
Linguocognitive analysis of the concept of “peace” in Suzanne Collins’s “The hunger games”

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Annotation *This article explores the linguocognitive analysis of the concept of peace in Suzanne Collins’s “The Hunger Games”. Following the principles of cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis, the author explores how language constructs cultural meanings and shapes readers' perception of the world as a political and psychological category. Through the analysis of metaphors, semantic fields, and linguistic oppositions, this study highlights that the term 'peace' in Collins's dystopian work functions paradoxically—as a form of state propaganda and psychological control rather than absence of war, or tranquility. The findings reveal that peace in Panem is linguistically and conceptually linked to domination, surveillance, and submission, which challenges the traditional moral, cultural and emotional association of the word. By comparing the political and personal uses of this term, the article demonstrates how cognitive processes and linguistic preferences shape a complex, multilayered conceptualization of the world. Thus, the analysis contributes to an understanding of the ideological manipulation of fundamental human values through language, also the heroine Katniss's desire for genuine inner and outer peace.*

Keywords *Concept of peace, linguocognitive analysis, metaphor, ideology, “The Hunger Games”, discourse*

Лингвокогнитивный анализ концепта «мир» в романе Сюзанны Коллинз The Hunger Games

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Аннотация *В статье рассматривается лингвокогнитивный анализ концепта «мир» в романе Сюзанны Коллинз «Голодные игры». Опираясь на принципы когнитивной лингвистики и дискурсивного анализа, авторы исследуют, каким образом языковые средства конструируют культурные значения и формируют восприятие читателем мира как политико-психологической категории. Посредством анализа метафор, семантических полей и лингвистических оппозиций в работе показано, что понятие «мир» в*

дистопическом произведении Коллинз функционирует парадоксально – не как отсутствие войны или состояние спокойствия, а как форма государственной пропаганды и психологического контроля. Результаты исследования свидетельствуют о том, что «мир» в государстве Панем лингвистически и концептуально связан с доминированием, тотальным наблюдением и подчинением, что вступает в противоречие с традиционными моральными, культурными и эмоциональными представлениями о данном понятии. Сопоставление политического и личностного употребления концепта позволяет показать, каким образом когнитивные процессы и языковые предпочтения формируют сложную, многоуровневую концептуализацию мира. Таким образом, анализ способствует более глубокому пониманию механизмов идеологической манипуляции фундаментальными человеческими ценностями посредством языка, а также стремления героини Катнисс к подлинному внутреннему и внешнему миру.

Ключевые слова *Концепт мира, лингвокогнитивный анализ, метафора, идеология, «Голодные игры», дискурс*

**Syuzanna Kollinzning
“The Hunger Games” romanida
“tinchlik” konseptining
lingvokognitiv tahlili**

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Annotatsiya *Mazkur maqolada Syuzanna Kollinzning “The Hunger Games” romanida “tinchlik” konseptining lingvokognitiv tahlili amalga oshiriladi. Kognitiv lingvistika va diskurs tahlili tamoyillariga asoslanib, mualliflar til vositalari orqali madaniy ma’nolar qanday shakllanishi hamda o’quvchining dunyoni siyosiy va psixologik kategoriya sifatida idrok etish jarayoni qanday yuzaga kelishini tahlil qiladilar. Metaforalar, semantik maydonlar va lingvistik qarama-qarshiliklarni o’rganish natijasida Kollinzning distopik asarida “tinchlik” tushunchasi paradoksal tarzda – urushning yo’qligi yoki osoyishtalik holati sifatida emas, balki davlat propagandasi va psixologik nazorat vositasi sifatida namoyon bo’lishi aniqlanadi. Tadqiqot natijalari Panem jamiyatida “tinchlik” tushunchasi lingvistik va konseptual jihatdan hukmronlik, kuzatuv va bo’ysundirish bilan chambarchas bog’langanini ko’rsatadi, bu esa ushbu so’zning an’anaviy axloqiy, madaniy va hissiy talqinlariga zid keladi. Konseptning siyosiy va shaxsiy qo’llanilish shakllarini qiyosiy tahlil qilish orqali kognitiv jarayonlar va lingvistik tanlovlar dunyoning murakkab, ko’p qatlamli konseptualizatsiyasini shakllantirishi ochib beriladi. Shunday qilib, mazkur tahlil til orqali asosiy insoniy qadriyatlarining mafkuraviy manipulyatsiyasini anglashga, shuningdek, bosh qahramon Katnissning chinakam ichki va tashqi tinchlikka bo’lgan intilishini yoritishga xizmat qiladi.*

Kalit so'zlar *Tinchlik konsepti, lingvokognitiv tahlil, metafora, mafkura, "The Hunger Games", diskurs*

Introduction

The concept of peace has long served as one of the fundamental values in human cognition and culture. It traditionally signifies harmony, stability, and the absence of conflict. However, within dystopian narratives, peace often acquires an ironic or manipulative function, becoming a linguistic tool for legitimizing power and control. Suzanne Collins's "The Hunger Games" (2008) presents a striking example of how language and ideology intersect to distort such universal human ideals. In the world of Panem, 'peace' is not synonymous with freedom or justice but rather with surveillance and coercion. The word itself becomes an emblem of the Capitol's authority.

This study applies a linguocognitive approach to analyze how the concept of peace is constructed in "The Hunger Games". Through the integration of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995), it aims to uncover how the novel's language shapes readers' understanding of ideological peace. The analysis focuses on three main aspects: (1) the semantic field of 'peace' and its related lexemes, (2) conceptual metaphors that define peace through control and violence, and (3) oppositional cognitive models that juxtapose peace with freedom, resistance, and silence. This article briefly examines some of these points and suggests possible ways to explore the underlying issues in more detail.

Linguocognitive Approach in Analyzing the Concept

The linguocognitive approach combines the study of language, cognition, and cultural perception. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), these concepts are not abstract entities, but mental structures that reflect collective experience and are linguistically encoded

through metaphors and categorization. Within this concept, the notion of the world is a complex mental construct that combines emotional, ethical, and political dimensions. It is also shaped by cultural narratives and discursive practices. (Kövecses, 2010).

In dystopian fiction, concepts like peace and freedom often undergo various semantic transformations through ideological manipulation (Charteris-Black, 2004). By analyzing lexical realizations and conceptual oppositions, using linguistic and cognitive research can reveal how fictional discourse reflects collective fears and cultural paradoxes. This paper thus interprets Collins's linguistic construction of peace as both a cognitive metaphor and a cultural critique of political control.

Conceptualizing Peace in "The Hunger Games"

In Collins's trilogy, peace is most visibly represented through the Capitol's institutional structure known as the 'Peacekeepers.' The lexical irony is instantly visible: 'Peacekeepers' impose peace through physical punishment, public executions, and elimination of dissent. For instance, when Gale is penalized for illegal hunting, the Peacekeepers incorporate violence masked as order: "The whip whistles through the air and I see the slash across Gale's back before I even hear it" ("Collins", 2008, p. 106). Here, the cognitive dissonance between the semantic value of 'peace' and the act of violence emphasizes the novel's criticism of state-imposed serenity.

The word 'peace' is also central to the Capitol's publicity discourse. President Snow repeatedly mentions the 'Peace of Panem' as the justification for the Hunger Games: "It was agreed that the districts would offer up tributes as a reminder of the price of peace" ("Collins",

2008, p. 18). This composition of ideas constructs a notion coordinating with the conceptual metaphor "PEACE IS SACRIFICE" – where peace is referred to as something that must be continuously paid for through sacrifice and obedience. Linguistically, the phrase 'price of peace' hides in itself a concept of a moral economy in which suffering is normalized.

However, peace also possesses a personal and emotional meaning for the main character – Katniss Everdeen. In the natural environment of the woods, she describes moments of solitude as peaceful: "The woods became my place of peace, where the world was quiet and I could breathe again" ("Collins", 2008, p. 29). This alternative understanding of peace — linked to nature, tranquility and autonomy — creates a cognitive contrast between institutional peace (enforced) and inner peace (experienced).

Cognitive Linguistic Metaphors and Oppositions

Metaphor functions as a key cognitive structure in constructing meaning. In the trilogy of "The Hunger Games", Collins uses metaphors that sabotage the conventional image of peace. Three primary conceptual metaphors can be identified:

1. "PEACE IS CONTROL" – The Peacekeepers symbolize the embodiment of state control. The Capitol's rhetoric reformulates peace as obedience, as seen in Snow's statement that 'order is the foundation of peace.
2. "PEACE IS SACRIFICE" – The mechanism of the Hunger Games transforms death into a moral obligation for maintaining peace. This metaphor authorizes violence as necessary.
3. "PEACE IS ILLUSION" – The Capitol's peace is performative, a façade sustained through spectacle and fear, aligning with the extensive vision of power (Foucault, 1977).

These metaphors generate what Kövecses (2010) calls a 'conceptual dissonance'—a situation where linguistic form

and cultural experience contradict each other. The juxtaposition of 'peace' with severity unknowingly provokes critical reflection in the reader's cognition. Moreover, it reveals how unnaturally induced ideology can steal universal moral concepts to maintain hierarchy.

Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995) states that language is both shaped by and shapes power relations. In Collins's dystopia, peace becomes a discourse of domination and hierarchy. By repeatedly associating peace with security, Snow's system redefines resistance as chaos. This echoes Orwellian vagueness of ideologies, where words acquire their opposite meanings. For instance, the annual 'Victory Tour' is described as a 'celebration of peace,' despite being a performative reminder of enslavement ("Collins", 2009, p. 42). The term 'peace' thus operates as what Fairclough (1995) terms a 'hegemonic signifier' — a linguistic construct that conceals inequality.

Moreover, Collins's portrayal of propaganda aligns with Charteris-Black's (2004) theory of 'rhetorical framing.' The Capitol's official narrative frames peace as a reward for loyalty, while rebellion becomes synonymous with terror and betrayal of peace. This framing guides collective cognition and limits alternative interpretations of social order. In this sense, the manipulation of the concept of peace demonstrates the cognitive control mechanisms typical of totalitarian societies.

Conclusion

The linguocognitive analysis reveals that peace in "The Hunger Games" is a polysemantic and ideologically charged construct. Its cognitive model intertwines notions of order, fear, and survival. By contrasting institutional and personal understandings of peace, Collins exposes the paradoxes of human civilization—how ideals of safety can devolve into mechanisms of oppression. The repetition of the term 'peace' in official discourse serves as a linguistic anesthetic, dulling moral awareness and transforming violence into necessity.

Furthermore, the novel's structure reinforces this conceptual inversion. Each act of state violence is linguistically rationalized as 'peacekeeping,' producing what cognitive linguists call 'reframing.' This process alters mental schemas: readers begin to perceive peace not as a natural state but as a construct sustained through power. As Kövecses (2010) notes, conceptual metaphors not only describe reality but shape it. Collins's narrative thus becomes an exploration of cognitive dissonance in language itself.

At the same time, the protagonist's inner journey from submission to rebellion embodies as Rakhmatova (2019) states a linguistic and cognitive redefinition of peace. Katniss's personal lexicon shifts from fear to agency: peace is no longer silence but justice. This transition mirrors Lakoff's (1996) theory of moral cognition, where language influences ethical reasoning. Ultimately, Collins invites

readers to reclaim the meaning of peace as an act of moral resistance.

Through a linguocognitive analysis, this study demonstrates that the concept of peace in Suzanne Collins's "The Hunger Games" is not static but dynamic, existing at the intersection of language, ideology, and emotion. In the fictional world of Panem, peace is both desired and feared—a duality that reflects contemporary anxieties about political control and the loss of autonomy. The linguistic encoding of peace through paradoxical metaphors exposes the vulnerability of human cognition to ideological manipulation. By contrasting institutional discourse with individual experience, Collins reclaims peace as a deeply personal and moral state rather than a political slogan. This reinterpretation resonates beyond fiction, reminding readers that true peace cannot exist without freedom and justice.

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