

COGNITIVE METAPHORS OF EFFECTIVENESS IN S.R. COVEY'S AND J. CLEAR'S MOTIVATIONAL DISCOURSE: A LINGUOPRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

Khasanova Yulduz Mukhtor kizi,
PhD in Philology, Acting Associate Professor,
Navoi State University,
yulduzxasanova025@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1051-3489>

Abstract. The present thesis examines the mechanisms of actualisation of the *effectiveness* concept through cognitive metaphors and linguopragmatic devices in modern English motivational discourse on the material of S.R. Covey's and J. Clear's works. In the course of the study, nine cognitive-metaphorical models expressing strategic effectiveness have been identified in the two-author corpus, and their illocutionary distribution and persuasive functions have been described. The results show that the effectiveness concept is actualised through spatial, organic, economic and directional domains.

Keywords: motivational discourse, effectiveness concept, cognitive metaphor, linguopragmatics, illocutionary act, S.R. Covey, J. Clear.

Introduction. The rapid expansion of self-help and productivity literature in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has turned motivational discourse into a distinctive object of linguopragmatic and cognitive-linguistic study. Within this discourse, the concept of *effectiveness* occupies a central position, since motivational texts are aimed at reshaping the reader's behavioural trajectory, decision-making and value orientation. The works of S.R. Covey and J. Clear stand out as canonical and operational sources of the genre, respectively, and offer a rich empirical ground for the analysis of cognitive metaphorical models and persuasive linguistic devices.

Although motivational discourse has been considered in a number of recent studies from the perspective of conceptual metaphor theory and speech act taxonomy, the concept of effectiveness has not received systematic linguopragmatic description in comparative-cognitive terms. The present paper attempts to fill this gap by combining conceptual metaphor analysis in the sense of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) with Searle's (1976) illocutionary taxonomy and Palmer's (2001) modality typology, while relying on Safarov's (2008) pragmalinguistic methodology as an integrating framework.

The relevance of the study is determined by the growing academic interest in the linguistic architecture of persuasive genres and by the need to describe how abstract

axiological concepts, such as effectiveness, are constructed and communicated through cognitive metaphors and speech acts. The aim of the thesis is to identify the principal cognitive-metaphorical models of the *effectiveness* concept in the motivational discourse of Covey and Clear and to describe the linguopragmatic mechanisms that support its persuasive functioning.

Methods. The empirical corpus of the study consists of two volumes of modern English motivational literature: Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (25th anniversary edition, 2013) and Clear's *Atomic Habits* (2018). From the corpus, 118 discourse fragments were excerpted in which the concept of effectiveness is actualised through metaphorical or persuasive linguistic construction. Fragments in which the concept was analysed in earlier research on the same works were excluded from the sampling in order to preserve the empirical independence of the present study.

The methodology combines four analytical procedures. First, cognitive metaphor identification was carried out on the basis of the Metaphor Identification Procedure, as developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) and refined by Steen et al. (2010), which enabled the reconstruction of source and target domains. Second, speech act classification was performed in accordance with Searle's (1976) taxonomy, distinguishing representative, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative acts. Third, modality was analysed within Palmer's (2001) three-way typology of epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality. Fourth, the axiological colouring of the concept was assessed contextually. Statistical-descriptive observation was used to summarise the distribution of the identified models.

Results. The analysis of the corpus has produced three groups of results.

First, cognitive-metaphorical models. Nine principal models of the *effectiveness* concept have been identified: (i) *effectiveness is an inner space of choice*; (ii) *effectiveness is sharpening the instrument*; (iii) *effectiveness is understanding before being understood*; (iv) *effectiveness is compound interest*; (v) *effectiveness is trajectory, not result*; (vi) *effectiveness is an invisible hand* (environment); (vii) *effectiveness is system over goal*; (viii) *effectiveness is a one-per-cent margin*; (ix) *effectiveness is a vote for a future self* (identity signal, without reference to the identity-formation examples analysed in earlier research on the same author).

Covey's construction "*Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom*" [Covey, 2013, p. 68] activates the metaphorical model *effectiveness is an inner space of choice* and constructs the reader as a cognitive agent situated in a psychologically expandable interval. Covey's sentence "*Seek first to understand, then to be understood*" [Covey, 2013, p. 239] activates the interpersonal model *effectiveness is*

understanding before being understood, while the aphorism “*Sharpen the saw*” [Covey, 2013, p. 288] metaphorically represents the renewal principle as the maintenance of a personal instrument.

Clear’s construction “*You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems*” [Clear, 2018, p. 27] manifests the model *effectiveness is system over goal* and shifts the conceptual weight from the visible end-point to the invisible structure that supports it. Clear’s sentence “*Environment is the invisible hand that shapes human behavior*” [Clear, 2018, p. 82] activates the model *effectiveness is an invisible hand*, in which the surrounding physical and social environment functions as an unnoticed causal agent. The formulation “*Habits are the compound interest of self-improvement*” [Clear, 2018, p. 15] manifests the economic-cumulative model *effectiveness is compound interest* and frames small daily actions as investments that yield delayed but exponential returns.

Second, illocutionary distribution. Of the 118 discourse fragments, directive acts constitute 34 per cent (mainly imperatives such as “*Seek first to understand*”, “*Sharpen the saw*”, “*Focus on systems*”); representative acts constitute 30 per cent (assertions describing regularities of behaviour and environment); commissive acts constitute 16 per cent (self-projecting formulations such as “*we choose our response*” or “*we cast a vote*”); expressive acts constitute 12 per cent; and declarative-axiological acts constitute 8 per cent. This distribution confirms the operational-strategic pragmatic orientation of the corpus.

Third, modality profile. Deontic modality is expressed in 41 per cent of the fragments (verbs *should, must, ought to, have to*); dynamic modality in 33 per cent (*can, will, be able to*); epistemic modality in 18 per cent (*may, might, seem to*); and axiologically neutral modality in 8 per cent. Deontic and dynamic modalities predominate and jointly construct the reader as a capable and obliged agent, which aligns with the persuasive orientation of the effectiveness concept.

Discussion. The results allow three theoretical conclusions to be drawn. First, the concept of effectiveness in the corpus is not reducible to a single metaphor but is distributed across nine cognitive models that combine spatial, organic, economic and directional source domains. Such multi-domain distribution is consistent with the position of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) that abstract concepts are typically structured through overlapping metaphorical clusters rather than through isolated projections.

Second, the persuasive influence of the corpus is achieved not primarily by directive commands but by the coordination of three linguopragmatic layers, namely cognitive metaphor, speech act and modality. Covey’s inner-space model, for example, would remain a static assertion if it were not supported by the deontic construction “*we choose*

our response” and by the directive continuation “seek first to understand”. Clear’s systems model would remain descriptive without the directive-strategic call to redesign the surrounding environment.

Third, the analysis suggests that the concept of effectiveness in contemporary English motivational discourse is constructed at the intersection of the individual choice-agency paradigm and the systemic-environmental paradigm. Covey’s texts foreground the first, while Clear’s texts foreground the second. Their combined analysis offers a fuller picture of how a genre-defining axiological concept is linguistically assembled. The results also open a comparative perspective. The nine identified models can serve as a controlled tertium comparationis for the cross-linguistic study of effectiveness-equivalent concepts in other cultures, and for testing whether the operational-strategic pragmatic profile is a genre-invariant or a culture-specific feature of English self-improvement discourse.

Conclusion. The thesis has identified nine cognitive-metaphorical models of the effectiveness concept in the motivational discourse of S.R. Covey and J. Clear and described the illocutionary and modality mechanisms that support its persuasive functioning. The integration of conceptual metaphor theory, speech act taxonomy and modality typology has proved a productive methodological framework for the linguopragmatic analysis of motivational texts, and can be extended to other authors and genres.

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