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**LEXICOGRAPHIC FIXATION OF THE SEMANTICS OF**  
**METAPHORS: A PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Makhaev Maierbeck Ruslanovich (a)\*, Ovkhadov Musa Rukmanovich (b),  
Ireziev Said-Khamzat Said-Eminovich (b)  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Kh. Ibragimov Complex Institute Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 21a, Staropromyslovskoe shosse, 364051, Russia, Autonomous Non-Profit Organization of Additional Professional Education Ingush National Research University named M.A.Shavkhalov, 386203, Sunzha city, Engelsa 1st lane, house 24, Sunzha, Daghestan Federal Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 45, Gadjeva str., Makhachkala, Russia, makhaev-87tomsk@mail.ru

(b) Chechen State University, 32, Sheripov str., Grozny, 364907, Chechen Republic, ireziev85@mail.ru

**Abstract**

The article studies the problem of lexicographic fixation of the semantics of metaphors in linguistic dictionaries. A brief overview of dictionaries of Russian metaphors is presented: Dictionary of metaphors and comparisons of Russian literature of the XIX–XX centuries, Dictionary of poetic images, Dictionary of Russian political metaphors, Dictionary of Russian food metaphor, Dictionary of word-formation metaphors of the Russian language, Dictionary of figurative words and expressions of Siberian dialect, etc. The main sources of lexicographic fixation of the semantics of metaphorical units are explanatory dictionaries, media texts, programs. Some dictionaries use literary texts as sources. Corpora are used as well (the National Corpus of the Russian Language is used in the Dictionary of Russian Food Metaphor). Some shortcomings of description of the semantics of metaphors based on explanatory dictionaries are revealed (incompleteness of a description of semantic properties and differential features of the semantics of metaphors, weak relations of the components identified by lexicographers with the linguistic consciousness of native speakers). The need for using the following methods is emphasized: the systemic methods (the method of unification of dictionary definitions), the experimental (psycholinguistic) methods (associative experiment, test phrase supplementation). The integrated approach is used to comprehensively describe the semantics of metaphors, to identify a set of semantic components and differential parameters of metaphors (the relationship of meanings with age, gender, ethnocultural, social characteristics of native speakers (generators and interpreters of metaphors)), to identify relevant semantic components of metaphors, etc.

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## **1. Introduction**

In the XX – early XXI centuries, researchers were interested in the nature and functions of metaphors.

The metaphor “can be used as a tool of description and explanation in any field: in psychotherapeutic conversations and in conversations between airline pilots, in ritual dances and in programming language, in artistic education and in quantum mechanics” (Hoffman, 1985, p. 209).

Various sciences (psychology, cultural studies, semiotics, linguistics, logic, literary criticism, history), trends and directions of philosophy are involved in the study of metaphors.

The current direction of modern Russian philology is lexicography of the semantics of metaphors, which is confirmed by a large number of dictionaries of Russian metaphors.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Since “to categorize the sentence as metaphorical is to say something about its meaning rather than about spelling, phonetics, intonation, or grammar” (Black, 1990, p. 62), one of the key problems of the modern metaphor theory is the semantics of metaphorical expressions.

Methods and principles of lexicography of the semantics of metaphors and dictionaries of metaphors are required.

Features of the description of the semantics of metaphors and theoretical problems of their lexicographic fixation have been studied in many Russian studies: "Motivological foundations of the theory of lexical imagery" (Yurina, 2012), "Figurative vocabulary of the Russian language" (Blinova & Yurina, 2008), "The figurative structure of language" (Yurina, 2005).

The meanings of metaphors are widely represented in the explanatory dictionaries of the Russian language, where "almost every polysemous word has figurative meanings" (Sklyarevskaya, 1993).

The emergence of dictionaries of metaphors (and dictionaries of metaphors as a special lexicographic branch) is a trend in Russian linguistics of the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries.

## **3. Research Questions**

The article focuses on the lexicographic fixation of the semantics of Russian metaphors.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose is to solve the problem of lexicographic fixation of the semantics of metaphors.

The objectives are to review of the dictionaries of metaphors of the Russian language and to identify shortcomings in the lexicography of the meanings of metaphors.

## **5. Research Methods**

The general scientific methods of analysis, synthesis, induction were used.

The empirical basis was formed by various dictionaries of Russian metaphors.

## 6. Findings

In Russian philology, there are many dictionaries of metaphors, where meanings of metaphorical units are fixed by various methods based on various theoretical principles.

There are dictionaries describing metaphors based on the language of fiction: "Dictionary of Metaphors and Comparisons of Russian Literature of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries" (Kozhevnikova & Petrova, 2015), "Dictionary of Poetic Images" (Pavlovich, 2007), etc.

These dictionaries describe the real composition of the system of comparative tropes in the language of Russian fiction, its formal syntactic characteristics ("Dictionary of Metaphors and Comparisons of Russian Literature of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries"), show the main directions of the evolution of the figurative system in literature.

In the "Dictionary of Metaphors and Comparisons of Russian Literature of the XIX–XX centuries", comparison objects are subdivided into three classes: "MAN", "TIME" and "ENVIRONMENT". For example, here are the meanings of the trope Human – tiger: <...> *были остановлены вдруг каким-то беснующимся, который, увидев у Андрия драгоценную ношу, кинулся на него, как тигр, вцепился в него, крича: «Хлеба!»* (Gogol) – *Как тигрица, бросилась на мужа мать и толкнула его двумя руками так, что и он наконец упал* (Garin-Mikhailovsky), and the different meanings of the tropes HUMAN – ram: – *Вы-то, вы-то, такой мальчишка, – такой глупенький мальчишка, – вы тоже туда влезли с головой, как баран?* (Dostovesky) HUMAN – sheep: <...> *я сегодня кашляю, как старая овца, и моя нянюшка, Терентьевна, не дает мне покоя: «Лягте, дескать, батюшка вы мой, да напейтесь чайку...»* (Turgenev) (Kozhevnikova & Petrova, 2015).

The lexicography of metaphors is based on the analysis of ideolects of writers and poets: "Metaphor of Mayakovsky: Dictionary. Tables. Commentary" (Turanina, 1997), "A. Blok's Dictionary of Metaphors" (Turanina, 2000), "Prishvin's Dictionary of Metaphorical Images" (Turanina, 2007).

For example, in the Mayakovsky's dictionary of metaphors, the main component is followed by the uses of this lexeme in the metaphorical context.

The dictionary entry contains from one to thirty uses of the metaphor in different contexts. Examples of metaphorical usage are arranged chronologically. Each example is accompanied by the necessary "output" for the researcher.

There are dictionaries that describe the semantics of metaphors that function in various discourses.

Thus, the Dictionary of Russian Political Metaphors contains uses of metaphorical expressions characteristic of modern Russian political language (Baranov & Karaulov, 1994).

"Dictionary of Russian food metaphors" describes the figurative means of the Russian language, reflecting metaphorical projections from the "Food" area."

The structure of the dictionary entries is as follows: I. the initial meaning; II. figurative meanings; III. linguoculturological commentary; IV. typical figurative representations. Dictionary entries are provided with stylistic notes and examples of the use of words. The example of the dictionary entry is as follows: ПЕРЕЦ... I. Исходное значение. Пряные плоды овощного растения семейства пасленовых

в виде стручков <...> II. Образные значения. ПЕРЕЦ. ЯМ. Разг. Парень, мужчина. <...> СТАРЫЙ ПЕРЕЦ. ФЕ. Разг. Немолодой мужчина <...> (Dictionary of Russian food metaphor, 2015)

The technique of lexicography for metaphorical units of economic discourse has been developed by Makhnitskaya who has proposed the structure of dictionary entries (Makhnitskaya, 2003).

The Dictionary of Derivative Metaphors of the Russian Language provides a lexicographic description of derivative words with a metaphorical motivation – derivational metaphors. Dictionary entries (consisting of text illustrations and word nests) give “an idea of the derivational and semantic productivity of words with a metaphorical motivation” (Kozinets, 2012). The example from the dictionary is as follows: *ЗВЕРСКИЙ*, -ая, -ое. Разг. (← зверь ‘о чрезвычайно жестоком, свирепом человеке’). 1. *Жестокий, свирепый <как зверь>. Случай к тому подал неистовый и беспутный или, лучше сказать, зверский поступок одного из его сыновей. А. Радищев, Путешествие из Петербурга в Москву. – Он пошатнулся и оскалил зубы в зверское лицо отца. М. Горький, Мальва. – Аркадий Апллонович, отмахиваясь от жены босой ногой и делая ей зверские глаза, бормотал в телефон. М.Булгаков, Мастер и Маргарита. 2. Очень сильный, чрезвычайный в своём проявлении. <...>* (Kozinets, 2012).

There are dictionaries of metaphorical units characteristic of certain dialects (Dictionary of Figurative Units of the Siberian Dialect, 2014). Excerpts from dictionary entries: *ВЕРЕТЕНО*. О худом и высоком человеке; *БАКЛАН*. О неповоротливом, крупном, как птица баклан, человеке; *БАРСУК*. О слишком толстом человеке; *ВЬЮЛА*. Об энергичном, активном, деятельном человеке;

There are dictionaries of comparisons of the Russian language.

According to the comparative point of view, “any metaphor is a literal assimilation, in which “like” is omitted, and the basis of comparison is undefined” (Searle, 1990, p. 21).

In the Russian lexicography, there are such dictionaries of comparisons as "Dictionary of stable comparisons of the Russian language", containing about 1500 figurative comparisons (Ogoltsev, 2001), "Dictionary of comparisons and comparative phrases of the Russian language" containing about 1.300 entries (Gorbachevich, 2004).

Here are a number of entries from these dictionaries: *БОГАТЫЙ БОГАТЫЙ как Крез, как Ротшильд. Граф Нельи поносил Зубова и прямо писал о нём, что «он богат как Крез, а надменен как индейский петух». Н. Лесков, Захудалый род. Но будь я богат, как Ротшильд, ... – не тысячи ли женщин... налетят ко мне со своими красотоми. Ф. Достоевский, Подросток* (Gorbachevich, 2004). *БАРСУК КАК (СЛОВНО, ТОЧНО) БАРСУК <В НОРЕ>. Мн. 1.1. Сидеть, отсиживаться, лежать. Постоянно находиться дома, в помещении, вести малоподвижный замкнутый образ жизни. – Бояре мои сидят по дворам, как барсуки. Вам нельзя, вы люди торговые... Учиться надо торговать не в одиночку – кумпаниями (А.Н. Толстой. Пётр Первый). – Что с ним, с Денисом? – тихо спросил Павел. – ...Лежит в дому, как барсук в норе, который месяц на улице не выходит...* (А.И. Иванов. Жизнь на грешной земле) (Ogoltsev, 2001).

Thus, in Russian lexicography there are dictionaries describing the semantics of metaphors from various spheres (poetry, politics, dialects, computer slang, etc.). Various options for presenting the material have been proposed (e.g., by semantic models and political realities)

An analysis of the definitions of metaphor dictionaries showed that the main sources of the lexicography of the semantics of metaphorical units are explanatory dictionaries (in which figurative words are recorded) and contextual bases (media texts, materials, programs, etc.).

Thus, the Dictionary of Russian Political Metaphors contains 6,000 uses of metaphors in media and political texts.

In developing the principles of the lexicographic description of economic metaphors (Makhnitskaya, 2003), fragments of scientific, media texts on economic topics and encyclopedic dictionaries on economics were used.

In compiling the Russian dictionary of metaphors for the architectural and construction sublanguage, the sources were uses of metaphors in architectural and construction discourse.

The technology of collecting information for the Dictionary of Information Technology Metaphors involved the selection of contexts corresponding to the research objectives, the introduction into the database, and the selection of all metaphors. Using the Ozhegov's explanatory dictionary, words were found in the interpretation of metaphors and had semantic connections with the chosen metaphor were selected. The data of the Russian Associative Dictionary were also used.

To obtain contexts, the DIALEX and YANDEX were used (i.e., the words obtained at the first stages were used at the subsequent stages as search queries).

In other dictionaries, fiction texts were used as sources (dictionaries of fiction metaphors, Dictionary of word-formation metaphors of the Russian language, etc.).

The significant disadvantages of describing the semantics of metaphors based on the explanatory dictionaries are the lack of a unified description of semantics (problem 1), an incomplete description of the semantic properties and differential features of metaphors (problem 2) (Lukyanova, 1984; Sklyarevskaya, 1989; Trypolskaya, 1984); weak relations between the semantic components identified by lexicographers and the consciousness of native speakers (problem 3), because language is not a dead medium abstracted from native speakers.

*Problem 1 and ways to solve it.*

Let us compare a description of the metaphorical meaning of the zoonym "wolf" in some dictionaries: *Тот, кто много испытал, привык к невзгодам, опасностям, искушен в каком-либо деле <...>* (Efremova, 2000). *<...> Угрюмый, недоброжелательный человек <...>* (Толковый словарь русского языка, 1935). *<...> мужик-вор, пьяница* (Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language, 1935). *<...> мужик-вор, пьяница* (Michelson's Big Explanatory and Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Language, 2005).

There are different semantic components and three mismatched meanings. In these definitions, only the integral semes coincide. It has different metalanguage formulations (one who; a person; a man).

The solution to this problem is the unification of vocabulary definitions, which involves the generalization of different vocabulary definitions to describe the semantics of metaphors according to the data of explanatory dictionaries

The result is an integrated lexicographic meaning, when the semantic components given by different dictionaries are included in the meaning of metaphors, and a single definition is formulated.

An algorithm for the unification of dictionary definitions is presented in our study; this method was applied to the analysis of the semantics of a metaphor (Makhaev, 2020).

*Problems 2 and 3 and ways to solve them.*

Lexicographers proceed from the fact that the metaphor they define exists in language in the semantic volume that is presented in the dictionary definition, and in the same volume this lexeme is understood and used in speech (in addition, the meanings of metaphors are described by lexicographers in accordance with the principle of reductionism, i.e. by minimizing features included in the meaning).

However, as the analysis of the use of lexemes in certain contexts and our experimental studies of the semantics of lexical units (Makhaev et al., 2019) showed, there are numerous semantic components in the meanings of words that are not recorded in dictionary definitions and not detected through the analysis of contextual uses.

The solution to this problem is the experimental (psycholinguistic) research methods, associative experiments, the method of filling in the comparative structure, complementing the test phrase, free attribution of signs to the meaning, etc. (Levitsky & Sternin, 1989).

As a result of the semantic interpretation of associative fields (responses to stimuli arranged in decreasing frequency) obtained during the experiments, it is possible to identify new semantic components that are not represented in dictionaries and contexts; to reveal the degree of their relevance for native speakers, to identify the differential parameters of the semantics of metaphors: the relationship of meanings with age, gender, ethnocultural, social characteristics of native speakers (generators and interpreters of the metaphor).

## **7. Conclusion**

A brief description of some dictionaries of metaphors of the Russian language was carried out.

The main sources for the lexicography of the semantics of metaphorical units are explanatory dictionaries, contextual databases, and the National Corpus of the Russian language.

Some problems that arise when dictionaries and contextual databases are selected as a source of information were identified, and options for their solution were proposed.

In general, we believe that it is necessary to apply a set of methods that will allow us to comprehensively describe the semantics of metaphors: the systemic methods (e.g., the method of unification of dictionary definitions), the anthropometric methods (the experimental research methods for recording real meanings of metaphors).

Members of the Voronezh scientific theoretical and linguistic school based on the Dagestan psycholinguistic circle of the Dagestan Federal Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Comprehensive Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences (headed by M.R. Makhaev) are developing a psycholinguistic approach to the semantics of metaphor, relying on a set of methods.

The involvement of speakers of different languages as participants in the experiments helps to reveal cultural differences in understanding metaphors.

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