source domain	Russian exemplification	Polish exemplification
love	container	<i>мы сгораем в любви</i>	<i>Aleksy spala się w miłości</i>
	person	<i>Любовь просилась из груди</i>	<i>miłość zdaje się szeptać</i>
	living being	<i>любовь охватила его</i>	<i>miłość trzeba ogrzewać, bo gdy wystygnie – umiera</i>
	subject	<i>высокая любовь [the feeling has size].</i>	<i>wielka miłość [the feeling has size].</i>
	illness	<i>Любовь – болезнь сжигающая</i>	<i>miłość trawiła mnie</i>
	suffering	<i>любовь мучила</i>	<i>katusze miłosne</i>

	light	<i>любовь погасла</i>	<i>miłość ściemniała się</i>
	explosive	<i>взрывались вспышки любви</i>	<i>miłość wybuchła</i>
	volcano	<i>вулкан любви</i>	<i>erupcja miłości</i>
	colour	<i>красная от любви</i>	<i>czerwone miłością</i>
	opponent	<i>чувство любви захватило ее</i>	–
	animal	<i>любовь – укус</i>	–
	liquid	<i>выливалась любовь</i>	–
	driving force	<i>движимый любовьюю</i>	–
	companion	–	<i>iść z miłością</i>
	movement	–	<i>serce rozsadza żebra w piersiach [movement from the centre towards the periphery of the body]</i>

The above-mentioned source domains tend to appear sporadically in the described material, mostly as single examples. Only the ontological metaphor of the container occurs very frequently. Love is a container. Inside it, as it were, is the experimenter or his organ (*мы сгораем в любви; Aleksy spala się w miłości; w ogniu miłości ludzkie serca...; porwał jej serce 'w sam żar miłości'*), as well as the object of affection (*roztopią go w swojej miłości*) or imperfection (*в этой Божественной любви сгорает все, что не может жить вечно*).

It should be noted that the feeling is sometimes located inside the vessel, which is the experimenter in general or a specific part of his or her body, as well as the soul:

Container source domain – locating love	
Russian exemplification	Polish exemplification
Experienter	
<i>это снова разожгло в ней любовь</i>	<i>rozpalała się w Bogu miłość</i>
Experienter's body	
heart	
<i>in их сердцах зажглась любовь</i>	<i>miłość, która tli się gdzieś jeszcze w sercu</i>
breast	
<i>любовь просилась из груди</i>	<i>w piersiach mych zapalił się wielki ogień miłości</i>
eyes	
<i>в ее умных голубых глазах загорается [...] огонь любви</i>	<i>Tylko w tych ciemnych, głębokich oczach jego płonie miłość.</i>

head	
<i>в голове взрывались вспышки любви</i>	–
soul	
<i>в душе Шумана загорелось пламя первой любви</i>	<i>rozpalily [...] w duszy biednego Sebastiana Krupy miłość</i>

In most of the exemplifications, the Russian and Polish metaphors coincide – the feeling is placed in the experimenter, his heart, soul, breast, and eyes. In both Russian and Polish texts, most often the vessel in which love is located is the experimenter's entire body or his heart. In Polish, there is no equivalent expression in which the container for feelings would be the head.

The analysis of the empirical material revealed a great wealth of metaphorical constructions in which the noun name of feeling is combined with lexemes semantically related to fire and temperature, belonging to different parts of speech:

THE METAPHOR OF FIRE						
Part of speech	Russian constructions			Polish constructions		
	Exemplification	Number of examples	%	Exemplification	Number of examples	%
verb	<i>любовь разгорелась</i>	250	32,5%	<i>miłość płonie</i>	203	47%
noun	<i>костер любви</i>	250	32,5%	<i>iskra miłości</i>	133	31%
adjective	<i>жгучая любовь</i>	264	34,5%	<i>ognista miłość</i>	88	21%
adverbial participle	<i>прогорев в любви</i>	4	0,5%	<i>płonąc miłością</i>	5	1%
	TOTAL	768	100%		429	100%

THE TEMPERATURE METAPHOR						
HEAT category						
Part of speech	Russian constructions			Polish constructions		
	Exemplification	Number of examples	%	Exemplification	Number of examples	%
adjective	<i>теплая любовь</i>	250	77%	<i>gorąca miłość</i>	83	77%
verb	<i>любовь греет</i>	63	19%	<i>miłość rozgrzewa</i>	12	11%
noun	<i>тепло любви</i>	9	3%	<i>ciepło miłości</i>	13	12%
adverbial participle	<i>согревая любовью</i>	2	1%	–	0	0%
	TOTAL	324	100%		108	100%
COLD category						

Part of speech	Russian constructions			Polish constructions		
	Exemplification	Number of examples	%	Exemplification	Number of examples	%
adjective	<i>холодная любовь</i>	57	53%	<i>zimne serce</i>	26	75%
verb	<i>любовь охладела</i>	40	38%	<i>miłość ostygła</i>	9	25%
noun	<i>охлаждение любви</i>	5	5%	–	0	0%
predicative adverb	<i>(На) холодно без любви</i>	4	4%	–	0	0%
	TOTAL	106	100%		35	100%

The number and variety of metaphors show how deeply rooted the image of love–vividness is in Russian and Polish cultural circles. It should be emphasised that the constructions extracted from Russian corpus texts stand out for their greater richness in terms of the number and variety of lexemes forming metaphorical expressions with the noun name of the feeling. However, in order to judge the stronger position of the metaphor *love is fire* in Russian than in Polish, more research is needed.

The analysis conducted reveals only a fragment of the image of love contained in Russian and Polish. Despite this, it contributes to the research on the linguistic image of love, regarded as a supreme value in many cultures. The present study may be an impulse and inspiration for further, more in-depth analyses on the perception of love as an element in the circle of Russian and Polish language users, as well as in other languages.

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