

APPLIED RESEARCH

© L. V. LEBEDEVA, L. V. LEPUSTINA

Cand. philosoph. sci., Associate professor, Department of General and Social Psychology,
Institute of Psychology and Pedagogics, Tyumen State University;
HR Manager, Bureau of the Technical Invertization, Nizhnevartosk

Olera-l@rambler.ru, barvinka_91@mail.ru

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FUNCTIONS OF THE METAPHOR IN THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSE

SUMMARY. Results of the research of a metaphor functions in an autobiographical discourse are received. The research was made within the modern discursive psychology, in humanistic, personal, subjective paradigm, and it has interdisciplinary character. The autobiography of four generations of our country sociologists involved in the formation of science and practice throughout the XX century are in the research focus. Texts of biographic interviews, collected by B.Z. Doktorov within the framework of "Discussion with Sociologists of Four Generations" project were published in the book "Modern Russian sociology: Historical and biographic searches". The urgency of this subject and need to develop the instrument of formalization of long text massifs analysis that allows to compare the results of the analysis and to receive a capacious picture of the depth of an author's reflection are explained. Moreover, it allows to define a metaphor as a reflection means of life and professional experience. Contextual analysis results of a metaphor in an autobiographical discourse are described. It is shown that the metaphor in an autobiographical discourse is used to increase the text figurativeness, facilitates the process of understanding, conceptualization of difficult life situations. Static character of types and functions of metaphors in time intervals, the ability of a metaphor "to awaken" a reflection of an individual life and professional experience are shown in an autobiographical discourse of functional and specific aspect of a metaphor.

KEY WORDS. Autobiographical discourse, discourse, discursive psychology, metaphor, experience.

Most part of the life stories research is based on autobiographies and biographical interviews that are vivid narrations of one's life events, complicated description of one's introspected experience, presenting author's various semantics, esthetics, poetics and methaphorics. While studying biographical documents, cultural studies experts,

sociologists and social psychologists (Z. Bauman, T. Lukman, G.S. Batygin, N.Y. Mazlumyanova, V.I. Backshtanovski, B.Z. Doctorov, M.V. Bogdanova, G.G. Silnizkii, N.N. Kozlova, Y.M. Bespalova, L.V. Lebedeva and others) point out that *individual life events are combined with the country's history and social cultural matrixes that set and structure biographical schemes, event scenarios and life paths*. They also underline that autobiographical discourse is important for understanding one's individual life contents and social cultural events in different historical periods.

While reflecting over an autobiography it becomes necessary to make life and professional experience integrally verbal. To achieve this, discourse authors use metaphor. The lack of the big corpuses analysis formalization tool does not allow to define metaphor as a means of life and professional experience reflexion, as well as to compare the results of the analysis and to get an integral picture of the life and professional experience author's reflexion depth.

The objective of the research – to study the role of metaphor as a means of life and professional experience reflexion in the autobiographical discourse.

Theory. Autobiographical discourse is a special kind of discourse that is “convenient for self-expression and self-presentation of the author”. It allows to express multiple images of the author (the narrator) that create an integral portrait of the linguistic personality when united [1, 6; 2]. The scientists are interested in a number of psychological aspects of the *autobiographical discourse* like the principles of psychotherapeutic discourse analysis [1]; *autobiographical memory*, “concentrations” in the subjective view of the past in particular, common cultural “life scenario” and individual determinants contribution to the “concentrations” of autobiographical memories on the “life time axis” and etc. [3].

The basic functions of autobiographical discourse are stating (to show one's life path and history of one's personality formation), expressive (to express one's preferences, emotions, assessments), reflexive (to consider one's life through the prism of one's “self”, to have a look at one's past), appealing (to urge to do something), disclosive (to shed light on some historical events, to clear up some family mysteries, to explain some ambiguity) and etc. [2]. Meanwhile, the authors often use metaphor.

Metaphor becomes a research subject for many scientists and scholars in different fields of study: as a psychotherapeutic tool as far as it *constructs person's thinking and behavior* (G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, J. Mills, R. Crowley, M. White and others), as *a means of presenting and understanding authors' reality*, and also for understanding the basics of thinking and the processes of the creation of the universal idea of the world in linguistics (N.A. Aroutunova and others). Metaphor is no longer considered to be a semantic device, but *a phenomenon of language and thinking interaction*. It makes it relevant in *psychological researches*. Among various definitions of the concept “metaphor”, the most relevant is the one coined by a well-known specialist in the field M. Black. He defines metaphor as “words used in their literal meaning (he names this part “frame”), and those in the figurative meaning (“focus”). “Focus” defines metaphorical context of the expressions used, combining some attributes of the compared objects on the basis of associative similarities that they generate. This

combination causes a “semantic shift” that leads to a new understanding of the compared objects. So, when we believe some person to be very cruel, we can call him/her a “beast”. In such a way we reveal some similarities between a human and an animal, as well as attribute to the animal some human features (i.e. conscious intention and etc.)” [4].

N.D. Aroutunova offered the following typology of the metaphors. *Nominative* type metaphor is observed when one descriptive meaning is replaced by another; it is a source of homonymy, accidental word match. It is visual, appeals not to the intuition but to the vision, presents an object or an event through its use in a new perspective, indicates a new meaning of the information. *Figurative* type metaphor contributes to the development of the synonymy. Indirect allegorical descriptions of events, phenomena and people’s activities are constructed. *Cognitive* type metaphor is used in the text as the result of the combinability shift of the attributive words. It creates polysemy when a word (word-combination) used by the author is connected with other words and context on the whole, conceptual cognitive map is produced and applied in order to compare some abstract notions and experience to everyday practice of human interaction with the outer world. *Generalizing* type metaphor allows the author to eliminate borders between logical orders in the lexical meaning of the word and encourages the development of logical polysemy [5].

Some authors single out *ontological* type metaphor (Lakoff, Johnson, 2004 and others). This is a complex formation that allows a person to *identify something that exists inside* (“receptacle”): “a child in me”; *to describe some complicated feeling* (“part-whole”): “it is pleasant to be an integral part of a big complex organism”; *to inform about being perceived by a person as a material substance*: “to dissolve one’s self, forget about oneself”; *to understand the experience of interaction with inanimate substances in terms of human motivation, characteristics and activities* (“personification”).

Nominative and *generalizing* metaphors are mostly used for a single description of some object and are “effaced”.

N.F. Krukova (1991) considers the substantial aspect of the metaphor in the text, its ability to combine objects from different fields and create new concepts in the worldview from the hermeneutic perspective. Among the meaning-making functions of the metaphor she singles out *fascination* that allows the author to find vast zones of experience in the reflective reality. Some of these zones might be dimmed, other highlighted. They direct reflexion and define producer’s initiated meanings. *Intensification* of the meaning is the ability of the metaphor to urge reflexion. The more metaphorical implications are connected with the previous experience of a person the more intensive this ability is. *Actualization* is defined by the redistribution of objects’ attributes in the process of their metaphorical comparison. The attributes that were concealed before are being put in the foreground and chosen as the grounds for metaphorization. *Explication* allows a subject to give the information about an idea in a simplistic form. It is based on such a comparison of the reflective fields when some complex notion is made to seem easy and obvious, thus the resources of meaning

expression are being saved. *Conceptualization* is metaphorical fixation of the ideas, opinions, events, phenomena, that didn't exist in some definite reality and thus do not have their correlate in the language. *Removal* is the realization of double nature of metaphoric images, because of which usual objects and phenomena are shown in a new perspective. *Combination of incompatible* reflects the specifics of metaphorization mechanisms that sometimes combine incompatible notions in a metaphor (Krukova, 1991). *Functional* aspect of the metaphor is defined by the context of the metaphor.

Taking into consideration the *assumption* that metaphor is a means of life and professional experience reflexion in autobiographical discourse, we examined the *supposition* that the authors of autobiographical discourse:

1) use basic expressive-evaluative function of a metaphor in order to increase figurativeness and emotional intensity of the narration;

2) use fascination function in order to discover vast zones of the experience in the reflected reality;

3) use conceptualization function in order to fix thoughts and ideas in the reflection of professional and life path.

The research was carried out on the corpus of biographical interviews, collected by B.Z. Doctorov within the framework of the project "Conversations with the Sociologists of Four Generations". There are 44 autobiographical interviews of prominent sociologists divided in 4 generations.

The results. To analyze the data we used contingency tables, chi-square criterion, Kruskal–Wallis's criterion. Contingency tables present joint distribution of two variables that is meant to research connection between them. This method was used to group the received data and on the initial stages of the calculation.

Table 1

The Contingency of Metaphors and Their Functions in the Autobiographical Interviews of the 1st Generation Authors

(Observed vs. Expected Frequencies (Spreadsheet1))

Chi-Square = 78.31014 df = 7 p < 0.000000

N metaphors – the number of metaphors in the 1st generation, equals 102 units

	Observed	Expected		
N metaphors * Expressive	45.8	16.53	29.27	51.86
N metaphors * Conceptualization	22.8	16.53	6.27	2.38
N metaphors * Fascination	21.4	16.53	4.87	1.44
N metaphors * Intensification	7.6	16.53	-8.92	4.82
N metaphors * Explication	14.4	16.53	-2.12	0.27
N metaphors * Actualization	7.0	16.53	-9.52	5.49
N metaphors * Removal	5.6	16.52	-10.92	7.22
N metaphors * Combination	7.6	16.52	-8.92	4.82
	132.2	132.2	0.00	78.31

* Modern Russian sociology: Historical and biographic searches. In 3 volumes. Volume 2: Conversations with the sociologists of four generations. M., 2012. 1343 p.

Expressive-evaluative, conceptualization, fascination functions of the metaphor prevail in the autobiographical interviews of the 1st generation authors.

Table 2

**The Contingency of Metaphors and Their Functions
in the Autobiographical Interviews of the 2nd Generation Authors**

(Observed vs. Expected Frequencies (Spreadsheet1))

Chi-Square = 52.21600 df = 7 p < 0.000000

	Observed	Expected		
Kmetaphors * Expressive	41.60	16.25	25.35	39.54
Kmetaphors * Conceptualization	18.60	16.25	2.35	0.33
Kmetaphors * Fascination	20.60	16.25	4.35	1.164
Kmetaphors * Intensification	8.80	16.25	-7.45	3.41
Kmetaphors * Explication	14.40	16.25	-1.85	0.21
Kmetaphors * Actualization	10.60	16.25	-5.65	1.96
Kmetaphors * Removal	6.40	16.25	-9.85	5.97
Kmetaphors * Combination	7.60	16.25	-8.65	4.60
	128.60	130.00	-1.40	57.21

Expressive-evaluative, fascination, conceptualization functions of the metaphor prevail in the autobiographical interviews of the 2nd generation authors.

Table 3

**The Contingency of Metaphors and Their Functions
in the Autobiographical Interviews of the 3^d Generation Authors**

(Observed vs. Expected Frequencies (Spreadsheet1))

Chi-Square = 78.00891 df = 7 p < 0.000000

	Observed	Expected		
Kmetaphors * Expressive	44.60	16.27	28.32	49.291
Kmetaphors * Conceptualization	16.40	16.27	0.12	0.00
Kmetaphors * Fascination	20.80	16.27	4.52	1.25
Kmetaphors * Intensification	7.40	16.27	-8.87	4.83
Kmetaphors * Explication	23.00	16.27	6.72	2.77
Kmetaphors * Actualization	5.20	16.27	-11.07	7.53
Kmetaphors * Removal	8.00	16.27	-8.27	4.20
Kmetaphors * Combination	4.80	16.27	-11.47	8.09
	130.20	130.20	0.00	78.00

Expressive-evaluative, explication, fascination functions of the metaphor prevail in the autobiographical interviews of the 3^d generation authors.

Table 4

**The Contingency of Metaphors and Their Functions
in the Autobiographical Interviews of the 4th Generation Authors**

(Observed vs. Expected Frequencies (Spreadsheet1))

Chi-Square = 183.5161 df = 7 p < 0.000000

	Observed	Expected		
Kmetaphors * Expressive	79.80	23.07	56.72	139.44
Kmetaphors * Conceptualization	19.00	23.07	-4.07	0.71
Kmetaphors * Fascination	30.00	23.07	6.92	2.07
Kmetaphors * Intensification	9.20	23.07	-13.87	8.34
Kmetaphors * Explication	24.20	23.0750	1.12	0.05
Kmetaphors * Actualization	7.00	23.07	-16.07	11.19
Kmetaphors * Removal	11.40	23.07	-11.67	5.90
Kmetaphors * Combination	4.00	23.07	-19.07	15.76
	184.60	184.60	0.00	183.51

Expressive-evaluative, fascination, explication functions of the metaphor prevail in the autobiographical interviews of the 4th generation authors.

Thus, in all the autobiographical interviews of the 4 generations authors expressive-evaluative function of the metaphor dominates. It is the main function that can be found in most types of the discourse, except scientific one. As we initially assumed, fascination function is also expressed. It is connected with the specific character of metaphor understanding during which vast zones of experience are distinguished in the reflective reality. In the autobiographical discourse conceptualization and explication functions of the metaphor are presented to the lesser extent. The rest functions are distributed evenly and do not stand out.

Using the data of expert assessment we made the contingency tables for the types and functions of metaphors used by the 4 generations authors in the autobiographical discourse. Having processed the information, we presented the descriptive data that was statistically verified with the help of Chi-square criterion.

Table 5

**The Contingency of the Types and Functions of Metaphors
Used by the Four Generations Authors (the entire sample)**

Functions of the Metaphor	Data
1	2
<i>Respondents of the first generation</i>	
expressive-evaluative	31.6%
conceptualization	15.7%
fascination	14.8%
<i>Respondents of the second generation</i>	
expressive-evaluative	28.7%

1	2
fascination	14.2%
conceptualization	12.8%
<i>Respondents of the third generation</i>	
expressive-evaluative	30.8%
explication	15.9%
fascination	14.4%
<i>Respondents of the fourth generation</i>	
expressive-evaluative	42.9%
fascination	16.1%
explication	13%

The authors of all generations when describing their professional and life experience prefer to use *figurative, personification and expressive-evaluative type of metaphor and expressive-evaluative function of metaphor*. Such a combination shows that the author is yearning to underline his/her emotional attitude to some event from his/her life. Example: “All my friends entered engineering universities, and became engineers, while I entered the department of humanities and was believed to be a *black sheep*”.

Personification function of the metaphor allows an author to understand the experience of interaction with social and political structures in terms of human characteristics and activity. Example: “What aggrieves me is that *terrifying, merciless machine of a cannibal state has cut off all the roots connecting me to the past, erased from my memory all the images of my ancestors, muzzled those who are still alive*”.

Structural type of metaphor and fascination function are the most pronounced in the texts composed by the authors of the 3 and 4th generations. It makes it possible for a human in reflective reality to define abstract substances through the familiar, structured elements of the experience, to single out vast zones of experience that can be dimmed and highlighted. Example: “So for me the *‘iron curtain’ collapsed* long before the ‘perestroika’”.

Structural type of metaphor and explication function are mostly presented in the texts composed by the authors of 1st and 2nd generations. Using such a combination, authors of the discourses use metaphor to streamline ambiguous notions through the familiar images that actively express the meaning of the assertion different from the original one that was metaphorized. *The authors of all four generations similarly used figurative type and function of metaphor to describe life experience*. The results of the research confirm that archetypes are the core of historical experience and we may assume that metaphors used by the author of autobiographical discourse are also elements of the historical experience [6]. That is why used types and functions of metaphors are similarly distributed in all types of the discourse, only parameter of prevalence is different.

Conclusions.

In autobiographical discourse metaphor is a means of reflexion of life and professional experience.

The authors of autobiographical discourse use the following types of metaphors in order to:

- 1) increase figurativeness and emotional intensity of the narration - basic expressive-evaluative function;
- 2) discover vast zones of the experience in the reflected reality - fascination function;
- 3) fix thoughts and ideas in the reflection of professional and life path – conceptualization.

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