

A Comparative Study of JOURNEY Cognitive Metaphor in International English and Russian Advertising Discourse

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Abstract

The purpose of the article is to summarize the results of a comparative study of JOURNEY metaphors presented in the corpus of English- and Russian-language advertising slogans. The method of the research is lexical-semantic analysis of a corpus of advertising slogans combined with linguistic-cultural approach to the study of cognitive metaphors. We believe that this approach allowed us to reveal the key semantic aspects of the metaphor in question for each of the two languages, and compare the lexical constituents that represent it. The main results show that most of the semantic aspects of JOURNEY metaphor exploited in slogans, such as “inspiration”, “hospitality” and “ease of travel”, coincide in both languages, though there are some unique aspects in both languages: English language slogans tend to describe JOURNEY as “exploration” and “discovery”, whereas Russian language slogans emphasize its “safety”, “security” and “reliability”.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Communication; Cognitive Metaphors; Linguistic-Cultural Concepts; Advertising Discourse; English and Russian Languages

Introduction

In today’s globalized world, understanding and respect of national and cultural specificity is, beyond doubt, the key to successful communication on various levels. A decade ago cross-cultural communication was a must for the business sector of society today the rapid advance of telecommunications and transportation, as well as the increase in population migration dictates the necessity of cross-cultural awareness in our daily lives.

This research focuses on the reflection of the cultural values and stereotypes presented in the form of a cognitive metaphor. We believe, that a comparative study of JOURNEY metaphors in the contemporary English and Russian languages, reflected through the prism of advertising slogans of companies, operating in the sphere of tourism and travel can contribute to a better understanding of the similarities and the differences in the values, stereotypes and expectations of English-language speakers and Russian-language speakers.

Subject Background

Cognitive metaphors have been studied extensively since “Metaphors we live by” by G. Lakoff and M.

Johnson was first published [1]. Cognitive metaphors are also referred to as concept or conceptual metaphors, concepts or linguistic-cultural concepts [2] or multidimensional clusters of sense [3]. The difference in the nomination of the object of the research reflects not only the historical differences in linguistic traditions, but the variations in the focal point of the studies and the boundaries different approaches set on the essence of a cognitive metaphor. To avoid any misconceptions, we shall take some time to clarify the term and its usage within the limits of our research.

In the works of G. Steen [4,5,6], L. Cameron and G. Low [7], G. Fauconnier [8,9], R. White [10], R. Gibbs [11], Z. Kovecses [12], C. Forceville & E. Urios-Aparisi [13], E. Semino [14], J.B. Herrmann [15] and A. Wierzbicka [16], a cognitive metaphor is viewed as one of the most fundamental and persuasive structures of language and cognition.

One of the most recent definitions calls them intermediaries between the words and extra linguistic reality, and proposes that they are internally organized by the field structure and include a visual image, informational content and interpretative field [17].

Most widely, cognitive metaphors are viewed as cognitive units and their meaning is introduced through a cognitive/conceptual metaphor. From the point of view of some linguists (Langaker [18]; Jackendoff [19]), conceptual metaphors can be expressed by different language units – classes of subjects or beings, situations and individuals. Supporters of the linguistic-cognitive approach represent cognitive metaphors as linguistic-cognitive units. They believe that it is a mental unit and an information structure, reflecting knowledge and experience of a person, but the cultural aspect is not the main one to consider [20].

In this research, we shall treat the JOURNEY metaphor the way V.I. Karasik and G.G. Slyshkin [21] propose in their article “Linguistic-cultural concept as a research

unit". They argue that a linguistic-cultural concept is a conventional mental unit used in complex studying of language, culture and consciousness. The correlation of a linguistic-cultural concept with these three spheres can be formulated as follows: culture determines a concept which is represented as a mental projection of elements of culture; consciousness is the area where a concept is placed and language is the sphere where a concept becomes object-orientated [22]. In other words, a cognitive metaphor is considered as a unit of consciousness, which enables us to approach it from the point of view of its content and structure and to describe it through the analysis of a set of language means. Thus, a cognitive metaphor or a linguistic-cultural concept is viewed as a multidimensional meaningful construct where the notional, figurative and value aspects are distinguished [23]. The main difference in this approach from the previously described ones is the presence of value component. Let us also note that throughout the article the terms "cognitive metaphor" and "linguistic-cultural concept" are interchangeable synonyms.

Russian linguistic tradition highly values the research of cognitive metaphors, *or cultural and language concepts* within the framework of cognitive linguistics or sociolinguistics.

Various aspects of cognitive metaphors of the English and Russian languages have been studied in the following works of Russian authors: "Happiness as a linguistic-cultural concept" [24], "Konstantas. Dictionary of the Russian culture. Experience of research" [25], "Istina: background and connotations" [26], "Language circle: personality, concepts, discourse" [27], "Linguistic continuum" [28].

Pertaining to the subject of our work, the results of research into JOURNEY metaphors were described in various publications, including "Metaphors We Live By" [29], "Turn of Phrase and Roots to Learning: The Journey Metaphor in Education Culture" [30], "The perception of the concept JOURNEY viewed in dynamics throughout its genesis in the English culture" [31], "The concept of JOURNEY in Russian and Chinese language cultures" [32], "Conceptual, evaluative and figurative constituents of the French concept VOYAGE" [33].

Cognitive metaphors which are realized through advertisements have also been studied [34]; [35]. It was stated that advertisements form a major manifestation of cognitive metaphors as the latter determines the selling power of an advertisement. However, there has not yet been any comparative study of JOURNEY metaphors in English and Russian advertising discourse.

Slogans appear to be the most natural choice of language material when it comes to the research of advertising discourse. In the past 30 years they have been studied extensively from the point of view of marketing, psychology and linguistics. Here is a short list of relevant academic publications in this area: "Surface structure transformation and advertising slogans: the case of moderate syntactic complexity" [36], "Adimpact: A multi-media advertising effectiveness measurement method" [37], "Got slogan? Guidelines for creating effective slogans" [38], "Persuasion and advertising English: Metadiscourse in slogans and headlines" [39], "The Effect of Syntactic Complexity, Social Comparison, and Relationship Theory on Advertising Slogan" [40], "Precedent texts in contemporary slogans" [41].

Methodological Framework

Methodology of the Research

The main aim of the research is to explore the national and cultural specifics of JOURNEY cultural concept, openly emphasized through public advertising to be able to understand and compare the underlying social-cultural values of the corresponding national-cultural entities. We believe that the accurate application of the research results can contribute to the facilitation of cross-cultural communication not only in the sphere of advertising, but on a larger social scale as well.

The linguistic objective of this research is the study of language manifestation of the concept of JOURNEY in English-language and Russian-language advertising discourse with the intention to correctly interpret the concept name and the core concept constituents. The traditional approach to the study of semantics, which is aimed at constructing a lexical field of the concept, has been criticized lately. As a result, it is used together with other research methods, such as Quantitative Multifactorial method [42].

The methodology of this research is a combined one: we use the mapping procedure described by G. Fauconnier [43] complimented by the complex method of semantic-cognitive study of the concept by Z. D. Popova and I. A. Sternin [44] and the procedure developed by V.I. Karasik [45]. Thus, we applied a combination of the above-mentioned methods in the following order to ensure the most accurate and objective results:

Firstly, a nominative field of the concept is constructed, representing the establishment and description of the set of the linguistic means nominating the concept and some of its features.

Secondly, analysis and description of the semantics of the constituent units that form the sub-concepts in English and Russian languages is carried out. In our

study, we aimed to identify the subjective understanding of the concept of JOURNEY in advertising discourse with the selection of lexical units, which represent the studied concept more clearly. The research is complemented by the analysis of the semantic associative meanings of words.

Thirdly, a cognitive interpretation of the results of the language means semantics description is conducted. The objective of this stage is to identify the cognitive features forming the studied concept as a mental unit.

The fourth step involves the verification of the data collected. The material presented within the framework of this study (see item 2.2 Steps of the research) provided a solid base for the verification of the results.

Finally, the description of the content of the concept in the form of a list of cognitive features is conducted and the field organization of the identified cognitive features (mapping) is completed.

The research is complemented by a comparative study.

Steps of the Research

Firstly, we collected a corpus of 200+ slogans of global and local Russian, American and British airline companies; Russian tour operators and travel agencies; American, British and Australian tour operators and travel agencies; countries, advertising themselves as tourist destinations and slogans of the UK and the USA cruise lines and agencies by online search.

Secondly, we grouped the collected corpus of language material into three categories, based on the following criteria:

- The language of the slogan;
- The native language of the agency / country that created the slogan;
- The native language of the target audience.

This gave us the following groups of slogans for further analysis: native English slogans for native English speakers (Group 1); non-native English slogans by non-native English agencies / countries for both native and non-native English speakers (Group 2); native Russian slogans for native Russian speakers (Group 3) (See Appendix 1-3).

Then, we mapped the JOURNEY metaphor for each group according to the concept mapping procedure described in 2.1. The results of the mapping were compared to the results of the existing research in the field of cognitive metaphor study and linguistic-cultural concept study. After that, the results of the mapping for each of the group were compared to the results of the two other groups. Finally, we analyzed the lexical constituents of the slogans in each of the groups according to the procedure of constituent analysis, described in 2.1, and compared the results.

Results

The lexico-semantic analysis of the advertising slogans in our corpus revealed that the majority of the aspects of the concept of JOURNEY, exploited by the travel agencies, airline companies and tourism commissions and ministries to achieve a greater pragmatic effect, coincide in both languages. However, there are several aspects that are uniquely used either in English-language or Russian-language slogans.

1 Semantic aspects of the linguistic-cultural concept JOURNEY, exploited in advertising slogans in the travel industry

1.1. Semantic aspects of the concept of JOURNEY, reflected both in the English-language slogans and in the Russian-language ones

Let's first consider the aspects that have lexical representation in both languages. The first one is the aspect of ease and accessibility of travel. In this case the traveler is assured that the journey won't take any effort on their behalf: the slogan of Intourist, a major Russian tour operator, says "Лёгкое дело отдых" (Holiday is an easy task), and Cruise Holidays of Topeka, a cruise travel agent, suggests: "Relax... You're with us! We make it simple". The next common aspect is the aspect of comfort: Emirates airlines' slogan in Russia reads "Новые горизонты комфорта" ("The new level of comfort"), Viking River Cruises' one – "Exploring the world in comfort". Another shared aspect is the one of affordability and low prices: 1st4cruising.com, a UK online cruise holiday agent, promises "Savings on every ship, cabin & cruise!"; another UK cruise company, Cruise.co.uk advertises itself as "The UK cruise discount warehouse"; consider the tagline for Sky Express airline: "Высокий сезон низких цен" ("High season – low prices"). The aspect, opposite to affordability, is that of prestige and status, and it is also present in both languages. Here the slogans emphasize the supposedly high position of the traveler in the social hierarchy and suggest that they deserve to be treated accordingly. For example, the slogan of a local Russian travel agency Detur says "Позволь себе эксклюзивный отдых!" ("Indulge yourself in an exclusive holiday"); one of the slogans of the Emirates airline said "Be good to yourself. Fly Emirates"; the official slogan of Swaziland as a tourist destination says "The Kingdom of Swaziland – a royal experience"; Solitaire Tours, a UK travel agency for single travelers, advertises its holidays as "Exclusive holidays for the single traveler." The aspect of JOURNEY as something different from everyday routine is very often used for advertising purposes, and

it's frequently mixed with an attempt to differentiate the company or country from its competitors in the industry: "Czech Republic – stunningly different", "There's NOTHING like Australia", "A river cruise unlike any other" (the slogan for Avalon Waterways, a river cruise line), "Отдых, отличный от других" ("A different kind of holiday") – says Zeus Travel, a Cyprus tour operator in Russia. Another popular aspect of JOURNEY in the advertising texts of both languages is travel as a source of novelty and inspiration: "Korea – be inspired", "South Africa – Inspiring new ways", KLM airline slogan in Russia "На что вдохновит вас это путешествие?" ("What will this trip inspire you to do?") and "Полет как путешествие" ("Flight as inspiration"). Finally, there is the aspect of hospitality, which leads the traveler to believe that they needn't be homesick or afraid or stressed while they're far away from home, because the organizer promises to take good care of them: "Abu Dhabi – Travelers welcome", "Scotland welcomes the world", Domodedovo airlines – "В небе как дома" ("The sky feels just like home").

1.2. Semantic aspects of the concept of JOURNEY, unique for the English-language slogans

There is one aspect, typical for the English slogans as long as it's a part of the English language culture sub-concept "Exploration/Discovery". The traveler is encouraged to satisfy their natural curiosity, to get the sense of adventure, excitement and adrenalin, like the explorers of old times. Canadian tourist official invite you to discover their lands with the slogan "Canada – keep exploring", Luxembourg and Japan take the same approach: "Luxembourg – Discover the unexpected", "Japan – endless discovery", P&O Cruises, a British cruise company, invites its customers to "Discover a different world". In Russian language only the slogans of international companies feature this aspect: "Emirates. Совершайте открытия" ("Emirates. Make discoveries.").

While analyzing the corpus of slogans for the research, we found that the English slogans consistently represent the same aspects of JOURNEY, regardless of the country of origin. The most prominent example of this peculiarity is the "typically English" aspect of Exploration/Discovery: compare the above-mentioned slogans for Japan "Japan – endless discovery", the Emirates "Emirates. Make Discoveries" and the slogan of a British sea cruise company "Discover a different world". We suggest that there may be several possible explanations:

1. The influence of national mentality, inherently present in language.
2. Adequate translation of the initial slogan, perhaps with the help of a native-English speaking interpreter.
3. Consulting a native English-speaking advertising agency in order to avoid a *faux pas* on the global market.

1.3. Semantic aspects of the concept of JOURNEY, unique for the Russian-language slogans

Russian travel agencies and airline companies prefer to emphasize the aspects of safety, security and reliability, which are much more significant for Russian language-speaking community: travel agency Neva claims to be "Ваша надежная турфирма" ("Your reliable travel agent"), Kogalymavia airline promises "Точность, надежность, комфорт!" ("Punctuality, reliability, comfort!"), Transaero airline ensures of its "Безопасность. Комфорт. Качество" ("Safety. Comfort. Quality"), Aeroflot Russian Airlines simply says "Классический полет" ("A classic flight"). Another aspect, unique for Russian slogans is the season, which is not surprising, considering the geographic location of the Russian Federation and the peculiarities of its climate. Travel agency HTL emphasizes it, saying "HTL - двери, ведущие в лето" ("HTL – the door to the summer"). Table 1 summarizes the findings in a concise and clear way:

Table 1: Semantic Aspects of the Linguistic-Cultural Concept JOURNEY, Exploited in Advertising Slogans in the Travel Industry

| Semantic aspects, unique for Russian slogans | Semantic aspects. common for slogans in both languages | Semantic aspects, unique for English slogans |
|--|---|--|
| Reliability Safety Security Summer Comfort | Ease of travel Affordability Status, Prestige Hospitality Inspiration Difference | Exploration Discovery |

2. Comparison of the lexical constituents of advertising slogans, representing the concept of JOURNEY in the English and Russian languages.

English slogans are characterized by the extensive use of adjectives with positive connotation and verbs of exploration and motion in the imperative mood: stunning, exclusive, unique, beautiful, pure, true, natural, unexpected, warm, royal, timeless, endless, best, better, exceptional, smart, cheap, simple, different, great; experience, enjoy, feel, explore, go, come, visit, fly, see, discover. Semantically, the adjectives refer to the groups “excitement”, “beauty”, “variety” and “quality”. The nouns used in English advertisements are semantically connected to the ideas of exploration, emotional warmth and personal experience: heart, soul, holiday, beauty, hospitality, diversity, discovery, wonder, life, experience, and discovery. In Russian slogans nouns prevail over other parts of speech: мечты, крылья, безопасность, комфорт, качество, надежность, высота, горизонты, путешествие, небо, земля, мир, низкая цена, отдых, без суеты / проблем, лето, свобода, воспоминания, формула, технология, удовольствие, профессия, компания, время (dreams, wings, safety, comfort, quality, reliability, height, horizons, journey, sky, earth, world, (low) price, holiday, (no) troubles, summer, freedom, travel, memories, formula, technology, pleasure, job, company, time). As for the adjectives, typical for Russian slogans, they are also characterized by strong positive connotation: классический, отличный от других, надежный, безопасный, солнечный, прекрасный, эксклюзивный, легкий, простой (classic, different, reliable, safe, sunny, wonderful, exclusive, easy, simple) and convey the ideas of simplicity, safety and status.

Discussions

While drawing the outline of the research, we faced the issue of choosing the appropriate source of language material, or language corpus necessary to conduct a well-grounded, high quality analysis of the JOURNEY metaphor, which will produce reliable results.

Cognitive metaphors have been studied extensively since “Metaphors we live by” [46] in a significant number of linguistic and multidisciplinary research works, mentioned in section 1.1 *Subject Background* of this paper. However, the language corpus for these studies rarely consisted of slogans only – advertising discourse is typically included in the broader language corpus where it usually constitutes several vivid examples. The studies that focus on slogans, also listed in the *Subject Background* section, are aimed at other aspects of this kind of texts – the difficulties of adequate slogan translation, the effectiveness of slogans in various market conditions, the peculiarities of their syntax, their

phonetic structure, their lexical constituents and the features of their figurative language.

Our choice of advertising discourse as the primary source of language corpus for a comparative analysis of a cognitive metaphor represents a fresh approach to a well-established area of contemporary linguistics. Slogans provide extremely valuable language material for studying cognitive metaphors from the point of view of cross-cultural communication for several reasons. First of all, to be able to attract the attention of the target audience, they must reflect the core cultural values and beliefs, either positively or negatively. Furthermore, the aim of attracting customers’ attention and making the product or service more desirable than the competition dictates the need for quick response to any changes in customers’ attitudes or preferences. This condition means that slogans can serve as language markers of the most recent public attitudes to the cultural values and beliefs, as well as the markers of changes in these values and beliefs.

Of course, slogans are not the only language material that possesses the qualities, described above. The benefits of the media discourse and the Internet discourse in this role as markers of trends in social and cultural attitudes are hard to underestimate. However, in our opinion, slogans have certain advantages over the mentioned kinds of discourse. They are targeted at wider audience than any TV program, news piece, a post or comment on the social network, which is extremely important for studying linguistic-cultural concepts, or cognitive metaphors.

The complex character of the object leads us to believe that this area is open for further research. One of the directions is frame analysis that will allow to define the content of JOURNEY metaphor as a scenario concept-event, where the analyzed concept can be presented in the form of a linguistic-cultural scenario, or a dynamic frame. Besides, this line of research gives the green light to designing, developing and conducting psycholinguistic experiments, aimed at creating the associative field based on the verbal associations of the respondents.

The area of the research can be broadened to include the slogans of virtually any companies operating in various spheres of the current market which will allow exploring the cross-cultural aspects of such metaphors as LIFE, HAPPINESS, BEAUTY, TIME, LOVE, and MONEY, YOUTH etc., commonly referred to in advertising. To ensure the best results from the point of view of cross-cultural awareness, the research must be comparative and include two or more languages. As slogans in English can be found worldwide due to the rapid development of transportation, tourism and global

trade. Thus, we suggest that the corpus of English slogans can serve as basis for comparison for further multi-lingual research of cognitive metaphors in advertising discourse.

Conclusions

The conducted research defines the framework of the key semantic aspects of the linguistic-cultural concept of JOURNEY and its sub-concepts, found in advertising discourse in two languages – English and Russian. It also contributes to the task of reflecting national and cultural specific features of the JOURNEY metaphor, characterizes the way that advertisers of different nations exploit the idea of travelling in their discourse. Overall, the lexical-semantic analysis of the concept of JOURNEY allows to reproduce the model of the object with a high degree of certainty.

The idea of travelling is embodied in human culture, it can be mapped with the help of linguistic research and it is expressed through language in general and through discourse in particular, in case of this article – that of advertising slogans. Today travelling is an inevitable part of life for millions of people around the world, and English is the modern *lingua franca* and the basis for cross-cultural contact. We believe that our comparative study will be beneficial not only for the linguists, interested in cognitive studies and metaphor studies, but also for the marketing specialists, psychologists, sociologists and the tourism industry professionals.

To summarize, we must say that the article just briefly lists the results of comparative analysis of verbal manifestation of the JOURNEY metaphors in advertising slogans from the point of view of linguistic-cultural approach and demonstrates the opportunities for further research in the area. We firmly believe, that this way of studying cognitive metaphors can contribute to the development of cross-cultural awareness and the improvement of cross-cultural communication by focusing on a reliable, easily accessible language material that provides quickest response to any societal and cultural changes.

Recommendations

The results of our research are useful for any linguist, working in the field of cognitive or comparative linguistics. The methodological framework that we applied can serve as a guideline for similar studies. The language material and the results can be useful for those involved in cross-cultural contacts while dealing with travel agencies, airlines and hospitality industry.

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