Прикладная лингвистика

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On conceptualizing excessive action through the Shower metaphor in English

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Abstract. The article presents the results of the research into the functioning of the "Excessive action is Shower" metaphor used to express the aspectual semantics of excessive action in contemporary English fiction texts. To reveal how such metaphors are built, the research investigated their semantic structure, i. e., the relations between the source and targets involved in metaphorical mappings. The results indicate that both meanings of the word Shower, i. e., the direct one (rain) and the one derived from it (device for washing) get into metaphorical relations to name excessive action.

The study identified five foci of metaphorical projections. They come to the fore when Shower is used metaphorically. The article provides a detailed classification of nouns collocating with Shower to express excessive action. It was found that the majority of such nouns name heavy or light objects, objects of material well-being and attitude, while nouns naming emotions and time rarely function as targets.

The article analyses contextual conditions to describe the functioning of the Shower metaphor. In particular, it focuses on most common syntactic structures of the Shower metaphor, prepositions it combines with, and accompanying linguistic phenomena. These include the following that appear regularly: a) the use of other Water metaphors in the close context as subtypes of the general conceptual metaphor "Excessive action is Water" (a "burst" of metaphors); b) semantic changes when a word with a positive meaning acquires a negative one when it functions as a target (axiological clashes).

The study identified the pragmatic potential of the Shower metaphor. It concluded that its prevailing evaluative connotation is negative. The study also found that the conceptual metaphor "Excessive action is Shower" is productive in English and is culturally specific.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, action quantity, excessive action, water metaphor, aspectuality

КОНЦЕПТУАЛИЗАЦИЯ ЧРЕЗМЕРНОГО ДЕЙСТВИЯ ЧЕРЕЗ МЕТАФОРУ Shower В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

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Аннотация. Данная статья представляет результаты исследования функционирования метафоры «Чрезмерное количество действия — Shower», реализующей аспектуальную семантику чрезмерного действия, в английских художественных текстах. В ходе исследования с целью выявления механизма образования метафоры была проанализирована ее семантическая структура, а именно, соотношение между источником (source) и целями/мишенями (target), метафорические проекции (mappings). В результате было выявлено, что языковая единица Shower используется метафорически для называния чрезмерного действия на основе обоих своих значений — прямого (ливень) и вторичного (приспособление для мытья). Были установлены пять основных элементов метафорических проекций, которые реализуются при метафорическом употреблении Shower; была составлена детальная классификация существительных, сочетающихся с Shower, при передаче значения чрезмерного действия. Было установлено, что среди них преобладают существительные, называющие тяжелые или легкие объекты, предметы материального благополучия, отношение. Существительные, называющие эмоции и время, редко встречаются в функции цели/мишени. Также с целью выявления механизма функционирования данной метафоры были описаны условия контекста — синтаксические структуры, в которых регулярно употребляется метафора, предлоги, с которыми сочетается Shower, а также сопровождающие языковые явления, среди которых регулярными являются: а) использование в ближайшем контексте нескольких других метафор Воды, подтипов более общей концептуальной метафоры «Чрезмерное количество действия — Water» ("burst" of metaphors); б) приобретение словом, имеющим положительную семантику, негативного значения при функционировании в качестве цели/мишени для Shower (axiological clashes). Анализ всех перечисленных выше особенностей позволил выявить прагматический потенциал данной метафоры и установить ее превалирующее отрицательное оценочное значение; а также позволил сделать предположение, что концептуальная метафора «Чрезмерное количество действия — Shower» продуктивна в английском языке и является культурно специфичной.

Ключевые слова: концептуальная метафора, количество действия, чрезмерное действие, метафора воды, аспектуальность

1. Introduction

The goal of this article is to explore how the aspectual meaning of excessive action (also known as action quantity "greater than the norm" (Körtvélyessy 2015) or intensified action quantity) is conceptualized metaphorically through the source concept Water in the English language. The focus is on one of the subversions of the "Too much action quantity is Water" metaphor — the "Too much action quantity is Shower" metaphor. In conducting the analysis, we relied on the basic tenets of aspectology and the conceptual metaphor theory.

Following the basic principles of aspectology with its "pronounced functional orientation" (Bondarko 1991, 10) and discriminating between the plane of content and the plane of expression

we state that excessive action is a quantitative aspectual meaning (unlike the qualitative one: telic / atelic, beginning / middle / end of the action (phases), perfect / non-perfect) as it names an action produced with much force/energy and/or exhausting its inner limit and that in English this meaning is often expressed through metaphors.

Following the conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff, Johnson 2003), and having analysed extensive language data we established a conceptual metaphor, namely, the "Too much action quantity is Water" metaphor. Contextually, it is represented by a range of subversions with names of different water forms as sources. The "Too much action quantity is Shower" metaphor is one of them.

Conceptual metaphor studies most commonly aim to identify metaphors, select conceptual metaphors and classify them into groups, while our study aims to reveal the semantic behaviour of the specific source Shower when used to name excessive action. Namely, the reported study explores 1) components of the semantic structure of Shower which create the conditions for it to function metaphorically to name excessive action, 2) semantic features of excessive action the Shower metaphor highlights, 3) the main meaning foci of Shower activated in the context, 4) its correlation patterns with different targets and the ways it activates different contextual elements. This approach makes the mappings more systematic and allows to reveal the mechanism of naming excessive action through the Shower metaphor. It may find an application as a matrix for analysing other Water metaphors naming excessive action and help to evaluate the pragmatic value of utterances with the Shower metaphor.

Before we set about reasoning how the Shower metaphor is used to express excessive action, we should highlight some important issues which were considered while conducting the analysis.

First, it is the issue of the norm as the speaker can view action quantity as normal (neutral), less than normal or greater than normal. This treatment of action is context and culture dependent. As excessive action is an evaluative meaning (Körtvélyessy 2015), we admit that the idea of excessiveness can vary across cultures, however, in the given language community the samples given below are tacitly accepted as greater than the norm.

Secondly, after A. Deignan and L. Janda, we argue that it is not the *evaluative* meaning alone which makes the metaphor a reliable language means for a speaker to convey his/her ideas but the *ideational* meaning as well (the information-bearing properties of figurative language (Deignan 2012)) which expresses action properties more precisely than non-figurative language means as "metaphor readily facilitates grasping a whole complex of relations at once" (Janda 2002).

Thus, using Water metaphors speakers not only make their utterances expressive but also more authentic.

2. Data collection

The data consist of samples collected from contemporary English fiction by hand-searching and by using corpus techniques (literary works available in British National Corpus, for the 1970–2000 period). The data were then analysed using both modes of analysis — bottom-up and top-down (Kövecses 2011; Kövecses et al. 2019). The bottom-up analysis was used to identify metaphorical expressions, check their behaviour in particular texts and, as a result, establish the conceptual metaphor of the "Too much action quantity is Water". The top-down approach was used after we made a hypothesis about the existence of the "Too much action quantity is Water" metaphor and verified it. To analyse the components of the meanings of metaphors, the componential analysis was used; word definitions were taken from monolingual dictionaries (Cambridge Dictionary 2021; Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2021).

3. Data analysis

As the research showed, one of the metaphors used to express excessive action of quantity "greater than the norm" is *the Water metaphor*.

The choice of the Water metaphor is physically determined by our bodily experience (Kövecses 2010a) as we constantly interact with water as one of the most powerfully destructive forces of nature and a basic necessity for human life. People view water as a mass and so "we conceptualize Mass/quantity with water because Mass has the closest connection with water and the aspect of Mass/Large amount triggers Water metaphors" (Zelinsky-Wibbelt 2003, 54–55).

Hence, the "too much action quantity is Water" metaphor is intended to highlight the following quantitative characteristics of action: 1) flowing, strong currents, 2) abundant (like flood, waterfall), 3) powerful.

Water can be called "an extensive domain with a large number of members" (Kövecses 2017) as it exists in three states, each represented by a number of forms: solid (as ice in snow, glacier, hail, frost), liquid/fluid, vapour (clouds, mist, steam) (Table 1):

Table 1. Names of water forms

Natural	Man-made
Passive (flat)	Canal
lagoon, lake, marshes, pond, bay, gulf (areas where water is collected)	dam
	shower
Flowing, powerful currents	bath
brook, stream, creak	water tap
river (source of energy generation), sea, ocean, channel	pool
waterfall, rain, *shower*, waves, storm, flood	any liquid kept in containers

To name excessive action we can use only those water forms which belong to its fluid state and which possess such quantitative characteristics of action as fast movement, abundance/in a mass. Shower is one of them.

To describe how Shower functions as a source, we should consider its semantic structure as it conditions what type of excessive action it expresses, the structure of the mappings and the targets it can correspond to.

As a source, Shower can function in its two meanings:

1) direct, meaning "downpour" (noun) and "to come down in showers" (verb) (from c.1400),

2) indirect (metonymic), meaning "a piece of equipment in which water is poured from above" (noun) and "washing yourself standing under a piece of equipment that produces a flow of water" (verb) (from 1835) (Online Etymology Dictionary 2021).

Shower can be defined as an abundance of small drops which come in bursts, start and stop suddenly and have a short duration, fall down together (downward movement, in a bound current) or move up through the air (upward movement and to the sides) and cover a small area. Hence, the "too much action quantity is Shower" metaphor focuses on the following aspects of the concept Shower: 1) an abundance (of drops), 2) (coming out) in bursts and suddenly, 3) moving in different directions (down or up through the air), 4) short duration, 5) covering the area. Of these, the main meaning foci (Kövecses 2017) are "abundance of drops" "moving down or up" which are mapped onto the target "abundance of objects/intangible substance moving down or up", while the others are non-central.

Hence, the following mappings corresponding to these foci can be singled out:

1) an abundance of small drops → an abundance of objects (big or small, heavy or light, concrete or abstract (time, emotions))

2) moving down/up through the air → downward movement, in a bound current or flying upward and to the sides

3) coming out in bursts and suddenly → coming out suddenly and/or when the container is broken

4) short duration → the movement finishes quickly

5) covering the area → covering the surface with a layer of objects/substance.

Of which (1) and (2) are central mappings.

These two main mappings condition the choice of targets the source Shower can correspond to. These targets fall into three groups (Table 2):

Group 1   Group 2
(Shower in the meaning of "downpour")   (Shower in the meaning "a piece of equipment")
– an abundance of heavy or light objects   – an abundance of light objects
– *falling* down   – moving *through the air and in different directions*

In Group 3 Shower maps onto "to cover with intangible substance" and both the predicate "to shower" and the Object/Subject naming things that "are showered/shower" are used metaphorically (the double metaphor). These examples are not many.

Table 2. Targets the source Shower can correspond to

Groups	Targets (objects)
Source: "shower" (direct meaning "downpour")	
1.1. Heavy objects falling in a mass	Glass (fragments, shards), bolts, books, sprigs, broken ceramics, shoes, rocks, earth, (brick) dust, coins
1.2. Time	Moments
1.3. Emotions (to be overcome)	realization, fear
1.4. Attitude	adulation, flattering remarks, contempt, love, affection, grace, praise(s)
1.5. Material things	benefits, donations, presents, gifts, rewards, coins, fortune, riches, material things, jewels, cloths, money
1.6. Words	complaints, congratulations, invitation, questions, words, advice, benediction
Source: "shower" (indirect meaning "showering equipment")	
2.1. Light objects flying up and falling in a mass	money, sparks, petals, confetti (and rice), flowers and petals, leaflets
2.2. To cover with a tangible substance	concrete nouns in the plural (seeds, arrows, confetti, insects) or by collective nouns (powder, dust)
3. To cover with intangible substance	kisses, voice, light, vapour, colour

3.1. Group 1. An abundance of objects, downward movement in one bound current

3.1.1. About heavy objects falling in a mass

The following mappings can be singled out:

an abundance of small drops → heavy objects or a heavy mass

coming out in bursts and suddenly → coming out suddenly and when their container is broken

moving down → downward movement, in a bound current

short duration → ---
covering the area → ---

The targets are concrete nouns in the plural or collective nouns (broken glass fragments, bolts, books, sprigs, coins (heavy objects); brick dust (i. e., a heavy mass of small particles).

Notably, the context will always contain elements denoting a sudden action and "breakage of a container" out of which these objects fall down.

(1) *The force of* <u>the casual blow</u> *was such that Yet* <u>was flung</u> *back against a bookcase. Books* **showered about** *him.* (Aldiss 1991) [1] (the bookcase = a container)

In (2) and (3) we observe *a "burst" of metaphors* (Corts, Pollio 1999) when the Shower metaphor is accompanied by other Water metaphors: "cascade", "float" in (2) and "a torrent", "washed over" in (3).

(2) *She saw herself* <u>pull</u> *back her arm, and, with more than human strength,* <u>launch</u> *a red missile.* <u>Streaking</u> *a fiery path through space it* <u>blasted</u> *into the kiosk wall.* <u>Crash!</u> *The ketchup bottle* <u>cascaded</u> *out into a million glass fragments which* **showered down** *in slow motion;* <u>floating</u> *and turning lazily like snowflakes, the light shivering in them like jewels.* (The Lock. Gates, Susan. Oxford: OUP, 1990)

(3) <u>*A torrent*</u> *of jubilant sound* <u>washed over</u> *the street, and sprigs of pine and fern* **showered down**. *Girls ran out to bestow kisses and men offered bottles of wine. Suddenly there was a shot, and total silence fell.* (The Fallon Blood. Robert, Jordan, Reagan, O'Neal, 1996)

3.1.2. About time

The following mappings can be singled out:
an abundance of small drops → moments/minutes
coming out in bursts and suddenly → ---
moving down → flowing like water
moving up through the air → ---
short duration → moments of life pass by quickly
covering the area → ---

(4) *Moments* **shower away**; *the days of our lives* <u>vanish utterly</u>, *more insubstantial than if they had been invented.* (P. Lively, *Moon Tiger*, 6), where the Shower metaphor emphasizes the fact that our life passes very quickly and nothing is left of a man after he dies.

These cases are few.

3.1.3. About emotions (to be overcome with)

The following mappings can be singled out:
an abundance of small drops → overwhelming emotions
coming out in bursts → ---
coming out suddenly → one suddenly feels some emotion
moving down → a feeling comes over you
short duration → ---
covering the area → ---

(5) *How dare he whip up strangers to hostility because I didn't wear clothes clearly indicating my sex — what was it to them whether I was a woman or a man?* <u>Then</u> *I* **was showered with** *the realisation that I had spent half a working day thinking these thoughts, during which time, if I had put a foot wrong.* (Wandor et al. 1978)

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[1] All the samples used in this research are taken from the British National Corpus (BNC), and thus, no special reference to books is given at the end of the article.

(6) (title of the article) *"Actress **is** still **showered with** fear after 'Psycho'": Janet Leigh can't forget the terror of the shower. Watching her character get stabbed to death in Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 thriller "Psycho" left a terrifying impression. "I stopped taking showers, and I take baths, only baths,"* she says in Monday's New York Times.

These cases are few.

3.1.4. About attitude

The following mappings can be singled out:

an abundance of small drops → abundance of attention paid to a person

coming out in bursts and suddenly → ---

moving down → attitude (positive or negative) to somebody is shown by people around

short duration → ---

covering the area → ---

Utterances with the Shower metaphor have positive or negative colouring depending on the following factors:

1) the evaluative connotation (approval/disapproval) of nouns functioning as the Subject/Object—without or within the context they have inherent positive or negative connotations which "are behavioral correlates of experienced semantics" (Samsonovic, Ascoli 2010). These nouns include:

– negative connotations: adulation, flatter, contempt

– positive connotations: love, affection

2) the close context, where nouns which are inherently positive can acquire negative connotations. Thus, "praise" has positive evaluative meaning but it can get a negative shade of meaning, e. g., when there is an excess of praise. Thus, we deal with *"axiological clashes"* (Krzeszowski 1997, 40): "shower" and "praise" are inherently positive but at the discourse level they become evaluated negatively and so the actual value of the sentence becomes negative. The analysis shows that "to shower praise" is more frequently used in negative contexts.

(negative) (8) *She stood still on the track, and, as she stared up at him, the shaft of moonlight slanting across her, her face betrayed surprise as she exclaimed,' Silas — you amaze me ... I shall never forget <u>the contempt</u> you **showered upon** me. However, I realised it was your usual attitude towards women.* (Wilder's Wilderness. Macgregor, Richmond. Surrey: Mills & Boon, 1993)

(negative) (9) *He wouldn't mean that Anna had become besotted by Canadian comfort, by supermarkets overflowing with food, by the glittering lights of Montreal office towers she described for him in such detail in her letters. He wouldn't even mean the ease with which she **showered** her <u>praises</u> **over** the smallest things. Strangers smiling at her.* (Necessary Lies, Eva Stachniak, 2000)

(positive) (10) *For many months afterwards, Cissie had suffered awful nightmares, when she would scream for her mam. It seemed to Beth as though nothing would ever console her. But she* **showered** *the girl* **with** <u>*love and affection*</u>, *sitting with her night after night...* (Don't Cry Alone. Cox, Josephine. London: Headline Book Pub.plc, 1992)

3.1.5. About material things

The following mappings can be singled out:

an abundance of small drops → an abundance of material things making up one's wealth

coming out in bursts and suddenly → ---

moving down → given to a person by many people from his surrounding (like falling down from many sides)

short duration → ---

covering the area → ---

Utterances with the Shower metaphor have positive or negative colouring depending on the context—nouns which are positive outside the context ("benefits, rewards, fortune, gifts, presents, material things, money") can acquire a negative contextual evaluation ("axiological clashes").

(positive) (11) *Caroline was always surrounded by adoring males,* **showered with** *gifts and benefits. But so far she had refused to take any of them seriously — sensible Caroline.* (Only Two Can Share. Murray, Annabel. Richmond, Surrey: Mills &Boon, 1993)

(negative) (12) *...then a thought occurred to me, that I don't like to be THUNDEROUSLY* **showered with** *gifts: constantly* **showered with** *gifts from people who are not particularly close to me, it's embarrassing, you see...* (Brutt, Or The Sighing Gardens, Friederike Mayröcker), where we observe a "burst" of metaphors: water metaphors (showered) and metaphors related or associated with water ("thunderously", which denotes "very loudly" and is derived from "thunder" that we always associate with water (rain); in this context its semantical component "loud noise" retreats to the background, while the semantic component "thunderstorm = an occasion when lots of rain falls" (Cambridge Dictionary 2021) comes to the fore, and thus "thunderously" acquires the metaphorical meaning "very many of something").

3.1.6. About words

The following mappings can be singled out:

an abundance of small drops → an abundance of words

coming out in bursts and suddenly → ---

moving down → given to a person by many people from his surrounding (like falling down from many sides)

short duration → ---

covering the area → ---

The targets are concrete nouns in the plural (words, complaints, congratulations, invitations, questions, advice).

(negative) (13) *Dealers* **have been showered with** <u>complaints</u> *about this highly sophisticated piece of equipment which has apparently developed a serious fault.* (Traffic. Masters, Anthony. Hemel Hempstead: Simon & Schuster Young Books, 1991),

(positive) (14) *Rex crossed the river with Ah Lo, and made his way to Mr. Bateman's, He was received* <u>with delight,</u> *and both father and mother* **showered** <u>questions</u> **upon** *him as to the state of things in Pekin.* (With the Allies to Pekin: A Tale of the Relief of the Legations, George Alfred Henty, 1974).

3.2. Group 2 An abundance of light objects, moving upward through the air before falling in a mass to the sides

3.2.1. An abundance of light objects, moving upward through the air

an abundance of small drops → an abundance of not heavy objects

coming out in bursts and suddenly → coming out suddenly and when their container is broken

moving up through the air → not heavy objects fly up and to the sides before falling down

short duration → ---

covering the area → ---

The targets are concrete nouns in the plural, like money (banknotes), sparks, petals, confetti.

Contextually, there are always elements denoting a sudden action and a "breakage of a container" out of which these light objects shower, e. g.:

(15) *Clare picked up the shovel and put some more coal on the fire. She <u>poked it</u> and sparks* **showered away** *into the dark chimney.* (P. Lively, House in Norham Gardens, 7)

(16) *He drew his arm back and <u>hurled the envelope</u> at Creed. Money* **showered through** *the yellow air.* (The Five Gates of Hell. Thomson, Rupert, 1991)

3.2.2. To cover with tangible substance

an abundance of small drops → an abundance of not heavy objects

coming out in bursts and suddenly → coming out suddenly and when their container is broken

moving up through the air → not heavy objects fly up and to the sides before falling down and covering the surface

short duration → ---

covering the area → objects cover the surface (man's body or the surface of an object)

The targets are concrete nouns in the plural (seeds, arrows, confetti, insects) or collective nouns (powder, dust). Contextually, there are always elements denoting a sudden action and a "breakage of a container" out of which these objects shower.

(17) *He managed to give the authorities a few sketchy details before he died. He jumped a freight train at Wissembourg on the Franco-German border and found six <u>beer kegs</u> in the car, but when he <u>broke</u> one of them open he* **was showered in** *fine powder. He then covered the kegs with a tarpaulin and left the train at Strasbourg.* (Death Train, MacNeill, Alastair. London: Fontana Press, 1989) (beer kegs = a container)

(18) *Winter was cold but autumn is come — the stubble fields, and so on. The simpering Vistula. Never before have I seen lice by the bushel. Some of the patients look as though they* **have been showered with** *<u>poppy</u> seeds.* (Time's Arrow. Amis, Martin. London: Jonathan Cape, 1991) (a poppy = a container as the seeds are borne in a kind of spherical capsule)

3.3. Group 3 To cover with intangible substance (double metaphor) (kisses, voice, light, vapour, colour)

an abundance of small drops → an abundance of substance

coming out in bursts and suddenly → ---

moving up through the air → ---

moving down → much of smth is given to smb/smth in abundance (as if falling down on him/it from many sides)

short duration → ---

covering the area → substance spreads over the surface.

(19) He **showered her with** kisses, and time seemed to stand still for them both. (Vets in Opposition. Bowring, Mary. Richmond, Surrey: Mills $ Boon, 1993) (= to kiss all over)

(20) *Then came a moment that electrified the congregation. It made its impact because it was so unexpected. For it was not the Police Choir that sang but seven-year-old Maria O'Neil. She sang solo against the humming of the male voices behind her and against the organ counterpoint. What the words were didn't matter. It was the sound the little girl made. Her pure unforced natural soprano <u>soared</u> into the air above them all and* **showered** *that hard school of auditors* **with** *<u>a sprinkling</u> of lovely notes that they turned into tears. The scene at the graveyard was more than usually touching.* (Worlds Apart. Cairney, John. Edinburgh: Mainstream Pub. Ltd, 1991) (= to impress with music)

The use of the Shower metaphor is accompanied by a burst of metaphors ("showered", "sprinkling" (a small amount of liquid), "soared" (about the voice)).

(21) *"What did you mean before when you said you'd waited so long for me?" His body froze, and for several tense moments he just looked at her, the metallic brilliance of his eyes darkening with*

unexplained emotion. "I didn't mean anything," he said. And tearing his gaze away from hers, he yanked her along with him. Outside, the sunset **showered** *the sky* **with** *a <u>fiery</u> orange glow.* (Silver Lady, Morse, Nancy 1980) (= to make smth brightly coloured)

(22) *"Where's your little friend?" she said. "Tal? He's around. I think he thought we should be alone together." For some reason this struck her as extraordinarily funny. A tactful parrot! She laughed and laughed. When she laughed, the laugh came out of her mouth <u>like mirror bubbles of liquid oxygen</u> and <u>spattered</u> the iridescent walls, the scintillating ceiling, the miraculous man, his wonderful glossy chestnut eyes. She* **was showering** *him* **in** *pleasure, did he understand? She thought it was important to tell him. "When I saw you," she said, "I was so pissed off...."* (Take back Plenty. London: Grafton Books, 1991) (to make smb pleased very much)

The use of the Shower metaphor is accompanied by a burst of metaphors (showered", "spattered", and the simile "like mirror bubbles...").

4. Discussion

1. In English the excessive action is regularly expressed by the conceptual metaphor "Too much action quantity is WATER" as the latter helps to highlight too much of action quantity. One of its subversions is the "Too much action quantity is SHOWER" metaphor as Shower possesses such quantitative characteristics of action as fast movement and abundance/in a mass.

2. As a source Shower can function in both of its meanings, i. e., "downpour" (direct) and "a piece of equipment in which water is poured from above" (indirect, derived from meaning 1).

When Shower is used to name excessive action, the following meaning foci can be actualised: 1) an abundance (of drops), 2) (coming out) in bursts and suddenly, 3) moving in different directions (down or up through the air), 4) short duration, 5) covering the area. The main meaning foci are "abundance of drops" "moving down or up" which is mapped onto the target "abundance of objects/intangible substance moving down or up", while the others are non-central.

3. These two main mappings (an abundance of small drops, moving down/up through the air) condition the choice of targets which fall into three groups (Table 2): 1) an abundance of heavy/light objects falling down, 2) an abundance of light objects moving through the air in different directions, 3) to cover with intangible substance. In Group 3 Shower corresponds to the targets which are used metaphorically (the double metaphor). The most frequent usage is observed of the samples from Group 1.

4. The Shower metaphor is frequently used when we talk about heavy and light objects (mass), material things (gifts, money), words, and attitudes (love, contempt). It is used less often to speak about time and emotions (fear, realization) (3 examples of the total of 78 under study) (by attitude we mean our general attitude to a situation; by emotions, our feelings).

5. It is the semantic structure of Shower that conditions its correspondence to these particular targets grouped in Table 2. This can be well illustrated if we compare the Shower metaphor and any other Water metaphor, for example, the Flood metaphor. Both name abundance of action, however, the meaning foci of Flood are "moving along and aside" "filling everything on its way", whereas with Shower these are "down/up and aside" "covering the surface". Hence, they correspond to different targets, e. g.:

I was showered with the realization...

but

Relief flooded through me.

6. The main meaning foci of Shower in 1.1 (heavy objects) and 2.1 (light objects) activate contextual elements denoting a "breakage of a container".

7. The Shower metaphor is often accompanied by "a burst" of metaphors. It is of interest that most often these accompanying metaphors are also Water metaphors (examples (2), (3), (12), (20), (22)).

8. The use of the Shower metaphor can activate "axiological clashes", when a noun which is inherently positive acquires negative contextual emotional colouring (like "praise", "money", etc. in examples (9), (12)).

9. The utterances where the Shower metaphor is used to name excessive action are more often negatively (46 examples from 78) than positively (32 examples from 78) coloured.

5. Conclusion

The conducted research proves that the concept of Shower used to name excessive action is metaphorically productive in English and is salient for the speakers of English. The Shower metaphor is mostly used in negative contexts often triggering bursts of metaphors and axiological clashes. Its main meaning foci predetermine its correspondence to a definite range of targets, the activation of certain contextual elements (like a "breakage of a container") and make it function differently if compared to other Water metaphors naming excessive action (e. g., flood).

The conducted analysis laid the foundation and outlined the direction of further research which can go along the following lines:

– comparison of different Water metaphors naming excessive action in English,

– identification and description of their equivalents in other languages as the use of metaphors naming excessive action can vary across cultures. For instance, in similar contexts in the Russian language the Sand metaphor is regularly used (cf. the sparks showered (English) vs. iskry posypalis (Russian)). It is the main meaning foci "abundance of drops/particles" "moving down or up" which can explain their use in similar situations,

– research into the pragmatic potential of the Shower metaphor (which tends to be used in negatively-coloured utterances) as well as other Water metaphors.

In general, the given research into the use of the Shower metaphor to name excessive action shows how our cognition works in terms of perceiving and naming the action and that metaphors are the cultural representation of thought.

Conflict of interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest, either existing or potential.

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