

## **THE IMAGE-BEARING COMPONENT OF THE CONCEPT SUFFER IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The paper conducts a study of the image-bearing component of the concept 'suffer,' using examples from the English language. Although "Suffer" is a universal concept, its expression may vary uniquely across different cultures. Examining the figurative aspect of this concept within the context of its national-cultural characteristics is important, as it helps uncover the unique features of cognitive-cultural and metaphorical perception in English linguoculture. The article identifies two primary types of metaphors: perceptual and anthropomorphic. Perceptual metaphor, in turn, is further categorized into visual and auditory types. Anthropomorphic metaphor relies on personification and encompasses metaphors related to individuals' a) bodily (somatic), b) emotional and psychological, and c) physical traits. Anthropomorphic metaphor, because of its evaluative nature, can also be considered an important element of the concept's evaluative aspect. A distinct characteristic of both types of metaphors is their ability to operate together with various other types and subtypes of metaphors, complementing each other within the same text fragment.*

**Keywords:** *cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, conceptual analysis, linguacultural concept, image-bearing component of concept, conceptual metaphor, perceptive, anthropomorphic*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the end of the last century, within the shift of the scientific paradigm of the humanities, the pendulum has begun to swing in the opposite direction.<sup>1</sup> The dominant scientific, systemic-structural, and static paradigm has been replaced by an anthropocentric, functional, cognitive, and dynamic paradigm, restoring the human being to the status of the "measure of all things" and returning them to the center of the universe. At a new stage of knowledge development, research focus naturally shifts from the well-studied center to the less-explored periphery, concentrating on the intersection of different scientific fields. This has led to the emergence of

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<sup>1</sup> Воркачев С.Г. Лингвокультурология, языковая личность, концепт. Становление антропоцентрической парадигмы в языкознании / С.Г. Воркачев // Филологические науки. – М.: Алмавест, 2001. – №1. – С. 64–72.

disciplines like ethnopsychology, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, and ethnolinguistics. Within these fields, the process of interdisciplinary synthesis continues, leading to the development of more specific areas, such as ethnopsycholinguistics, ethnosemantics, and even ethnophraseology. Language and culture are key concepts in the humanities<sup>2</sup>.

When reflecting on the nature of language, scholars arrive at different metaphors to describe this fascinating phenomenon: language is a living organism, a system of rules like a chess game, a tool for translating deep structures into surface ones, a mirror of consciousness, a repository of experience, or a vessel of meaning in the form of a "house of being." Each explanation is valid, as it highlights one aspect of language. However, it's important to note that while scholars used to focus on how language is structured on its own, the focus has now shifted to questions about how language is connected to the human world, to what extent people depend on language, and how the communication context influences the choice of linguistic tools.

The study of metaphor as a cognitive tool that shapes concepts and influences how we think about large parts of the non-linguistic world became a focus of 20th-century linguistics. Recently, there has been growing interest in an approach that combines cognitive analysis of metaphorical expressions with their role as part of a text, driven by efforts to create a general theory of metaphor. Conceptual metaphor—where one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another—and its linguistic form are now studied in terms of how they contribute to the organization of a text.

Cognitive linguistics, which studies language as a cognitive mechanism that encodes and transforms information, is a branch of cognitive science that began to emerge as a distinct field in the late 1970s, with its final establishment in the 1990s. The main sources of cognitive linguistics include: 1) the initial study of the relationship between language and thought; 2) linguistic semantics; and 3) cognitive science<sup>3</sup>. Linguoculturology is a branch of linguistics that arises at the intersection of linguistics and cultural studies, examining how cultural expressions of a people are reflected and embedded in their language.

A concept is a national image, symbol, or idea represented in language. It has a complex structure that is expressed through various linguistic means. Information about an object (or fragment of the world) can be gathered through different senses (such as sight, hearing, smell, touch, etc.), forming a framework of peripheral

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<sup>2</sup>Карасик В.И. Языковой круг: личность, концепты, дискурс / В.И.

<sup>3</sup> Пименова М.В. Концептуальные исследования. Введение: учебное пособие / М.В. Пименова, О.Н. Кондратьева. – М.: Флинта: Наука, 2011. – 176

conceptual features.<sup>4</sup> This information can also be expressed through secondary categorization, which forms the core of the concept's structure. A concept reflects categorical and value-based characteristics of knowledge about certain parts of the world, including features that are functionally significant for the corresponding culture.

According to Rahilina, the process of describing the linguistic picture of the world is linked to reconstructing a specific subsystem of human knowledge, which is why it is often referred to as cognitive analysis (or cognitive semantics).<sup>5</sup> This term is well-known but not universally accepted, even among those who use the metaphor of a worldview. However, there is a significant movement in Western linguistics (primarily American) that identifies itself as cognitive linguistics today.

There are some general principles by which human consciousness, being anthropocentric by nature, organizes non-material reality in analogy with the space and time of the world experienced through direct sensations. For instance, spatial coordinates are understood as high or low in relation to a person; what is ahead is perceived as the future, while what is behind is seen as the past. Noble qualities are described using the adjective "high" (e.g., high feelings, aspirations, thoughts), while negative intentions are labeled as low or base (e.g., base feelings, low impulses, thoughts). Moving to the right is thought of as the "true" path—righteous or correct, associated with truth. The upper part is viewed as the peak of some (usually pleasant) state (e.g., being at the height of bliss, on cloud nine, or at the zenith of fame), while the lower part symbolizes a "fall from grace" (e.g., the feeling of wanting to sink from shame, or phrases like "to be cast down" or "to sink to the depths of life").<sup>6</sup>

The exploration of language and culture highlights key concepts in the humanities, where language is viewed as a cognitive mechanism that encodes and transforms information. Cognitive linguistics emerged in the late 20th century, focusing on the relationship between language and thought, drawing from linguistic semantics and cognitive science. Concepts, defined as national images or ideas in language, reflect complex structures shaped by various senses and cultural values. The study of metaphors as cognitive tools reveals their role in organizing thoughts about the non-linguistic world. This analysis often involves reconstructing knowledge subsystems and leads to significant interdisciplinary approaches in Western

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<sup>4</sup> Пименова М.В. Метод описания концептуальных структур (на примере концепта «надежда») / М.В. Пименова // Ученые записки Забайкальского государственного университета. Сер. Филология, история, востоковедение. – 2011. – №2. – С. 85–93.

<sup>5</sup> Рахилина Е.В. Когнитивный анализ предметных имён: семантика и сочетаемость. М.: Русские словари, 2000. – 415 с

<sup>6</sup> Телия В.Н. Метафоризация и ее роль в создании русской языковой картины мира / В.Н. Телия // Роль человеческого фактора в языке: Язык и картина мира. – М.: Наука, 1988. – С. 173–204

linguistics. Additionally, human consciousness organizes non-material reality in relation to space and time, associating concepts like high/low and right/wrong with emotional and moral values, further illustrating the intricate connections between language, thought, and culture. Such frameworks enrich our understanding of how language shapes cultural identity and influences perception, ultimately revealing the profound connections between language, thought, and culture in our lives.

## **METHODS.**

In order to fully understand a certain concept, it is essential to build a model which will reflect its structure. Despite the fact that we understand a concept to have a specific structure, we cannot say that it is a rigid one. The reason for that is the fact that concepts are dynamic and tend to change according to time, place, culture or they can merge with other concepts as well as be separated from them. Therefore, it should be mentioned that the structure of a concept is a complex one. On one hand, a concept includes in itself everything that is associated with the notion of the word, on the other it can be constituted of cultural, historical or other types of information.<sup>7</sup>

It could be said that a concept is a complete content of a word. Consequently, it has not only objective meaning, but also any communicatively important information.

In order to understand any concept, a person has to come across and evaluate it. Apart from evaluative component, a concept can also have image-bearing and notional constituents. Image-bearing component is linked to the person's ability to understand the reality. This includes all images, which are fixed in the language as pictures. As for the methodology for studying concepts, it involves interpreting the meanings of constructs that reflect certain features of the concepts. This includes identifying frequent characteristics (common to many concepts) and determining the general typological features of the concepts being studied based on these characteristics. Then, the methodology focuses on summarizing the unique features of the concepts and identifying their conceptual structures, cognitive models, and linguistic patterns that activate these concepts in the languages.

Within the integrative approach, V.I. Karasik defines a concept as a complex meaning that includes three components: the evaluative (sensory-emotional assessment), the image-bearing (non-verbal), and the notional (verbal).

In this article, the materials for analysis were taken from modern day English literature.

The aim of the analysis was to identify the main features of the concept "suffer" as presented in texts of contemporary English literature.

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<sup>7</sup> Титова, Ю. В. (2010). Структура концепта и методы его описания. Вестник Ульяновского государственного технического университета, (4 (52)), 16-21.

Since the concept of "suffer" belongs to an abstract domain, its linguistic representation is largely connected to the use of conceptual metaphors.

The study of the concept involves examining conceptual metaphors, one of which is the representative word for the concept. Conceptual metaphors are created and reproduced based on cognitive models typical of a given language. A cognitive model is a stereotypical image that helps organize experience in human consciousness. The choice of a particular cognitive model determines the conceptual organization of experience and depends on what we want to express.<sup>8</sup>

According to E.O. Oparina, the meaning of a conceptual metaphor is formed based on two components: the referent and the figurative expression.<sup>9</sup>

Examples of the contextual use of the concept name "suffer" were selected using a comprehensive sampling method from the texts of the novels.

## **RESULTS.**

The analysis was conducted following the description of a concept structure illustrated in the Cognitive linguistics by Z.D. Popova and I.A. Sternin. They write that the image-bearing component of a concept's structure is made up of two elements — the perceptual and cognitive images, both of which equally represent the figurative traits of the object or phenomenon being conceptualized. A perceptual image captures how people experience things through their senses. The cognitive image shows how the concept is linked to other concepts through metaphorical and metonymic associations. Using this method of analyzing metaphorical expressions of concepts, we will explore the figurative aspect of the concept "Suffer" in English. From our analysis, we distinguish between perceptual and anthropomorphic metaphors. Perceptual metaphors arise from how people perceive the world through their senses and are categorized into visual, tactile, auditory, and gustatory types. Anthropomorphic metaphors are created by personifying the concept "Suffer," giving it human traits such as moral, intellectual, physical, and psychological characteristics. The visual metaphor (suffer as a visual object) encompasses metaphorical expressions that describe objects and phenomena perceived through sight. Upon further categorization, these visual metaphors can be classified into subtypes:

a) Object-based, meaning they equate the word with a tangible object, its feature, or action: « *Her suffering was her armour. Gradually it became her skin. Then she could not take it off*» (J. Winterson), «*Suffering is the only thing we can*

<sup>8</sup> Демченко Екатерина Федоровна, & Островская Татьяна Александровна (2018). Образный компонент концепта «Property» в британской лингвокультуре в первой половине XX века. *Интерактивная наука*, (1 (23)), 86-91.

<sup>9</sup> Опарина Е.О. Концептуальная метафора / Е.О. Опарина // *Метафора в языке и тексте*. – М.: Наука, 1988. – 326 с.

forget» (N. Irene), «...everyone knows the stuff such suffering is made of» (P. Zullino). In the former example, the merge of two metaphorical types can be seen (

b) Color-based metaphors, which assign color attributes to suffering: « *It's an awful truth that suffering can deepen us, give a greater lustre to our colours...*» (A. Rice)

c) Nature-based metaphors, linking suffering to natural phenomena: «...what he had remembered as a mountain of suffering was dwarfed by this... (J. Langan), «*It is the interplay between the brilliance of our joy and the abyss of our suffering...*» (J. Harnisch)

d) Spatial metaphors, relating the suffering to spatial characteristics: «*Beneath satin and silk, there is much suffering, ...in this pit of suffering, that we discover an unwavering strength to overcome the seemingly impossible* (J. Harnisch), *A man in suffering finds relief in rehearsing his ills.*

Auditory metaphor (suffer as sound) includes metaphorical expressions that convey the concept through sound perception, using specific lexemes:

«*Lots of folks have put their hands over their ears to drown out the suffering*» (Sh. Claiborne), «*Our cry of suffering is the cry for reunion: it is the calling towards home and the awakening of our True Nature. When we repress that call of suffering – which is the precise music of our healing...*» (G.Y. Johnson)

Anthropomorphic metaphors are based on the idea that "man is the measure of all things." Unlike perceptual metaphors, they involve personification, giving human traits to the concept. These metaphors can be divided into those reflecting human moral, intellectual, emotional-psychological, and physical characteristics. A distinctive feature of anthropomorphic metaphors is their focus on values, making them not only part of the figurative aspect of a concept but also a key element of its value-based structure.<sup>10</sup>

Metaphors that represent physical traits (suffer as physical ability) suggest that the "suffer" can engage in physical actions or has human-like physical features. This type of anthropomorphic metaphor occurs most often and is typically conveyed using verbs. And in the examples below, the concept Suffer moves, steals, teaches and speaks:

«*Suffering comes to us as an interrogator. It asks, «Who are you? »»* (D. A. Fiensy), «...*Suffering moved to pick up glass...*» (SH. Kenyon), «...*understood how suffering steals the aptitude for happiness from you*» (A. Sparks), «*The only thing suffering teaches us is that we are capable of suffering*» (M. J. Bukiet), «*It is when*

<sup>10</sup> Галиева М.Р. Метафорическая репрезентация концепта Слово в художественном тексте// Ўзбекистонда хорижий тиллар. — 2020. — № 2 (31). — С. 139-152

*suffering finds a voice and sets our nerves quivering that this pity comes troubling us» (H.G.Wells).*

Metaphors that attach body parts to the name of the concept are grouped as somatic. In the following examples, the concept Suffer possesses body parts, similar to living beings:

*«It stands in the very teeth of suffering» (Brennan Manning), «The only cure for suffering is to face it head on, grasp it round the neck and use it» (Elisabeth Elliot).*

The metaphor that illustrates emotional and psychological traits (Suffer as emotion) conveys a person's emotional condition. The examples below equate this concept to the emotion of love:

*«In so many ways, suffering— when allowed – looks like love» (G.Y. Johnson), «Suffering is for the loving» (N. Wolterstorff).*

Exploring the image-bearing elements of the concept of "suffering" in English unveils significant insights into the cultural, emotional, and existential facets of human experience. By examining idioms, phrases, and subtle word choices, we have illuminated the complex nature of suffering in English-speaking cultures. Whether depicted as a test of strength or a burden to carry, the linguistic expressions show how pain, endurance, and the search for meaning are intertwined in difficult circumstances.

Additionally, examining "suffering" in English shows how it intersects with larger cultural stories and societal expectations, emphasizing how language influences and mirrors collective views on hardship and resilience. Through the analysis of linguistic tools like dictionaries and literature, we unveil the deep semantic layers of "suffering," which include themes of endurance, pain, and redemption.

Analyzing the image-bearing component of "suffering" in English reveals deep truths about the intricacies of human pain and resilience, illustrating how language shapes our perception and articulation of profound emotional experiences.

Language plays a critical role in mediating our understanding and expression of human suffering, illustrating how it influences our perception of deep emotional experiences. The metaphorical representations of suffering, particularly those rooted in physical actions or human attributes, highlight the profound ways in which language captures the complexities of the human condition.

**DISCUSSION.** Images play a fundamental role in various types of concepts, making it important to explore their function within concepts. This article aims to examine the figurative aspect of the abstract concept of "suffer" by analyzing

cognitive metaphors in the literary text of the English language. Analyzing an image-bearing component of a concept helps us understand how speakers of a particular language associate and link concepts with others and how personifying an abstract concept can aid in its understanding. As we have outlined, the image-bearing constituent of the Suffer can include two types of metaphors such as perceptive and cognitive. Perceptive metaphors are further divided into object-based, colour, naturomorphic and auditory while anthropomorphic metaphors include such subtypes as somatic, emotional and action-based metaphors. The research revealed that the concept of "suffer" is associated with figurative traits, including perceptual (object-related and auditory) and anthropomorphic (physical, bodily, and emotional) features. The frequent appearance of these traits, particularly anthropomorphic and perceptual, in English literature highlights the deep cultural relevance of the concept "suffer" in English-speaking societies.

### **CONCLUSION.**

The figurative aspect of a concept is shaped by its neurolinguistic properties within the universal object code, where sensory imagery serves to encode the concept and create a unit of this universal code.<sup>11</sup> Metaphorical expressions within a concept serve an important conceptual function. The boundaries between cognitive and perceptual imagery are somewhat fluid, as some characteristics may be seen as both perceptual and cognitive. A key feature of the figurative component of "Suffer" is the interconnectedness and mutual influence between perceptual and cognitive traits, enabling a range of possible combinations.

The practical value of this research is that its results can be applied to creating dictionaries of English linguistic and cultural concepts, in translation studies, intercultural communication, and in teaching English language courses.

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<sup>11</sup> Попова З. Д., Стернин И. А. *Когнитивная лингвистика*. – М.: Восток Запад, 2007. – 75 с.



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