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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES OF VERBS IN METAPHORS

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Annotation. This article presents a comparative analysis of the grammatical categories of verbs as they function in metaphorical expression. The study examines how verbal categories such as tense, aspect, mood, voice, person, and number participate in the creation of metaphorical meaning and how grammatical metaphor restructures the relationship between semantic content and grammatical form. It argues that metaphor is not only lexical but also grammatical, and that the comparison of verbal categories across metaphorical uses reveals important interactions among cognition, discourse, and linguistic structure [1][2][3].

Keywords: verbs, grammatical categories, metaphor, grammatical metaphor, tense, aspect, mood, voice, person, number, comparative analysis.

Verbs occupy a central place in language because they express actions, processes, states, and events, and they organize the temporal and relational structure of discourse. When verbs are used metaphorically, they do more than denote concrete activity; they project one domain of experience onto another and generate new interpretations. A comparative analysis of grammatical categories of verbs in metaphors is therefore important because it shows that figurative meaning depends not only on vocabulary but also on grammar. This approach connects morphology, syntax, semantics, and cognition in the study of metaphor [1][2][4].

Comparative typology is one of the most significant fields of modern linguistics because it allows scholars to compare languages beyond the limits of individual description. Instead of examining a single language in isolation, comparative typology searches for recurring structural and functional patterns across languages. In this way, it helps explain both diversity and similarity in the world's languages. The discipline is valuable not only in theoretical linguistics but also in practical areas such as translation, language teaching, and contrastive grammar [1][2][4]. The central purpose of comparative typology is to classify languages according to shared features and to reveal which structural patterns are common, rare, or universal. Typological research therefore moves from particular observations toward broader generalizations about language structure. It asks how languages organize sounds, words, grammatical categories, and sentence patterns, and whether these organizational principles reflect universal tendencies of human language. Because of this, comparative typology occupies an important place within general linguistics [1][2][3].

One major type of comparative typology is genealogical typology. This type studies languages that are historically related and belong to the same language family. Its goal is to identify inherited similarities and to distinguish them from later innovations. Genealogical typology is closely connected with comparative-historical linguistics because both fields investigate common ancestry, language families, and diachronic development. At the same time,

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typology uses this historical relationship as one basis for classification rather than as its only object of inquiry [1][3].

Another important type is structural typology, which classifies languages according to their internal organization. This includes such features as word order, morphological structure, phonological systems, and grammatical marking. Structural typology is often considered the central type because it examines how languages are built regardless of whether they are historically related. For example, languages may be compared according to whether they prefer subject-verb-object order or subject-object-verb order, or whether they are mainly analytic, agglutinative, or fusional in their morphological structure [1][2][3][5].

Areal typology, also called regional typology, studies similarities among languages that arise through geographical contact rather than common origin. Languages spoken in the same region often influence one another over long periods, which may result in similar grammatical, lexical, or phonological features. These similarities are especially important when the languages belong to different families but share a geographical area. Areal typology therefore helps scholars understand contact-induced change and distinguish borrowed traits from inherited ones [1][3].

Comparative typology can also be divided according to the levels of language hierarchy it investigates. One of its major branches is phonetic and phonological typology. This branch compares sound systems, vowel and consonant inventories, syllable structures, stress patterns, tonal distinctions, and phonotactic rules. Through this comparison, linguists determine which sound patterns are widespread and which are typologically marked or rare [1][2][6]. Traditional studies of metaphor often concentrate on lexical transfer, as in expressions such as “time flies” or “an idea came to me,” where a concrete verb is applied to an abstract domain. However, modern linguistic theory demonstrates that metaphor can also operate through grammar. The concept of grammatical metaphor explains that meanings normally expressed in one grammatical form may be recast in another. Thus, processes usually expressed by verbs may appear as nouns, adjectives, or condensed grammatical constructions. This shows that the study of metaphor must include both lexical and grammatical levels of analysis [2][3][5].

One of the most important grammatical categories in metaphorical verbs is tense. Tense places events in time, but in metaphorical discourse it often does more than indicate chronology. Present tense may create immediacy and universality, making abstract statements sound vivid and current. Past tense may create distance or narrative framing, while future forms may project inevitability, expectation, or evaluation. As a result, the same metaphorical predicate may have different interpretive force depending on the tense in which it is expressed [1][4].

Aspect also plays a crucial role in the metaphorical potential of verbs. Aspect determines whether an action is viewed as ongoing, completed, repeated, or developing over time. In metaphorical usage, this category strongly shapes conceptualization. A progressive form may depict an abstract phenomenon as unfolding dynamically, while a perfective form may present it as bounded and result-oriented. For instance, when social change is described as “growing,” “spreading,” or “crystallizing,” aspect contributes directly to the image of duration, movement, and transformation [1][2].

Mood is another grammatical category that influences metaphorical expression. Indicative forms often present metaphorical meanings as facts, which strengthens their rhetorical effect.

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Imperative forms can make abstract guidance sound active and forceful, while modal and subjunctive forms introduce possibility, uncertainty, obligation, or evaluation. In public discourse and literature, mood helps determine whether a metaphor appears as description, command, warning, or supposition. Therefore, mood is not a secondary element but an active participant in metaphorical meaning construction [1][3].

Voice, especially the distinction between active and passive constructions, also affects metaphorical organization. Active voice usually foregrounds agency and presents the subject as the visible doer of the process. Passive voice, on the other hand, may background the agent and emphasize the affected entity. In metaphorical discourse, this choice can reshape interpretation significantly. An abstract force may be personified as an agent that "drives," "consumes," or "shapes" events, whereas passive constructions may depict communities or institutions as being acted upon by metaphorical processes [1][2][3]. Person and number are likewise meaningful in metaphorical analysis. First-person forms may create immediacy and subjective involvement, second-person forms may intensify rhetorical contact, and third-person forms often support generalization or distance. Singular verb forms may personify an abstract entity, while plural forms may distribute agency across collective actors. These categories affect how the metaphor positions the speaker, listener, and participants inside the figurative frame. Comparative analysis therefore shows that person and number contribute not only to agreement but also to perspective and communicative stance [1][4].

A central issue in the comparison of verbs in metaphors is the distinction between congruent and metaphorical grammatical realization. In congruent expression, processes are naturally encoded by verbs. In grammatical metaphor, however, these process meanings may shift into nouns or other categories, as when "people decide" becomes "the decision" or "the economy grows" becomes "economic growth." Such nominalization increases abstraction and density, especially in academic and bureaucratic discourse. This proves that metaphorical transformation can involve not just figurative imagery but also changes in grammatical class [2][3][5].

The contrast between literary metaphor and academic grammatical metaphor is especially informative. In literary texts, metaphorical verbs often remain dynamic, image-rich, and emotionally expressive. In academic discourse, by contrast, metaphor often appears through nominalization and abstraction, where verbal processes are repackaged as entities or relations. Research on grammatical metaphor across disciplines shows that such structures are characteristic of formal writing because they condense information and make causal relations more compact. Thus, the grammatical behavior of verbs in metaphor depends not only on the language system but also on genre and communicative purpose [2][3][6].

Cross-linguistic comparison adds another dimension to the analysis. Different languages vary in how richly they mark tense, aspect, mood, voice, person, and number, and these variations shape the grammatical resources available for metaphorical expression. In languages with elaborate verbal inflection, metaphor may exploit subtle morphological distinctions, whereas in more analytic languages the same meanings may be distributed across auxiliary verbs, particles, and syntax. This does not mean that one language is more metaphorical than another; rather, it shows that languages encode figurative process meanings through different structural pathways [1][4].

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The study of grammatical categories of verbs in metaphors also has cognitive significance. Metaphorical understanding depends on mapping one conceptual domain onto another, but grammar determines how that mapping is presented in discourse. Tense, aspect, mood, and voice influence whether the metaphor is understood as an event, a state, a command, a possibility, or a result. Person and number influence perspective and alignment. When these categories change, the same lexical metaphor can produce different semantic and pragmatic effects. For this reason, metaphor should be analyzed as a grammatical as well as a lexical and cognitive phenomenon [1][2][3].

Finally, this analysis has practical importance in stylistics, translation studies, discourse analysis, and language teaching. Students often recognize lexical metaphor but overlook the grammatical forms that intensify or redirect figurative meaning. Translators face similar difficulty when a metaphor depends on tense, aspect, or nominalization patterns that do not correspond directly across languages. In academic writing, awareness of grammatical metaphor is particularly important because much abstract meaning is created through the transformation of verbal processes into nominal forms. Comparative analysis of verbal categories in metaphors therefore contributes to both theoretical linguistics and applied language study [2][3][6].

In conclusion, the grammatical categories of verbs play a decisive role in the formation and interpretation of metaphor. Tense, aspect, mood, voice, person, and number shape the temporal, modal, perspectival, and agentive profile of figurative meaning, while grammatical metaphor demonstrates that process meanings may shift beyond the verbal class itself. A comparative approach shows that metaphor is simultaneously lexical, grammatical, cognitive, and discourse-based. By examining how verbal categories function in metaphorical contexts, linguistics gains a deeper understanding of how grammar organizes figurative thought and expression [1][2][3].

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