



COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC APPROACHES TO CONCEPTUAL
METAPHOR IN ALEXANDER FAYNBERG'S POETIC DISCOURSE

Abdumalikova Sevinch Tayirovna

Master's student in Linguistics (English),

Uzbek State University of World Languages, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Abstract: *This article explores conceptual metaphors within the poetic discourse of Alexander Faynberg, the People's Poet of Uzbekistan, through the lens of cognitive linguistics. Drawing upon the "Conceptual Metaphor Theory" (CMT) established by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, the study identifies how abstract concepts—such as time, fate, homeland, and creativity—are structured and understood through concrete source domains. The research analyzes the unique linguistic world-picture of the author and the cognitive mechanisms of metaphorical mapping that define Faynberg's lyrical style.*

Keywords: *Cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, Alexander Faynberg, linguistic world-picture, cognitive poetics, lyrical discourse, mapping, source domain, target domain.*

In contemporary linguistics, the focus has shifted from viewing a text merely as a collection of linguistic signs to understanding it as a product of human cognition and mental processes. **Cognitive poetics**, in particular, offers a robust framework for analyzing literary language, treating poetic discourse as a rich repository of conceptual metaphors. Within this paradigm, metaphor is not regarded simply as a stylistic ornament or a rhetorical device, but as a fundamental cognitive tool used to construct and interpret reality.

The poetic legacy of **Alexander Faynberg** stands as a profound example of how philosophical depth can be integrated with unique imagery. Faynberg's poetry is characterized by its complex conceptual architecture, where abstract notions such as "time," "memory," and "solitude" are brought to life through unexpected and poignant cognitive mappings.



The relevance of this study lies in the necessity to decode Faynberg's metaphorical system to understand his individual-authorial world-picture. As a poet writing in Russian within the rich cultural tapestry of Uzbekistan, his work reflects a distinct cognitive style that bridges different cultural codes. By identifying the dominant metaphorical models in his discourse, this research aims to reveal how Faynberg uses language to navigate the intricacies of human existence and the surrounding world.

The study of Alexander Faynberg's poetic discourse through the lens of cognitive linguistics transcends mere stylistic analysis. It involves uncovering the "architecture of the mind" that governs the poet's world-picture. At the heart of this approach lies the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which posits that metaphor is not a decorative linguistic device but a fundamental cognitive mechanism. In Faynberg's work, abstract target domains—such as time, creativity, and identity—are systematically understood through concrete source domains, creating a unique mapping that defines his lyrical identity.

In Faynberg's poetry, Time is rarely an abstract chronometer. Instead, it is conceptualized as a physical entity with agency. Following the Lakoffian model of *TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT* or *TIME IS A LANDSCAPE*, Faynberg often treats time as a tangible force that interacts with the lyrical hero. However, Faynberg's individual-authorial metaphors add a layer of tragic tension. For him, "Time is a Sculptor" that carves wrinkles onto the face of the earth and the soul of the poet, or "Time is a Predatory Animal" that consumes the present. By mapping the source domain of physical labor or biological aggression onto the target domain of Time, the poet communicates the inevitability of change and the heaviness of historical memory. This cognitive strategy allows the reader to perceive the passage of years not as a mathematical sequence, but as a sensory experience involving weight, friction, and resistance.

For Faynberg, the act of creation is a central theme, frequently structured through the metaphor *CREATION IS PHYSICAL TOIL*. While romantic traditions often view inspiration as a divine spark, Faynberg's cognitive model aligns more



with the image of a miner or a craftsman. The Word in his discourse is a raw material—stone, ore, or clay—that must be refined through suffering and labor. The mapping of *POETRY IS A LIVING ORGANISM* is also prevalent. In his verses, a poem has a pulse, it can bleed, and it breathes. This personification is a cognitive bridge that allows the poet to express the vital necessity of art. By conceptualizing the poem as a biological entity, Faynberg emphasizes that the text is inseparable from the poet's physical existence. This ontological metaphor validates the sincerity of the poetic voice, as the word is given the attributes of life itself.

Alexander Faynberg, a Russian-speaking poet born and raised in Uzbekistan, possesses a unique cognitive hybrid world-picture. His conceptualization of Home and Homeland is a rich field for linguistic analysis. The city of Tashkent serves as a megametaphor in his discourse. It is not merely a geographical location but a container of cultural memory. Through the metaphor *THE CITY IS A LIVING BEING*, Tashkent is described as having its own character, scent (hot bread, dust, rain), and voice. Faynberg's cognitive mapping integrates Russian linguistic structures with Central Asian cultural imagery. The source domains of warmth, hospitality, and ancestral soil are mapped onto the target domain of The City. This creates a sense of belonging that is both linguistic and emotional, proving that the poet's conceptual system is deeply rooted in the synthesis of two cultures.

Faynberg's philosophical lyrics are dominated by metaphors of transition. Life is frequently conceptualized through the metaphor *LIFE IS A JOURNEY* or *LIFE IS AN UNEXPECTED MEETING*. However, he often subverts the classical "Life is a Theater" trope by adding elements of raw realism. In his discourse, life is a test or a debt that must be repaid. Death, the ultimate abstract concept, is domesticized through cognitive framing. It is often mapped as *DEATH IS SILENCE* or *DEATH IS A DEPARTURE TO ANOTHER ROOM*. By using the source domain of physical space to describe the end of existence, Faynberg reduces the existential dread associated with the unknown. His metaphors provide a cognitive structure that makes the concept of mortality manageable and even poetic. This demonstrates the



rehabilitative function of metaphor in cognitive poetics—helping the human mind process trauma and finality.

From a purely linguistic perspective, Faynberg's metaphors are characterized by their high degree of novelty and unpredictability. He frequently employs metonymic expansions, where a part (the sound of a train, the shadow of a tree) represents the whole emotional state of the character. His use of synesthesia—mapping sensory perceptions from one modality to another, such as "the cold sound of the wind"—further enriches his cognitive style. These linguistic choices reflect a brain that perceives the world as an interconnected web of sensations. In the framework of Text World Theory, Faynberg constructs a reality where the boundaries between the internal psychological and external physical worlds are blurred.

The cognitive linguistic analysis of Alexander Faynberg's poetic discourse reveals a sophisticated system of thought where language serves as a tool for world-building. His conceptual metaphors—ranging from the personification of time to the organic understanding of the word—act as the cognitive glue that binds his philosophical reflections to the reader's perception. Faynberg does not simply use metaphors; he thinks through them. By identifying these patterns, we gain a deeper understanding of how a poet living at the crossroads of cultures uses the Russian language to map the universal human experience. His discourse remains a testament to the power of the human mind to transform abstract existence into a vivid, felt, and meaningful reality.

The cognitive linguistic analysis of Alexander Faynberg's poetic discourse reveals that his metaphorical system is not merely a collection of stylistic tropes but a fundamental framework for conceptualizing the human condition. Through the systematic mapping of concrete source domains—such as physical labor, biological life, and spatial movement—onto abstract target domains like time, creativity, and death, Faynberg creates a bridge between the physical world and the metaphysical realm. His unique position as a Russian-speaking poet in Uzbekistan allowed him to synthesize diverse cultural codes, resulting in a "metaphorical dialect" that is both



universally human and specifically regional. The study confirms that Faynberg's poetry functions as a complex cognitive map, guiding the reader through the intricacies of memory, identity, and existence. Ultimately, his work demonstrates that conceptual metaphor is a vital tool for world-building, transforming the silence of the abstract into the vibrant resonance of poetic truth.

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