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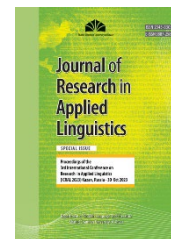
The Use of Literary Metaphors and Their Importance in Teaching English Literature

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to test a hypothesis that claims that language units that form a field of nontrivial (literary, authorial) associative connections realize a literary metaphor enclosed in the book title. The title of Guzel Yakhina's novel, "Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes," is a literary metaphor that foreshadows the heroine's internal transformation following a series of harrowing experiences leading to an epiphany that liberates her from her fears, prejudices, and ignorance of the outside world. A list of language units from the continuous sampling method that were utilized in the first chapter of Guzel Yakhina's book "Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes" and related to the "visual perception" lexico-semantic field was produced during the research. The study's findings included the discovery and in-depth analysis of linguistic (semantic and grammar) features of such units featured in the literary text, as well as an examination of the degree of realization of the novel's central metaphor at the level of verbal units from the book's opening section. Both the semantic and morphological aspects of this field have been studied; the latter because of the notion of cognitive aspects of morphology in various forms that is emerging in modern science on both theoretical and practical levels. The authors of this study firmly believe that a deeper comprehension of the realization features of the author's idea can be achieved by analyzing the morphological units in Guzel Yakhina's literary text that represent the concept of "blindness."

Keywords: Literary Text; Metaphor; English Language.

1. Introduction

Guzel Yakhina's debut book, "Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes," was published in 2015 and gained popularity almost right away among readers worldwide. Novels with a wide range of plot genres, such as melodrama, historical fiction, and even postcolonial fiction, are appealing works of literature because they appeal to a wide readership and because of their linguistic and cultural content, which introduces the discourse of national Tatar culture as a central statement into literature. Regarding the novel's range of issues, it should be highlighted that, on the one hand, it satisfies the demands of a contemporary reader who speaks Russian and is particularly interested in history and the Soviet era (Ware, 2019). The strong demand from readers indicates that the discourse surrounding the untreated traumas of the Soviet past, such as the Red Terror, collectivization, famine, and the Great Purge, is far from being fully covered. The process of reflection is mythologizing the past, which eventually results in the metaphorization of language. Conversely, Yakhina's book serves as an artistic commentary on the global national image (Borisova, 2017); the latter, however, is severely warped in the process of the writer's myth-making, which lacks support from both linguistic and artistic ethnos traditions. The glossary at the end of the book does not make up for the lack of linguocultural details about Tatar culture that are written into the text, nor does it explain some of the national and cultural phenomena that Khaibullina (2016) describes.

Accordingly, the research interest was piqued by the novel title, which enables the author to highlight his or her most significant ideas. We firmly believe that Yakhina's book "Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes" has an important literary metaphor, and that this metaphor should be taught in English classes as a distinct textual unit that both generates and is generated by the text (function of retrospect). We think that the most valuable titles in terms of plot are those that refer to the literal meaning of the action (waking up) as well as the figurative meaning of realization (snapping back to reality, wiping out all ignorance). The phrase "to open someone's eyes about something or someone" in language suggests that the subject of the speech is explaining the world to the addressee. However, this direct appellation is missing from the phraseological unit under discussion in the novel's title because of grammatical issues (no addressee, no actions in the addresser's interest). Furthermore, Zuleikha's physical blindness at the end of the novel—a result of aging—indicates that

her physical ability to see plays a more significant role in the plot than her epiphany. The novel opens with Zuleikha waking up. Since Zuleikha's mother-in-law is blind at the beginning of the book and loses sight by the end, we were interested in the text's exact linguistic realization of the novel's title metaphor, which is about awakening and experiencing an epiphany in a world of ignorance and blindness (Zuleikha, after being sheltered in her husband's house from the outside world, begins to rapidly learn more about it). We firmly believe that the examination of an author's personal values—that is, the components of their worldview—as they are portrayed in a literary work and the significance of these analyses in the teaching of English literature help to uncover possibilities within a unified system of axiological categories of a specific linguoculture and to identify explicit assessments and implicative evaluative meanings semantics (Alyokhina et al., 2016).

2. Literature Review

Literary analysis can benefit greatly from the application of conceptual metaphor theory, which enables us to examine how metaphors are used to develop themes, characters, and plots. Metaphors can be employed in character development to portray a character's motivations, feelings, and personality. For instance, the metaphor of the moors is used by Emily Bronte in Wuthering Heights to illustrate the wild and passionate nature of Heathcliff. Metaphors can be employed in plot development to convey the story's underlying themes, foreshadow events, and build suspense. For instance, Gatsby's desire for the past and his unfulfilled desire to win back his lost love are symbolized by the metaphor of the green light across the bay in Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby. Metaphors can be employed in theme development to represent cultural and social norms as well as the story's underlying ideas and values. For instance, Jane Austen uses the metaphor of the marriage market to illustrate the expectations and social pressures that 19th-century English women faced. Prior studies on conceptual metaphors in literature have examined the cultural and historical contexts of metaphor use in addition to examining how metaphors are used in particular works or genres. For instance, Steen (1999) examined the use of metaphor in Shakespeare's plays, while Lakoff and Johnson (1980) examined the metaphor "argument is war" in political discourse. Scholars have recently concentrated on how metaphor shapes political discourse and cultural identity (Charteris-Black, 2011; Musolff, 2016).

Although the theory of conceptual metaphors has been extensively employed in literary analysis, there exist possible objections to its utilization in literary analysis. Its potential to oversimplify literary language's complexities and reduce it to a collection of pre-existing conceptual metaphors is one of the main criticisms leveled against it. Another criticism is that it might not consider the peculiarities of literary language, like irony, ambiguity, and multiple interpretations. The rich and intricate language of literary works can be difficult to analyze using conceptual metaphor theory, according to some academics. Turner (1996), for example, proposes that literary language analysis ought to be approached in terms of "blends," which entail the blending of several conceptual domains to produce a novel, intricate meaning. Additionally, Kosimov (2022) contends that literary analysis needs to adopt a more nuanced approach to metaphor, one that considers the context as well as the social and cultural elements that influence the use and interpretation of metaphor. Additionally, critics have drawn attention to the conceptual metaphor theory's possible shortcomings in explaining the intricacies of literary language. Some have argued, for instance, that the distinctive qualities of particular works or authors, as well as the particular historical and cultural contexts in which they were created, may not be explained by conceptual metaphor theory. Moreover, some critics have noted that the entire spectrum of literary devices and techniques—such as imagery, symbolism, and allusion—that writers employ to elicit meaning and emotion may not be fully explained by conceptual metaphor theory. Notwithstanding these objections, conceptual metaphor theory continues to be a useful framework for examining how metaphor is used in literary works and has advanced our knowledge of how metaphor affects how we perceive the outside world. But it's crucial to use it in concert with other strategies and to be conscious of any potential drawbacks (Kosimov, 2023).

3. Methodology

The purpose and objectives of this study had a direct bearing on how crucial it was to employ a complex, methodical approach that integrated a range of research techniques and instruments. Therefore, at the outset of the study, specific units from Yakhina's novel "Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes" that represent the "blindness" subfield were selected through continuous sampling in order to determine the specifics of lexical units acting as the means of language representation and expression of value worldview. The novel's first chapter was selected for analysis because the theme of "blindness" or "ignorance" was consistently realized in this chapter's plot. This was opposed not only by the main

setting, which is the village of Kul'bash after being forcibly deported to Siberia, but also by the main character's abusive behavior by her husband, which is reflected in the chapter's title, "Wet Chicken," which carries a derogatory assessment from other people. It should be noted that the epiphany metaphor used in the novel alludes to the process of escaping the state of "blindness," which is a metaphorical darkness that, if not mentioned at the outset of the story, loses all meaning.

185 units were highlighted in the lexico-semantic field grouping centered on the "visual perception" concept during the first conceptual analysis stage of the units. The concept of "vision" is presented in the novel as a "visual perception" lexico-semantic field, which highlights the idea of Yakhina's novel's headline metaphor—one condition replacing another—by having subfields with the opposing meanings of "Sight" and "Blindness." We find it noteworthy how precisely the concept of "vision" is linked to related concepts (mainly "blindness"), and how these relationships influence and enhance one another as they construct a conceptual representation of the worldAs a result, the highlighted subfield is named after a corresponding word-concept that designates the central idea of the concept that is described. Through the application of quantitative counting, contextual analysis, and component analysis, we were able to gather a set of lexemes that were directly and associatively related to the lexeme "blindness." The next stage involved component analysis, which aimed to describe various morphological categories that had been investigated as a result of the cognitive mechanisms examination by reducing each lexeme's meaning to its most basic semantic components and identifying their shared characteristics. It should be noted that, because of the fundamental ideas of cognitive linguistics, which imply that language cannot fully describe itself without cognitive processes due to a certain lack of independence, we acknowledge in our study that the grammatical meanings of units cannot be seen solely as a distinct formal system because they form a continuum of symbol structures in language, but also primarily in a literary text, and this is why they are important to teach when teaching English literature Fedorov (2008).

We established the associative connections and hierarchical structure of the "blindness" subfield by applying the structural-semantic method, which promotes a detailed examination of the semantics of structured units. The words that make up its core vocabulary are those that, when combined, mean "a refusal to visually percept" (seven percent of the total amount) and "an inability to have a visual perception" (60 percent of the total amount). This is the definition that most closely approximates the central key word. The peripheral of this field includes units whose meanings slightly depart from the central one; for instance, a common generic term such as "a distortion of visual perception (crying)" (2% of the total amount) or "lack/rejection of visual perception" (31% of the total amount) is pushed into a category of potential or probabilistic semantics Humboldt (1984). Studying the sensory lexicon within an aesthetically functioning system and figuring out its specifics and role in the system has led to a linguistic analysis of literary text method and its importance in teaching English literature. This approach entails commenting on the different language units that make up the text as well as analyzing features, which work based on their systematic connections. Utilizing a liguostylistic analysis of the text predicated on the pursuit of synthesizing beginning with speech figurativeness is another aspect of it (Jackendoff, 1985). The idea of "blindness" was thus found to be linguistically related to related concepts like "ignorance" and "unwillingness to learn," as well as to the consistent formation of chronotope characterized by the objective inability and impairment of visual perception, including a cognitive one (e.g., the dark of a winter village, a mother-in-law who is blind, etc.). Through their mutual influence and complementarity, these ideas create a conceptual worldview.

4. Results

Our research focused on the exact language realization of a metaphor, which was included in the novel's title, in the text. This metaphor was about waking up and experiencing an epiphany in a world of ignorance (Zuleikha, who is sheltered from the outside world in her husband's home until the end of the novel, when her mother-in-law becomes blind) and blindness (Zuleikha's mother-in-law is blind at the beginning of the novel and loses sight by the end). In Guzel Yakhina's novel, language units that embody the metaphor of "insight"—moving from blindness to the capacity to perceive the world visually—form a unique lexico-semantic field of "visual perception" for the author. Lexico-semantic field units are text structures that preserve the text's deep connection to general cultural ideas recorded in a language while also highlighting significant facets of the author's worldview in the language, which creates a wealth of opportunities for comparing the concept spheres of common and authored languages. We had repeatedly gathered the language-based material that represented the concept of "blindness" as one of the most important in the "blindness/ignorance - insight" opposition in the first chapter of the book. There had been 94 instances of the word "blindness" being used in a context. Each member of the system shares the same integral semantic sign of the "blindness" subfield, which means "difficulty/inability to see." Yakhina's novel's first chapter contains 94 terms that are associated with this subfield. They

fall into four categories: (1) "visual impairment resulting from illness or old age"; (2) "visual impairment resulting from a temporary physical condition (weariness, sleep)," (3) "visual impairment resulting from environmental factors (darkness, etc.)"; and (4) "vision substitution" (Langacker, 2000).

Units with meanings of: lack of experience or comprehension; rejection of perception (visual and cognitive); gestures that indicate the "crying" semantics are situated on the edge of the current field. The inability to fully perceive reality is primarily conveyed in the first chapter's text by parts of speech with the meanings of process (verbs), the majority of which carry a negative connotation (23 examples, 46%), and present tense forms (33 examples, 59%) are more common than the forms of past tense (10 examples, 18%) or future tense (4 examples, 7%). This was determined through an analysis of the morphological structure of the units in the current field. It should be noted that gerunds in syntactic subordination to the verb are only used in negation (7 examples (4 morphological units)), indicating a modification of the situation in relation to another situation described by the verb.

The author's concept objectification is achieved through the use of other frequently used morphological classes (nouns, adjectives, participles, adverbs, and gerunds), non-procedural and procedural features of an action and/or of an item, and characteristics of the surrounding reality. The main character is described as living a life of helplessness and inferiority and struggles to perceive and understand the world around her. According to the author's intention, the novel describes the incapacity to perceive the world as an action (or, more frequently, a lack of it), is connected to the images of the main characters in the first chapter, and serves as a means of transferring information about the subject (prediction field). Thus, the formation of two parallel women's worlds—the world of an elderly blind woman and the world of Zuleikha, who is so exhausted that her eyes are darkened—as well as textual imagery, where the inability or reluctance to see acts as a refusal to perceive and understand the surrounding reality in a childish manner (e.g., gestures that indicate crying semantics), are responsible for the development of new semes in the importance structure. In this instance, it is crucial to recreate the textual incrementation of the desired semes' meanings in order to analyze the context of the highlighted unit's use.

5. Discussion

The goal of the current study was to explain the lexico-semantic field of visual perception as defined by the author in the first chapter of Guzel Yakhina's novel "Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes." This was done because the field's units—namely, the antonymous subfields of "visual impairment (blindness)" and "ability to visually perceive (sight)"—help realize the author's title metaphor, which is an epiphany that contrasts with the world of blindness and ignorance presented in the novel's first chapter. The results of the study enable us to draw the conclusion that the author's lexico-semantic field of "visual perception" in the literary text is formed by lexical units that represent the metaphor of "epiphany," and that these lexical units are crucial for teaching English literature of Guzel Yakhina's novel. As well as the aesthetically emphasized neutrality of evaluative juxtaposition in a "blindness-ignorance" binary opposition based on the objective limitation of the surrounding reality perception, the author's writing style is characterized by the continuous appellation to the connectivity of sensual and rational learnings (blindness-ignorance) (Vassilenko et al., 2018).

6. Conclusion

The particulars of the methodology proposed in this work are found in the way issues related to the sensory lexicon are addressed within a system that functions aesthetically (literary text). Based on the study's findings, it is advised to carry on developing literary texts' linguistic analyses in detail and stressing their significance in English literature education. This includes providing commentary on various language units while taking into account the systemic connections between them. as well as to apply the methodology of such analysis as a useful tool in expert-philologist training to develop research philological competence.

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