



COGNITIVE METAPHOR, CULTURAL CONCEPTUALIZATION,
AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN THE POETIC DISCOURSE OF
ALEKSANDR FAYNBERG

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Abstract: *The present study investigates the role of conceptual metaphor and cultural conceptualization in the construction of identity within poetic discourse. Drawing upon Cognitive Linguistics and Cultural Linguistics, the article examines the poetic language of Aleksandr Faynberg as a site of intercultural meaning-making. The research applies conceptual metaphor theory, discourse analysis, and semantic modeling to selected lyrical texts in order to identify dominant metaphorical schemas and their cognitive functions. The findings indicate that Faynberg's poetic discourse encodes identity through embodied metaphor, conceptual blending, and culturally embedded semantic structures. The study contributes to contemporary discussions on metaphor as a cognitive mechanism and highlights the relevance of poetic discourse for linguistic research on identity and cultural memory.*

Keywords: *cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, cultural linguistics, poetic discourse, identity construction, embodiment, semantic mapping.*

1. Introduction

In contemporary linguistic scholarship, language is no longer regarded solely as a system of formal structures but as a cognitive and cultural phenomenon embedded in human conceptualization. Over the last four decades, the development of Cognitive Linguistics has significantly transformed approaches to metaphor, meaning construction, and identity representation.



Poetic discourse provides a particularly productive domain for examining how linguistic structures encode conceptual and cultural knowledge. Within this framework, the poetry of Aleksandr Faynberg offers a compelling case for linguistic investigation. Functioning at the intersection of Russian linguistic expression and Central Asian cultural space, his poetic texts demonstrate complex processes of metaphorical modeling and intercultural conceptualization.

In the context of globalization, multilingualism, and shifting identity boundaries, the study of metaphor in poetic discourse acquires renewed relevance. Identity is increasingly understood not as a static category but as a discursively constructed phenomenon shaped through language.

The present study seeks to address the following research problem:

How do conceptual metaphors in Faynberg's poetic discourse function as cognitive mechanisms for cultural identity construction?

The objectives of the study are:

1. To identify dominant conceptual metaphors in selected poems.
2. To analyze their semantic and cognitive structures.
3. To examine their role in encoding cultural conceptualizations.
4. To evaluate their contribution to identity construction within poetic discourse.

2. Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in Conceptual Metaphor Theory as developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*. According to this theoretical model, metaphor is a cognitive mapping between a source domain and a target domain, structuring abstract reasoning through embodied experience.

The study also incorporates:

- Conceptual Integration Theory (Fauconnier & Turner)
- Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian)
- Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough)



Conceptual Metaphor Theory posits that metaphor is systematic rather than ornamental. For instance, the conceptual mapping TIME IS MOTION reflects embodied human experience of spatial movement.

Such mappings are not limited to everyday discourse but are intensified in poetic language.

Cultural Linguistics further argues that language encodes shared cultural schemas, categories, and metaphors. These cultural conceptualizations are transmitted and reinforced through discourse.

From a discourse perspective, identity emerges as a semiotic construct negotiated through linguistic choices, evaluative positioning, and metaphorical framing.

Thus, poetic discourse may be understood as a cognitively and culturally structured semiotic system.

3. Methodology

The study employs qualitative linguistic analysis combining:

1. Conceptual metaphor identification (MIP procedure)
2. Semantic field analysis
3. Discourse-analytic interpretation
4. Contextual and cultural modeling

A corpus of selected lyrical poems by Faynberg was examined. The analysis focused on metaphorical expressions related to:

- Homeland
- Memory
- Time
- Silence
- Belonging

Metaphorical expressions were identified, categorized, and interpreted according to their source and target domains. Particular attention was given to recurring metaphorical schemas and their semantic consistency across texts.



The methodological approach is interpretative but grounded in established cognitive linguistic principles.

4. Results

The analysis revealed several recurrent conceptual metaphors that structure Faynberg's poetic discourse.

4.1 Homeland as a Living Entity

A dominant conceptual mapping observed in the corpus is HOMELAND IS A LIVING ORGANISM. Linguistic realizations include verbs associated with breathing, suffering, remembering, and speaking. This anthropomorphic mapping constructs homeland as an embodied presence rather than a geopolitical abstraction.

This metaphor performs a cognitive function by enabling emotional attachment and collective identification.

4.2 Time as Fluid Movement

The metaphor TIME IS FLOWING WATER appears consistently. Lexical items such as "river," "current," and "wave" frame temporality as irreversible motion. This metaphor aligns with universal embodied experience but acquires specific cultural resonance through localized imagery.

4.3 Memory as Light or Archive

Two related conceptualizations emerge:

- MEMORY IS LIGHT
- SILENCE IS ARCHIVE

Memory is depicted as illumination, while silence is conceptualized as preservation. Rather than absence, silence functions as latent meaning. This metaphorical construction encodes historical experience and intergenerational transmission.

4.4 Identity as Spatial Orientation

Spatial metaphors such as "root," "path," and "horizon" structure identity as movement within space. These metaphors reflect dynamic identity construction rather than fixed categorization.



5. Discussion

The findings support the central claim of Cognitive Linguistics that metaphor structures conceptual thought. In Faynberg's poetic discourse, metaphorical mappings are not decorative but constitutive of meaning.

The metaphor *HOMELAND IS A LIVING ENTITY* strengthens collective belonging through embodied cognition. *TIME IS WATER* reflects universal experiential grounding while integrating cultural specificity.

From a Cultural Linguistics perspective, these metaphors encode shared conceptualizations rooted in historical and geographical context. They function as carriers of cultural memory.

Moreover, the interaction between Russian linguistic medium and Central Asian cultural imagery demonstrates conceptual blending. This blending produces hybrid identity models that resist rigid categorization.

The study thus confirms that poetic discourse is a productive site for analyzing identity construction mechanisms in multilingual environments.

6. Conclusion

This study has examined conceptual metaphor and cultural conceptualization in the poetic discourse of Aleksandr Faynberg.

The findings indicate that:

1. Conceptual metaphors systematically structure poetic meaning.
2. Metaphorical mappings encode cultural schemas.
3. Identity is constructed through embodied and spatial conceptualization.
4. Poetic discourse serves as a cognitive repository of collective memory.

The research contributes to cognitive poetics, discourse studies, and cultural linguistics by demonstrating how metaphor operates as a mechanism of identity construction.

Future research may apply corpus-based methods or computational metaphor detection to expand analytical precision.



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