

# METAPHORICAL MOTIVATION OF LITHUANIAN, ENGLISH AND FRENCH IDIOMS WITH THE LEXEME MOUTH

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The purpose of this article is to analyse the motivation behind the metaphorical and metonymic projections in idioms with the lexeme *mouth*. The bulk of these idioms are used to refer to the two primary functions of the mouth – eating and speaking. Here I will classify and compare English, Lithuanian and French idioms the target domain

of which is speaking and try to answer three questions: (1) what is the structure of the motivation for the idiomatic meanings; (2) what is the scope of the target domain of speaking as carved out by idioms with *mouth* in the three languages; and (3) what is the cross-linguistic significance of the metaphoric mappings in these idioms.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The basic theoretical foundation for the study of figurative meanings of idioms is the contemporary theory of conceptual metaphor, which postulates the existence of a conventional system of conceptual metaphors pervasive in our language. The new field of cognitive linguistics, largely mapped out by Roch, Langacker, Lakoff, Johnson, etc., provided an impulse for novel approaches to the role of metaphor in language by according special attention to the cognitive processes of conceptualisation and categorization. The term “conceptual metaphor” refers to the systematic metaphorical mappings of particular source and target domains in the conceptual system. Such a definition postulates the existence of different domains on the conceptual, i.e. pre-linguistic, level (they could be compared to Fauconnier’s mental spaces) which have particular internal

structures and extensive links to other domains. Depending on their specificity, certain domains are easier to conceptualize than others because they are more directly experientially grounded; their structure is clearly delineated and more detailed. There is extensive linguistic data to suggest that some domains are systematically conceptualized in terms of other domains, that is, that there are consistent metaphorical links between certain source and target domains. In a conceptual metaphor, a source domain with its specific structure is mapped onto another domain, which as a consequence acquires its structure or certain facets of that structure. Examples of conceptual metaphors are STATES ARE LOCATIONS, GOALS ARE DESTINATIONS, DIFFICULTIES ARE HURDLES, ARGUMENT IS WAR, ANGER IS HEAT, HAPPY IS UP, SAD

IS DOWN, etc. As is apparent from these examples, metaphors can structure more or less abstract concepts; also, mappings can be organized in hierarchical structures, where some metaphors lower in the hierarchy are derived from and inherit the structures of the ones higher in the hierarchy. Such metaphoric structures are concealed in our everyday language, which we hardly if ever recognize as metaphorical. As far as figurative language is concerned, Lakoff (1987) proposed that idiomatic meaning might well be motivated by people's conceptual knowledge, which is largely constituted by metaphor.

It is generally agreed that one of the objectives of cognitive idiom studies is to challenge the traditional view of metaphorical idioms as "dead metaphors". Admittedly, the transparency of idiomatic motivation has been discussed in most studies on the semantics of idioms; however, rarely did the actual motivational patterns get considerable attention. Given the cognitive mechanism of metaphorical mapping and the new findings about the semantic compositionality of idioms, it is possible to prove that the metaphorical motivation of idiomatic meaning is very much alive. Another key motivational principle for idiomatic meaning is metonymy. While it is often studied as a sub-case of metaphor, metonymy can motivate the figurative meanings of idioms on its own, or interact with metaphor. Kövesces and Szabo (1995) insist that metonymy and conventional knowledge are two distinct cognitive mechanisms in addition to metaphor and should therefore be studied separately for the purpose of uncovering pervasive patterns in figurative motivation of idioms. In metonymic motivation, the mapping of source and target domains occurs within the same conceptual domain, and the conceptual relationship between the two entities is "stand for". For instance, in the idiom *give some-*

*one a hand*, the *hand* stands for 'helping', that is, the performer (in this case a part of the human body) stands for the action performed. This pattern of metonymic motivation is very common in idioms with names of body parts.

In addition to metaphor and metonymy, some idioms can be motivated by conventional knowledge, which is the coherent information that people share about a conceptual domain based on their direct experience concerning that domain. In the case of MOUTH, for example, conventional knowledge would include, among others, such features as the structure of the mouth; its place in relation to other contiguous parts such as the face, lips, teeth, etc.; its properties of being open or closed, full or empty; its main functions of eating and speaking; and its shape, which can indicate emotions. Some parts of this conventional knowledge are universal, while others are definitely culturally bound, like the cultural symbolism of some gestures or certain household items. Conventional knowledge is typically the source of many conceptual metaphors and metonymies, but it can also independently motivate the more direct figurative meanings of certain idioms, such as *to be down in the mouth* meaning 'to be sad'.

All of the studies on the conceptual basis of idiomatic meaning provide experimental evidence in support of the idea that idioms are in their nature a conceptual phenomenon, and not a linguistic idiosyncrasy<sup>1</sup>. Even though the existence of conceptual metaphors and metonymies does not predict that certain idioms must appear in language, the presence of these conceptual mechanisms provides a partial motivation for the

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<sup>1</sup> See Gibbs (1993) for a detailed description of psycholinguistic experiments on mental representation of the metaphors motivating idiomatic meaning.

highly specified and diverse meanings of idioms. This claim also explains why many languages have similar idioms with similar figurative meanings. Having accepted the notion of cognitive motivation based on conceptual tools like metaphor and metonymy, I was tempted to analyse

and compare the structure of this motivation in idioms of different languages. Idioms with the parts of the human body present a special interest because they reflect the structure of the concepts for the human body, which are directly experientially relevant.

## 2. BASIC MOTIVATING STRUCTURES

### 2.1 Metonymy MOUTH FOR ITS FUNCTION

The metonymic mapping of the mouth onto the activity of speaking is a pervasive motivating structure that underlies the meanings of most of the idioms under discussion here. The contiguity relation is between the function and the body part performing that function. We can find metonymy at work in many idioms with other parts of the human body, e.g. *to use one's head*, *to have a nose for sth*, *to give a hand*, *to leg it*, etc. However, the generic MOUTH FOR SPEAKING metonymy alone would not be sufficient to produce all the idioms with highly specific meanings in different domains. In fact, these metonymic mappings are just the first supporting threads in the complex motivational network of metaphors and metonymies. As will be clear from the analysis of the examples below, the ontological metaphor MOUTH IS A CONTAINER together with many other more specific conceptual metaphors and metonymies add to the metonymy BODY PART FOR ITS FUNCTION to provide the motivation for individual idiomatic mappings.

### 2.2 Metaphor MOUTH IS A CONTAINER

The relevant aspects of the concept MOUTH for analyzing idiomatic meanings are related to its structure and its major functions. The structure of mouth is conceptualised with the help of the

metaphor MOUTH IS A CONTAINER. In fact, the conceptual image-schema of containment is productive of many basic cognitive metaphors and is used to structure many different categories, such as space and time concepts, human physical and emotional states, and so on. The CONTAINER metaphor is an effective means of talking about many abstract concepts. Moreover, this metaphor provides a means of conceptualising qualitative and/or quantitative change: the concept of the contents of the container plus the notions of being in/out or moving into/out of the container are all basic metaphorical conceptual operations.

The metaphor MOUTH IS A CONTAINER is well experientially grounded. There is the obvious structural similarity: the mouth is a cavity with concrete boundaries; also it has an opening which people continually open and close. It should be noted that the English word *mouth*, the Lithuanian *burna* and the French *bouche* are used to denote two things: the oral cavity and the opening of that cavity on the face. In fact the mouth, as a cavity, has a few openings, but the relevant one is the visible external opening. Besides, the mouth is framed by the lips, which have a role of their own to play. The opening part of the mouth provides for the fact that, in addition to something being inside/outside of the mouth, we can

use the dynamic directional concepts PUT INTO and TAKE OUT OF. Hence the image-schema underlying the metaphor is a container of unspecified size and form with an adjustable opening (i.e. set to be open or closed) and big enough to permit other smaller objects to be put inside. Another important grounding factor is the experience of eating, that is, when discrete items of food are being put in the mouth and thus become the contents of the container. The fact that we physically experience material substance being put into the mouth is of utmost importance for conceptualising mouth as a container.

By extension, the metaphor of speech as the contents in the mouth-container is derived from the concept of food as the contents of the mouth-container. Speech often stands metonymically for its meaning, i.e. the ideas expressed in that speech. The metaphor of speech as the contents of the mouth-container is derived, then, from two sources — the link between speech and food, which both pass through the mouth, the former during speaking and the latter during the process of eating, and the metaphor IDEAS ARE FOOD, which describes thinking and comprehension processes in terms of eating and digestion (see Lakoff & Johnson 1980). In order to appreciate fully how people make sense of the relationship between the ideas and the uttered speech conveying these ideas, the discussion should include one more ontological structure — the CONDUIT metaphor.

### 2.3 The CONDUIT metaphor

The term “conduit metaphor” was first used by Michael J. Reddy (1979) to refer to a basic conceptual system of interrelated metaphors that structures the concept of human communication. This metaphor accounts for the popular assumption that ideas exist either within human heads

or, at least, within words uttered by humans. Here are the implications of the major framework of the conduit metaphor:

- (1) language functions like a conduit, transferring thoughts bodily from one person to another;
- (2) in writing and speaking, people insert their thoughts and feelings in the words;
- (3) words accomplish the transfer by containing the thoughts or feelings and conveying them to others;
- (4) in listening or reading, people extract the thoughts and feelings once again from the words (in Ortony 1979:290).

We cannot underestimate the importance of the conduit metaphor for explaining the motivation of idioms referring to the domain of speech. To mention just a few examples, the idioms *to keep one's mouth shut* and *to take the words out of someone's mouth* both rely on the implications of the conduit metaphor. It is as a result of this metaphor that spoken words are conceptualised as discrete entities that can be located inside the mouth or moved into or out of the mouth, all along referring to thoughts and ideas they are used to express. As a rule, the conduit metaphor exists as a basis for further metaphorical structuring of idiomatic meaning; in other words, as a precondition for more elaborate mappings of the specific structure. Therefore, just as is the case with the CONTAINER metaphor, I do not think it necessary or possible to discuss its role in the motivation structure of individual idioms every time it occurs.

### 2.4 The structure of motivation: interaction of mappings

We can see now how motivating metaphors and metonymies are interrelated and work together to create the more or less specified meanings of concrete idioms. As will be evident from the examples below, the idioms about mouth are

motivated by the MOUTH FOR ITS FUNCTION (SPEAKING) metonymy and the basic metaphors MOUTH IS A CONTAINER, WORDS ARE DISCRETE ENTITIES IN A CONTAINER, as well as the CONDUIT metaphor. The metaphors and the metonymy interact, weaving a basic network of motivating links and correspondences. On this basic motivational structure, more elaborate meanings are constructed, often with the help of one or more additional conceptual metaphors, or of some conventional knowledge related to the mouth and its functions.

Let us proceed with the analysis of the idioms the target of which is the speech-act domain. The metaphors MOUTH IS A CONTAINER and WORDS ARE DISCRETE ENTITIES IN THE MOUTH structure the figurative meanings of these idioms. The CONTAINER metaphor makes use of such specifications of container as its structure, size and contents, which are further elaborated in the following pairs of semantic oppositions: open vs. closed, full vs. empty, big vs. small, and dirty vs. clean. In various idioms, different aspects of container are foregrounded thus evoking various images of a given situation. For the purpose of highlighting the static/dynamic distinction in the container schema, I have distinguished two groups of idioms employing the image of words being inside the mouth:

#### A

- (1) Eng. *to mouth one's words*
- (2) Lith. *iš burnos nepaleisti* 'not to let sth out of one's mouth'
- (3) Fr. *avoir toujours un mot a la bouche* 'always have a word in the mouth'

#### B

- (4) Eng. *not to open one's mouth*
- (5) Lith. *burną užčiaupti / užkimšti* 'to close/stuff someone's mouth'

(6) Fr. *mot qu'on a sur les levres / sur le bord des levres* 'the word on the (edge of the) lips'

In group A, the Lithuanian idiom *iš burnos nepaleisti* is partly equivalent to the French *avoir toujours un mot a la bouche*, where keeping the words in the mouth is equivalent to speaking them. A few Lithuanian idioms using the concept of lips have the same meaning of talking repeatedly about the same thing, e.g. *lūpose nešioti* 'to carry sth in one's lips' and *nuo lūpų nenuieiti* '[for a topic] not to get off one's lips'. The emphasis is on the continuous and repetitive character of someone's speech, which is often regarded as negative. Letting the words out of the mouth, then, would mean a regular speech act with a beginning and an end. In other words, the concept of speaking is instantiated in the image of the mouth with words in it. In group B (idioms 4–6), on the other hand, the open-closed feature dichotomy of the container is brought into focus. According to this schema, what is in the mouth is not spoken unless the mouth-container is opened and the speech-contents is released. Also, we can attempt to keep others' containers shut or open them up, so that the contents are either revealed, or not. Words acquire the properties of physical entities, they are handled like things in a container. This image is motivated by the fact that the mouth is a cavity with an opening (lips) and that when speaking people do open their mouths so that the sounds are heard as coming out of the mouth. In the English idioms *to have the words stick in one's throat* and *on the tip of one's tongue*, the speech is not uttered because the words get stuck inside the container. The parts of the mouth are specified here; the throat, tongue and lips participate in speech production and can metaphorically serve as hurdles in the path of words leaving the mouth.<sup>2</sup>

It is obvious that the two images A and B are closely related, and the relation is not that of opposition but rather of a different focus on the speech situation. Idioms employing the image A have a wider range of meanings about what is spoken, while idioms using the image B have a more specific meaning that focuses on the utterance of speech. Depending on the meaning of the idiom – whether it is about the contents of speech or the process of speech – different aspects of the container schema are activated. Consequently, the ontological MOUTH IS A CON-

TAINER metaphor and the CONDUIT metaphor interact, creating a ready-to-use framework for talking about human verbal communication in concrete physical terms.

In further semantic analysis of individual idioms with *mouth*, the idioms describing speaking and verbal interaction will be classified and their motivational patterns discussed. Also, idioms with *lips*, *tongue* and *throat* will be included in appropriate sections of the analysis where their metaphorical meanings are related to that of *mouth*.

### 3. IDIOMS ABOUT SPEAKING

#### 3.1 Speaking too much or too little

It seems that in many cultures there exists a negative attitude towards people who talk a lot. Here are a few idioms meaning 'to speak much' or 'to repeat the same thing':

(7) Eng. *to run off at the mouth*

(8) Eng. *to shoot one's mouth off*

(9) Lith. *burną aušinti* 'to let one's mouth cool off', used when no one is paying attention to someone speaking.

The concept of garrulousness is expressed by referring to the contents of the container and to what is happening with those contents. In (7) the container is overflowing with liquid, in (8) it is conceived as a gun which is expelling (many?) bullets with speed and force, and in (9) the con-

tents is hot so the mouth is kept open in order to let it cool down (however, this is presumed to be pointless, possibly because it is only steam that is escaping out of the mouth). In all of these idioms image metaphors are created whereby the mouth-container is mapped onto another container, for instance a pot or a gun, and the contents which is escaping out of the container is in profile. Within these metaphors the mouth metonymically stands for the speech activity, and the verbs denote the action which is excessive or irresponsible, or both.<sup>3</sup>

The opposite meaning of being quiet, not able or not willing to speak much is expressed by the following idioms:

(10) Lith. [*kas žodį*] *iš burnos traukti* 'to pull each word out of someone's mouth'

(11) Lith. *kaip vandens į burną prisisėmęs* 'like having some water in one's mouth'

As with speaking too much, speaking too little has a negative affective meaning, i.e. the per-

<sup>2</sup> The locating *tip in on the tip of one's tongue* maps onto the concept NEARLY in relation to the act of speaking or remembering what one wants to say. This concept is often expressed in spatial terms such as *on the verge*, *on the point*. Such conceptualization follows from the basic metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS, since remembering, i.e. having something activated in one's memory, or speaking can be understood as a state here. Changing from one state to another, then, is being on the boundary of a new location.

<sup>3</sup> Also consider *shoot a line*, where *shoot* denotes boasting and unreliability of message.

son to whom the idiom refers is supposed to be quiet because he/she is slow, confused, scared, etc. As opposed to words flowing freely out of the mouth in idioms describing talkativeness, in (10) *pull* implies physical effort on the part of the interlocutor and a certain resistance on the part of the speaker. Idiom (11) presupposes that the person is reluctant to speak because if he/she were to open the mouth, only water would come out of it.

### 3.2 Relevance and clarity of the message

The image of a full mouth seems to imply either that what is said is very important or that the message is delivered clearly, openly and willingly, e.g.,

(12) Eng. *to say a mouthful*

(13) Lith. *visa/pilna burna* 'say sth with a full mouth'

(14) Fr. *a pleine bouche* 'with a full mouth'

Compare the following idioms, which have the opposite meaning of talking unclearly or in a forced manner:

(15) Lith. *puse lūpu* 'with half of one's lips'

(16) Lith. *lūpų kraštu* 'with the edge of one's lips'

(17) Fr. *parler, répondre, etc. du bout des lèvres* 'speak, etc. with the edge of the lips'.

It is important that in order to express the unwillingness and vagueness of a communication the image of lips is made use of. As opposed to the "full mouth" which delivers a clear message, only a part of the mouth, i.e. the lips, are brought into focus, whereas the concept of partiality is reinforced by pointing out that the person was using only half or the edge of their lips. Thus, on the conceptual level, FULL is correlated with CLEAR, while PARTIAL is mapped onto UNCLEAR or RELUCTANT.

### 3.3 Responsibility for the speech

In a typical speech act, there are at least two participants, whose interaction and relationship to

the message communicated can be quite complicated. The following three idioms describe specific situations where the issue of the ownership of ideas and words is not straightforward:

(18) Eng. *to take the words out of someone's mouth*

(19) Eng. *to put the words into someone's mouth*

(20) Lith. *i kieno lūpas idėti* 'to put sth into someone's lips'.

The underlying image is the same for both English idioms: there are two potential speakers whereas only one of them is the owner of the mouth with the words, i.e. the owner of the ideas to be expressed. The difference is in the relationship between the two speakers and their responsibility for the message. This responsibility is expressed through the ownership of the mouth in which, according to the container schema, the words are located. The figurative meanings are constructed by blending the source and target inputs. In (18) the words are in the mouth of A, because A had a certain idea and wanted to express it. B takes these as yet unuttered words out of A's mouth and speaks them. In a typical speech situation person A would make an observation: 'B took the words right out of my mouth', by which A would be claiming the ownership of the ideas/words which had been uttered by B. The issue of ownership of ideas/words is in profile and the issue of speaking is in the background. Here the CONDUIT metaphor is clearly observable: the ideas originate in someone's head, then pass on into the mouth in order to be spoken in the form of words, and someone else can take these words from that person's mouth and utter them first. To proceed with idiom (19), the situation is even more complicated. When C says, 'I don't like D putting words into my mouth', she means that D spoke the words and also that D claimed that these words or the ideas expressed by the words initially belonged to C. The ownership of ideas/words is again

in profile, whereby the owner of the mouth C is supposed to be the owner of the ideas as a result of D putting the words into her mouth. The idiom has a negative affective meaning, which spills over onto the referential meaning implying that the claim about the words initially coming from C is not true. In fact, the semantics of *put* supports such a reading: D is presumed to have the object at his disposition in order to later put it somewhere else. By putting it in C's mouth, however, D did not report what C had said but rather shifted the responsibility for his own words to C. The Lithuanian idiom (20) works much like (19), except that *lips* are used instead of *mouth*, and the idiom does not have the negative inference and thus means 'to report someone's speech'.

The CONDUIT metaphor, elaborated by the mapping of MOUTH onto the source of words, is instantiated in the following idioms, which describe the reliability of a message due to it being further repeated:

- (21) Eng. (*straight*) *from the horse's mouth*  
 (22) Lith. *iš pirmos burnos* 'from the first mouth'  
 (23) Lith. *eiti iš lūpų į lūpas* 'to go from lips to lips'

These idioms are based on the OUT OF directional component of the container schema. Finding out the information is conceptualized by means of the scenario from the CONDUIT metaphor: materialized information coming out of a person's mouth or through the lips and reaching the interlocutor's ears. In (21) the *horse* could probably be explained by the metonymic usage of *horse* to refer to both the horse and the rider, especially a cavalry soldier, dating to late Middle English. Thus the information coming from someone who has witnessed or taken part in the events is reliable and accurate, as compared to the information coming from a secondary source which might be distorted.

### 3.4 Keeping silent or revealing secrets

The open – closed feature of the CONTAINER metaphor is employed in expressing the meaning 'to keep/reveal a secret'. Consider the following idioms:

- (24) Eng. *to keep one's mouth shut*  
 (25) Eng. *to stop someone's mouth with a gag/bribe* = not to allow someone to speak  
 (26) Eng. *tight-lipped*  
 (27) Lith. *burnos neatverti* 'not to open one's mouth'  
 (28) Lith. *burną užkimšti / užrišti* 'to stuff / tie up someone's mouth'  
 (29) Lith. *tūpas surakinti* 'to lock someone's lips'  
 (30) Fr. *la bouche cousue* 'the mouth is sewn up'  
 (31) Fr. *ne pas desserrer les lèvres* 'not to open one's lips'.

In accordance with the general container schema, the concrete, physical entities that are kept in a closed container (mouth) are mapped on information that should be kept secret. The idioms mean what they do by virtue of an interaction between two motivating structures: the metonymy PRE-CONDITION FOR RESULT and the metaphor SECRET INFORMATION IS SUBSTANCE IN A CLOSED CONTAINER. According to the metonymy PRE-CONDITION FOR RESULT, keeping one's mouth closed stands for not talking and consequently not revealing the information that is available to one (this generic metonymy is parallel to a more wide-spread metonymy CAUSE FOR EFFECT, see Kovesces & Radden 1998: 56). According to the causal structure of the metaphor SECRET INFORMATION IS SUBSTANCE IN A CLOSED CONTAINER, when the mouth-container is shut, the secrets cannot escape and thus will not be revealed. One entailment of this metaphor is that the secrets have a will of their own and will escape if the mouth were opened, cf. *let the cat out of the bag*. In *tight-lipped*, the

opening in the mouth is further specified as *lips*, and tight is contrasted with loose (cf. *loose-tongued*). A number of idioms express the idea of forcing a person to be silent by closing that person's mouth in one way or another. In idioms (28), (29) and (30) the person is not allowed to speak so that they would not express their ideas. Some of the action verbs have a literal meaning, referring to the actions that can be performed on a person, others, like *lock*, are more metaphorical.

### 3.5 Insulting and cursing

Another target domain is what people say or what the results of their talking are. The most common subjects are insulting someone and cursing. Let us take a look at a very popular idiom:

(32) Eng. *to put/stick one's foot in the mouth*.

Here the literal meaning of the idiom creates a disgusting physical image of a nearly-impossible action, where the foot, which treads on the ground and is dirty, is put into the mouth, the hygiene of which we are so concerned about. By employing the semantic oppositions high vs. low and dirty vs. clean, the idiom achieves a shocking and imaginative effect – the incongruence of the mouth coming into contact with the foot suggests some dramatic/ugly mishap in communication. Typically, the notion of improper, angry speech or cursing is also expressed through the opposition clean vs. dirty which is found in the

pair of the conceptual metaphors CLEAN IS MORAL and DIRTY IS IMMORAL. Another semantic opposition is tied vs. loose in the metaphors TIED IS MORAL and LOOSE IS IMMORAL. Here are some examples of idioms making use of these oppositions:

(33) Eng. *foul mouth*

(34) Lith. *burną išsiplauk* 'wash your mouth'

(35) Lith. *burną paleisti* 'to let one's mouth loose'

(36) Lith. *burną atidaryti* 'to open one's mouth'

If the container is dirty, its contents are dirty, and, conversely, by cleaning your mouth you are censoring your language. In Lithuanian idioms (35) and (36) the concept of 'using improper language' is expressed through the open-closed, or, more particularly, tied - loose dichotomy. The metaphors TIED IS MORAL and LOOSE IS IMMORAL are grounded in our cultural experience which encompasses a system of beliefs where morality is seen as a set of rigid social principles to abide by. The concept of looseness is applied to the domain of morality where it is mapped on absence of rigid principles, hence the definition of 'loose' as 'morally lax'. According to the system of entailments for such metaphoric understanding of morality, people are seen as rather immoral creatures that should keep their restraints tight and their containers (with improper language and destructive emotions) closed if they want to act morally. Most of the idioms utilizing the metaphor of looseness are polysemous and can refer to acts of swearing, gossiping, or just empty talk.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The English, Lithuanian and French idioms with the lexeme *mouth* cover a relatively broad range of topics which are motivated by two main func-

tions of the mouth – speaking and eating. In the many idioms referring to people's verbal communication, the metonymy MOUTH STANDS

FOR SPEAKING is only the first cognitive principle in the structure of motivation. Secondly, the CONTAINER image-schema is mapped onto MOUTH, which allows the projection of main features of the container (such as its size, content, open – closed, tied – loose, full – empty and dirty – clean characteristics or a combination of a few of these) to aspects of speech act or of the communicated message. Coherent with mouth-as-a-container mapping, speaking is conceptualized by means of the CONDUIT metaphor, whereby speech is mapped onto substance in the mouth-container.

As it appears from the material analyzed and from our discussion, the basic target and source domains are represented by idioms in English, Lithuanian and French. Besides, the specific motivations for each group of idioms seem to be applicable to examples from all three languages. This supports the cognitive view of semantic processes in language in the sense that linguistic figuration, of which idioms comprise a big part, is well motivated by metaphorical and metonymic principles on the conceptual level. In fact, most of the pervasive conceptual image-schemas and metaphorical mappings are active in the motivational structures for the analyzed idioms. Thus it could be maintained that the conceptual status of these metaphors, which has been long accepted in cognitive research, is validated not only by the analysis of English idioms, but also by the comparison of Lithuanian, French and English idiomatic phrases. What is more important, specif-

ic structural metaphors and metonymies are also cross-linguistically relevant, consistently motivating as they are idioms in all three languages.

In addition to the well-researched CONTAINER and CONDUIT metaphors and the metonymy BODY PART FOR ITS FUNCTION, the following specific structural metaphors and metonymies have been found to account for the motivation of idioms with *mouth* referring to verbal communication:

- SECRET INFORMATION IS SUBSTANCE IN A CLOSED CONTAINER
- FULL IS CLEAR and PARTIAL IS UNCLEAR
- TIED IS MORAL and LOOSE IS IMMORAL
- CLEAN IS MORAL and DIRTY IS IMMORAL.

It seems that the proposed analysis of the motivation of idioms with a specific body-part lexeme is able to reveal certain paths of metaphorical structuring, with some ontological conceptual metaphors as its basis and several superimposed structural metaphors, which interact at the level of specific idioms. This revelation is contrary to the view that the motivation of idiomatic language is just a matter of historical linguistics. From the semantic analysis of idioms with *mouth*, it is evident that the meaning of the idiomatic component of our language is largely motivated by our cognitive apparatus with its network of conceptual metaphors and metonymies. Consequently, this network of conceptual metaphors is very real and active, being firmly grounded in our physical functioning as part of the world.

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## METAFORINĖ FRAZEOLIGIZMŲ SU LEKSEMA BURNA MOTYVACIJA LIETUVIŲ, ANGLŲ IR PRANCŪZŲ KALBOSE

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### Reziumė

Straipsnyje bandoma palyginti ir suklasifikuoti lietuviškus, angliškus ir prancūziškus frazeologizmus su leksema *burna* pagal jų semantinę motyvaciją. Remiantis konceptualinės metaforos teorija (Conceptual Metaphor theory), nagrinėjamos frazeologizmų motyvacinės struktūros, bandoma atrasti bendras konceptualines metaforas ir metonimijas. Dvi pagrindinės motyvacijos priemonės, išryškėjančios daugumoje frazeologizmų visose trijose kalbose, yra ontologinė

metafora BURNA YRA INDAS ir metoniminis ryšys tarp burnos ir jos atliekamų funkcijų. Kadangi daugelio skirtingų kalbų vienodos reikšmės frazeologizmų metaforinė motyvacija yra ta pati, galima daryti išvadą, kad esminės metaforinės struktūros yra universalios. Tokios metaforinės ir metoniminės struktūros yra pagrįstos mūsų kognityvine ir fizine/kinetine patirtimi.

Įteikta  
2001 m. spalio mėn.