

EDN: HOZYDA
УДК 398.91:316.642:811.11

Cognitive Perspective of English Money Proverbs

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Received 17.02.2024, received in revised form 27.02.2024, accepted 02.04.2024

Abstract. The present paper aims to examine the metaphorical aspects found in English proverbs related to money. This analysis will be conducted using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), along with the FORCE money system introduced by Kövecses (2018). Our primary objective is to delve into the metaphorical nature of money proverbs and anti-proverbs across both languages. Kövecses (2018) suggests that further investigation is required into the FORCE metaphor of money, which will be a focal point of this chapter. Additionally, we will explore various conceptual metaphors related to money during our analysis.

Keywords: English proverbs, money, money proverbs, the conceptualization of money, conceptual metaphor theory.

Research area: social structure, social institutions and processes; languages of the peoples of the foreign countries (English).

Citation: Oleneva P. Cognitive perspective of English money proverbs. In: *J. Sib. Fed. Univ. Humanit. soc. sci.*, 2024, 17(5), 882–891. EDN: HOZYDA



Когнитивный аспект английских денежных пословиц

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Аннотация. Цель настоящей статьи – изучить метафорические аспекты, встречающиеся в английских пословицах, связанных с деньгами. Этот анализ будет проведен с использованием теории концептуальных метафор, предложенной Лакоффом

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и Джонсоном (1980), а также системы принудительных денег, представленной Кевексесом (2018). Наша основная цель – изучить метафорическую природу денежных пословиц и антипереговорок в обоих языках. Кевексес (Kövecses, 2018) предполагает, что требуется дальнейшее исследование метафоры СИЛЫ денег, которая будет в центре внимания этой главы. Кроме того, в ходе нашего анализа мы рассмотрим различные концептуальные метафоры, связанные с деньгами.

Ключевые слова: английские пословицы, деньги, пословицы о деньгах, концептуализация денег, теория концептуальной метафоры.

Научная специальность: 5.4.4 – социальная структура, социальные институты и процессы; 5.9.6 – языки народов зарубежных стран (английский).

Цитирование: Оленева П. Когнитивный аспект английских денежных пословиц. *Журн. Сиб. федер. ун-та. Гуманитарные науки*, 2024, 17(5), 882–891. EDN: HOZYDA

Introduction

According to de Saussure’s work (1959: 66–67), meaning comprises two elements: one intrinsic to language and the other transcending it. This interaction between linguistic expressions, referred to as signifiers, and the concepts they represent, termed Signified, is a cognitive process whereby language users organize their knowledge and experiences in the world. These cognitive processes, identified as schematization and categorization, collectively known as conceptualization (Sharifian 2003: 188), operate within the realm of cognitive semantics, intimately linked with language and the meanings it conveys (Langacker, 2008: 4). Proverbs exemplify how conceptualization manifests. Additionally, meaning isn’t solely reliant on linguistic structures and senses; external factors such as culture, experience, and shared knowledge contribute significantly to meaning, drawing upon our embodied experiences to shape meaning, thereby becoming integral to the mind, language, and culture nexus (Kövecses, 2006: 3).

Idiomatic expressions serve as fertile ground where these three aspects intersect. The Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms defines idioms as “a group of words which have a different meaning when used together from the one it would have if the meaning of each word were taken individually” (Sinclair 1995: iv). Consequently, the significance of idioms cannot be discerned by considering their in-

dividual components in isolation (Kövecses and Sazbo, 1996: 326). In essence, linguistic meaning stems from both the linguistic expressions (signifiers) and the concepts they represent (signified). The cognitive processes of schematization and categorization, or conceptualization, enable language users to structure their knowledge and experiences. While proverbs illustrate conceptualization within language, meaning isn’t solely contingent on linguistic structures and senses; extralinguistic factors such as culture, experience, and shared knowledge significantly contribute to meaning. Idiomatic expressions serve as a prime example of how these extralinguistic factors interact with language to generate meaning that transcends the sum of its individual parts.

Therefore, the present investigation will delve into the significance of selected English proverbs as reflections of our societal constructs. Specifically, our primary objective is to scrutinize the metaphorical implications embedded within money-related proverbs in both languages. Kövecses (2018) suggests that further exploration is warranted concerning the FORCE metaphor of money, which will be a focal point of our analysis. We aim to examine the monetary realm portrayed in metaphorical English proverbs, with an emphasis on the FORCE metaphor. Additionally, other conceptual metaphors related to money will be explored.

Idiomatic expressions will not be within the scope of this study. Moreover, as noted by Mieder (2004: 8), many proverbs carry metaphorical meanings, thereby limiting our analysis to those English proverbs with metaphorical connotations. Proverbs with literal interpretations were excluded from the analysis, although they form part of the dataset to ascertain the extent to which money-related proverbs can adopt metaphorical attributes.

To address these objectives, the following research questions will be considered:

1. To what extent can the Conceptual Metaphor Theory elucidate the metaphorical nuances of specific English money-related proverbs?

2. What are the principal conceptual metaphors identified in English proverbs concerning money?

This study will primarily utilize literature review and comparative analysis as research methods. Additionally, a statistical frequency analysis will be conducted to determine the predominant themes addressed by money-related proverbs in English and Russian contexts.

Theoretical background of the research

Proverbs commonly exhibit idiomatic characteristics, as many are rooted in idioms. Mieder (2004: 3) defines a proverb as “a short, widely known sentence of folk wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional viewpoints, expressed in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable manner, passed down through generations.” This definition serves to distinguish between proverbs and idioms. According to this definition, where a proverb constitutes a complete sentence while an idiom consists of a group of words, not necessarily forming a sentence (Belkhir, 2021: 559), the data examined in this study will focus solely on proverbs.

Metaphor, defined as “understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain” (Kövecses, 2010: 4), involves experiencing one thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 5). Therefore, there exists a primary domain (the target domain) comprehended through another domain (the source domain). The former is abstract, while the latter is more concrete (Kövecses, 2010:

4). For instance, in the proverb ‘Money talks,’ there exists a conceptual metaphor where money is equated with a powerful person. Here, the source domain is a human being, and the target domain is the influence of money. The relationship between both domains is established through understanding the target domain in terms of the source domain, facilitated by systematic correspondences known as mappings, as explained by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). The analysis conducted in this research will adhere to the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980, p. 3), our ordinary thought processes and actions are fundamentally metaphorical. Therefore, there must be a method or approach to effectively identify the metaphors present in our surroundings. Pragglejaz Group (2007) introduced a systematic procedure for detecting metaphors (as well as metonymies) in language. This paper will adopt the same methodology to pinpoint instances of metaphorical language in the data. The ‘metaphor identification procedure’ (MIP) involves several steps for identifying metaphorical language in discourse. Initially, the entire text is comprehensively read to grasp its overall meaning and to identify lexical units. Then, based on the context, the basic meaning of each lexical item is determined to ascertain whether it differs from its contextual meaning. If the contextual and basic meanings align, the lexical items are labeled as non-metaphorical. However, if there is a disparity between the two meanings, further analysis is conducted to determine if any similarities exist between them. If similarities are found, the lexical item is marked as metaphorical; otherwise, it is labeled as non-metaphorical and excluded from the data.

Many idiomatic expressions related to money, as well as proverbs demonstrating a high degree of idiomaticity in English, are grounded in metaphor (Kövecses, 2018). In this metaphorical framework, the concept of money is termed the ‘target domain,’ while that of (moving) liquid is referred to as the ‘source domain.’ According to Kövecses (2018), the conceptualization of money often draws from the

imagery of moving substances or liquids, not only in everyday language but also in scientific discourse (e.g., economic, financial, commercial terminology such as currency, cash flow, money circulation, liquidity, and frozen assets). Despite the importance of money in daily life, Kövecses (2018) notes that the force metaphor has been relatively overlooked by linguists studying metaphors of money. This study aims to focus more on the metaphorical concept of money, utilizing a different corpus than that examined by Kövecses in 2018, specifically English proverbs. Additionally, while examining the English proverb “time is money,” it becomes apparent that “money” is not the target domain but rather the source domain. In this realization of the metaphor, “time” is conceptualized as a valuable entity in life, with “money” serving as the source domain. Hence, this paper’s discussion will not be confined solely to money as a target domain in English proverbs. The analysis will explore instances in the data where money functions as both a source and target domain.

Literature review

Numerous endeavors have been made to explore the concept of money in English, Russian, and other languages from diverse perspectives. Scholars such as Kövecses (2018), Denisenkova (2013 & 2016), Fedyanina (2005), Golubeva (2008), Mayorenko (2005), Osheva (2015), and Paleeva (2010), among others, have contributed to this field. Kövecses (2018) examined how English idiomatic expressions about money can unveil the conceptualization of money, analyzing the metaphorical implications of certain idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and sayings in English. His focus lay on the conceptual metaphor “money is a force,” suggesting that the force domain of money is utilized to denote the relationship between individuals and money. According to Kövecses, two forceful entities are involved in the conceptualization of money: human attitudes toward money and money itself (p. 367). Kövecses proposed a classification of money metaphors based on the conceptual metaphor “causes are forces,” as outlined by Lakoff (1993). This categorization system includes causes such as social power,

desire, source or origin, essential condition, enabling cause, and multiplier (p. 368). The analysis in this study will adopt Kövecses’ categorization framework. However, the data will exclusively consist of money-related proverbs, with idiomatic expressions excluded from the analysis. Furthermore, this study will illustrate how money can serve as a source domain in English proverbs.

Recently Oleneva (2023) investigated the metaphorical dimension in English and Russian money proverbs. The examination revealed that the notion of money in English and Russian proverbs can serve as both the source domain and target domain. Additionally, it was observed that both languages largely share similarities in the conceptual metaphors that inspire money proverbs. However, in English proverbs, money appears slightly more frequently as a source domain compared to its occurrence in Russian money proverbs. Conversely, Russian money proverbs indicate that money serves as a target domain to a greater extent than in English proverbs concerning money. This study aimed to investigate conceptual metaphors in money proverbs across two distinct languages. However, the study did not have the detailed analysis as the current paper.

Another investigation conducted by Oleneva (2022) delved into the conceptualization of money in English anti-proverbs from a cognitive standpoint. The objective of the study was to examine the metaphorical significance of the money theme within a collection of English anti-proverbs, drawing upon the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Kövecses’ research (2018). The primary source domains utilized to conceptualize money included force, human beings, objects, plants, and animals. A total of 170 English anti-proverbs concerning money were analyzed by the author. However, it’s worth noting that the sample size of anti-proverbs analyzed is relatively small, and the exclusive focus on anti-proverbs may not fully encompass the range of money metaphors present in English. The study heavily relies on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Kövecses’ work, potentially limiting alternative perspectives on the concept of money. Consequently, further research is warranted

to gain a comprehensive understanding of the metaphorical usage of money in the English language.

Furthermore, Oleneva and Litovkina (2021) conducted an examination of Russian proverbs and anti-proverbs concerning money. The authors illustrated various mechanisms of proverb transformations, explored the semantic domain of the term “money,” and provided examples of money-related proverbs from other languages. They also offered a comprehensive analysis of money proverbs and anti-proverbs in Russian, covering a total of 33 Russian proverbs and 88 anti-proverbs. Their analysis focused on the internal changes within proverbs and identified the most prevalent types of transformations within the corpus.

These studies by Oleneva (2022, 2023) and Oleneva and Litovkina (2021) concentrated on money anti-proverbs in English and Russian, unlike the present study, which will concentrate on deeper analysis of money proverbs in English. Nonetheless, Oleneva and Litovkina’s examination of Russian proverbs and

anti-proverbs regarding money provides valuable insights, although it has some limitations, such as a relatively small sample size and the absence of a theoretical framework. Moreover, the study’s exclusive focus on Russian proverbs and anti-proverbs may restrict its applicability to other languages. Further research is necessary to fully grasp the metaphorical usage of money in proverbs and anti-proverbs across diverse languages.

Discussion and data analysis

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the metaphorical aspects of money-related proverbs in English and. The sample comprises a total of 92 English proverbs. Following the application of the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) to identify money proverbs.

There are 57 instances of English money proverbs where money is depicted as the target domain. In these proverbs, metaphors are employed to discuss the topic of money by drawing on other concepts. Table 1 illustrates

Table 1. Source domains in the English proverbs that have money as a target domain

Money as a target domain in English Proverbs		
Source Domains	Frequency	Percentage
Human	16	28.1
Power	14	24.6
Object	7	12.3
Food	3	5.3
Plant	3	5.3
Animal	2	3.5
Feeling	2	3.5
Fire	2	3.5
Comfort	1	1.8
Hell	1	1.8
Language	1	1.8
Location	1	1.8
Lubricant	1	1.8
Relationships	1	1.8
Smell	1	1.8
Sport	1	1.8
Total	57	100

the primary source domains that are metaphorically linked to money in English, including MONEY IS A HUMAN BEING, POWER STANDS FOR MONEY, and OBJECT STANDS FOR MONEY. These conceptual metaphors are the most prevalent in English money proverbs. Additionally, Table 1 lists other conceptual metaphors that are used less frequently compared to these main three, such as FOOD STANDS FOR MONEY, PLANT STANDS FOR MONEY, and OBJECT STANDS FOR MONEY.

Furthermore, the examination indicated that apart from serving as a target domain, money is also employed as a source domain in numerous English proverbs. These proverbs do not primarily revolve around the notion of money itself; rather, they utilize money metaphors to convey other concepts such as behavior, life, and relationships, as depicted in Table 2. The table outlines the principal target domains within a selection of English proverbs where money functions as the source domain. Hence, terms related to money are utilized in the figurative language of money proverbs to address various themes, with behavior, life, relationships, and risk being the most prevalent ones.

Based on the analysis, the focus on money as a source domain has predominantly centered on either English proverbs or target domains. In particular, this part of the study will delve into identifying the primary conceptual metaphors found in English money proverbs. Only the most common examples will be explored in

the chapter addressing money as both a target and source domain.

In both instances (1) and (2), money is personified, being portrayed as a person or friend. However, cognitive linguistics doesn't confine personification solely to literary language, as seen here, where it conveys the importance and loyalty of money. These English proverbs employ the conceptual metaphor that equates a human figure with money A HUMAN STANDS FOR MONEY.

(1) "There are three faithful friends: an old wife, an old dog, and ready money."

(2) "There's no friend like a dollar."

Below, we will illustrate *the Mapping Process* step by step:

Step 1. Identify Candidate Metaphors:

Identify segments of the text potentially containing metaphors. In examples (1) and (2), the potential metaphors are:

- "faithful friends"
- "an old wife"
- "an old dog"
- "ready money"
- "friend like a dollar"

Step 2. Determine Source and Target Domains:

For each candidate metaphor, determine the source and target domains. The source domain is what is used to describe another concept (target domain).

Table 2. Money as a source domain in English Proverbs

Money as a source domain in English Proverbs		
Target Domains	Frequency	Percentage
Behaviour	15	42.9
Risk	8	22.9
Life	4	11.4
Relationships	3	8.6
Appearance	1	2.9
Corruption	1	2.9
Power	1	2.9
Time	1	2.9
Value	1	2.9
Total	35	100.0

Example 1:

Source Domain: Faithfulness

Target Domains: Companionship and support (old wife, old dog), Financial security (ready money)

Example 2:

Source Domain: Friendship

Target Domain: Monetary value (dollar)

Step 3. Categorize Metaphors:

Categorize the metaphors based on their type. Common categories include structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, ontological metaphors, etc.

Example 1:

Structural Metaphor: Faithfulness is linked to the concept of being a friend or companion.

Example 2:

Structural Metaphor: Friendship is linked to the concept of being like a friend.

Step 4. Conceptual Metaphor Analysis:

Analyze the metaphorical associations and implications. Explore the deeper meanings and cultural connections associated with the metaphors.

Example 1:

The metaphor “faithful friends” suggests that faithfulness resembles the loyalty and support of a friend, emphasizing the value of long-term relationships.

Example 2:

The metaphor “friend like a dollar” implies that the value of money can be likened to the dependability of a friend, reflecting the importance placed on financial resources.

These examples illustrate how language employs metaphor to connect abstract concepts and shape our perceptions. Personification, a frequently used figurative device, makes abstract concepts more relatable and understandable in proverbs and literature. By personifying money, its significance in our lives is underscored, highlighting its role as a symbol of safety and constancy. Essentially, this technique aids individuals in grasping the importance of money and its societal significance.

The proverb in (3) suggests that money is a superpower that can make the world turn. The

proverb in (4) also portrays money as a force that can influence how people view others’ mistakes. On the other hand, besides the power metaphor, there is another conceptualization in which money is a blanket or something that hides objects.

Example Metaphors:

(3) “Money makes the world go round.”

(4) “Money covers all faults.”

Step-by-Step Mapping Process:

Step 1. Identify Candidate Metaphors:

– “Money makes the world go round.”

– “Money covers all faults.”

Step 2. Determine Source and Target Domains:

Example 3:

Source Domain: Physical motion (spinning, moving)

Target Domain: The world (figuratively described as in motion due to money)

Example 4:

Source Domain: Protection or concealment

Target Domain: Faults or shortcomings (figuratively hidden or addressed by money)

Step 3. Categorize Metaphors:

Example 3:

Structural Metaphor: Money is depicted as a force propelling global activities, highlighting its pivotal role in societal dynamics.

Example 4:

Structural Metaphor: Money is presented as a cover or solution to address imperfections.

Step 4. Conceptual Metaphor Analysis:

Example 3:

The metaphor “Money makes the world go round” underscores money’s influence in driving global interactions and affairs.

Example 4:

The metaphor “Money covers all faults” suggests that money has the ability to mask or alleviate flaws, emphasizing its potential to address issues.

Proverb (5) implies that money is fleeting and can easily slip away from one’s grasp. The metaphor of money as a moving object indi-

cates that it is challenging to hold onto and that it requires constant attention and vigilance to keep it. The following example (6) suggests that money is an essential element that is necessary for business to function. The metaphor of money being the sinews of trade, which refers to the tough tissue that connects muscles to bones, implies that money is the connective tissue that enables business transactions to occur.

(5) Money is round and rolls away.

(6) Money is the sinews of trade.

Step-by-Step Mapping Process:

Step 1. Identify Candidate Metaphors:

“Money is round and rolls away”.

“Money is the sinews of trade”.

Step 2. Determine Source and Target Domains:

Example 5:

Source Domain: Physical characteristics of objects (roundness, ability to roll)

Target Domain: Money (being metaphorically described as having these physical traits)

Example 6:

Source Domain: Anatomy or structure (sinews, which are connective tissues)

Target Domain: Money (being metaphorically linked to sinews in the context of trade)

Step 3. Categorize Metaphors:

Example 5:

Structural Metaphor: Money is metaphorically portrayed as a round object with the ability to roll away, suggesting its potential to be elusive or difficult to retain.

Example 6:

Ontological Metaphor: Money is conceptually linked to the notion of sinews, which serve as a vital connection in trade.

Step 4. Conceptual Metaphor Analysis:

Example 5:

The metaphor “Money is round and rolls away” may imply that money can be fleeting and easily lost, comparing its behaviour to a rolling object.

Example 6:

The metaphor “Money is the sinews of trade” highlights the essential role of money as

a connecting and enabling factor in commercial transactions.

The metaphorical concept MONEY STANDS FOR RISK associate money with risk, implying that financial resources can be both a source of gain and loss, and that taking risks can lead to both success and failure:

(7) You can spend a dollar only once.

(8) You never accumulate if you don't speculate.

In the money proverb in example (7), taking a risk is portrayed as spending a dollar once. This proverb is used to encourage people to take risks and seize opportunities because it is thought that opportunity comes once in a lifetime. Hence, money or money spending here stands for taking risks which motivates the conceptual metaphor money stands for risk. Also, the same conceptual metaphor is present in example (8).

Step-by-Step Mapping Process:

Step 1. Identify Candidate Metaphors:

“You can spend a dollar only once”.

“You never accumulate if you don't speculate”.

Step 2. Determine Source and Target Domains:

Example 7:

Source Domain: Expenditure or usage (spending a dollar)

Target Domain: The one-time nature of opportunities (being metaphorically described as spending a dollar)

Example 8:

Source Domain: Financial risk-taking (speculating)

Target Domain: The accumulation of wealth or success (being metaphorically linked to speculation)

Step 3. Categorize Metaphors:

Example 7:

Structural Metaphor: The metaphor “You can spend a dollar only once” relates the one-time nature of spending money to the idea of seizing opportunities.

Example 8:

Structural Metaphor: The metaphor “You never accumulate if you don't speculate” con-

nects the concept of accumulating with the act of financial speculation.

Step 4. Conceptual Metaphor Analysis:

Example 7:

The metaphor “You can spend a dollar only once” suggests that opportunities are finite and should be taken advantage of, similar to how money can only be used once.

Example 8:

The metaphor “You never accumulate if you don’t speculate” implies that taking calculated risks (speculation) is necessary to achieve accumulation or growth.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to examine the usage of money-related terms in a selection of English proverbs. Proverbs were analyzed within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), with metaphorical proverbs identified using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007). Proverbs with literal, non-metaphorical meanings were excluded from the comparative analysis. While prior research primarily focused on

money as a target domain, this study aimed to provide a more comprehensive perspective by considering money metaphorical proverbs from both English and Russian angles.

The analysis revealed that English money proverbs are predominantly metaphorical, with most proverbs carrying metaphorical meanings. Additionally, it was noted that money can serve as both a source and target domain in proverbs.

The study is grounded in Conceptual Metaphor Theory, providing a cognitive explanation for the metaphorical elements found in English proverbs. English proverbs with money as the target domain were primarily motivated by conceptual metaphors such as a human stand for money, power stands for money, and an object stands for money.

In conclusion, further research is recommended to explore the topic of money in English across various contexts such as media, literature, and daily conversations. Comparative studies can also be conducted to examine the metaphorical use of money in other languages, providing valuable insights for educators, translators, and language learners navigating cross-cultural communication.

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