CONCEPTUAL BLENDING IN METAPHORS IN THE 2016 PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN

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Abstract

Purpose: The article examines metaphor as transferring features of the social world onto the other elements of reality, the 2016 pre-election campaign in particular; the theory of conceptual integration of J. Fauconnier and M. Turner is used to analyzing the metaphor.

Methodology: As a material of the research, there were examined transcripts of the 2016 pre-election campaign debates for the presidential position of Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton.

Result: The analysis reveals convergent and divergent features of metaphor in the pre-election campaign of Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton. Metaphor in D. Trump's texts tends to focus on conceptual models 'we' and 'they' which is deduced with the help of quantitative analysis whereas in H. Clinton's texts 'divided nation' model is mostly described through metaphor.

Applications: This research can be used for universities, teachers, and students.

Novelty/Originality: In this research, the model of Conceptual Blending in Metaphors in the 2016 Pre-Election Campaign is presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

Keywords: Metaphor, Mental space, Cognitive aspect, Conceptual blending, Pre-election discourse.

INTRODUCTION

The role of language in politics cannot be exaggerated. Language is linked to R. Lakoff's mentioned that politics is language and language is politics (Taiwo, 2009). De facto of globalization process leading to the intensity of cross-cultural communication is developing political communication as well. The increasing interest in the language of politics that is a political speech, political discourse has been observed for the last decades in particular. The linguistic peculiarities of composing of political communication depend on a politician's pragmatic background.

Taiwo concludes the language system of politics texts has been shaped within the framework of political rhetoric, linguistic-stylistic, pragmatics, discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis (Yapparova, Ageeva & Agmanova, 2018). The language of a politician could be figured as a tool of manipulation based on his/her intentions.

A means of manipulation in political communication has been advanced in pre-election discourse. 'The pre-election discourse is a kind of political discourse in the process of political agitation of citizens for their decision to vote for a certain candidate' (Ritchie, 2013). These language formations within the framework of stylistic means revealing cognitive and pragmatic features are also the attempt of analyzing the peculiarities of pre-election discourse. Thus, the interest in the study of the cognitive aspects of stylistic means is increased in general. The work contains the analysis of the metaphors functioned in the pre-election campaign texts of H. Clinton's and D. Trump's.

Metaphors functioning in political discourse are considered as a means of the stylistic device and as a mental phenomenon. As stated by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, 'conceptual metaphors and metonymies, representing the universal human capacity to structure new realms of knowledge while relying on the experience of human interaction with the world, are 'phenomena', providing understanding. The most frequent methods for studying metaphors are considered to be the theory of conceptual metaphor, the theory of conceptual blending, the theory of primary and complex metaphors connectivity theory of metaphor interpretation, descriptor theory of metaphor, theory of metaphorical modeling (Andrianova, Ostroumova, Zakamulina, & Vanchikova, 2017; Dautova & Badmatsirenova, 2014; Seredina, 2012).

METHODS

The cognitive view of metaphor advocates that metaphors are matters of thought. Fr toom that point of view, we wish to focus on the binarity of metaphors. It might be expressed by linguistic structure and conceptual structure. Metaphors functioning in a certain conceptual sphere – politics, economics, sociocultural – tend to acquire a pattern which adjusts in the speaker's conceptual system.

Conceptual structures consist of the source domain and target domain. Based on conceptual metaphor theory, the source domain is the one which (frames and scenarios) correlate with the target domain elements. Thus, the effect of metaphor is a mapping scheme. Moreover, on the other hand, the interaction of the two domains emerges a new domain. The idea of generating new conceptual structures from functioned ones was developed by G. Fauconnier and M. Turner and resulted in creating 'conceptual blending theory' (Aldai, & Wichmann, 2018).

The theory of conceptual blending in the development of conceptual metaphor theory expands. The theory of conceptual blending is based on the interaction of two partial temporary conceptual structures - mental spaces. The formation of the mental spaces proceeds within the framework of pre-election discourse. They are similar to conceptual domains, but mental spaces are formed in the online mode, and the structure of the mental space depends on the intentions of a doer of the action. Cross-space projection brings together the elements of two mental spaces. In the process of interaction, there are common elements that relate to the third – generic– space. The most significant difference between the theory of conceptual integration is the fourth space which called a blended space. This space is a new conceptual structure, new knowledge. This process is not mechanical - the components of two spaces are not simply combined into one space, there is a selection of components that are projected into blend depending on the intentions of the author, that is, the process of conceptualization is similar to a biological process (Husnutdinov, Akalin, Giniyatullina, & Sagdieva, 2017; Bentley & Bossé, 2018). Another difference is the possibility of interaction of not only two but more spaces. Since the theory of conceptual blending describes the dynamic structures that commence in the process of discourse, the blend as a conceptual structure can subsequently become an input mental space and participate in the creation of a new blend.

The study of metaphor from the position of the theory of conceptual integration allows us to expose the meaning formation. The main point is the result of the interaction. The expressed productivity of the metaphor is called emergent content called. Emergent features are the signs that appear in the blend under the interaction of mental spaces, but in the mental spaces themselves are not available.

As a material of the research, there were examined transcripts of the 2016 pre-election campaign debates for the presidential position of Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The presidential debates while the pre-election campaign in 2016 of H. Clinton's and D. Trump's texts have been analyzed in the course of a comprehensive study. The analysis of the texts studied showed that the pre-election discourse has a high level of functioning of expressive means in the content of the pre-election campaign's texts.

Metaphorical speech of politicians as the main subjects of political discourse is confirmed by a significant number of studies, see (Ameen, Ahmed, & Hafez, 2018). The metaphor in a pre-election campaign, however, has not received illumination, although this kind of metaphor, as shown in our study, is quite common in other discourses. The following examples are given to describe conceptual blending underlying metaphors:

1. 'We are a dumping ground to the rest of the world.' (Donald Trump, https://www.debates.org/voter-education/debate-transcripts/september-26-2016-debate-transcript/)

In this example, the author uses the expression 'dumping ground' to describe the relation of the outer world to the USA. This case is an example of a metaphor-based on the interaction of the mental space "nation" and the mental space 'dumping ground'. In the cross-space projection, we have the following correspondences: country - ground, an outer world - dump, dump – undocumented immigrants. In the common – generic space, "unity of the group" and "group interaction" elements are derived. Determining the integrated space that is the blend is an element of 'non-desirability' from the mental space of the 'dumping ground', which is expressed by opposing the USA with other countries: the expression 'dumping ground to the rest of the world' is used to demonstrate contrast – undocumented people are not desirable in the country. The undesirable feelings are also explicitly expressed with the help of the lexeme "dump" in terms of the way considering the undocumented immigrants are being marginal in the countries they have been moved. This example leads us to the conclusion about the existence of the model 'We – they', the unity of activity and illegal behavior is attributed to the nation with the help of contrast.

'We – they' and 'divided nation' are frequently functioning models in both Donald Trump's and Hilary Clinton's texts:

2. 'If Mr. Trump gets his way it will be like Christmas in the Kremlin. It will make America less safe and the world more dangerous'. (Hilary Clinton, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-elections/hillary-clinton-trump-would-be-like-christmas-for-the-kremlin-a6948786.html)

3. 'People are going to pour into our country. Our jobs are being sucked out of our economy. Our product is pouring in from China, pouring in from Vietnam, pouring in from all over the world'. (Donald Trump, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/20/us/politics/third-debate-transcript.html)

4. 'And I think when you look at the letters that I get, a lot of people are worried that maybe they wouldn't have a place in Donald Trump's America'. (Hilary Clinton, https://www.politico.com/story/2016/10/2016-presidential-debate-transcript-229519)

5. 'Well, I think when the middle class thrives, America thrives'. (Hilary Clinton, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/20/us/politics/third-debate-transcript.html)

6. 'So we have undocumented immigrants in America who are paying more federal income tax than a billionaire'. (Hilary Clinton, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/20/us/politics/third-debate-transcript.html)

Associations of a nation with a certain politician lie in the basis of the metaphorical model "nation - politician":

1. 'We have a divided nation, because people like her -- and believe me, she has tremendous hate in her heart'. (Donald Trump, https://www.politico.com/story/2016/10/2016-presidential-debate-transcript-229519)

2. 'Also, the Second Amendment, which is totally under siege by people like Hillary Clinton'. (Donald Trump, https://www.politico.com/story/2016/10/2016-presidential-debate-transcript-229519)

3. 'People like Donald, who paid zero in taxes, zero for our vets, zero for our military, zero for health and education, that is wrong'. (Hilary Clinton, https://www.politico.com/story/2016/10/2016-presidential-debate-transcript-229519)

4. 'Donald always takes care of Donald and people like Donald'. (Hilary Clinton, https://www.politico.com/story/2016/10/2016-presidential-debate-transcript-229519)

In these examples 'nation' and 'politician' mental spaces interact. The existence of a generic space is due to the presence of such frames as: 'living being' and 'the subject of activity'. The people resemble a politician (an image of Donald Trump and/or Hilary Clinton) in the habitat, the behavior of the people is compared with the behavior of the politician in a situation of opposition to another, which is conceptual integration is reflected by the 'focus on the characteristics of the people'. These elements are present in both mental spaces, in the blend comparison takes place: the characteristics of the politician exceed the characteristics of the people, quantitative characteristics are transferred to the people. The metaphor 'nation-politician' thus, serves to enhance quantitative characteristics and corresponds to the generally accepted concept of 'hyperbole'.

Multi-billion-dollar behemoths

The examples above are frequent in the pre-election discourse. At the same time, there are other kinds of metaphor that can be characterized by a low level of reproducibility:

1. 'We cannot be the policemen of the world'. (Donald Trump, https://www.debates.org/voter-education/debate-transcripts/september-26-2016-debate-transcript/)

2. 'They're devaluing their currency, and there's nobody in our government to fight them. And we have a very good fight. And we have a winning fight. Because they're using our country as a piggy bank to rebuild China, and many other countries are doing the same thing'. (Donald Trump, https://www.debates.org/voter-education/debate-transcripts/september-26-2016-debate-transcript/)

3. 'And we are a big-hearted, fair-minded country'. (Hilary Clinton, https://www.debates.org/voter-education/debate-transcripts/september-26-2016-debate-transcript/)

In these examples, we highlight the interaction of the mental space "nation" and "man". Unlike the previous example, in which the "people" element was distinguished in the generic space, in this example, we are dealing with the people as a man. In the blended space, the element of "existence and functioning" is derived - like a man, the people go through the stages of development and perform certain functions. But the blend is a rather complicated phenomenon: the functioning of the social system (the people) depend on the complicated process in the society, this is expressed in the comparison with the human.

Thus, the analysis of conceptual integration in these examples allowed us to identify the following models of metaphor:

- 'we-they'

- 'nation – politician'

- 'nation – man'

SUMMARY

Focus on the cognitive perspective of metaphorical expressions contributes to investigating and analyzing patterns of thought. Identifying veridical, hidden motives of a doer of action presents a difficulty to the communicants revealing the complexity of the patterns. Conceptual integration analysis reveals the aim of a speaker and enables tracing the whole structure of conceptual integration back to its starting point.

Pre-election contains numerous meanings as discourse analysis provides us metaphorical typological diversity. The purpose of the metaphor is to denote the attitude of a subject of the pre-election process towards the opponent and sets the behavioral pattern. Actions of the people (nation) are viewed through a natural selection perspective genuine motives of a doer of the action. Hyperbole, which is a part of the blended space, enhances frames of individual or people (Yazdekhasti, Erfan, & Nazari, 2015).

Metaphor, thus, serves the purposes of describing a nation through transcending its characteristics as a system. This may be regarded as a temporary view of a nation as a man and/or a certain politician's features with a loss of social identity as a system.

CONCLUSIONS

Contrastive quantitative analysis revealed a prevalence of a certain model in each politician's texts. Donald Trump's texts are characterized by dominating models 'We-They as the USA and the other countries' and 'Nation as a Politician', whereas Hilary Clinton's texts are characterized by the prevalence of 'We – They as a divided nation' and 'Nation as a Man' models. The opposition of individual and group characteristics in politics is a universal opposition of unity and its elements.

The results of the research reveal convergent features in conceptualizing a nation and its people in the process of the pre-election campaign (mechanism of conceptual blending) and divergent features (predominance of certain metaphoric models). Defining patterns of metaphoric modeling contribute to distinguishing cultural specifics of a language, thus, construing a linguistic worldview.

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