

## The use of metaphor in evaluative utterances

T. Myroniuk

Research and Educational Center for Foreign Languages, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine  
Corresponding author. E-mail: boboshko.tanya@gmail.com

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**Abstract.** The present article studies the role of conceptual metaphor in evaluative utterances chosen from modern English fiction. In that connection, the author singles out typical conceptual metaphors in proper and manipulative evaluative utterances and considers their examples. The research concludes that conceptual metaphors make proper evaluative utterances more expressive, vivid and creative, thus, attracting an interlocutor's intention. As for manipulative evaluative utterances, the metaphors contained in them help to achieve quicker and greater influence on the interlocutor.

**Keywords:** *metaphor, conceptual metaphor, evaluation, evaluative utterance, fiction.*

**Introduction.** The category of evaluation is significant in every sphere of our life. We evaluate others and are evaluated in accordance with our deeds and words. From a linguistic point of view, an evaluative utterance is a speech act containing evaluative units at speech levels. Typically, these evaluative units convey positive, negative, or ambivalent speaker's attitude to the message content [12].

It should be noted that we quite often use metaphors to emphasize and individualize our evaluation of a person, an object, or a phenomenon. In their seminal paper on conceptual metaphor, G. Lakoff and M. Johnson claimed that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" [7]. In this regard, the following quote of a well-known playwright is a great example indicating a high frequency of both metaphor and evaluation in our everyday life. "The only man who behaves sensibly is my tailor; he takes my measurements anew every time he sees me, while all the rest *go on with their old measurements and expect me to fit them*" (George Bernard Shaw).

**A brief review of publications on the subject.** There is a considerable amount of literature on semantic and structural-semantic [1; 10; 12; 15], pragmatic [3; 5] as well as cognitive [12; 14] aspects of evaluative utterances. Several studies [5; 11; 12] suggested studying verbal and nonverbal evaluative means. In our preceding research [3], we determined the following typical means of evaluative utterances: the use of descriptive and conventional estimative lexemes, the employment of imagery, modality markers, the introduction of implicit information, the regulation of the utterance length, the use of (de)intensifiers, constructions of subjective opinion, filler words, etc.

Metaphors are attracting interest in a variety of academic disciplines, including psychology, linguistics, philosophy, cognitive science, literature, education, music, and law. Most linguistic studies address metaphor identification, understanding, and processing, the relationship between embodiment and metaphor, the role of metaphor in different types of discourse, the corpus linguistic study of metaphor, the embeddedness of metaphor in cultural context, metaphor in foreign language teaching [4; 6].

However, little is known about metaphor as an important means for expressing an evaluative attitude. There is no general agreement as to the correlation between metaphor and evaluation. On the one hand, this relation should answer the question about the behaviour of evaluative words in metaphorical statements. On the other hand,

it concerns the issue of how metaphorical statements acquire evaluative meaning and the rules of this process [14].

The **scientific relevance** of this paper is based on the opinion that metaphor is not just a figure of speech, but our thoughts are also metaphorical. Thus, metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in a person's conceptual system [7]. In this article, we **aim** to determine the role of conceptual metaphor in evaluative utterances chosen from modern English fiction. To achieve this aim, we need to single out typical conceptual metaphors in evaluative utterances and analyze their examples.

The rest of the article is organised as follows. We first describe the empirical material, determine the theoretical background and methods of the research. Then we follow by presenting our findings and testing them against representative samples chosen from modern fiction. Finally, we offer some concluding remarks and suggestions for further studies.

**Materials and methods.** To carry out our research, we used the language material selected from modern American and British fiction. An overall number of such novels is 30, or about 11 000 pages. For our analysis, we chose 3400 dialogues containing evaluative utterances.

The investigation was conducted within the framework of pragmalinguistics. It considers the language in action, in the process of functioning [2; 13]. We also used the principles of the theory of conceptual metaphor developed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson. This theory suggests that our conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical. It also treats a conceptual metaphor as the one consisting of a source and a target domain. The source domain is typically more concrete, structured, and comprehensible to the senses, while the target domain is usually more abstract and less structured [7; 8]. If we consider the above-mentioned quote of G.B. Shaw, we may single out a conceptual metaphor EVALUATION IS MEASUREMENT. Here MEASUREMENT is the source domain that is more comprehensible because it denotes the quantity of the object. On the other hand, EVALUATION is the target domain that is less accessible as it denotes the quality of the object.

This study involved a variety of methods. First, selective, descriptive methods and content analysis were used to sample dialogues and identify evaluative utterances in general and those containing metaphors in particular. Second, a pragmatic analysis allowed us to address a typology of evaluative utterances. Third, a concept analy-

sis of the empirical material specified typical conceptual metaphors peculiar of evaluative utterances in modern English fiction.

**Results and discussion.** To achieve the aim of the study, we used a pragmatic typology of evaluative utterances developed in our preceding research [3]. According to that typology, evaluative utterances may express the speaker's attitude to the interlocutor or another person, some phenomenon, or object. They may also exert manipulative influence on the interlocutor. Thus, we distinguished proper and manipulative evaluative utterances. Proper evaluative utterances represent a direct, open expression of the speaker's attitude to the object of evaluation, whereas manipulative evaluative utterances express evaluation for the purpose of indirect influence on a person's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural spheres of life.

Within proper evaluative utterances, we singled out rational, emotional, logical, social, ethical, aesthetic, sensory, and quantitative types. The pragmatic sense of a rational evaluative utterance lies in characterizing practical consequences, effectiveness and correspondence to the norm; emotional – representing an affective attitude regardless of real characteristics; logical – creating the author's view of the communicative situation; social – emphasizing the evaluation of both professional and social values and conventions; ethical – presenting the evaluation of moral qualities and behaviour; aesthetic – evaluating aesthetic qualities; sensory – representing the evaluation of physical and psychological experience; quantitative – presenting quantitative properties in terms of quality [3].

Manipulative evaluative utterances may be divided into the manipulation of image, personal values, conventions, and typical actions. The essence of an evaluative response with the manipulation of image consists in imposing evaluative association between the image and a relevant need, instruction, or interest upon an interlocutor; the manipulation of personal values – evoking or destabilising the interlocutor's moral qualities, instructions, and values; the manipulation of conventions – using social norms, traditions, stereotypes, and their evaluation for the manipulator's or for the interlocutor's benefit; the manipulation of typical actions – forming the interlocutor's evaluative attitude to people, phenomena, or objects in accordance with an automatic, typical mechanism of verbal and nonverbal actions in standard situations [3].

Let us single out typical conceptual metaphors in evaluative utterances and consider their examples. The analyzed metaphors are underlined in each evaluative utterance.

Education is an important process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and values. Some people learn quickly, others do not, but everyone understands the significance and value of knowledge. In view of that, the empirical material contains quite a lot of conceptual metaphors with education as a target domain. This type of conceptual metaphors is usually found in rational evaluative utterances, as in examples (1) and (2):

**EDUCATION IS A DIFFICULTY:**

*Rutherford, very alarmed, asked. "Why are you doing this, Bezumov?"*

(1) "An intelligent question, at last, Dr Rutherford. I

was tiring of your painfully slow grasp of astronomy" [22];

**EDUCATION IS AN ASSET:**

*"What will you do?"*

(2) *Henry smiled. "My education has not been wasted, Mariah"* [21].

It should be noted that evaluative utterances do not necessarily contain explicit evaluative words like "good" or "bad". They may include the phrases that acquire evaluative meaning due to the stereotypes of a certain society, group or due to a person's model of the world [15]. Such implicit evaluative components make the statements more prominent and emphasize their most important ideas.

Life of every person is full of both positive and negative moments. The experience connected with these moments is represented in our speech. Surprisingly, negative evaluative utterances prevail in the investigated fiction. Correspondingly, negative conceptual metaphors are of higher frequency in modern English fiction. The examples of rational (3) and ethical (4) evaluative utterances as well as an evaluative utterance with the manipulation of conventions (5) indicate that various hindrances are present in many spheres of life. In fact, some difficulty is a source domain in examples (3)-(5), but these conceptual metaphors have different target domains, which are typical problems of many people. Let us turn to the examples:

**TRANSPORTATION IS PHYSICAL ANNOYANCE:**

*"How is it going in Upper Ploxley?" he asked.*

(3) *"It's fine," she replied. "Good," she added quickly, but then followed it up with "the commuting's a bit of pain, but we'll get used to it"* [26];

**WORK IS A BURDEN:**

*"I hope she didn't give you much trouble?"*

(4) *"Not at all. Compared to the type of prisoner I usually deal with she was a day at the beach"* [16];

**AGE IS AN OBSTACLE:**

*"A bit old for me, don't you think?"*

(5) *"Age has never been a barrier to men's passions, as you should know. You're very brave"* [17].

A person's behaviour and emotions are also target domains of many conceptual metaphors though their source domains differ. Thus, an emotional evaluative utterance (6) presents the connection of the inner state and the work of a machine. An ethical evaluative utterance (7) depicts a human character as a building. An evaluative utterance with the manipulation of typical actions (8) shows the correlation between a human behaviour and a sea.

**STATE OF MIND IS A MACHINE:**

*"Jude, what's wrong?" I said, devastated.*

(6) *"I'm having a breakdown," she sobbed. "Everything seems black, black. I can't see any way out. I can't..."* [18];

**CHARACTER IS A BUILDING:**

*I sought to reassure her. "He must be tougher than that. Don't you think so?"*

(7) *"No, he's not. The toughness is all a façade. He's actually very vulnerable"* [23];

**BEHAVIOUR IS A SEA:**

*"Why are you going to Switzerland?"*

(8) *"I'm sick of this country," he hissed. "They have reviled me. They dare to question my morals when they are swimming in a sea of debauchery themselves, covering it up with smiles and social graces. Well, I shall*

go, and then they will regret it!" [29].

Evaluative utterances may include orientational metaphors MORE IS UP, LESS IS DOWN [8] and their derivatives as well. Due to its nature of emphasizing some qualities, this type of metaphors is most frequently used in social (9), emotional evaluative utterances (10), and evaluative utterances with the manipulation of images (11). It can be thus reasonably assumed that examples (9)-(11) contain a conceptual metaphor SIGNIFICANT IS HIGH:

"He is a fine lad, isn't he?"

(9) "He is not just any man, Mariah. He is the pinnacle of our local society" [21];

"What car do you have?"

(10) "Oh, it's heaven. It's a dear little Morris, I love it to death" [28];

"What about Liberty Boyd?"

(11) "Liberty Boyd's a star, and in other circumstances, she might have been powerful enough to have some impact" [19].

A similar idea is contained in a conceptual metaphor SIGNIFICANT IS EXCLUSIVE, like in examples of emotional (12), ethical (13), and quantitative evaluative utterances (14). This metaphor differs to some extent as its source domain is exclusiveness, which does not necessarily involve height.

"She's a rare old bird, don't you think?"

(12) "There is no one like her... She's the jewel in the crown" [27].

Here metaphors *a rare old bird* and *the jewel in the crown* demonstrate that an evaluated person is a determined, organized, wise, and successful woman. Moreover, she is an example to follow.

"What was your father like?"

(13) "He could walk with kings nor lose the common touch..." [24].

A metaphor *he could walk with kings nor lose the common touch* is a quote from Rudyard Kipling's poem "If -". Here it denotes a kind, sincere, and light-hearted nature of an evaluated person.

Our results would seem to indicate that SIGNIFICANT IS HIGH and SIGNIFICANT IS EXCLUSIVE mostly denote a positive evaluation, though there are some exceptions. For instance, dialogue (14) reflects an ambivalent evaluation of a challenging task:

"Where do you think your wife'll be now?"

(14) "That's the \$64,000 question! I really don't know" [20].

A policeman asks an addressee where his wife is staying at the moment because she is suspected of a crime. An embarrassed husband knows nothing of the crime and can

not get in touch with his wife. He expresses his evaluation of the situation using a metaphor *the \$64,000 question*. This metaphor comes from a popular US TV game show in the 1950s called *The \$64,000 Question*, where people could win up to \$64,000 by answering more and more questions correctly. Therefore, it presents a question that is the most important and most difficult to answer concerning a particular problem or situation [9]. In this case, a quantitative evaluative utterance reflects quantitative properties in terms of quality of an evaluation object.

Charles Darwin and his followers considered people to be animals, though humans are not the same as other species. This theory still holds and is represented in many spheres of our life, in language inclusively. Our data suggest that a conceptual metaphor A HUMAN IS AN ANIMAL is quite frequent in modern English fiction. These results are broadly consistent with the trends in the literature [6; 8]. Let us turn to the example of the evaluative utterance with the manipulation of image (15), which contains the mentioned type of metaphor:

"And you are young enough to change, don't you?"

(15) "This dog's too old to learn new tricks" [25].

The addressee does not want to change his way of life, so he gives an implicit evaluation of the addresser's suggestion. An idiom *an old dog will learn no new tricks* implies the image of an elderly, weak, and sick person who can not change his habits in a moment. We assume that implicit means of evaluation – including metaphors – may influence an interlocutor's interpretation of the utterance and, thus, his further words and actions.

**Conclusions.** In this paper, we have studied the role of conceptual metaphor in evaluative utterances chosen from modern English fiction. Our research suggests that typical conceptual metaphors are linked with everyday routine and are important for people, their personal development, evaluation, and cooperation with others.

Our work has led us to conclude that apt conceptual metaphors make proper evaluative utterances more expressive, vivid and allow their creative interpretation, thus, attracting the interlocutor's intention. As for manipulative evaluative utterances, the metaphors contained in them help to achieve quicker and greater influence on the interlocutor.

The theoretical and practical significance of the obtained results is determined by their contribution to pragmalinguistics and the theory of conceptual metaphor. This study may be effective in harmonising communication by using apt metaphors and learning to avoid the manipulative influence of evaluative utterances that contain metaphors. Further studies will concentrate on studying the role of conceptual metaphors in scientific texts.

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#### Использование метафоры в оценочных высказываниях

**Т. М. Миролюк**

**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена изучению роли концептуальной метафоры в оценочных высказываниях в современной английской художественной литературе. В связи с этим, автор выделяет типичные концептуальные метафоры в собственно оценочных и манипулятивных оценочных высказываниях и рассматривает их примеры. В результате исследования установлено, что метафоры придают собственно оценочным высказываниям выразительности, яркости и возможности творческой интерпретации, таким образом привлекая внимание собеседника. Что касается манипулятивных оценочных высказываний, содержащиеся в них метафоры помогают достичь более быстрого и сильного влияния на собеседника.

**Ключевые слова:** метафора, концептуальная метафора, оценка, оценочное высказывание, художественная литература.