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METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF IMAGERY RESEARCH IN COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

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Abstract: This article examines the methodological foundations of imagery research in cognitive linguistics within the framework of an interdisciplinary approach. The study analyzes modern directions in the investigation of imagery as a cognitive, linguistic, and cultural phenomenon. Particular attention is paid to the interaction of cognitive linguistics with psychology, neurolinguistics, cultural studies, semiotics, and media linguistics. The research reveals that imagery represents a complex mechanism of conceptualizing reality that reflects the processes of perception, categorization, and interpretation of the world. It is emphasized that the interdisciplinary approach makes it possible to comprehensively investigate the functioning of figurative structures in language and communication.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, imagery, conceptualization, cognitive approach, metaphor, interdisciplinarity, linguistic worldview, discourse, cognitive semantics, communication.

Modern linguistics is characterized by the active development of the cognitive approach focused on the study of the relationship between language, thinking, and cognition. At the center of cognitive linguistics is the problem of conceptualizing the world and the linguistic representation of human experience. One of the key objects of research is imagery as a universal mechanism for the formation and transmission of knowledge.

The relevance of the study is determined by the fact that in the conditions of digital communication, media discourse, and intercultural interaction, the significance of figurative means in organizing communicative space is increasing. Imagery is considered not only as a stylistic category but also as a cognitive mechanism for interpreting reality. Cognitive linguistics considers imagery as an important element of conceptual structures that reflect the interaction between linguistic forms and mental representations [1]. According to G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, metaphorical thinking forms the basis of human cognition, while figurative models determine the ways people perceive and interpret reality.

Modern studies demonstrate that imagery performs not only aesthetic but also cognitive, communicative, and cultural functions. Figurative structures help systematize knowledge, model abstract concepts, and create a coherent linguistic worldview.

The study of imagery in cognitive linguistics is based on several methodological approaches. One of the most significant is the theory of conceptual metaphor developed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson. According to this theory, metaphor is not merely a stylistic device but a fundamental mechanism of human thinking. Conceptual metaphors reflect the transfer of knowledge from one conceptual domain to another. For example, abstract concepts such as time, emotions, or social relations are often interpreted through spatial, physical, or sensory experience.

An important role in imagery research is also played by the theory of conceptual integration proposed by G. Fauconnier and M. Turner [2]. This approach explains how new meanings emerge through the blending of different cognitive spaces.Cognitive semantics considers imagery as a result of mental categorization and interpretation processes [3]. Linguistic units activate conceptual structures stored in human consciousness and connected with cultural and individual experience.

The modern study of imagery is characterized by a pronounced interdisciplinary character. Cognitive linguistics actively interacts with psychology, philosophy, cultural studies, semiotics, neuroscience, and media studies. Psycholinguistics investigates the mechanisms of perception and processing of figurative language. Experimental studies demonstrate that metaphorical expressions are processed by the human brain more rapidly when they correspond to culturally established conceptual models [4]. Neurolinguistics examines the neural mechanisms involved in the comprehension of figurative meanings. Modern neurocognitive research confirms that the perception of imagery activates not only language-related areas of the brain but also sensory and emotional systems [5].

Cultural studies emphasize the dependence of imagery on national and cultural traditions. Figurative models reflect cultural values, historical experience, and social stereotypes characteristic of a particular linguistic community. Semiotics considers imagery as a system of signs functioning in various communicative spaces. In contemporary digital discourse, imagery increasingly acquires multimodal forms combining verbal, visual, and audiovisual elements.

The development of digital technologies has significantly transformed the forms of imagery representation. Modern media discourse actively uses memes, emojis, visual metaphors, and hybrid communicative forms. Media linguistics studies the functioning of figurative structures in online communication, advertising discourse, journalism, and social networks. Researchers note that digital communication contributes to the intensification of emotionality and visualization in language [7].An important feature of modern imagery is its multimodal character. In internet communication, verbal means interact with images, animation, sound, and graphic symbols, creating complex semiotic systems.

The active spread of internet culture contributes to the formation of new metaphorical models and precedent phenomena that become part of collective cognitive experience.

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, imagery is associated with the processes of conceptualization and categorization. Human consciousness structures information through associations, analogies, and metaphorical projections. Mental imagery is closely connected with embodied cognition theory, according to which cognitive processes depend on bodily and sensory experience [6]. Figurative language often reflects physical interaction with the surrounding world.

Researchers emphasize that imagery performs an adaptive function by simplifying the comprehension of abstract concepts and facilitating communication. Figurative models increase the expressiveness and emotional impact of speech. In artistic discourse, imagery becomes a means of representing individual authorial worldview. Literary texts create complex systems of metaphors, symbols, and conceptual oppositions.

An important direction of contemporary research is the study of national and cultural specificity of figurative systems. Different linguistic cultures possess unique metaphorical models reflecting their historical and social experience. These models are manifested in lexical units, phraseological expressions, and discursive practices, thereby forming distinctive conceptual frameworks through which speakers perceive and interpret reality. The analysis of culturally marked metaphors contributes to a deeper understanding of the interaction between language, cognition, and culture, as well as reveals the mechanisms of representation. In Uzbek and Russian linguistic cultures, figurative representations often demonstrate both universal and

culturally specific characteristics. Comparative studies show that many conceptual metaphors are based on common human experience, while their linguistic realization varies depending on cultural context. The bilingual environment of Uzbekistan creates favorable conditions for studying intercultural interaction and the transformation of figurative structures in multilingual communication. Researchers from Fergana State University actively investigate the functioning of figurative means in educational discourse, media communication, and intercultural interaction.

The methodological foundations of imagery research in cognitive linguistics are based on the integration of linguistic, psychological, cultural, and semiotic approaches. Imagery is understood as a complex cognitive mechanism participating in the processes of conceptualization, categorization, and interpretation of reality. The interdisciplinary approach makes it possible to comprehensively investigate the functioning of figurative structures in language, discourse, and communication. Modern studies demonstrate that imagery performs cognitive, communicative, emotional, and cultural functions.

The development of digital communication and multimedia technologies creates new forms of figurative representation and expands the possibilities for studying multimodal discourse. The research of imagery in cognitive linguistics remains one of the most promising directions of contemporary philology, since it contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, thinking, culture, and human cognition.

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