METAPHOR RESEARCH FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ECO-LINGUISTICS

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Abstract

Metaphoric cognition has both positive and negative sides. It's like a shiny two-sided coin with both benefits and cautions. On the one hand, the human experience of interacting with the natural world for thousands of years has resulted in metaphors that not only reflect a wealth of human thinking, but also innovative ways of securing a lasting possible future for us as people. Which is good. But there are other factors to be considered. For example, alongside its positive attributes, on the other hand, metaphoric cognition opens itself up to a world of subjective possibilities. Among them, it recognizes how knowledge, with its certain degrees of unreliability and limitations, might just pose a threat to mankind's actual survival. Due to the limitations of human cognitive ability, metaphorical cognition is inevitable. As far as metaphors related to eco-linguistics are concerned, the sky's the limit. They reveal and question the very metaphors we believe in and practice. They point us onward toward new and endearing metaphors to encourage people to protect life-sustaining ecosystems. Herein lies mankind's greatest hopes, because these metaphors become the things we both believe in, and practice. In short, they reflect our ecological language, forming the important role of learning.

Keywords: eco-linguistics, cognitive linguistics, metaphor

Introduction

When we deal with environmental crises, we need sophisticated technology, flexible policies, and the improvement of moral standards. In addition, we need better, less human-centric metaphors. Choosing what metaphor to rely on is important to us. If we cannot make wise choices or understand the meaning of metaphors, we may die. In short, metaphor is a kind of story that describes thing A as thing B. It "shows the identity between different things" [Martin 2014: 78], "by using knowledge

in familiar fields and combining (them) to another field and work" [Chilton & Schaffner 2011: 320]. Metaphor is an important part of cognition and understanding of the world. Some scholars such as Brigitte Nie Lixi and Russie Gaspar [Nerlich & Jaspal 2012: 143] even claim that the wrong choice of metaphor "may lead to Mankind (becoming) extinct." For this study, we have created a single mechanism for analyzing metaphors and structures, and then we will apply this mechanism to analyze texts to explore metaphors related to eco-linguistics.

Metaphor theory and framework theory are two completely different paths, from two different times in history. For a better understanding of their difference, just know that the theoretical research of metaphor can be traced back to the Aristotle era – many, many centuries ago – and "frame" (as it is called) is a new concept that appeared in use both with regular linguistics, and the linguistics of artificial intelligence from the 1970s. In fields such as cognitive science, however, these two concepts overlap each other and are often used interchangeably. For example, Nie Lixi, et al. [Nerlich, et al. 2002] used the expression "framework and metaphor" when studying the construction of foot-and-mouth disease: the British government, media, and citizens almost subconsciously rely on a well-structured framework and metaphor system, better known as Conceptualized foot-and-mouth disease. They mentioned that a large-scale foot-and-mouth disease broke out in the United Kingdom in 2001. The political and press used words such as "battle", "enemy", "victory", "battle", "frontline", and "task force" to construct the metaphor of "Responding to foot-and-mouth disease (as) a war". The construction of this metaphor has led people to take extreme measures to slaughter and burn thousands of animals, which has caused a bad impact on the welfare and living environment of the animals. It was reported that: "Although the war against oral disease has metaphorical characteristics in its name… its (damaging to the environment) impact is real and concrete". People could have adopted another conceptual approach – that is, using medical terms such as "treatment", "vaccination", "quarantine", "disease", "care", "cure" and "hygiene" – and thus take completely different behaviors: such as helping infected animals to heal and improve their immunity, vaccinating uninfected animals instead of killing them.

The relationship between metaphor and frame

From a cognitive perspective, the two cases are similar: the former uses war (including allies, enemy weapons, killings, etc.) to build the concept of foot-and-mouth disease, while the latter uses veterinary medicine (including veterinarians, patients, drug quarantine procedures, etc.) The concept of foot-and-mouth disease is different in that veterinary science is directly related to foot-and-mouth disease,

so it is not a metaphor. "War" and foot-and-mouth disease belong to completely different areas of life. Using the framework of war to conceptualize foot-and-mouth disease requires imagination to complete a great leap. The conceptualization of foot-and-mouth disease as war is a metaphor. As Donald Schon [Schon 1993: 141] said, the expression of the new presumption must be determined from the beginning as something different but related to the original thing in order to make this conceptualization process a metaphor. Build the process, rather than simply re-describe the process. From this point of view, metaphor and structure function in the same way, but metaphor is a special structure. The framework of metaphor comes from a specific and different area in life – usually an area familiar to us in our daily lives. Therefore, we can define metaphor by clarifying the relationship between metaphor and framework: metaphor uses the framework of a specific, concrete, and imaginable field in life to conceptualize another completely different field of life.

This is somewhat different from the most common way of describing metaphor in cognitive science [Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 58]. Cognitive science describes metaphor as a mapping from the source domain to the target domain. The target domain refers to the current field of discussion, and the source field refers to the field that provides a reference for the target field in terms of vocabulary and structure (see Figure 1). For example, in the metaphor that love is a journey, we use words from the source domain "journey" to discuss the target domain "love." However, it is obvious that the "source domain" referred to by metaphor theorists is actually composed of frames [Sullivan 2013: 23]. Karen Sullivan believes that a source domain like "body" is composed of frames such as movement, digestion, and observable body parts. In a particular metaphor (such as "thinking" is "exercise" and "digestion viewpoint"), it is the concrete framework ("exercise" and "digestion") rather than the more abstract source domain ("body") that constructs the target domain. Therefore, the metaphor is said to be from the source frame to the target frame. The mapping of the source frame to the target frame is reasonable, and it is also applicable to other non-metaphoric frames. According to the mechanism used in this article, metaphor is also a kind of frame – where the source frame comes from a specific domain in life. It is completely different from the imaginable domain and the domain to which the target domain belongs.

An article by Rebecca Solnit in The Guardian entitled "What You Call Climate Change: Violence" clarifies the difference between metaphorical and non-metaphorical frameworks. Solnit wrote: "Climate change is global violence, violence against regions, humans, and other species. Once we look at it truthfully, we can start a real dialogue about our priorities and values, because resisting violence starts with resisting language that conceals violence. This method of reconstructing climate
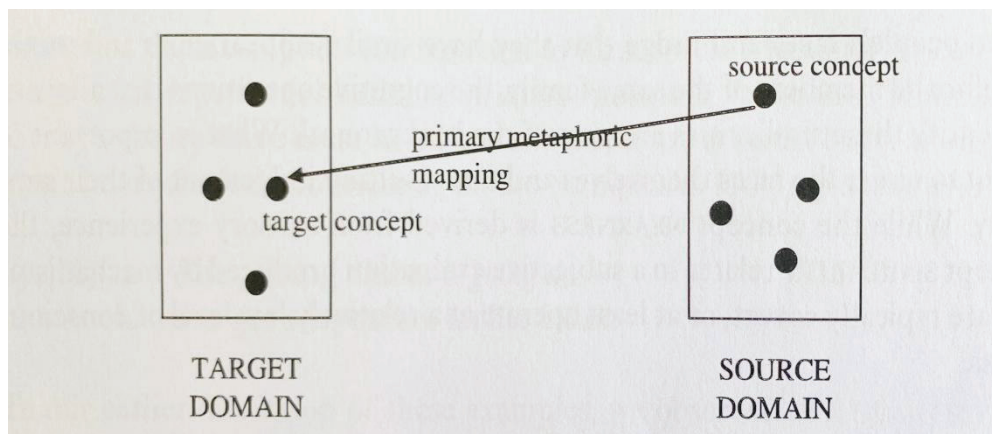
change from environmental problems into violent behavior emphasizes the direct impact of excessive consumption behavior in developed countries on people in poor countries, causing harm and death"[1]. The meaning of this structure is quite literal, which can be seen from the "what" in the title of the article. The source framework of "violence" is large enough to cover "climate change", because violence can be understood as a way of causing physical harm to others, even if it is only an indirect cause of harm in the current context. In the same way, it is not metaphorical to frame "climate change" as "problems", "dilemmas", "moral issues" or "environmental issues", because these frameworks are broad enough to directly include climate change and frame climate change. The framework of the "roller coaster" used by the author clearly belongs to a specific and distinct field. The source framework of the "roller coaster" is too specific to include climate change in a literal sense. If the title mentioned above is called "whatever climate change is: a roller coaster" then climate change is simply a roller coaster. It doesn't make sense semantically. Climate change can only be metaphorically constructed as a roller coaster, as written in the following environmental blog: "The earth may have reached the highest point on the roller coaster of climate change, and the high-speed driving thereafter may make people feel discomfort. Humans may not be able to survive to the end".

Chris Russell [Russel 2010] also introduced many other metaphors used to describe climate change. For example: "The metaphors in climate language can be seen everywhere, there are warm sheds and greenhouses, atmospheric blankets, and atmospheric voids, sinks and grounds, flip and strobe switches, conveyor belts... even bungee enthusiasts who jump off a speeding roller coaster". The most famous is Wally Broek's statement. He warned everyone that the climate is as dangerous as

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[1] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/07/climate-change-violence-occupy-earth

a "tempered beast" with humans poking a stick at. Other famous scientists are also rushing to join this word game. Alli talked about the "drunkard" model of the climate system – when he was taken alone, he would sit quietly; when he was forced to walk, he would stagger and sway. James Hansen also reminded us: "The climate sudden change is like a slippery slope, like a deal between Faust and the devil, and more like a time bomb. Now this bomb is on the verge of a tipping point and is in danger of exploding at any time." This metaphor has constructed the scientific community to theorize climate change and talk to the public. Various ways of climate change also construct the way people conceptualize climate change in daily life. Vocabulary such as "blanket", "switch", "drunkard", "greenhouse" and "roller coaster" triggers the framework of specific and familiar areas in daily life, and is used to construct a more vague and less clearly defined field of climate change. Generally speaking, the source framework used by metaphors is clear and specific and is mostly related to body movements. It is easy to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell and taste [Semino 2008: 11]. The framework of metaphor and non-metaphor is similar in the level of cognitive function, but metaphor has additional heterogeneity and specific characteristics, which makes metaphor stronger and more vivid. In most cases, it is easy to distinguish whether this frame belongs to a "specific and clearly different area of life", but there are also some marginal cases where the boundaries are not very clear. The above examples contain the most obvious metaphors (such as "angry beast"), but also have a more literal structure.

The Eco-linguistic Perspective of Metaphor Research

Metaphor establishes a model of reasoning – Mark Johnson [Johnson 1983] called it "Metaphorical Reasoning", James Martin called it "Analogous Reasoning", an inductive argument presenting a situation as another kind of situation which is "similar" or has common characteristics, and achieves the purpose of making people react similarly to these two situations. Metaphorical reasoning is based on the concepts extracted from the source frame and draws conclusions about the target domain. In 2004, "Scientific American" published an article written by climatologist Jim Hansen with the title "Removing the Time Bomb of Global Warming"[2]. The source framework "Time Bomb" is used to construct the target domain "Global warming." The source framework has certain elements – bombs, bomb disposal people, bomb disposal methods, potential explosions, and victims. These elements form a structured relationship with each other. The structure of the time bomb framework is limited. The bomb disposal person must use effective methods to dismantle the

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[2] https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/defusing-the-global-warmi/

bomb, otherwise, it will explode and cause casualties. In Hansen's article, the bomb maps "global warming", and the bomb disposal method maps "reverse the growth trend of atmospheric pollutants" and maintain "Carbon emission level", "explosion" maps "the coastline will be submerged"; potential victims are "most people in the world"; "bomb disposal guys" point to ambiguity and do not specifically map anyone. Metaphorical reasoning uses the structure of the source frame and inserts the corresponding elements taken from the target domain in it. Under the above metaphoric framework, the following conclusions can be drawn: within a limited time, the relevant people must reverse the growth trend of air pollutants and maintain the level of carbon emissions to prevent global warming. Otherwise, the coastline will be submerged and most people in the world will be harmed.

Through this alternative method, we can also draw many other possible conclusions from the source framework, such as "Once the bomb has exploded, it will not cause harm again", and then infer that "Once global warming has occurred, it will not happen again" and "cause harm". Nevertheless, the reasoning model that Hansen wants to promote is obviously to emphasize the possibility and urgency of action, just as removing a time bomb and emphasizing urgency may have some effect, but if people find that the timetable for the mandatory reduction of carbon dioxide emissions cannot be fulfilled, That is to say, the bomb cannot be dismantled within the specified time, so the metaphor of "climate change is a time bomb" will be criticized because it may lead to inaction. The news headline "50 months to save the world" followed the metaphorical reasoning of the "time bomb", which might inspire people to take action. However, after a few months, carbon emissions continued to increase, with almost no concrete actions taken. Like another metaphor – playing a seesaw on a cliff, – the time bomb metaphor is an all-or-nothing, and its risk is that it may lead to "nothing".

In general, when analyzing metaphors, we must first identify the source frame and target domain, and then (using text clues) find out which elements of the source frame should be mapped to the target domain, so that it is possible to find the underlying reasoning mode in the metaphor. And analyze its advantages and disadvantages. According to the viewpoint of ecological linguistics, the most important thing is to investigate the nature of metaphors from the perspective of ecological view, that is, whether it is a destructive metaphor, neutral metaphor, or beneficial metaphor. Some theorists [Romaine 1996; Goatly 2001; Nerlich and Jaspal 2012] exaggerated the importance of metaphors by using "metaphors for which we are born" or "metaphors for which we die". Raymond and others expressed more cautiously. They think it is necessary to "systematically consider the advantages of different metaphors in the process of making environmental decisions." But

since context is important, the idea that a certain metaphor is destructive under any circumstances is too simplistic. Therefore, Raymond and others suggest that we should "consider a variety of metaphors in order to understand the relationship between humans and the environment, and choose appropriate metaphors to fit the context of...". Kratz [Keulartz 2007: 45] criticized the metaphor of "ecological restoration" that regards nature as a work of art because people often do not know what state the ecosystem needs to be restored to. He concluded that the metaphor is applicable. In the context of a slight degradation of the ecosystem, it is clear at this time what state the ecology should be restored to. For highly degraded habitats, other metaphors – such as the metaphor of "ecological health" – are more applicable. Constructing human metaphors about the concept of "nature" is the most common metaphor in eco-linguistic analysis. Frans Verhagen pointed out: "Revealing the myths, hypotheses, and ideologies that form the basis of the concept of nature is a new aspect of ecolinguistics. One of the main functions of the subject is precisely through the language of metaphor, which makes these assumptions spread".

Many studies have examined how target domains such as "nature", "earth", and "ecosystem" are constructed from various source frames, including gardens, islands, spaceships, lifeboats, clocks, warehouses, artworks, libraries, networks, communities, tapestries, creatures, people, and goddesses, etc., most of which belong to five main categories – location, machine, commodity, creature, and network; there are some that do not fall into these five categories, such as competition. This article considers whether metaphors indicate that humans are part of nature, whether they can promote human respect for other species, and whether they can improve human awareness of environmental constraints, etc., to study the applicability of metaphors. Nikolai Clementsov and Daniel Todes [Krementsoy & Todes 1991], and Larson [Larson 2011] condemned the metaphor of "Nature is competition" and its variants "nature is a battle", "nature is a struggle", "nature is a war" as destructive. Clementsov and Todice's expression is as follows: "Darwin's 'Origin of Species' book is full of fighting images – words such as 'life and death' and 'natural war' abound. The metaphor of 'Battle for Survival' utilizes the power of combat imagery, and also involves various natural relationships. Although Darwin described the relationship of mutually beneficial cooperation between organisms, his description is based on the primary metaphor of 'natural selection in nature, survival of the fittest'". Larson believes that this metaphor not only echoes the "humanity competition theory", which was previously recognized by the economist Adam Smith and others, but also gives this view new rationality: once it is introduced in this way with this metaphor, it is easier for people to defend it in the cultural field. We should not only recognize the existence of competition, but also actively promote competition,

because competition is the way the world operates, and it is natural.

The metaphor of "Nature is competition" strengthens the hypothesis of neoclassical economics – human beings are inherently selfish, and they only care about whether the satisfaction of personal interests can be maximized. This metaphor dilutes the role of concepts such as cooperation and mutual benefit. To protect the ecosystem on which life depends to meet human needs, Larson believes that metaphors such as "nature is progress" and "nature is competition" are "ideological metaphors with great influence. These metaphors are how humans get along and how to get along. How to treat nature provides a rationale. Therefore, for the sustainable development of social ecology, we need to reconsider these metaphors." He later added: "If we can strike a balance between corporate liberalism and a more cooperative worldview, we can take the path of sustainable development more firmly."

"Nature is a machine" is another metaphor that is generally regarded as destructive. "Nature" or "Earth" is compared to various machines, such as clocks, factories, computers, or spaceships. The primary problem of this metaphor is that the machine is composed of assembled parts which can be repaired by repairing and replacing defective parts without the need for overall repair. This can lead to a false optimism that technological methods such as carbon capture and storage, nuclear fusion, hydrogen-powered vehicles, or geoengineering can solve environmental problems one by one. Nie Lixi and Gaspar studied various metaphors related to geoengineering in various newspapers and found that "turn down the global thermostat", "repair the atmosphere", "repair the climate", "technical methods", "tool kits", and expressions such as "toolbox" all describe climate as "a machine like a car that can be repaired with technical tools; and climate repair is constructed as simple and ordinary as if it is completely within the control of scientists and engineers."

"Earth is a cosmic spaceship" is a form of machine metaphor, but because it contains some positive factors, it is regarded as a neutral metaphor. Like other machine metaphors, "the technical metaphor of spacecraft reflects the image of human beings as managers and controllers rather than as servers", but it can also highlight environmental constraints. Its metaphorical reasoning model is: resources in a spacecraft are limited, so the resources of the earth are limited too. We depend on the life support system in the spacecraft, so we depend on the ecosystem of the earth. Kenneth Boulding [Boulding 1966: 9] was one of the first to use this metaphor. He said that "the earth is a spaceship, and there is no infinite reserve of resources for human extraction or pollution." Susannah Romane [Romaine 1996: 184] believes that the metaphor "emphasizes the fragility of the environment and the plight of human beings, the safety of life is uncertain because life cannot exist outside the environment protected by spacecraft."

The metaphor of "Nature is a living thing" is slightly better than the metaphor of "Nature is a machine". This kind of metaphor also has many manifestations, the most abstract of which is the "ecosystem health" metaphor, or the "ecosystem medicine" metaphor. The metaphor of "ecosystem medicine" strives to find "a systematic approach to solve the problems of prevention, diagnosis, and prediction of ecosystem management". This requires a more complex method to deal with ecological problems because organisms exist in the form of a whole and have the ability to repair themselves. This is the opposite of a machine, which is assembled from repairable parts and requires intervention to repair it. As Elizabeth Sartorius said, "Nature as a whole, shouldn't it be more like our naturally evolved creatures than machines?" However, Robert Lackey [Lackey 2007: 15] argues that this metaphor expressed opposition because it allows scientists rather than decision-makers to set goals for the healthy development of the ecosystem. This argument is quite tenable. Kratz takes a more positive attitude towards this metaphor because it "promotes the mutual cooperation between natural scientists, social scientists, and medical scientists"; it can promote relevant discussions and debates, and prompt humans to reach a consensus on what ecosystem health is.

Compared with the "nature is a machine" metaphor, the "ecosystem health" metaphor is more likely to make people respect and care for nature because, in this metaphor, living things are at least alive. However, the fly in the ointment is that the metaphor of "ecosystem health" delegates the responsibility of medical care to experts. In some cases, health metaphors can evoke a fairly simplistic "problem-solution" framework. For example, Nie Lixi and Gasl [Nerlich & Jaspal 2012: 139] found that the metaphor of "the earth is a patient" is used to explain the rationality of the "technical approach" of geoengineering: climate change is mapped to cancer, and the earth is mapped to a patient. For patients, geoengineering is mapped to medical intervention, and engineers are mapped to doctors. Here, non-experts have no specific mapping roles. Frank Frenz [Forencich 1992: 142] also advocated the use of this metaphor, but the form of mapping he used fundamentally changed the original reasoning model: if the earth is a living body, what physiological role do humans play? What kind of cells do we belong to? Judging from the current state of the earth and the trend of faster and faster population growth, the answer is shocking but unavoidable –

human beings are cancer cells of the earth. Here, human beings are mapped into cancer cells, and patients are mapped into the earth. The most obvious reasoning model of this metaphor is: "To cure cancer is to kill cancer cells, and to cure the earth is to eliminate mankind". Since it is "not a practical option" [Forencich 1992: 144], Frentz did not adopt it. Instead, he gave a series of interventions to treat cancer,

such as reducing consumption, redistributing wealth, slowing population growth, etc. "The normal parts of the living body of the earth are the healthy tissues (such as forests) that act against cancer cells and protect the earth". This metaphor highlights the urgency of action – we are undergoing an "emergency surgery", during which the earth may lose its entire life at any time. However, the negative positioning of human beings as cancer cells may lead to the ignorance of the inherent value of people, especially the inherent value of residents living in areas with rapid population growth. Therefore, the metaphor can be regarded as a neutral metaphor, its pros and cons depending on the mapping method.

Conclusions and Enlightenment

Thus, it can be said that "if something tends to maintain the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biological community, it is correct; otherwise, it is wrong" [Leopold 1979: 224]. However, Greg Garrard [Garrard 2012: 81] criticized this metaphor for failing to specify what and who is in the community, and what and who is outside the community: "If the community cannot be described properly, if we can't establish the ideal and stable conditions of the community, we can't use 'integrity' and 'stable' as the objective criteria for judging moral behavior." There is no doubt that besides this metaphor, other principles are needed to guide specific actions. Yet, this metaphor at least puts human beings in nature and expounds a moral orientation beyond the purely human world.

Although most metaphor studies in the field of eco-linguistics focus on various metaphorical constructions of nature and their advantages and disadvantages, there are other metaphors that are equally important to eco-linguistic research. For example, the destructive metaphor of "economic growth is the tide" is frequently used. President Obama once said: "The United States promises that our prosperity can and must become a tide so that every ship will set sail; we will rise and fall together with our country." This metaphor usually uses "the tide goes up, and the boat goes up" to mean that economic growth is the solution to the poverty problem. Here, economic growth is mapped to tides, and the wealth of the rich and poor is mapped to small boats. Another metaphor, "the cake increases, the share increases" (a rephrase similar to "the tide rises, the boat is high") has the same reasoning model.

From the perspective of ecology, the above two types of metaphors can be regarded as destructive metaphors, because they both try to defend unlimited growth in a finite world. Considering environmental constraints, the economy cannot grow forever, and the tide will definitely retreat. The raw materials will also be exhausted, but these implications from the source framework have not been formed. In a finite world, the only way to "raise the poor's boat" is to redistribute, and the metaphor

of "economic growth is the tide" tries to divert people's attention from the poor. As Kowalski [Kowalski 2013: 79] said, "Economic growth is often seen as an alternative to fair distribution. As long as there is economic growth, there is hope, which makes the huge income gap easy to tolerate." However, we can also use different modes of reasoning to resist this metaphor. Generally speaking, the reason why metaphors in texts can become powerful language means is that they can directly convey vivid images to readers' minds. Whether these images can build a longer cognitive model in the readers' minds depends on the readers themselves, what other metaphors they have been exposed to, and what metaphors prevail in the society they belong to. To reveal and question the metaphors we believe in and practice, to find new metaphors to encourage people to protect the ecosystem that sustains life, and to promote these metaphors to become new metaphors we believe in and practice is an important role of eco-linguistics.

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ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ МЕТАФОР С ТОЧКИ ЗРЕНИЯ ЭКОЛИНГВИСТИКИ

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Аннотация

Из-за ограниченности познавательных способностей человека метафорическое познание неизбежно, при этом оно имеет как положительные, так и отрицательные стороны. С одной стороны, как средство объяснения и результат опыта, накопленного человечеством в процессе взаимодействия с миром в течение тысячелетий, метафора – это не только драгоценное богатство человеческого мышления, но и способ выживания людей. С другой стороны – заключенное в метафорах знание имеет определенную степень ненадежности и ограниченности, что может представлять угрозу для выживания человека. Эколингвистика занимается как выявлением метафор, которые уже прочно вошли в язык экологических проблем, так и поиском новых метафор, побуждающих людей защищать жизнеобеспечивающие экосистемы. Продвижение этих метафор позволяет объективно осознать имеющиеся в обществе экологические проблемы.

Ключевые слова: эколингвистика, когнитивная лингвистика, метафора

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