METAPHOR AND METONYMY IN SIGN LANGUAGE

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Summary. The study of sign language developed into a separate linguistic science in the 20th century. Sign language contains many gestures, as well as metaphors and metonymies. Hearing-impaired children and our environment played a major role in the examination of gestures. Furthermore, it is common for scientists to draw a parallel between the sign language gestural components and the phonemes of the spoken language. Metaphors and metonymies play a role not only in spoken language, but also in sign language. The problem of sign language metaphors is also dealt with by Taub’s scheme and Grushkin’s model.

Key words (metaphor, metonymy, sign language, nonverbal communication, communication, gesture, spoken language, cognitive process)

The history of the study of sign languages began recently - in the 60s of the XXI century. William Stokoe was one of the first sign language scholars to begin analyzing American Sign Language. His work considered revolutionary, because W. Stokoe proved that sign language is as natural a language as, for example, spoken language. He found that English Sign Language, like any other spoken language, has phonetic, morphological, and syntactic levels. William Stockey also identified several important grammatical features of sign languages, based on which a significant number of studies were later conducted on different sign languages [17].

Nowadays, compared to spoken and other sign languages, the study of Russian sign language is still in its initial stages. The first study tried to highlight the essential linguistic features of Russian sign language. In addition, it is worth noting that G.L. Zaitseva's work is the only textbook on Russian sign grammar to date. Also in the 1990s, the journal Sign Language Studies published a short essay in English by Grenoble [7, 19].

To this day, the study of sign languages is widespread. Several outstanding works can be noted: a study on the morphology of verbs, an article on the main characteristics of Russian sign language and their comparison, markers on the local structure of discourse, the expression of negation in sign language, the about the differences between nouns and verbs, about word order. This work deals with the linguistic investigation of emotional verb metaphors in Russian Sign Language, and the subsequent results of this study considered in the typological perspective of two sign languages [9, 10, 14].

Since sign languages were recently recognized (in the 60s of the XX century) as natural languages, it is not surprising that many people considered sign language
international due to the lack of knowledge of the "inhabitants of the sound world". [1, 5, 13].

More precisely, something unique and universal, all hearing-impaired people on earth system for unifying your communication. Many can compare sign language to pantomime, that is, when observing sign language, one must look for a coherent image in the speaker's gestures, based on which one can guess the conveyed message. Both assumptions are fundamentally wrong. First, it is worth saying that the culture of the development of sign languages was by no means clear and simple. Hearing-impaired people were always and everywhere, and for understandable reasons, they could not communicate with a hearing-impaired person from another continent. In all societies, speech has always been accompanied by gestures, which have been adopted, adapted and supplemented by the hearing-impaired population.

In addition to gesticulation, the home communication of hearing-impaired children isolated from the hearing-impaired population also contributed to the development of sign language (a system of gestures created by a hearing-impaired child born in a family with good hearing parents). And this is present in every country. However, the group of hearing-impaired people was only able to pass on their language and knowledge with the development of urbanization and population mobility, only in the 18th century. at the end of the century. The first training center for hearing-impaired children opened in France, which initiated the establishment of new similar schools and the adaptation of the educational methodology. Regarding the question of the relationship between pantomime and sign language, it is worth noting that if the methodology of understanding pantomime is applied to understanding sign language, such an attempt will fail. As I mentioned earlier, all gestures and sign languages have their own phonetics, grammar, and morphology, without knowing which a layman cannot understand anything. In any sign language, the following are used to convey information: facial expression, eye movements, hands, body.

If we look at a single gesture, we can distinguish five components: four main ones and one additional one. More precisely, something unique and universal, something that is shared by all hearing-impaired people on earth (hand movement, palm orientation, localization, movement and facial expression), and a gesture associated with one of the two [5].

It is quite common to draw parallels between gesture components in sign language and phonemes in spoken languages since both the set of components and the set of phonemes are rigidly fixed in the language. In this respect, it is possible in sign language to select minimal pairs - pairs of gestures that differ in only one component. This level of regularity is not characteristic of pantomime, as pantomime gestures do not have a strict internal structure that allows new gestures to combined in sign languages. This suggests that a limited set of components is an important feature that distinguishes any sign language from pantomime. When we talk about the structure of gestures, we cannot ignore the fact that most gestures in sign languages are iconic, for example, schematically imitating an object that is not visible in spoken languages. In spoken languages, iconicity is extremely rare, for example in onomatopoeia: in English, the word ding (to ring) iconically conveys the sound of a bell [16, 18].
In sign languages, iconicity takes a different form. For a detailed analysis of iconicity in sign language, consider the tree as an example. Sarah Taub's model of iconic gesture construction identifies three steps in the creation of an iconic gesture. The first step is the selection of a prototypical object, in our case a tree, whose image first comes to mind when the object mentioned. For everyone, it is approximately the same image of a tree growing from the ground, with a straight trunk and a lush crown. In the second step, we simplify the drawing, make it more schematic and visual, and select the most key features of the image, which we then encode. In the final, third step, a schematic image of a tree created using five components - any sign language. [18].

In science, metaphor and metonymy usually distinguished as a shift between similarity and adjacency. A huge amount of work has been done on this topic which suggests that this definition is incomplete, as it does not reflect the value shift algorithm, does not affect the cognitive aspect, etc. Added terms for metaphor and metonymy have been coined within the framework of an innovative approach to metaphor. In their revolutionary work, Lakoff and Johnson introduce the notion of a domain, which they characterize as a semantic field to which a particular concept belongs. Croft introduces the notion of a domain matrix, and Blank the notion of a frame, which can be understood as a complex system of relations that connects the participants in a situation and that can be fitted into certain external frames that are related to it in some way. They argue that such a relational framework simplifies the understanding of the algorithm for changing the value. If we talk about the differences between metaphor and metonymy within the framework of the added terms, we can conclude that metaphor is a transition or shift from one domain/frame of a lexeme to another domain/frame. For the sake of clarity, consider the verb "to boil" (whose initial domain/frame is associated with the liquid, its characteristic movement and sound during boiling (cf. below, water boiled and foamed). If in the verb "to boil" the association with the liquid is replaced by an association with the mass of people, i.e. from one range/frame to another (e.g. the huge mass of Cossacks boiled, reacting differently to the speaker's speech), in the new context the same verb already transforms its specific physical meaning, which refers to the movement of water while boiling, into a new metaphorical one - a noise and crowd speech with a characteristic emotional color. Lakoff and Johnson's theory of metaphor as an understanding of the essence of one kind of entity in terms of the essence of another kind of entity (e.g. a dispute - a war) is quite close to the traditional notion of metaphor, but it does not remain the same in the end and it is unclear what criteria should be used to determine the extent of the relationship between these entities. Fauconnier, Fauconnier and Turner have tried to answer this question. Despite the abundance of metaphor theories, they do not contradict each other but, on the contrary, rather complement each other [1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 15].

Let us take a look at the metonymy. Just like metaphor, metonymy also has a shift, except that it occurs within a range/frame. According to Paducheva, there are two types of metonymies: argumentative and resultative. Argumentative metonymy refers to the predominance of one argument over another within the same domain/frame. For example, in the proposal "Assign commandant to Shvabrin", the argument expressing the direct object dominates the person to be assigned (in this
case Shvabrin). In the example "Assign commandant", the situation has changed: now the indirect object commandant prevails, which has moved into the category of direct objects, and the original direct object Shvabrin has been reduced to an indirect object to the extent that it is not even mentioned [12].

Lakoff and Johnson have argued that metaphors are an integral part of cognitive processes that embedded in our thoughts and actions, fixed, and transmitted over time in society. This claim is true not only for spoken languages, but also for sign languages, since sign languages also contain cultural models of society's cognitive processes, which include metaphors. Even though certain metaphors are repeated between different languages and cultures, there is a specific and unique set of metaphors for each society, embedded in a particular language, be it sound or sign. One of the first studies to deal with the topic of sign language metaphors was the work of Taub, which examined the metaphors of English sign language. In her work, Sarah Taub not only highlighted the stages of the construction of an iconic gesture, which I have already discussed above, but also identified the steps of a metaphorical gesture. According to Taub, the metaphorical gesture goes through the same steps as the iconic gesture, the difference being that here an additional step is added. Given that the metaphorical gesture carries the meaning of an intangible object, to represent it schematically through linguistic gestures, the gesture must be transferred from the immaterial category to the category of material objects [11, 18].

To successfully complete the first stage of metaphorical gestures in Taub's scheme, it is necessary to find not only a metaphorical but also a figurative connection between the concept of gesture and the abstract. In other words, the metaphorical link defines a relationship between a non-material object within its concept as a material object, and a figurative link must be established, for example, the expression of a schematic image through the linguistic means. We then follow the Taub scheme already described for iconic gestures. For a better understanding, consider the gesture of thinking-intention (to understand something difficult) from English sign language. Following the four steps outlined in Taub's schema, the first step of the metaphorical gesture is to make a connection with some material object. Consider a gesture: a gesture has two components. The first component is the touching of the temple with the index finger of the dominant hand. The second component is the movement of the index finger to the non-dominant hand. The gesture is completed by overcoming the barrier with the index finger. To complete the first step of Taub's schema, we need to interpret the metaphorical gesture in terms of material objects. In this gesture, the following interpretation is possible: first a subtle object representing knowledge comes out of the head where our mind and thoughts are located, then it encounters some kind of barrier and overcomes it. In other words, in order to understand and master something difficult, an effort has to be made and the 'barrier of misunderstanding' has to be overcome. This completes the first step [18].

The next three stages in the development of the metaphorical gesture completely repeat the sequence of the development of the iconic gesture: the definition of the object that interprets the idea, the selection of the most significant features of the image, which are later encoded, is done using the sign language tools of schematic representation (hand shape, palm positioning, localization, movement).
In addition to the work on sign language metaphors, there have been several major studies on the diverse groups of verbs. Brennan for example, has devoted his work to metaphors in verbs in the mental sphere of English sign language, and Grushkin to metaphors in verbs that provoke anger. Grushkin’s research begins with an attempt to touch the forefinger of the dominant hand. The second component is the movement of the forefinger in the nonunderstanding whether the American Deaf Society is part of the American Deaf Society or a separate community with its own culture. If it can show that the American Deaf Society is a separate society, then the author will attempt to determine whether this society has its own cognitive structure or whether it has been adopted from the dominant-sounding society of the United States of America [3, 4, 8].

To address this problem, Grushkin (1998) compared two cognitive models inherent in both American spoken language and English sign language, which also considered by Lakoff and Kovecses. At the end of his work, Grushkin achieved the expected results and found that the American hearing-impaired society is distinct from the general hearing-healthy American society. He also found small but significant differences in the cognitive structures of these languages. For example, in English sign language, all the gestures containing the MIND gesture (MIND-BLOW TOP, MIND GO UP IN AIR, MIND POP UP, etc.) carry the same meaning and represent the same stage of anger - the highest - as in American sign language. The variability of the MIND gestures is just one of several ways to express that anger has reached its highest point, and furthermore none of them are used in a positive context. MIND expressions of the emotion of anger exist in American spoken language, but can be used in both negative (e.g. Look at this mess. It’s blowing my mind!) and positive contexts (e.g. This movie is awesome, it’s blowing my mind!) [8, 11].

This difference between the languages is smaller than we expected, but it still demonstrates that there is some difference between the cognitive models of American spoken language and American sign language users and that the American hearing-impaired population is a distinct society. As far as sign language metonymy is concerned, it is worth noting that more detailed studies needed to draw generalizable conclusions, as it is not as professionally researched a topic as sign language metaphors. However, I believe that localization (a component of gesture) can used well as a sign of metonymy in sign language.

References: