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ZOOMORPHIC METAPHOR AND ITS CORRELATION WITH LINGUISTIC WORLDVIEW IN BRITISH FICTION

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Abstract

The article deals with anthropocentric zoomorphic metaphors which disclose people's mentality in the discourse of the British literary text. Discursive reading of the zoomorphic metaphor reveals the cognitive basis for identifying linguistic and extralinguistic components of the relationship between the human world and the animal world. Quantitative data on identified cases of using zoomorphisms shed light on the implementation of typological features in the binary opposition "man – animal". The authors classify zoomorphic metaphors, expressing various aspects of behavior, appearance, physiological and intellectual characteristics, and social background of a person. Segments of human knowledge about the world of fauna transferred to the world of people are manifested in persistent associations, which result in a vivid, imaginative, emotional and very accurate description of anthropocentric observations through the prism of zoonyms to characterize a person, his activities, and lifestyle. The article reveals some differences in the implementation of meanings by using zoonyms-hyperonyms and zoonyms-hyponyms. The authors claim that functional potential of zoomorphisms in the discourse of a literary text lies in the ability to reflect the national and cultural tradition of people with special attention to axiological and emotional parameters of the utterance. The authors also find correlations between the British and Russian worldviews regarding the use of zoomorphisms.

Keywords: Zoonym, zoomorphic metaphor, literary discourse, anthropocentrism

1. Introduction

The anthropological paradigm of linguistic cognitive science reflects various aspects of the presence of the human factor in language. Metaphor, being a multifunctional nominative mechanism, has all the cognitive bases for modeling fragments of the language picture of the world that characterize a person on the basis of different types of figurative analogies. One of the most popular models of metaphorical nomination is the zoomorphic metaphor, the cognitive source of which is the "image" of an animal transferred to a person.

Zoomorphisms present the attribution of animal traits to certain human qualities and states. These are metaphorically reinterpreted zoonyms that nominate subjects, objects, tools, and processes (Ivina, 2018). According to BenceNanay, zoomorphism begins with understanding what mental states animals have, and then attributes these mental states to humans. The philosophical explanatory paradigm of zoomorphism cannot explain all aspects of human behavior, but by adopting a zoomorphic way of thinking and understanding about a person, it helps to establish various types of mental states through the zoomorphic attribution of animal traits to a person (Nanay, 2018). The nature of zoomorphism, as it is known, lies in the assumption of a metaphorical likeness of man to an animal. It brings into a dynamic state an image-associative representation caused by knowledge about animals, and a ready-made meaning that interacts in the process of metaphorization.

Zoomorphic metaphor as a multifunctional phenomenon of thinking, language and speech most clearly reveals all possible resources in the discourse of a literary text, since it has an inexhaustible speech-creating potential (Petrenko, 2013), fully revealing the "associative potential of the word" (Malkova, 2014). Only a discursive reading of a zoomorphic metaphor can serve as a reliable indicator of its cognitive properties, because the text is a "generator and carrier of information" (Abdrashitova, 2016) about the surrounding reality. Thus, its implementation in the framework of literary discourse reveals the linguistic and extralinguistic components of the relationship between the man and the world.

2. Problem Statement

Discursive analysis of a British literary text brings about wonderful examples of using zoomorphisms for characterizing people, describing their mental states, physiology, behaviour and psychic conditions, environment and background. Those anthropomorphic characteristics are vivid and accurate, expressive and eloquent due to metaphorical reference to the world of fauna. Moreover, they amaze imagination by their diversity and multidimensionality. It seems linguistically essential to present the British way of seeing the human through the prism of zoomorphisms and to find correlations with the Russian tradition. Thus, the problem of the article lies in the analysis of zoomorphic metaphors data in the British literary text to describe the functional potential of zoomorphisms, which sheds light on the ability to reflect the national and cultural tradition of people with special attention to axiological and emotional parameters of the utterance.

3. Research Questions

The undertaken analysis is aimed at finding clues to the following questions:

- What meanings do zoomorphic metaphors contain for describing anthropocentric elements? How do they unfold in a literary text?

- What typological correlations can be found in the binary opposition 'man – animal' in the British tradition in comparison with the Russian worldview?

- What functional potential of zoomorphisms is represented in the discourse of fiction to reflect the national and cultural tradition of people with special attention to axiological and emotional parameters of the utterance?

Answers to these questions can shed light on the metaphorical nature of zoomorphisms in the discourse of British belletristic literature.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the undertaken research is to reveal the peculiarities of transferring of the segments of human knowledge about the world of fauna to the world of people, while forming persistent associations, which result in a vivid, imaginative, emotional and very accurate description of anthropocentric observations through the prism of zoonyms to characterize a person, his activities, and lifestyle.

5. Research Methods

Contemporary research of anthropomorphism and zoomorphism is represented by two different vectors of studying the world with the same typological mechanisms of models of knowledge. Linguists, who aim to explain the behavior and way of thinking of people by comparing them with the animal world, deal with zoomorphisms (Dybo & Nikulenko, 2019; Kim, 2019; Maritsas, 2012; Nanay, 2013, 2018; Pacherie, 2011; Petrenko, 2013; Sinakaeva, 2017, etc.). Those, who see anthropological traits (gestures, facial expressions, behavior) in animals, are more interested in anthropomorphism (Archer-Lean, 2019; Bekoff, 1993; Gorevoy, 2015; Keeley, 2004; Mitchell, 2002; Pesina et al., 2019; Sober, 2012; Titova, 2010; Tomasello & Call, 2008, etc.). Latest research tends to show correlation between zoomorphism and anthropomorphism (Danielsson, 2020; Sax, 2020, etc.).

Using the above-mentioned works, the authors aim at disclosing the specifics of the British mentality, in particular, the perception of zoomorphic traits in a person's character, behavior, external data, etc.

The material for the study of zoomorphic metaphors in the present research is presented through the works of British writers: Ian McEwan "Atonement" and John Fowles "The Collector". Zoomorphic metaphor acts in accordance with figurative-associative models, formed in native speakers based on experience, perception of the world, and personal observations.

6. Findings

6.1. Quantitative data

Contextual analysis of belletristic literature by British writers revealed a body of examples – 289 cases of using the figurative meaning of a zoonym as an anthropocentric zoomorphic metaphor. The largest number – 95 examples (32.9%) – refers to the description of a person's behavior and actions. The second most recurrent meaning (54 cases out of 289 selected examples, i.e., 18.7%) is the description of the character traits of a person. In 46 utterences (15.9%), zoomorphism describes a person's appearance. In 38 cases (13.1%), there is an actualization of human social functions through a zoomorphic metaphor. 37 examples (12.8%) contain zoomorphic metaphors aimed at describing the physiological features of a person. The least recurrent ones are zoomorphic metaphors that reflect intellectual characteristics of a person: according to the results of our data, out of 289 examples of zoomorphic metaphors, only 19 reflects a feature of the mindset of the described character, which is 6.6% of the total number of examples considered.

6.2. Contextual analysis of an anthropocentric zoomorphic metaphor in the discourse of the British belletristic literature

The most widespread hyperonyms in the zoomorphic function are ***animal*** and ***beast***, as well as the derivative ***beastly***. They are usually used to verbalize the behavioral tactics of a person who resembles a wild beast and shows all his monstrous nature, to describe a vulgar and capricious character, give a negative assessment of social functions, reflect the low intellectual level of people who do not show proper interest in life and do not have valuable or sensible life orientations. For example: (1) *I was furious, that first night. Mad with disgust. His **beastly** gloating hands touching me. Peeling my stockings off. Loathsome* (Fowles, 1998).

In (1), a rude man reminds a beast to a girl. She compares his hands with the paws of an animal and evaluates his actions and behaviour extremely negatively. Semantic environment in the form of pejorative vocabulary (*furious, mad with disgust, gloating, loathsome*) complements the picture of dislike, disgust, antipathy of the girl to the brutalized man. The metaphorical expression beastly hands creates a mental picture of physically rude behaviour, violence.

Examples with hyperonyms ***animal/beast(ly)*** represent the processes of using zoonyms for secondary nomination. Human behavioural reactions correlate with a specific representative of the animal world through qualification and evaluation activities, which lead to a metaphorical transfer of the word's meaning or figurative comparison. Contextual analysis of the zoonym allows the reader to extend a cruel person's characteristics, taking into account the overlap of animal properties with personality qualities.

Zoonyms-hyperonyms have a generalizing character and cover the largest number of zoomorphic shades of meaning. Nevertheless, the most striking meanings in terms of expressiveness and imagery of the description are produced by zoonyms-hyponyms, which mentally draw a more complex and expressive anthropocentric picture. Thus, we can discover some stable associations in the considered contexts. A surprisingly lazy person resembles *a cow*. A treacherous and cruel man is compared to *a scorpion*. An

extremely unlucky person is described as *a lame duck*. A helpless and weak person resembles *a butterfly*. A girl compared to *a cat* is tender, but lustful. A strong and hardworking person receives analogies with *a horse*, while an aggressively enterprising man resembles *a wolf*. A shy and compliant brings about an idea of *a lizard*; an insidious and unpleasant person is compared to *a spider*. A man, who is voracious and untidy receives an analogy with *a pig*, a brave and hardy one – that with *a bear*, a disgusting one – that with *a toad*.

It is worthwhile illustrating some zoomorphisms with examples:

 (2) The draymen were watching her too, and one of them __wolf__-whistled. "All right, darling?" (McEwan, 2002). The correlation of human behaviour with the habits of *a wolf* in (2) provides a cognitive basis for creating a zoomorphic metaphor *wolf-whistled*, through which the author draws an image of a driver – a predator, eager to get a client.

In (3), the occasional adverb *unwolflike* describes the discrepancy between a person's real behaviour and the expected one. Instead of being overbearing and violent (similar to the *wolf*), the hero looked apologetic, pathetic, worried, and unsure of himself: (3) *He looked so innocent and worried when he stopped me. He said he'd run over a dog. I thought it might be Misty. Exactly the sort of man you would not suspect. The most __unwolflike__* (Fowles, 1998). It is worth noting that from the point of view of the Russian tradition, the zoonym *wolf* in relation to a person brings to the fore some other characteristics, namely: "hungry", "greedy", "evil".

Referring to herself as *a lazy cow*, the heroine in the micro-situation (4) assesses the prospects of getting married, having a child, and plunging into the troubles of home life: (4) *Marriage and being a mother terrifies me for that reason. Getting sucked down into the house and the house things and the baby-world and the child-world and the cooking-world and the shopping-world. I have a feeling __a lazy-cow__ me would welcome it…*(Fowles, 1998). Figurative comparison with *a cow*, according to the heroine, helps her to realize how her life can proceed in the case of marriage.

It is worth mentioning some inconsistencies in the perception of "*cow* traits" in the British and Russian mentality: in the British tradition, *a cow* is lazy and slow, for Russians, additionalmeanings of overweight and clumsiness are emphasized. This image should also be interpreted through the semantics of 'domesticated animal': *a cow* stands in a stall, as well as a married woman who does not work stays at home.

In (5) the comparative zoomorphism *like a scorpion* compares the description of the behavior of an angry and vengeful character with the habits of *a scorpion* that stings and kills without warning: (5) *If only I had the strength to kill you. I'd kill you. Like a __scorpion__. I will when I'm better.* (Fowles, 1998).

Microsituations (6-8) present metaphorical transfers of signs and features, typically relevant for the image of an animal in the national British culture, on a person. The comparison with an animal in the discourse of a literary text contributes to a faster and clearer understanding of the human character. The appeal to images of the animal world signals the desire and ability of a person to understand and describe complex abstract properties with the help of more familiar representations through an analogy with the animal world. When transferring the meaning of a zoonym to a person, a secondary, metaphorical nomination occurs, due to which zoomorphisms get their onomasiological formula, which serves for the situational characterization of a person: (6) *I know what I am to him. __A butterfly__ he has always wanted to*

catch (Fowles, 1998). (7) *I've been nice to him. That is, not **the cat** I've been lately* (Fowles, 1998). (8) *If there is a God he's a great loathsome **spider** in the darkness* (Fowles, 1998).

A butterfly (6) is a helpless weak insect that is caught with a net. This image helps the subject of speech to define himself and his weak character, without resorting to lengthy explanations. Comparison with *a cat* (7) allows the character to describe her changed character much more clearly than if she launched into a long explanation of exactly how she has been behaving lately. The difference between axiological attitudes in the British and Russian mentality also seems weighty. In the British tradition, *a butterfly* is helpless and weak, while in the Russian worldview it is careless and frivolous. According to the British vision, a person with *cat* features is unflattering and dangerous ("lets out claws"), in the Russian national tradition, *a cat* is graceful, agile, flexible, with quiet and soft movements, self-sufficient ("on its mind"). In (8), the essence of God is represented as *a spider's* ability to spin a web in the dark. This association helps us understand that the character has fallen into difficult life circumstances, and, most likely, he faced unexpected difficulties, so he transfers his fears, resentments and failures to God, associating him with a disgusting, unpleasant *spider* in the dark.

In the British discourse, when describing a look, the most common zoomorphic associations are *fish*, *cow*, and *lizard*:

*(9) **Fish**-eyes. They watch. That's all. No expression* (Fowles, 1998).

(10) *…a large, kindly, slow-moving girl with a **cow's** harmless gaze, met the lacerating force of the ward sister's fury* (McEwan, 2002).

(11) *He looked sideways. His **lizard** look. Still shocked?* (Fowles, 1998).

Fish eyes (9) is a classical description of a bulging, uncomprehending, emotionless stare. *A lizard* (11) is a shy, secretive reptile. This is how the character behaves, hiding his eyes from the interlocutor His appearance, recreated with the help of the zoonym *lizard*, is very bright, imaginative, and understandable. The association with a *cow's* gaze (10) is used to describe a large, unhurried, good-natured girl. Associative-imaginative way of thinking cognitively connects a meek harmless girl with a large farm animal, just as unhurried and innocuous.

In (12), the figure of a slender, toned girl is described through the zoomorphic metaphor *a racing dog*. The athletic girl resembles a hound dog with similar external data: (12) … *here she was, still as lean and fit as **a racing dog**, and still faithful* (McEwan, 2002). Here it is necessary to note the most striking difference in comparison with the Russian perception of "*dog*" traits in a person, where other images come to the fore ("hungry like a dog", "like a beaten dog", "Beware! An evil dog"). In the Russian discourse, as well as in English, loyalty is a characteristic feature of dogs, which can be transferred to a person, but the slimness and tightness of the girl and the same characteristics of a dog usually do not form a firm associative chain.

In microsituations (13-14), on the basis of associative comparison, the appearance of a girl is compared with the image of *a horse*, fixed in the national British consciousness as a strong, large, docile animal: (13) *That long, narrow face, the small mouth …he might have said she was a little **horsey** in appearance* (McEwan, 2002). (14) *That long face always looked odd, and vulnerable, **horsey** everyone said* (McEwan, 2002). In the Russian national tradition, the *horse* is patient and hardworking, it is unlikely to be "weak" and "vulnerable" as in (14).

Zoomorphic metaphors that give a complex characteristic of a person are of particular interest. The connotative-figurative meaning of zoomorphism perfectly fulfils the function of actualizing a special attitude to the character described, for example, dislike, respect, wariness, etc. Example (15) reflects a negative assessment of a person using the zoonym *toad*: (15) *Aunt Hermione had run off with some __toad__ who delivered fireside sermons on the wireless every week* (McEwan, 2002). An unpleasant person resembles a *toad*. This complex image includes both the external data of the referent and the emotional assessment of the speaker, who perceives unpleasant actions of the character in this way.

The phenomenon of secondary nomination by means of zoomorphisms in modern English fiction allows writers to reveal some specific features of a character, relying on the similarity with the zoonym, without resorting to lengthy explanations. This makes it possible not only to make the image more vivid, colorful, imaginative, and memorable, but also to reflect the British mentality in terms of cognitive mechanisms for building associative images at the intersection of semantic fields "man/animal".

7.   Conclusion

The undertaken study of anthropocentric zoomorphisms in the discourse of the British belletristic literature confirms the cognitive ability of a person to reflect knowledge about the surrounding world by means of associative convergence of segments of certain semantic spheres, e.g., observations of a person actualize ideas about fauna. The features of people represented by zoomorphic metaphors are unfolded in the discourse of the literary text by vivid images from the animal world. The analogy between "man" and "animal" is carried out as a cognitive operation, the result of which is a zoomorphic metaphor.

The use of zoomorphisms to depict anthropocentric matters is characterized by increased emotionality, showing the resulting image in a lively, understandable, accurate and expressive way, in contrast to prolonged direct verbose descriptions. Zoomorphisms are informative, emotional, and accurate, since the image-associative pair "man-animal" forces each new association to perform a new cognitive operation that helps to extract knowledge about the animal world around us from memory and experience, and focus attention on the most expressive typological features. Zoomorphic metaphors, built by focusing on external data, specific behaviour or character traits of a person based on similarities with certain animals, give the description a more specific form and contribute to their greater visibility, reflecting the national and cultural traditions of the British people. In this case, we can see an axiological comment or an increase in the emotional component of the statement. Correlations in the use of zoonyms for anthropocentric judgments between the British and Russian vision allow us to identify some similarities and differences in the ways of "animating" literary characters.

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