

## PERSONIFICATION OF MENTAL CONCEPTS

The article presents a brief excursus of linguistic and cognitive reasoning concerning the personification of the basic lexical units of the lexical-semantic field “Intellectual activity”. Personalization process implements an intrinsic property of metaphors, that is the property of anthropocentrism. It must be mentioned that the content of conceptual personification differs because while transforming personally identifiable object in a new status, it presents deeper comprehension. The article also summarizes the relationship between metaphorical shift and personification. Personification is a subtype of the metaphor, the essence of which is to express the transfer of characteristics of a living object to an inanimate object. The article also highlights the universal mechanism of personification that relates ideas, abstractions and inanimate objects with human nature, character, or feelings; representation of imaginary beings or things like having a human character, intellect and emotions. In the focus of analyses there are verbalized concepts of mind, memory, thought, soul, spirit, wisdom, which constitute the basic parcel of lexical-semantic field “Intellectual activity”. Verbalized abstract concepts that relate to intellectual activity, are often targeted to personification process that could not go unnoticed in lexical studies.

**Key words:** lexical-semantic field, cognitive linguistics, intellectual activity, verbalized concept, personification.

**Formulation of a research problem and its significance.** Topicality of the article is determined by the fact that cognitive aspect of linguistic investigations helps to explicate and clarify a lot of lexical phenomena in any language. The last few years have witnessed a spectacular change of climate in linguistics which endures the anthropocentric shift of scientific investigations. It enables linguists to retrospect the role of language and thought from the point of view of cognition. In contemporary linguistics it has become almost axiomatic that metaphor serves as an important element in the concept formation and cognition. Thus it links language with myth and art on the one hand and the correlating modes of thought on the other. Language in its turn is regarded as a form of knowledge, that is, of thought and cognition. Hence metaphorical processes can be investigated in terms of cognitive semantics.

Personification, as one of the types of metaphor, is the attribution of personal nature or character to inanimate objects or abstract notions, i.e. the representation of abstraction in the form of a person [1]. Analyzing the sphere of mental activity of a human being you will inevitably find yourself in the world of metaphor and feel the influence of the latter on the conceptual structures of the lexical units which represent mental activity.

**Analysis of the research into this problem.** Many studies indicate a genetic link personification, as a trope, has with a metaphor, it is studied as an attribute of the latter (N. I. Bakhmutova, N. O. Guchinskaya, S. K. Konstantinova, T. E. Cherkasova, etc.). Most clearly this relationship is revealed at the level of the common language, or formula metaphors, which lost its imagery (N. D. Arutyunova, V. N. Telia).

While analyzing personification, it is necessary to mention that some researchers (T. V. Orichimenko, A. A. Zalevskaya) define the essence of personification via metaphor. Personification, as it was mentioned above, is a subtype of the metaphor, the essence of which is to express the transfer of characteristics of a living object to an inanimate object [1, 370]. According to T. V. Orichimenko, this trope is a semantic phenomenon, which allows to reconstruct the main stages of the ethnic picture of the world. Thus, we can conclude that the personification reflects the processes taking place in any society, as well as the stereotypes that underlie a rethinking of certain objects of reality [2; 7].

Personification, could be named as an element, fully actualizing “incoherent property of a metaphor – its anthropometric aspect” [3, 127] – the principle that “man is the measure of all things” [4, 174] and it implements the most concise way to create a “naive view of the world”.

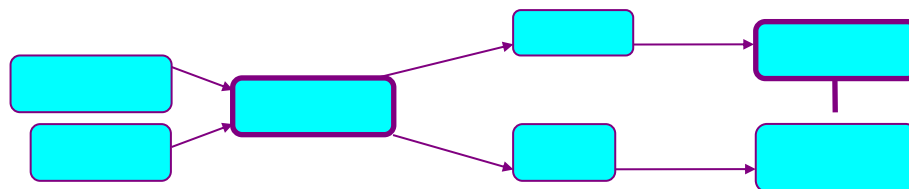
<sup>19</sup>♥ *Nizhehorodtseva-Kyrychenko L., 2015*

**The goal and the specific tasks of the article.** The figure of speech we are going to cover in this article is personification, which occurs when a thing is spoken of as if it were a person, or takes on the attributes of a person. The main task of this article is to analyze the peculiarities of personification and metaphorical shifts of the lexical units which belong to the lexico-semantic field “Intellectual activity”.

**Statement regarding the basic material of the research and the justification of the results obtained.** The Greek word for personification is *prosopopoeia*, which, interestingly, has come into English in its own right, and appears in English dictionaries with a meaning that is slightly different from the meaning it had in Greek as “personification”. Today, as well as meaning “personification”, *prosopopoeia* is when an imaginary person is represented as speaking or acting. The figure of speech personification creates more intimacy, identity, or intensity than does a literal expression of fact [7; 8]. Playing the essential role in the life of an individual such concepts as *mind*, *soul*, *spirit*, *thought*, *wit* are naturally subdued to the process of metaphorization in general and personification in particular. Here we shall be concerned with the phenomena: 1) of personification in the conceptual structures of the words *head*, *brain*, *mind*, *soul*, *spirit*, *intellect*, *reason*, *wit*; 2) of metaphorical process in the conceptual structures of the words *consciousness*, *mentality*, *thought*, *wisdom*.

All the above mentioned words can be integrated “under the roof” of the general concept “substance”. In common sense substance is regarded as synonymic to matter and is subdivided into corporeal and incorporeal substance. In philosophical sense the concept of substance is the essence of a thing, considered as a continuing whole with inherent attributes [5; 6]. It presents matter not as something opposed to consciousness, but in the light of the inner unity of all forms of its movement, and of all differences and opposites, including the opposition of being and consciousness; it exists independently and is casually active. Thus, the hypothetical conceptual model of substance includes 6 parameters: *matter* [symbol Sb], (corporeal [crp] / incorporeal [inc]), form [F], quality [Q], location [Loc], activity [Act] and can be presented in the following way:

Scheme № 1



Activity in our investigation is considered as normal mental powers, function or process, i.e. *modus vivendi* of mental substance. Due to this model several differentiating criteria can be extracted, which explicate the direction and ways of metaphorical processes. Suffice it to say that metaphor embraces all the constituent conceptual elements of substance.

1. The main criterion deals with the divergency of substance into corporeal / non corporeal. Only two words (*head*, *brain*) belong to the corporeal subgroup, the rest of them are the constituents of the non-corporeal one. The semantic structures of the words **head** and **brain**, possessing real referents, perfectly fit the conceptual structure of the corporeal substance. They can be defined as: 1) **real organs**; 2) **definite location**: **head** – the upper part of the body containing the eyes, nose, mouth and brain; **brain** – [C] organ of the body, consisting of a mass of soft grey & white matter inside the head; 3) **definite form or shape**; 4) **physical qualities**: head is hard and hollow, brain is soft and solid; 5) **physical functions**: head protects brain; brain, as the centre of the nervous system, controls its activity. But being so important as organs and so interlinked with the mental activity they are inevitably subjected to a certain metaphorical shift and acquire different mental functions and are personified.

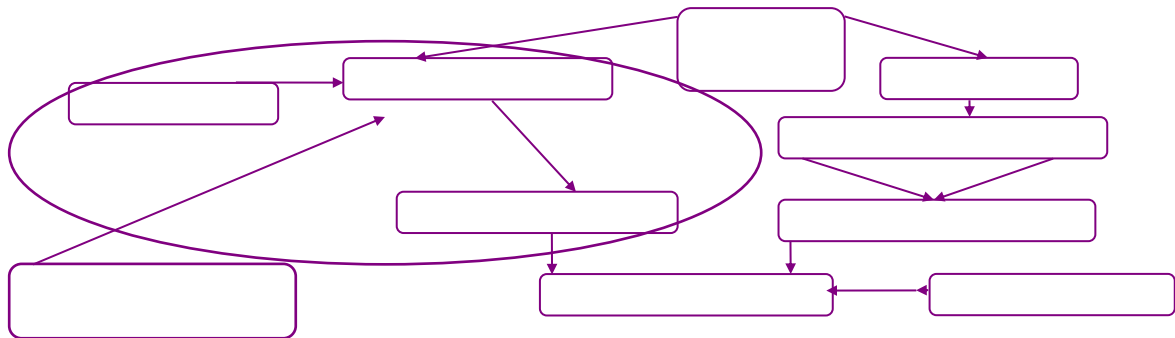
Thus, **brain** – 1. intellectual power; intelligence; the center of thought, mind, understanding, intellect: *He has very little brain* [= He is rather silly]. *He has one of the best brains in the university*. As a matter of fact the relationship of brain size to intelligence is a matter of dispute; 2. a) **clever person**; **intellectual**: *He is the leading brains in the country*; b) (the brains) **cleverest person** in a group: *He's*

*the brains of the family. She was the brains behind the whole scheme; 3. constantly thinking about sth.: I've had this tune on the brain all day but I can't remember what it's called.*

**Head** – 1. ability to reason, intellect, imagination, mind: *Use your head [=Think]; The thought never entered my head [= my mind]; 2. mental ability or natural talent as specified: He has a good head for business; 3. a) (a head) individual person: They ordered dinner at \$15 a head; b) a chief person of a group or organization (social position): A special gathering of the crowned heads (i.e. kings and queens) of Europe is soon envisaged.*

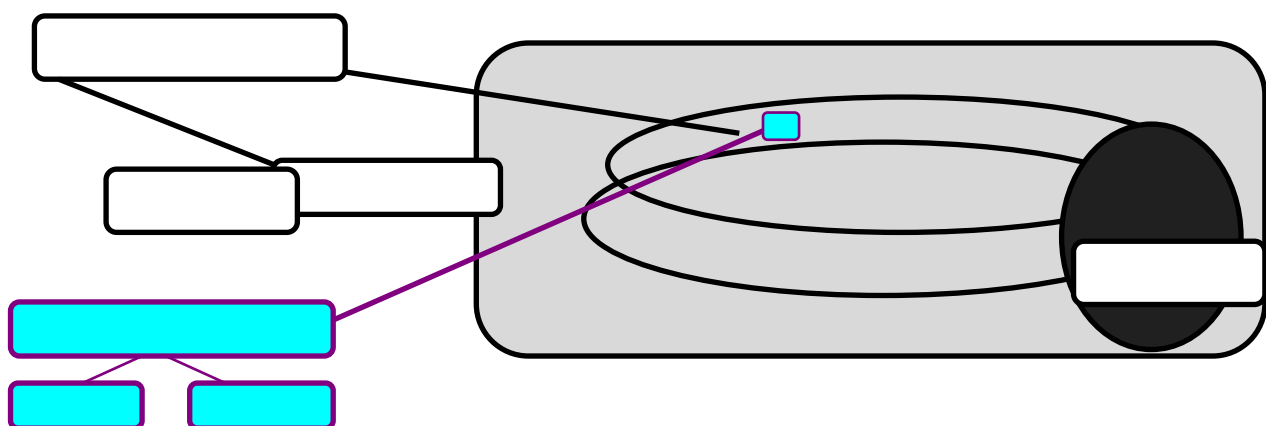
Hence, we may conclude that metaphorical process and personification take place where there mental function is concerned. Accordingly it is possible to represent the hypothetical conceptual structure of the two notions in this way:

Scheme № 2



2. Metaphorical shift of mental function is based on the factor of locality in the first place. It's because speaking of mind, intellect, reason, memory, consciousness, thought we imagine them situated somewhere in the container, i.e. in our **head** or **brain**. Hence **brain** – the center of thought, understanding, mind, intellect; **mind** – reasoning substance; the seat of a person's consciousness, thoughts, volitions & feelings; **intellect, reason** – rational part of mind; **consciousness** – spiritual substance; a mind; **memory** – the mind's store of remembered thoughts; **thought** – that which is in one's mind (brain). Consequently the conceptual scheme of locality can be presented in such a way:

Scheme № 3



Mind may be seen as synonymous with the merely random chemical reactions within the brain, or as a function of the brain as a whole, or (more traditionally) as existing independently of the physical brain, through which it expresses itself, or even as the only reality, matter being considered the creation of intelligence. The relation of mind to matter may be variously regarded, but modern psychology reckons mind as product of activities of brain and nervous system [6]. Thus being the product of the highly organized matter (brain) the concept of mind is marked with acquisition of some common traits which make possible their interchangeable positions and justify metaphorical actualization. Mind as

the part of a person that knows & thinks, understands & feels, wishes & chooses can be subdivided into rational, emotional, and empirical parts. To the rational part belong **intellect** and **reason**, to the emotional and empirical – **soul** and **spirit**.

Due to the fact of the coincidence of their localization, *mind*, *intellect*, *reason*, *memory* are thought to be organs though not real but imaginary. This idea can be proved by the following examples:

1. as imaginary organs or mental instruments:

a) mind has metaphorical eyes and ears: *If you try hard, you can see the room in your **mind's eye**; You must hear his voice with your **mind's ear**.*

b) mind and memory can serve as a chamber: *My mind was filled with thoughts; filling their memory with the lumber of words; a richly stored memory.*

c) mind and memory can fulfill their specific functions as instruments and this activity can be evaluated as “good” or “poor”: *have a memory/mind like a sieve (= have a very **bad** memory; forget things easily); have an **excellent** (brilliant) memory /mind.*

2. As for the definiteness of locality and boundaries of shapes they certainly differ.

Being the main source of finding out the points of distinctions between material and ideal, this criterion helps to define the fundamental elements, which constitute the conceptual structures of real and imaginary organs. We organize these features into two groups: A) common features and B) specific features.

#### A) common features:

1) **organ**: head, brain, mind, soul, memory;

1a) **part of the organ**: intellect, reason;

2) **individual organism**: soul, spirit;

2a) **social organism**: consciousness, mentality;

3) **person**: head, brain, mind, soul;

3a) **part of a person**: head, brain, spirit, soul, mind, memory;

4) **divine entity**: Mind, Spirit, Reason;

5) **locality**: a) **definite**: head, brain; b) **less definite**: mind, memory, reason, intellect, consciousness, soul, thought; c) **vague**: spirit;

6) **form**: a) definite: head, brain; b) vague: soul, spirit; c) shapeless: mind, memory, reason, intellect, consciousness, thought, mentality;

7) **function**: a) physical: head, brain; b) mental: mind, intellect, reason, consciousness, soul, spirit, mentality; c) moral: spirit, soul;

8) **aim**: most of them belong to intentional, so in general the aim is cognition;

9) **physical sensations**: a) pain: head, soul, spirit; b) emotions: soul, mind, spirit; consciousness;

10) **qualities**: mortal – head, brain; immortal – soul, spirit.

#### B) specific features:

1) **value**: soul, spirit;

2) **evaluation**: brain;

3) **quantity**: mind, thought;

4) **independence**: spirit;

5) **dependence**: soul;

6) **dynamics**: thought, soul, spirit;

7) **statics**: head, brain, mind, consciousness, mentality, memory, reason, intellect.

Speaking of real and imaginary organs we, volens-nolens, deal with the metaphorical sphere.

Personification or metaphorical shift can be traced practically in all the conceptual features, which have been extracted from the definitions of the above mentioned mental lexical units:

For example: **PERSON**: **head, brain** □ *a clever man*, **mind** □ *My mind* (= *I* as a person) is always open to new ideas; **soul** □ *Some poor soul* (person/man) was asking for handouts on the street; **wisdom** □ *Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares.*

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** The analyses of mental concepts proves that though they belong to abstract notions, they could be easily personified in human mind and imagination with further verbalization. Personification as well as metaphor usually introduce and reflect the world's picture of an individual in a more profound way and, moreover, refer to the individual's experience, which is based on the society where this person lives and on the stereotypes, which are essential in this society. Further investigations of lexical units belonging to mental sphere would give the opportunity to develop a specific dictionary of mental concepts in the domain of personification and metaphors.

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**Нижегородцева-Кириченко Лариса. Персоніфікація ментальних концептів.** Представлено короткий екскурс лінгво-когнітивних міркувань щодо персоніфікації лексичних одиниць лексико-семантичного поля «Інтелектуальна діяльність». Процес персоніфікації реалізує внутрішню властивість метафори, яка полягає в антропоцентричності. У змістовному відношенні концептуальна персоніфікація відрізняється тим, що, переводячи персоніфікований об'єкт в новий статус, вона дозволяє глибше його осмислити. Також коротко висвітлюється взаємозв'язок метафоричних зрушень і персоніфікації, універсальний механізм персоніфікації, яка співвідносить ідеї, абстракції та неживі об'єкти з людською сутністю, характером, почуттями, уявлення уявних істот або речей, які мають людський характер, інтелект і емоції. За численними фактами персоніфікації стоїть складна лінгвістична реальність, яка потребує спеціального дослідження та пояснення. У фокусі уваги знаходяться вербалізовані концепти *mind, memory, thought, soul, spirit, wisdom*, які складають базові парцели лексико-семантичного поля «Інтелектуальна діяльність». Вербалізовані абстрактні концепти, які співвідносяться з інтелектуальною діяльністю, часто стають об'єктами процесу персоніфікації, що не могло залишитися непоміченим у лексичних дослідженнях.

**Ключові слова:** персоніфікація, лексико-семантичне поле, інтелектуальна діяльність, когнітивна лінгвістика, концептуальна структура, персоніфікація.

**Нижегородцева-Кириченко Лариса. Персонификация ментальных концептов.** Представлен краткий экскурс лингво-когнитивных рассуждений относительно персонификации базовых лексических единиц лексико-

семантического поля «Интеллектуальная деятельность». Процесс персонификации реализует внутреннее свойство метафоры, которое заключается в антропоцентричности. В содержательном отношении концептуальная персонификация отличается тем, что, переводя персонифицируемый объект в новый статус, она служит более глубокому его осмыслению. Также кратко освещается взаимосвязь метафорических сдвигов и персонификации, универсальный механизм персонификации, которая соотносит идеи, абстракции и неодушевленные объекты с человеческой сущностью, характером, чувствами, представление воображаемых существ или вещей как имеющих человеческий характер, интеллект и эмоции. За многочисленными фактами персонификации стоит сложная лингвистическая реальность, которая нуждается в специальном исследовании и объяснении. В фокусе внимания находятся вербализованные концепты *mind, memory, thought, soul, spirit, wisdom*, которые составляют базовые парцеллы лексико-семантического поля «Интеллектуальная деятельность». Вербализованные абстрактные концепты, которые соотносятся с интеллектуальной деятельностью, часто становятся объектами процесса персонификации, что не могло остаться незамеченным в лексических исследованиях.

**Ключевые слова:** лексико-семантическое поле, интеллектуальная деятельность, когнитивная лингвистика, вербализованный концепт, персонификация.