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ЗООМОРФНЫЕ МЕТАФОРЫ КАК ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА БИЗНЕС-КОМПАНИЙ

Научная статья

Коптелова И.[1] *, Панёвкина Е.И.[2]
[1] ORCID: 0000-0002-3739-9807;
[1, 2] Дипломатическая академия МИД России, Москва, Россия

* Корреспондирующий автор (csikos[at]yandex.ru)

Аннотация

Цель статьи заключается в анализе английских зоометафор, используемых в языке экономики и профессиональном сленге, которые приобрели статус терминов. Авторы ставят целью выделить те типичные черты животных, которые являются референтными при использовании базовой метафорическое модели «компании – это животные». Авторы опираются на теорию Дж. Лакоффа и М. Джонсона. Показано, что метафоры служат важным коммуникативным инструментом для передачи специализированной информации. Когнитивная ценность рассмотренных зоометафор состоит, с одной стороны, в том, что они показывают особенности категоризации внешнего мира англоговорящим сообществом, а с другой стороны, раскрывают лингвокреативный потенциал этого явления.

Ключевые слова: метафора, метонимия, проекция, характерные черты, зоо-компонент.

ANIMAL FIRM

Research article

Koptelova I.E.[1] *, Panyovkina E.I.[2]
[1] ORCID: 0000-0002-3739-9807;
[1, 2] Diplomatic Academy of Russia's Foreign Ministry, Moscow, Russia

* Corresponding author (csikos[at]yandex.ru)

Abstract

The aim of the article is to analyze English animal metaphors used in the language of economics and professional slang, which have acquired the status of terms. The authors aim to highlight those typical animal features that are referential when using the basic metaphorical pattern of "companies are animals." The authors base their research on the theory by J. Lakoff and M. Johnson. The article shows that metaphors serve as an important communicative tool to transmit specific information. On the one hand, the cognitive value of the metaphors lies in the fact that they show the features of the categorization of the outside world by the English-speaking community, and on the other hand, reveal the linguistic and creative potential of this phenomenon.

Keywords: metaphor, metonymy, mapping, salient features, animal component.

No wonder, names of animals are a rich source of metaphors. As humans have lived side by side with first wild, later with domestic animals, man has always noted their most salient characteristics and patterns of behavior. In most cases such generalizations were based on empirical experience, however at times the ideas about animals were not devoid of the fantasy element predetermined by the mythological and poetic model of the world. Consequently, such metaphorical thinking has been fixed in the lexical system of language in the form of numerous animal-based metaphors, ex., PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS [2].

Methodology

An animal-based metaphor is viewed as a result of a metaphorical transfer, in which an animal's properties are attributed to a man, and human behavior is linked to the behavior of an animal. We now want to address certain metaphorically used business terms in English that are based on the ANIMAL metaphor. The corpus of the research comprises the terms taken from *Investopedia.com*, as well as from *thefreedictionary.com*. Several terms, which are not highly technical, come from various English business dictionaries, e.g. Longman Business English Dictionary, Cambridge Business English Dictionary and Thesaurus. The metaphors are instantiated from English-speaking mass media: *The Guardian, The Independent, The Forbes, Wall Street Journal*, etc.

Modern cognitive theory suggests that a metaphor arises at the level of deep structures of the human mind; therefore, the cognitive theory of metaphor has transcended linguistics. The relation to a metaphor as to a verbal shell of the world's interpretation picture required completely different approaches in describing metaphorical processes. A number of scholars — J.Herder, E.Cassirer, F.W.Schelling, etc. — tried to formulate the connection between thought and metaphor through "metaphorical thinking". Being very different at the first sight, each conceptual group of metaphors is based on its source domain facts that are understood at the level of common sense and adopted in its terms by another area. Carl Gustav Jung believed that there are certain patterns, traces, models — that he called archetypes — in the human unconscious thanks to which the same images appear in men's dreams, pathological states, mythology, rituals and verbal creativity [4]. Each image contained in a metaphor, "does not exist by itself, but in a number of others, externally, perhaps, different, but in a profound sense of similar images – and together with them implements a certain law, model, rule… The Lakoff and Johnson's book *Metaphors We Live By* triggered the research of metaphors in the fields of specialized professional languages: economics, politics, sports, oil and gas production, medicine and so on. The scope of studies proves the extent to which metaphors enlarge this type of discourse. Such studies have described various aspects of metaphoricity in economic and business English texts, e.g. ECONOMY, MARKET, STOCK EXCHANGE, and INVESTMENTS. Metaphorical modeling is a means of attaining, perceiving and evaluating the reality concurrently reflecting the centuries-old experience of the people and their national identity at a certain stage of development; the conceptual metaphor is linked to the specific conditions of the society's progress [12]. The speech act is based on previous experiences of a speaker and a listener, on their knowledge of the world.

The authors argue that the transfer of meaning is not confined to the sphere of a language; thinking per se is generally metaphorical. According to the researchers, "our everyday conceptual system, within the framework of which we think and act, is inherently metaphorical" [12, P. 118] and is a phenomenon of interaction of thought, language, and culture. This means that the comprehension and experience of phenomena of one kind occurs in terms of phenomena of a different kind. The correlation of disparate domains is realized through the mechanism of a metaphor. A metaphor itself does not generate new concepts and representations, but it helps to make the vague and unclear fairly transparent and understandable. G.Lakoff and M.Johnson identified in English the systems of conceptual metaphors based on the views of English-speaking society on certain objects of designation [12, P. 117-118]. Conceptual metaphors are stable correspondences between the source-domain and the target-domain fixed in the linguistic and cultural traditions of a society [12, P. 14]. A metaphor makes it possible to understand an abstract unstructured object through the presence of basic concepts that are common and shared by all members of certain communities either by virtue of natural thinking or empirical experience.

Explaining how animal-based words acquired their metaphorical meanings, Kövecses writes the following: "The only way these meanings can have emerged is that humans attributed human characteristics to animals and then reapplied these characteristics to humans. That is, animals were personified first, and then the 'human-based animal characteristics' were used to understand human behaviour. But it is not only human behavior that is metaphorically understood in terms of animal behavior; people themselves are also often described as animals of some kind." [11, P. 125]

Though metaphor is presumed to be based on similarities between unlike entities, the research has shown that some metaphors "cannot be traced back to experiential correlations, but rather have their basis in perceived similarities or resemblances" [14, P. 7]. Metonymy, on the other hand, is based on conceptual contiguity, which is rooted in "extra-linguistic experiences and connotations and is therefore culture-dependent." [13, P. 123].

Discussion

Within the theoretical framework of **Conceptual Metaphor Theory** (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Kövecses 2002) we deal with the broad PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS and INSTITUTIONS ARE ANIMALS metaphors, which in their turn categorize them into several sub-metaphors (INVESTORS ARE ANIMALS, PRODUCTS ARE ANIMALS or COMPANIES ARE ANIMALS) in order to show how salient characteristics of animals and their behaviour (source domain) are mapped onto companies and people working for them (target domain).

So we will sort out the recurrent characteristics of animals that are mapped onto companies (on the basis of COMPANIES ARE ANIMALS metaphor).

Animal-based metaphors have dominated the area of entrepreneurship for years. When we say COMPANIES ARE ANIMALS, size is of paramount importance. David Birch [7] identified several types of companies. He called the big businesses elephants, he named the smallest companies *mice* and he dubbed the fast-movers *gazelles*.

Mice are small business formations. They might be sole proprietors such as self-employed street vendors that can be found by quantities both in developed and developing countries. Or they might be small entities in conventional industries. The number of employees is limited to 20. They can multiply easily and with the same ease they can become a prey of predator-companies or unfavorable circumstances [1]. They contribute relatively little to the economy in terms of employment, innovation or productivity growth.

Being the second largest mammals in the world, *elephants* are able to survive and grow. The word is used to refer to large corporations that are stable and steady. Because of their efficiency they are vital to the economy. In terms of workforce, we usually speak of at least 500 employees. It also implies that such large institutions have sufficient funds to make high volume trades, so have apparent influence on a price of the underlying financial asset. On the other hand elephants are rather slow-paced animals and the projection of this feature shows that big companies are slow to change and adapt to new business environment.

Gazelles are swift, and it helps them to run away from predators, and adapt easily to changing environment. By *Gazelles* economists allude to enterprises able to increase their revenues by 20% or more for 4 consecutive years, starting from a revenue base of at least $100000. As the characteristic feature of *Gazelle* companies is their rapid growth pace rather than their size, they can range from small firms to very large corporations. So swiftness of a gazelle as its most salient characteristic is metaphorically mapped onto a company that can grow at an unusually high annual rate.

*…**Gazelles** maintain growth by solving real problems for more customers each year and by making money on each transaction…* [5]

Gorillas are the largest of the living apes, and the size of the animal is projected onto the concept of a company which has the biggest market share but is short of the monopoly. Nevertheless the size of its market share suggests that it is more able to take risks without fear of losing a significant customer base. A regular example of a *gorilla* company is McDonalds.

*What Happens When A **Gorilla** Firm Moves into Town*? [10]

Another animal that projects its size onto a company is a behemoth (*retailing behemoths arriving with a splash*) [3, P. 33]

Unicorn describes start-ups that have grown from nothing to be worth at least $1 bl. Some economists believe these companies to be the pinnacle of success; while others are more cautious claiming that *unicorns* will remain the source of market speculations. Entrepreneurs, investors, journalists tend to get animated when discussing unicorns, which are mostly found among tech startups.

Dragons are even more unique than *unicorns*, though they can be more frequently found in fairy tales. A *dragon* is a legal entity that has grown so effectively that it returns all investors' money. Statistics insists that only one in four *unicorns* is a *dragon*, which explains the Silicon Valley old saying "***Unicorns** are for show. **Dragons** are for dough*."

A new metaphor has emerged to refer to starts up created by people from ethnic minorities or women. As the coloring of the animal sets it aside from others so the projection of the animal's uniqueness onto a company signals that it may look for more options for entrepreneurs in underserved markets outside the major venture capital markets. With the current trend *Zebra* companies may be tech-enabled companies rather than pure tech companies.

***Unicorns** may be revolutionary to society in general, but **Zebra** companies can outweigh them and have a larger impact on local communities*. [8]

Business world is well-known for its predatory character, thus dichotomy of predator – prey can be easily found among business animal metaphors.

Sharks feature quite heavily in financial lingo. A company that tries to execute a hostile takeover is dubbed "*shark*" forcing the target company to deploy a "*shark repellent*" meaning a number of measure to fend off an unwanted takeover attempt. *Shark watcher* refers to a company specializing in the early identifying and preventing unwelcome takeovers.

*"I was the first **shark watcher**," said Arnold Minsky of Brookville. But don't look for the 48-year-old Mr. Minsky in the waters off Montauk, chumming for great whites. Look for him — figuratively speaking — on Wall Street, trolling for the sort of sharks inclined to feed on stock as they raid tempting targets in corporate takeovers*. [9]

Loan shark means a loan company charging extortionate interests on their loans and credits (up to 100% or even more). It should be noted that the use of metaphors containing the word "*shark*" gives the context a shade of danger which quite plausibly reflects many business concepts.

The metaphor "*prey*" can be illustrated with such well-known word combination as "*lame duck*". Nowadays the phrase is more familiar when referring to politics but it was coined in the 18th century at the London Stock Exchange and then referred to a stockbroker who defaulted on his debts. In its literal sense, the term lame duck refers to a duck that is unable to keep up with its flock which makes it an easy target for predators. The duck's lameness and its inability to proceed are projected onto a company which has defaulted on its debts or has gone bankrupt due to the stock market.

*There was also considerable conflict over attempts to make private companies more self-reliant, expressed through the withdrawal of subsidies for '**lame-duck**' companies*. [6]

Turkey which is considered inept or stupid is a metaphor for a start-up company that may subsequently go bankrupt.

*In case of a corporation, a **turkey** can be the acquisition of a smaller company that ends up making much less revenue than anticipated, thus making it an investment which eat up the company's profits*. [16]

Conclusion

Thus summing up the above we can say that the main salient features of the animals invoked by business animal-based metaphors are size and speed that is synonymous in this case to growth rate. The next dichotomy is reality and fabulousness, the latter being synonymous to rarity in business world. Another juxtaposition involves dichotomy predator-prey showing the ability of a business to survive under the law of the corporate jungle.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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