

THE FUNCTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF METAPHORS IN THE WORKS BY OSCAR WILDE – “AN IDEAL HUSBAND”, “A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE”, “LADY WINDERMERE’S FAN”, “THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST”

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Metaphor is one of the ways of knowing the world. It is an integral part of the language. From ancient times to the present day, it has attracted a lot of attention as an object of scientific study. Currently, the metaphor is increasingly studied in the framework of cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, linguistic and cultural studies, and other frontier sciences. The article presents the analysis of literary significance of metaphors in the cognitive linguistics, and identified the metaphors' types and functions, based on Oscar Wilde's comedies "A woman of no importance", "Lady Windermere's Fan", "The Importance of Being Earnest", "An Ideal Husband". In the comedy by O. Wilde "An Ideal Husband", "A Woman Of No Importance", "Lady Windermere's Fan", "The Importance Of Being Earnest" the metaphor, along with a comparison, is a major, systematically applied stylistic mean. Metaphors are in every act of comedies, and often they are the basis of the artistic image.

Keywords: metaphor, functions of metaphor, stylistic means, approach, types of metaphors

Metaphor is the most commonly used figure of speech in everyday language. Earlier metaphor was viewed as means of creating imagery of language, stylistic device, a way to "illustrate" the speech. However, in recent years the study of metaphors has moved to a new level. The number of works on this subject has dramatically increased that can be attributed to new prospects for consideration of the metaphor not only as an element of the language, but also as a reflection and result of thinking processes. Currently, the metaphor is increasingly studied in the framework of cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, linguistic and cultural studies, and other frontier sciences. This article is devoted to the study of metaphors in the comedies of Oscar Wilde – "A Woman Of No Importance", "Lady Windermere's Fan", "An Ideal Husband", "The Importance Of Being Earnest".

Metaphor is a kind of trail, which consists in transferring the values of similarity. The metaphor always connects simultaneously two meanings: one that is determined by the context, and the other, which is determined by the usual definition of the word that is specific to it devoid of context [1 P. 151]. Metaphor is often called "the reduced comparison" because metaphor as one word connects both the image and the object in question. The distinguishing peculiarity of metaphor is absence of a sign, by which the convergence between the subject and the image is made, it is necessary to guess this sign [2 P. 35]. This need to guess, i.e. to show some activity of perception, makes metaphor stronger stylistic means than comparison. In comparison, too, sometimes there is no a sign, and it is necessary to guess this comparison, but the object and image are not aligned. Meet-

ing the metaphor, the reader should understand the relationship between the subject and image to determine what is common between them, what is the sign applies to both the object and the image [3 P. 281].

Currently, there are many approaches to the study of metaphors. This diversity entails the birth of a plurality of classifications. Other researchers identify different types of metaphors, relying on its own approaches and criteria (Fig. 1).

In this article, we use the traditional classification of metaphors which involves the following types:

1. sharp metaphor is a metaphor that separates different concepts.

2. dead metaphor is a common metaphor the figurative character of which is no longer recognized.

3. metaphor-formula is similar to dead metaphor but differs from it by even more stereotype and sometimes impossibility to convert to nonfigurative construction.

4. extended metaphor is a metaphor being implemented consistently over a large fragment of the message

or the entire message as a whole.

5. realized metaphor involves handling metaphorical expression without regard to its figurative nature, that is, as if the metaphor has a direct meaning. The result of the implementation of the metaphor is often comic [1], [13] and [15].

Also, it should be noted that a certain kind of metaphor performs a specific function in the text. Currently, the issue of functioning metaphors in the language communication system remains open subject for the study and, accordingly, various scientists emphasize a great

variety of metaphor spheres in a language. In our article we will use the following metaphor function hierarchy by V.K. Kharchenko:

- nominative (metaphor in titles)
- informative (features of the metaphorical information)
- mnemonic (quick information memorizing)
- style-forming (formation of certain styles)
- text-forming (metaphors' ability to be complicated)
- genre-forming (creation of various genres)
- heuristic (study of search functions)
- explanatory (easy assimilation of complex information)
- emotionally – estimated (means of influencing the addressee)
- autosuggestive,
- encoding,
- conspiring (sense securing)
- play (one of the techniques of creating the comic)
- ritual (metaphors in greetings, congratulations, etc.) [2 P.30], [8 P. 112].

In the comedy by O. Wilde "An Ideal Husband", "A Woman Of No Importance", "Lady Windermere's Fan", "The Importance Of Being Earnest" the metaphor, along with a comparison, is a major, systematically applied stylistic mean. Metaphors are in every act of comedies, and often they are the basis of the artistic image. With the help of metaphors the author reinterprets the reality, reveals the hidden meaning of things and relationships, and encouraging the

reader to an active perception, makes him go through the same path of knowledge.

Let's note, first, cases where a metaphor is an epithet; such an epithet is called metaphorical. This category includes part of epithets. For example: "charming place", "suitable person", "odd trick", "beautiful nature", "beautiful moon", "domestic creatures", "dry goods", "magic lantern", "silliest word", "popular idea", "civilized body", "vulgar habit", "serious thing", "intellectual helpmate", "breathing space", "monstrous tie", "promissory note", "a very strong chin", "a square chin", "happy marriages", "picturesque protests", "common sense", "clever talk", "perfect angel", "hideous smile", "metallic problems", "perfect martyr", "London dinner-table", "fascinatingly willful sex", "nice pulpit", "gigantic intellects", "fatal thing", "wrong time", "wrong people", "wonderful piece of good luck", "guilty thing", "a most unfortunate case", "the wicked society", "the best auspices", "solemn moment", "bad headache", "pleasant scandals", "fresh waters", "democratic days" [20 P. 85-157], [21 P. 30-87], [22 P. 57-125].

These metaphorical epithets can be considered deleted, constant. These epithets perform **nominative** (lies in the possibility of developing the word figurative meanings), **informative** (is realized in the metaphors' ability to transfer information creating a holistic, panoramic image) and **mnemonic** (lies in the fact that the metaphor contributes to a better memorization of information) **functions** [4 P. 81], [5 P.52], [6 P. 78].

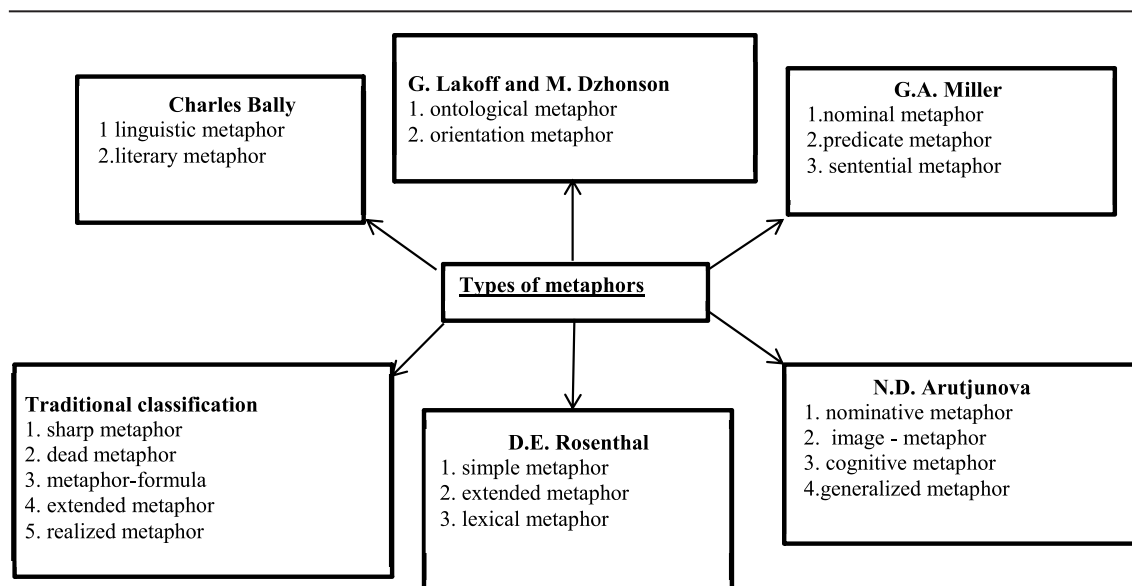


Fig. 1. Classification of metaphors

Since in our work, we are based on the traditional classification of metaphors, metaphors function in the text will also be considered from the perspective of this classification.

The first type of metaphors in the traditional classification is a harsh metaphor. We consider the examples of this metaphor and thus functions it performs on the material of comedies we have chosen:

- Lady Basildon: Men are grossly material, grossly material [20 P. 57]!

In this case, here is the harsh metaphor “*glossy material*”. This metaphor performs functions such as **play** (since gives a certain irony, comedy to the sentence), **emotionally-estimated** (there is a subject assessment and negative emotions) and **conspiring** (with the help of this metaphor there is classifying the general meaning of the utterance) [7 P. 107].

- Lady Chiltern: ... And money that comes from a tainted source is a degradation. Power? But power is nothing in itself [21 P. 61].

In this sentence, a sharp metaphor of “money is a degradation” emotional -estimated function (carries a negative assessment), mnemonic (as using this metaphor storing information occurs quite easily), moreover, the metaphor can serve to the formation of a certain slogan, quote, logo, etc.) and conspiring (there is classifying the true meaning of statements).

- Lady Markby: ... Mine (husband) is the general rule, and nothing ages a woman so rapidly as having married the general rule [22 P. 81].

Here the metaphor “the general rule” realize functions such as **play** (present comic tone), **encoding** (there is a subject of classification) and **emotionally-estimated** (since there is evaluation and emotion in saying).

Lady Bracknell : ... You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter- a girl brought up with the utmost care- to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel [20 P. 31]? In this example, we clearly see a sharp metaphor of “a cloak- room” and “a parcel”. Presented metaphors perform such functions as encoding (subject of classification), **nominative** (development in the word figurative meaning), **play** (presences of irony, comic) and **emotionally – estimated** (presence of negative emotions and consequently evaluation)

Cecil Graham: Here you are going to be married again; thought you are tired of that game.[22 P. 33] In this case, a sharp metaphor of “game” bears the features such as the **nominative** (there is figurative meaning of a word), **emotionally – estimated** and **conspiring** (there is sense of classification statements).

Mrs. Allonby: All men are married women’s property. That is the only true definition of what married women’s property really is. [21 P. 34] Presented metaphor in this example, “women’s property” carries out such functions as **conspiring, emotionally – estimated, nominative, mnemonic**.

Thus, considered from the perspective of a sharp metaphor fulfillment of certain functions in the text it should be noted that most of the metaphor performs functions such as:

- **nominative**: since in most cases the contact facing away from each other leads to the development of concepts in the word figurative meanings, thus enriching the vocabulary of the text.

- **emotionally – estimated**: from the metaphor theory and also according to the examples given in the work becomes apparent, that a sharp metaphor adds text field, sometimes taunts, which leads to the emergence of emotions in replicas of heroes and as a result contributes to the appearance of some estimates.

- **play**: it is quite common if such a function, which is due to the previously mentioned taunts and sharpness of this metaphor.

- **conspiring**: less often we see this function in sharp metaphors. Nevertheless, classification of meaning is a common phenomenon in terms of a sharp metaphor.

- **encoding**: this feature occurs more rarely than the above. But despite this sometimes sharp metaphor can serve as a prerequisite for the security classification of the characters [9 P. 35].

- **mnemonic**: review of the functions the reader watches in the works of Oscar Wilde are rare, due to the fact that it is typical for most scientific style than for art.

The following types of metaphors to be considered is erased metaphor, and metaphor-formula. These types of metaphors are very similar to each other so as that, and the other type is a common main feature even more commonplace [10 P. 151]. Nevertheless, there is a difference; it is even more stereotyped formulas-metaphors and sometimes impossibility of its conversion into non-figurative design. Let us consider in more detail these types of metaphors and their functions in the comedy material:

- Mrs. Marchmont: Pray, Mr. Montford, do not make these painful scenes of jealousy in public! In this case, we see a metaphor for “painful scenes”; the considered the metaphor could be called obliterated as its figurative nature of today is not there. The text referred to the metaphor of the following functions:

- **informative** (as it creates a complete image of the events), **conspiring** (it hides the true

meaning of statements), **nominative** (portable form values) and **emotionally – estimated** (there are negative emotions in pronouncing).

- Algernon: All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his. [22 P. 155] In this sentence erased metaphor "tragedy" performs such functions as play (there is a certain cynicism, irony expression), **conspiring, emotionally – estimated and nominative**.

- Lady Bracknell:..., been used for that purpose before now-but it could hardly be regarded as an assured basis ("the hand-bag") for a recognized position in good society. Here we are faced with the metaphor "an assured basis", characterized by even more stereotyped than the above listed erased metaphors. Hence the metaphor "an assured basis" is deleted and perform such functions as **encoding** (classification of the subject), **nominative** (figurative meaning appears in the word), **emotionally – estimated** (the existence of negative attitudes).

- Lord Darlington: Ah, what a fascinating Puritan you are, Lady Windermere! [21 P. 33] In this example, the formula- metaphor "a fascinating Puritan" carries out such functions as **conspiring, emotionally – estimated, play, nominative and mnemonic**.

- Cecily: And surely there must be much good in one who is kind to an invalid, and leaves the pleasures of London to sit by a bed of pain. [22 P. 33] The proposal metaphor of "a bed of pain" is clearly obliterated, as in it there is some generally accepted, but at the same time, there is no stereotype, and the inability to convert in non-figurative design. Obliterated metaphor of "a bed of pain" performs such functions as **nominative** (it opens in a figurative meaning of the word), **informative** (it forms a panorama, the image more clearly the ongoing pattern) and **emotionally – estimated** (the word "pain" in this metaphor emphasizes all the tension of feelings and emotions).

- Sir Robert Chiltern: Gertrude, you are to me *the white image of all good things*, and sin can never touch you! There is formula- metaphor "the white image of all good things", performs functions such as **emotionally- estimated and conspiring**.

So, after analyzing erased metaphors and formula- metaphor on the material comedies O. Wilde came to the following conclusions:

Because of the similarity of symptoms these types of metaphors, argue that they are performing equivalent functions in the text, namely **nominative, informative, emotionally- estimated, conspiring**. In rare cases, a mnemonic and encoding.

The fourth type of metaphor is in the traditional classification is quite common in the comedies of Wilde is the unfolded metaphor. Consider the function of the metaphor in the examples:

- Description: Mabel Chiltern is *a perfect example* of the English type of prettiness, the apple- blossom type. She has all *the fragrance and freedom of a flower*. There is *ripple after ripple of sunlight in her hair*, and the little mouth, with its parted lips, is expectant, like the mouth of a child. She has *the fascinating tyranny of youth*, and the astonishing courage of innocence. To sane people she is not reminiscent of any work of art. But she's really like *a Tanagra statuette*, and would be rather annoyed if she were told so. [30 P. 32]

This example clearly traced metaphor for carrying new metaphors. In other words, in front of us it is a real unfolded metaphor carried out throughout the whole message. This type of metaphor is manifested in functions such as text-forming (the ability to generate text metaphor), **informative** (there is panoramic with depicted by the author of the text), **nominative** and **emotionally- estimated** [11 P. 104], [12 P. 52].

- Lady Windermere: Yes. Nowadays people seem to look on life as *a speculation*. It is not a speculation. *It is a sacrament. Its deal is Love. Its purification is sacrifice*. [20; 150] Here, as in the previous example, in front of the reader appears typical unfolded metaphor carried out in the same paragraph. In contrast to the sharp metaphor, metaphor Unfolded gives in this, as in the previous case, the softness of the text, the hill ideas, which would provide us with the author. The metaphor of the following functions: **text-forming** (as it is carried on throughout the whole message), **nominative** (disclose any figurative meanings of words), **emotionally-estimated** (present views of the author about life, accompanied by some estimate).

Lord Illingworth: That is *its special vice*. That is *the special vice of the age*. One should sympathise with the joy, the beauty, *the colour of life*. The less said about *life's sores* the better, Mr. Kelvil. [20 P. 95] There is extended metaphor which carries the features such as **text-forming, emotionally-estimated, nominative and conspiring**.

Gerald: It is to take away *the bitterness out of your life*, to take *the shadow* that lies on your name, that this marriage must take place. [21 P. 65] In this example, the metaphor is used throughout the whole sentence, which indicates that the extended metaphor appears as in the previous four examples. In this case, it performs

functions such as text-forming, informative, conspiring and nominative [14 P. 35], [15 P. 27].

After analysis of the extended metaphor from the perspective of its accomplishment the certain features in the text, it should be noted that in most cases the metaphor performs functions such as:

- **text-forming**: its main feature is to go through a whole sentence, a paragraph, a message and thereby give rise to a literary text [16 P. 532].

- **informative**: due to its deploying it creates panoramic, colorful image, pleasing to the perception of the narratee.

- **emotionally-estimated**: by means of its ability to soften the text, to give it some greatness, genteelness, beauty and emotions as a consequence and the various judgments of the characters of the work.

- **nominative**: its ability is to create figurative meaning in the word [17 P. 358].

- **conspiring**: this function is found, but not as often as the above functions [18 P. 100].

The last form which we have covered in the traditional classification is a realized metaphor. The feature of this type of metaphor is that it proposes handling a metaphorical expression without regard to its figurative nature, that is, as if it was a metaphor that had the direct meaning [19 P. 351]. It is necessary to consider this type of metaphor, in accordance with the functions that it performs.

Sir Robert Chiltern: Lord Goring is the result of Boodle's Club, Mrs. Cheveley. [22 P. 75] In the sentence "the result of Boodle's Club" is a realized metaphor due to the fact that it can be perceived by the narratee as if it had a direct meaning. Mentioned above the realized metaphor performs the following functions: nominative (as it carries the figurative meaning of the word), emotionally-estimated (there are judgments and emotions of the speaker), as well as a play (the presence of the comic element).

Lady Windermere: ..., and I don't see why a man should think he is pleasing a woman enormously when he says to her *a whole heap of things* he doesn't mean. [21 P. 35] The realized metaphor "a whole heap of things" contains the following functions: conspiring, nominative, play.

Thus, as part of the study of Wilde's comedies "An Ideal Husband", "A Woman Of No Importance", "Lady Windermere's Fan", "The Importance Of Being Earnest" it turns out that the author had an increased sensitivity to English word, to such stylistic phenomenon as a metaphor, his comedies includes a profound

interpretation of the very nature of the prose, not only of society and *socium*.

This article was an attempt to draw attention to the phenomenon of metaphor through consideration of linguostylistic theories and analysis of metaphorical potential of language in Wilde's comedies while solving relevant problems: review of general linguistic concept of metaphors, the definition of significance and classification of metaphors in the stylistic theory, case detection of metaphors use and the study of their types in the comedies of Wilde "An Ideal Husband", "A Woman of No importance", "Lady Windermere's Fan", "The importance of Being Earnest", a contextual analysis of the significance of metaphors on the material of Wilde's comedies and the generalization of the results. Illustration of the use of metaphors, based on four comedies of Wilde, once again proved how much metaphorical language of the writer can be rich, and that prose is not conceivable without such a phenomenon as a metaphor. That is why, interest has not still extinguished in the detailed study of metaphors, especially in the works of such well-known writer such as Oscar Wilde.

The analysis shows that Wilde uses the following metaphors in his comedy:

- **sharp metaphor** that brings together different concepts. Model: young days, picturesque protests.

- **dead metaphor** is a common metaphor and its figurative character is no longer there. Model: clever talk, gigantic intellects.

- extended metaphor which is carried out throughout a large fragment of the statement or the total statement as a whole.

Model:

Lord Illingworth. Don't be afraid, Gerald. Remember that you've got on your side the most wonderful thing in the world – youth! There is nothing like youth. **The middle-aged are mortgaged to Life. The old are in Life's lumber-room. But youth is the Lord of Life. Youth has a kingdom waiting for it.** Every is born a **king**, and most people die in **exile**, like most kings. ...

- **realized metaphor** involves manipulation of metaphorical expression without regard to its figurative nature, i.e. as if the metaphor had a direct meaning. Model: essence of destruction.

- **metaphor-formula** is close to the dead metaphor, but differs from it even more stereotype, and sometimes it cannot be converted into non-figurative structure. Model: the true ideals, artificial social barriers.

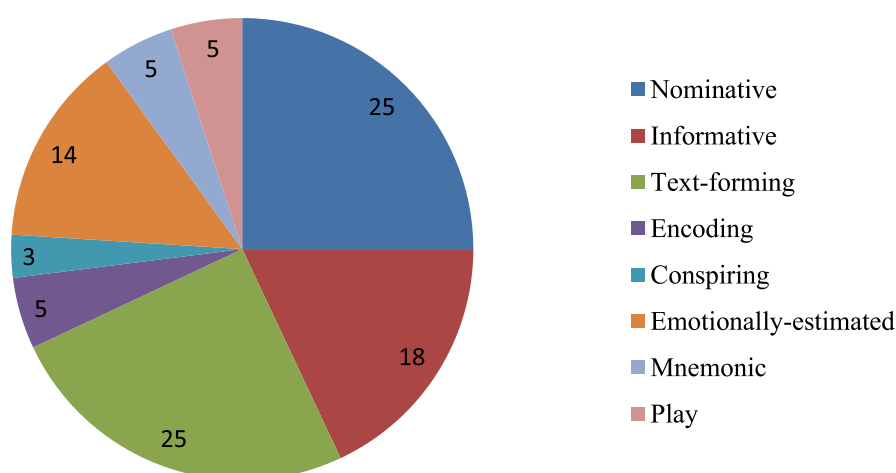


Fig. 2. Functions of metaphor

Thus, it should be noted that the metaphors, in the comedies of Oscar Wilde, make it possible to feel the psychological state of the author, as well as deep features of his character, life experience and world view. Metaphors create not only the moral and psychological atmosphere of a comedy, but they also enhance the emotional impact on the narratee.

In the description of everyday life of epoch of that time metaphors are realistic, as they help to present a faithful portrait of relations between people. Thus, the metaphors, in comedies, enable the reader to feel the connection of the inner world of the poet with a deep, mysterious and as-yet unknown laws of nature and human society.

Metaphors, in Wilde's comedies, perform many different functions (Fig. 2):

- nominative: (a metaphor in the title) it allows to develop figurative meaning in the word, creates a powerful counterweight to the formation of an infinite number of new words. In comedy, this function is primarily implemented in the dead metaphors and sharp metaphors, which are fairly common in the author's work (25%);

- informative (specificity of the metaphorical information) it is realized in metaphors ability to transmit information, creating a holistic, panoramic image. This feature is based on the nature of the visual image. O. Wilde creates colorful paintings of his experiences, emotions and feelings. He uses a vocabulary of different linguistic layers and different expressiveness – from the sublimated to explicit rude (18%);

- text-forming: it is a consequence of these features of metaphorical information

such as an image panorama. A large part of the unconscious in his structure is the pluralism of word reflections. This feature is disclosed in the extended metaphors, in their ability to be explained and continued. Certain metaphors of O. Wilde sometimes cover throughout speech (25%);

- encoding: it is to code the image (заключается в закреплении образа). Oscar Wilde uses encoding properties of metaphors to create covertness, innuendo in certain situations between lyrical heroes (5%);

- conspiring: it is to classify the meaning of the message (3%);

- emotionally-estimated: it has emotional impact on a reader (metaphor and estimation) (14%);

- mnemonic: (a metaphor and memory) it is a metaphor that contributes to a better memorization of information (5%);

- play: it creates comicality in the text (5%).

O. Wilde quite limited uses such functions as: genre-generative, heuristic, explanatory and ritual, as they are not very specific for the epoch of the late Victorian period.

To summarize, it is important to note that the metaphor provides exclusive copyright of the literary work, conveying ideas through sensory images, thereby reviving the grudging abstraction and making it closer to the narratee (reader).

Moreover, O. Wilde defines a lot of problems in his comedies, which are sensible for the writer, among them – the problem of the relationship between people; the individual with himself and the world around. The narratees directly in search of the solution of these

problems in the speech of characters. And the metaphors signify not the last role in it.

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