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METAPHORICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE THINKING (BASED ON MODERN AMERICAN DISCOURSE OF POPULAR PSYCHOLOGY)

У статті схарактеризовано чотири групи метафоричних концептуальних моделей, відмінності в структурній організації яких дозволяють співставити способи метафоричного осмислення концептів НЕГАТИВНЕ МИСЛЕННЯ та ПОЗИТИВНЕ МИСЛЕННЯ, що є складовою частиною сучасної американської концептуальної картини світу. Результати дослідження показали, що трансформація від негативного до позитивного стилю мислення супроводжується появою низки метафоричних концептуальних схем, притаманних новому, позитивному сприйняттю дійсності.

Ключові слова: когнітивна лінгвістика, концепт, метафорична концептуальна модель, НЕГАТИВНЕ МИСЛЕННЯ, ПОЗИТИВНЕ МИСЛЕННЯ, дискурс.

Books and manuals on positive psychology agree that positive thinking is a habit that can be nurtured in an individual through changing his/her perceptions of reality by activating a set of positive thoughts, images, and corresponding actions (Carnegie, Carnegie; Hay; Peale; Seligman; Tracy, Tracy Stein). Psychotherapists and psychoanalysts usually structure their books as a set of effective strategies and techniques directed at changing one's lifestyle and, most importantly, one's mindset. In this respect, language plays a vital role in reprogramming an individual's frame of mind and is widely employed by professional psychologists as a powerful instrument of transforming one's thinking patterns. In particular, psychologists view using constructive language or positively charged words and word-combinations as an initial prerequisite of forming a positive mindset while destructive language is associated with negative, pessimistic, and self-critical words and phrases that prevent one from acquiring an optimistic mind frame (Quilliam 20).

Recent research of popular psychology discourse testifies to the potential of metaphor as an effective tool for changing individual thinking patterns (Mosiichuk 115). Proponents of positive psychology try to somehow reprogram their clients' / patients' mindset by activating a whole set of fundamentally different metaphorical conceptual models that stimulate a more positive mindset. Modern English discourse of positive psychology abounds in metaphorical formations – the fact that results from its specific nature: while the addresser is a professional psychologist, the addressee is usually a person without any medical or psychological background (Petrova 55) who wants to solve a certain psychological problem by consulting a specialist in the field. In this regard, metaphor seems

an ideal instrument, a kind of universal language for people of different social and cultural backgrounds.

The hypothesis of the present research is that POSITIVE THINKING and NEGATIVE THINKING reveal differences in their metaphorical conceptualization reflected in the structure of corresponding metaphorical conceptual models, which testifies to a shift in one's perception of reality: from negative to positive thinking respectively.

By applying the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff, Johnson) to the abstracts of discourse containing metaphorical formations, it is possible to identify metaphorical conceptual models, which constitute the conceptual layer of the corresponding language means. The **object** of the study is POSITIVE THINKING and NEGATIVE THINKING concepts, which correlate with the respective styles of thinking. While the positive style of thinking refers to the optimistic and confident perception of objective reality, which helps an individual to reach true happiness (Tracy, Tracy Stein 60), the negative style of thinking is associated with a pessimistic life stance and restricted vision of the situation, which prevents one from achieving well-being (Mosiichuk 115). The **research subject** is metaphorical conceptual models constituting the conceptual foundation of the words and word-combinations that embody POSITIVE THINKING and NEGATIVE THINKING concepts in language. **The purpose** of the present study is to highlight the metaphorical conceptual models underlying positive and negative thinking styles and reveal differences in their structural elements. The research is interdisciplinary in character and entails the findings of cognitive linguistics (Kovescses; Lakoff; Lakoff, Johnson) and discourse analysis (van Deyk), which accounts for its **topicality**.

The **material of** the present study comprises the book of American psychologists, trainers, and coaches B. Tracy and Ch. Tracy Stein "Kiss That Frog: 12 Great Ways to Turn Negatives into Positives in Your Life and Work" (Tracy, Tracy Stein), the book of a transformational psychotherapist, NLP practitioner, and personal performance trainer R. Anthony "Beyond Positive Thinking: A No-Nonsense Formula for Creating the Results You Want" (Anthony, Vitale), and the material of a positivity blog Abundance and Happiness.Com (Abundance and Happiness.Com).

The study uses integrative **methodology**, which encompasses methods of conceptual and contextual-interpretative analyses. Conceptual analysis based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory allowed revealing different groups of conceptual metaphorical models verbalized through corresponding lexical means in abstracts of the psychological discourse under analysis. Contextual-interpretative analysis enabled interpretation of the lexical units verbalizing the corresponding metaphorical conceptual models.

Linguistic analysis of the positive psychology discourse abstracts has revealed that constructive language that psychologists advise their clients to use abounds in metaphorical formations, which

serve as an effective tool for nurturing a positive style of thinking. In the context of our research, NEGATIVE THINKING and POSITIVE THINKING are interpreted as concepts comprising the notional (non-metaphorical) and figurative (metaphorical) components (Vorkachev 48) structured by corresponding conceptual features. While the notional component of POSITIVE THINKING is characterized by such structural elements as *optimistic, hopeful, confident*, NEGATIVE THINKING reveals such features as *unpleasant, depressive, harmful* in its structure (Collins Free Online Dictionary).

To characterize the figurative component of the POSITIVE THINKING and NEGATIVE THINKING concepts, it is necessary to conduct conceptual analysis aimed at establishing metaphorical conceptual models, which along with the above-mentioned conceptual features of the notional component constitute the conceptual layer of the lexical means representing the concepts under analysis. Based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff, Johnson) a conceptual metaphorical model emerges due to the projection of the structures of common sensor-motor experience in the source domain onto the more abstract knowledge structures in the target domain.

Conceptual analysis of the positive thinking discourse has revealed four groups of metaphorical conceptual models that explicate POSITIVE THINKING and NEGATIVE THINKING concepts.

The first group of metaphorical models, known as *ontological*, is based on common human bodily experience, which allows perceiving different activities, ideas, and emotions as substances and entities (Lakoff, Johnson 25). Thus, THINKING is perceived as PROCESS: *Meditation has proven to be a HUGE benefit for me personally in relation to becoming conscious of and learning to re-pattern my own destructive thought processes*. (Abundance and Happiness.com). In this regard, THOUGHTS are viewed as OBJECTS: *exchange a positive thought for a negative thought* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 68).

The second group is *structural metaphorical models* whose main function is to detail the experience delineated by ontological metaphors (Kovesces 39). Among structural metaphorical models dominating in the positive thinking discourse, we have revealed a conceptual metaphorical model THOUGHTS ARE OBJECTS THAT CAN BE MANIPULATED. Consider the following examples: *The Law of Substitution says that you can hold only one thought in your mind at a time, positive or negative. It also says that you can deliberately substitute a positive thought for a negative thought* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 32); *Through my own research and personal experiences concerning the power of thoughts, specifically overwriting subconscious thoughts, it is only necessary to overwrite and replace the undesirable, counterproductive subconscious programming (false beliefs) with information that is congruent with desired outcomes* (Abundance and Happiness.com). In the sentences under analysis, the word-combinations *positive thoughts, negative thoughts*, actualize the corresponding concepts POSITIVE THOUGHTS and NEGATIVE THOUGHTS while the lexical

units *substitute, overwrite, replace* further specify the ontological metaphorical model THOUGHTS ARE OBJECTS turning it into a structural model THOUGHTS ARE OBJECTS THAT CAN BE SUBSTITUTED / OVERWRITTEN / REPLACED. Thus, by instilling in an individual this belief, psychologists try to convince their clients/patients that their thoughts are objects that they can “*consciously and purposefully transform*” (Abundance and Happiness.com), and the first step in changing one’s thinking patterns is the realization that thoughts can be easily manipulated like things. Likewise, the ontological metaphorical model THINKING IS PROCESS is further specified in the structural metaphorical model THINKING IS VOLITIONAL PROCESS: *We choose those thought processes...WE choose the emotions that we experience...AND...WE choose whatever events, conditions and circumstances that WE create in our lives* (<http://www.abundance-and-happiness.com/the-power-of-thoughts.html>).

Further, another ontological metaphorical model THINKING IS MOVEMENT (*evaders ... fear the unknown and lack the trust in themselves that is necessary to move ahead* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 18) is specified in the structural metaphorical model PROBLEM IS A BLOCK TO MOVEMENT: *Many people do not do this because they think it is negative to focus on obstacles and roadblocks, but it is important to understand that you won't get where you are going until you know who or what is standing in the way of your achieving your goal* (Anthony, Vitale 83). Thus, while an individual with a negative mindset views some problematic situations chiefly as blocks or obstacles, the one with a positive mind frame would rather see them as challenges or benefits (structural metaphorical model PROBLEMS ARE CHALLENGES / BENEFITS), as in the following examples: *Problems are simply challenges that you deal with as you go through life* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 20); *a series of simple but powerful methods and techniques that you can use immediately to change from negative thinking to positive thinking and turn every problem in your life into a benefit of some kind* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 3). Another model of this type is SOLVING A PROBLEM IS ACCEPTING / CONFRONTING IT: *by making it a habit to confront your situation honestly rather than to evade it or deny that you have a problem* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 18); *The opposite of denial is acceptance. When you accept that a person or situation, at home or at work, is the way it is and is not going to change and act accordingly, most of the stress generated by the situation fades away* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 19). Thus, examples like those above allow revealing differences in the organization of the corresponding structural models: while POSITIVE THINKING IS ACCEPTANCE of problems, NEGATIVE THINKING IS EVADING / DENYING them.

In addition, the analysis of the figurative component of the NEGATIVE THINKING concept, has revealed that NEGATIVE THINKING is associated with the concept of COMFORT ZONE and conceptualized as LIMITED SPACE unlike POSITIVE THINKING, which is conceptualized as MOVEMENT, as could be seen from the examples listed above: *We are locked into our comfort zone,*

no matter how self-destructive it may be. Yet, the only way to get out of our comfort zone and to be free of our problems and limitations is to get uncomfortable (Anthony, Vitale 11). One more ontological metaphor THOUGHTS ARE STATES is further specified in the structural metaphor NEGATIVE THOUGHTS ARE DISEASE: *Their self-destructive behavior spreads like a contagious disease* (Anthony, Vitale 174).

Another feature of NEGATIVE THINKING refers to the restricted vision of the situation which is embodied in the metaphorical conceptual model NEGATIVE THOUGHTS ARE RESTRICTIONS: *negative or self-limiting beliefs and doubts are restrictions* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 7); *By creating our own limitation through our belief system, we do the very same thing. We become limited not by reality, but by reality as we perceive it to be* (Anthony, Vitale 19-20). Instead, POSITIVE THINKING is often described as thinking with no limits. Thus, the examples provided allow deducing a structural metaphorical model POSITIVE THOUGHTS ARE LIBERATION FROM RESTRICTIONS: *You practice “no limit” thinking* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 12); *You liberate your mind from the constraints of day-to-day work and bill paying. You practice what is called “blue sky thinking”, a hallmark of top people and peak performers in every area* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 12). The substitution of the negatively charged lexemes *negative, self-limiting beliefs, doubts* by positively charged ones *“no limit” thinking, liberate from constraints, blue sky thinking* in these examples is indicative of the change in the structural organization of the metaphorical conceptual models underlying POSITIVE THINKING and NEGATIVE THINKING. Overall, the analysis of the structural metaphorical models shows that negative thinking is viewed as a limited, restricted space while positive thinking is associated with progress and unrestricted movement.

The third group is represented by *orientational metaphorical models* which also testify to the shift from negative to positive thinking through changes in their organization. Orientational metaphorical models deal with spatial relationships, such as FRONT-BACK, IN-OUT, UP-DOWN, ON-OFF, FORWARD-BACKWARD, NEAR-FAR (Lakoff 56-60). POSITIVE THINKING is chiefly associated with an upward movement: *happy, fulfilling, uplifting thoughts that lead to positive actions and results* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 8). The shift from FROM NEGATIVE THINKING to POSITIVE THINKING is conceptualized as MOVEMENT FORWARD: *It is not a question of going from negative thinking to positive thinking. It is a matter of moving toward “right thinking”* (Anthony, Vitale 11). Hence, instilling in the readers the orientational metaphorical models with the structural elements UP and FORWARD, psychologists try to convince their audience that to achieve the “right” frame of mind, they have to move, do something, and not remain in their comfort zone.

Creative metaphorical models constitute the fourth group of metaphors. Unlike the previous groups, they are initially fresh and present a new perspective on the objects and events of everyday life, as proved by the example below: *He discovered that negative emotions, ugly frogs that squat in*

the back of your mental pond, are the primary obstacles to enjoying the happiness (Tracy, Tracy Stein 28). The analyzed example contains the conceptual metaphorical model EMOTIONS ARE CREATURES. The element of the source domain *living being*, which is part of the concept CREATURE, is verbalized in the lexical unit *frog* resulting in the creative metaphorical model NEGATIVE EMOTIONS ARE FROGS. On the other hand, the sentence *Imagine your handsome prince* (Tracy, Tracy Stein 11) activates the conceptual model POSITIVE EMOTIONS ARE PRINCES. Creative metaphors like the ones described above have an immense potential in reprogramming one's thinking patterns, as due to their unusual form, they are capable of touching the innermost corners of one's consciousness and becoming deeply engraved on one's mind.

In conclusion, the research has revealed that metaphorical formations play a significant role in changing one's beliefs and thinking patterns by programming and reprogramming an individual's mind frame. The four groups of metaphorical conceptual models and the changes in their structural organization testify to differences in the metaphorical conceptualization of POSITIVE THINKING and NEGATIVE THINKING as two concepts belonging to modern American conceptual world view. The shift from negative to positive thinking can thus be described in terms of these concepts at the conceptual (conceptual metaphors) and verbal (metaphorical formations) levels of analysis. Further research relates to the conceptual analysis of the metaphorical formations of constructive and destructive language employed in positive thinking discourse.

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