



METAPHORIZATION OF NOUNS AS A SEMANTIC AND COGNITIVE PROCESS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19381162>

Keywords: *metaphor, metaphorization, nouns, semantic change, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, lexical development.*

This research paper examines the phenomenon of metaphorization of nouns as a productive semantic and cognitive process in language. While metaphor has traditionally been studied as a stylistic device, modern linguistic theory considers it a central mechanism of conceptualization and semantic development. Special attention is given to the ways nouns acquire metaphorical meanings through transfer based on similarity, function, structure, and evaluation. The paper analyzes types of metaphorized nouns, mechanisms of semantic change, stages of conventionalization, and their role in discourse. The study demonstrates that metaphorization of nouns is a fundamental process in vocabulary expansion and conceptual structuring.

Metaphorization is one of the most productive mechanisms of semantic development in natural languages. Among different parts of speech, nouns play a particularly significant role in metaphorical transfer because they serve as primary nominative units. Nouns name objects, persons, phenomena, abstract concepts, and categories of experience. Through metaphorization, nouns expand their semantic structure and contribute to the dynamic evolution of the lexical system.

Traditionally, metaphor was viewed as a rhetorical figure characteristic of poetic language. However, contemporary linguistics, especially cognitive linguistics, interprets metaphor as a conceptual process underlying human thinking. In this framework, metaphorization of nouns is not limited to stylistic usage but represents a systematic semantic phenomenon.

The aim of this study is to analyze metaphorization of nouns as a linguistic and cognitive process, identify its mechanisms and types, and examine its role in lexical development and discourse formation.

The theory of conceptual metaphor was developed by J. Lakoff and M. Johnson and further expanded upon by researchers such as Z. Kövecses, R.W. Gibbs, E. McCormack, V. Petrov, N.D. Arutyunova, and others. Notably, N.F. Alefirenko has proposed a conception of cognitive metaphor, asserting that metaphor is a cognitive-semiotic phenomenon that reflects human cognition. It is based on "conceptual shift," leading to the emergence of new (unexpected) meanings during the process of metaphorization. An important conclusion is that metaphor analysis requires a dual approach encompassing both linguistic and cognitive perspectives. Considerable attention is devoted to metaphor interpretation, with the author outlining various types of metaphor interpretation, suggesting that interpretation depends on an individual's age and cognitive-nominative experience. Here are several definitions of metaphor from the cognitive theory of language:

- Metaphor is a form of conceptualization, a cognitive process that generates and shapes new knowledge.



- Metaphor is a way of describing one aspect of the world through another, comprehending the essence of one kind in terms of another

- Metaphor involves transferring a portion of the knowledge structure from the source domain to the target domain

- Metaphor is a fundamental tool of cognition, resulting from a cognitive process that correlates two (or more) referents, often incompatible, leading to a semantic conceptual anomaly.

The aforementioned definitions, while emphasizing the cognitive nature of metaphor, do not fully uncover the cognitive mechanism of conceptual metaphor. In the twenty-five years since conceptual metaphor was discovered, researchers in fields as diverse as literary theory, legal studies, linguistics, and the philosophy of science have made exciting applications of the theory. They have identified conceptual metaphors at the heart of poetry, law, politics, psychology, physics, computer science, mathematics, and philosophy.

In the cognitive linguistic view, metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. Examples of this include when we talk and think about life in terms of journeys, about arguments in terms of war, about love also in terms of journeys, about theories in terms of buildings, about ideas in terms of food, about social organizations in terms of plants, and many others. A convenient short hand way of capturing this view of metaphor is the following: conceptual domain (a) is conceptual domain (b), which is what is called a conceptual metaphor. A conceptual metaphor consists of two conceptual domains, in which one domain is understood in terms of another. A conceptual domain is any coherent organization of experience. Thus, for example, we have coherently organized knowledge about journeys that we rely on in understanding life. We will discuss the nature of this knowledge below. We thus need to distinguish conceptual metaphor from metaphorical linguistic expressions. The latter are words or other linguistic expressions that come from the language or terminology of the more concrete conceptual domain (i.e., domain b). Thus, all the expressions above that have to do with life and that come from the domain of journey are linguistic metaphorical expressions, whereas the corresponding conceptual metaphor that they make manifest is life is a journey. The use of small capital letters indicates that the particular wording does not occur in language as such, but it underlies conceptually all the metaphorical expressions listed underneath it. The two domains that participate in conceptual metaphor have special names. The conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions to understand another conceptual domain is called source domain, while the conceptual domain that is understood this way is the target domain. Thus, life, arguments, love, theory, ideas, social organizations, and others are target domains, while journeys, war, buildings, food, plants, and others are source domains. The target domain is the domain that we try to understand through the use of the source domain.

According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, metaphor involves mapping between two conceptual domains: a source domain and a target domain. Nouns frequently serve as lexical realizations of these mappings.

Metaphorization of nouns typically relies on:

- * Similarity of form
- * Similarity of function
- * Similarity of position



* Similarity of quality or evaluation

Abstract concepts are structured in terms of more concrete and familiar experiences.

For example:

Time is money.

The heart of the city.

The head of the department.

In these examples, concrete nouns (money, heart, head) structure abstract or extended meanings.

Nouns function as key lexical units in naming reality. They denote:

Physical objects (tree, stone, river)

Human beings (teacher, doctor, leader)

Abstract concepts (freedom, love, power)

Because nouns categorize experience, they are especially susceptible to metaphorical transfer. When a noun undergoes metaphORIZATION, it often acquires additional meanings without losing its original one, leading to polysemy.

MetaphORIZATION of nouns is based on perceived similarity between two entities. The similarity may be:

A noun may acquire metaphorical meaning due to resemblance in shape:

The eye of a needle

The foot of a mountain

The neck of a bottle

Here, body-part nouns are transferred to inanimate objects based on structural resemblance.

Transfer may occur due to shared function:

Head of department (leader)

Bridge between cultures (connection)

Key to success (means of solution)

The noun retains functional properties while shifting semantic domain.

Metaphorical transfer may be based on shared qualities:

He is a lion. (bravery)

She is a star. (fame, brilliance)

That child is an angel. (innocence)

The noun representing an entity becomes a characteristic label for a person.

Spatial metaphors often affect nouns:

The top of the career ladder

The foundation of theory

The backbone of the company

These nouns metaphorically structure abstract hierarchies.

Human-related nouns transferred to non-human domains:

Mother tongue

Father of modern physics

The birth of an idea

Such metaphors humanize abstract or inanimate phenomena.

Animal nouns applied to humans:



Fox (cunning person)

Snake (treacherous person)

Tiger (strong, aggressive person)

These metaphors reflect cultural symbolism.

Objects used metaphorically:

Shield of faith

Engine of growth

Tool of communication

Here, artifacts structure abstract relationships.

Nature-related nouns extended to abstract domains:

Storm of protest

Wave of migration

Flood of emotions

Metaphorization of nouns reflects how speakers conceptualize reality. Cultural values influence metaphor selection. For example, animals symbolizing intelligence or strength differ across cultures. Therefore, metaphorized nouns reveal national worldview and collective experience.

From a cognitive perspective, nouns serve as conceptual anchors. Their metaphorical extension enables categorization of abstract domains in terms of concrete experience.

Metaphorization of nouns is a fundamental semantic and cognitive process that contributes significantly to lexical expansion and conceptual structuring. Through similarity of form, function, quality, or position, nouns acquire new meanings and develop polysemous structures. This process operates across all types of discourse and reflects both universal cognitive mechanisms and culture-specific conceptual patterns.

The study of noun metaphorization deepens our understanding of semantic change, language creativity, and the interaction between thought and language. Future research may focus on comparative analysis across languages or corpus-based investigation of metaphorized noun frequency and patterns.

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