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*The article is devoted to the analysis of one of the concepts of new forms of political communication – SOFT POWER concept, introduced by Joseph Nye and representing a political metaphor. The authors analyze the history of the emergence and encyclopedic information about this concept. In the focus of our attention are the mechanisms of metaphorical representation of SOFT POWER concept. The most productive means of its objectification in the political media discourse is the subject metaphorical model. High frequency of the conceptual metaphor SOFT POWER → RESOURCE proves the “resource” understanding of “soft power”.*

*Key words and phrases:* concept; conceptual metaphor; political metaphor; soft power; subject metaphorical model; resource; political media discourse.

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### **METAPHORICAL REPRESENTATION OF SOFT POWER CONCEPT IN THE MODERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

Today, the focus of attention of specialists in cognitive linguistics are concepts as units of human consciousness and their study with the help of linguistic methods, that is, through language means of objectification.

The authors of this article have devoted a number of papers to the study of the content and structural features of POWER and STRENGTH concepts in the modern English language. In the process of considering new aspects of this problem, our attention was drawn to SOFT POWER concept, defined by modern political scientists as one of the concepts of new forms of political communication.

**The purpose** of this work is to identify the main mechanisms of metaphorical representation of SOFT POWER concept, the undoubted importance of which in the mental space of society determines **the relevance** of this study. The concept under consideration interests us, first of all, as a concept that actively functions in the collective consciousness, which is promoted by its wide use in the media space of the multipolar world.

The present research involves setting up the following **tasks**:

1) to summarize the provisions of modern scientific research in various fields to develop the theoretical foundations of the study of SOFT POWER concept in modern English; 2) to analyze the linguistic means of objectification of the concept under study; 3) to determine the mechanisms of verbalization of SOFT POWER concept by metaphorical means in the political media discourse.

The choice of **the methods** used is determined by the purpose and tasks of the study. Since we have not specifically studied the object of the present research yet, the fixation of SOFT POWER concept in the speech of modern English speakers comes to the fore. To solve this problem, the method of continuous sampling was used. The analysis was based on **examples** (about 350) from the electronic context dictionary Reverso Context [11]. In the process of study, we also used the method of contextual analysis, method of analysis of the compatibility of abstract names which allowed us to identify a number of conceptual metaphors representing the concept, and the method of cognitive interpretation of metaphor, defining the way of understanding the concept in the minds of native English speakers.

The scientific novelty of the work lies in the fact that the linguistic description of the phenomenon of soft power in the modern English language has not been carried out before. Metaphorical means of objectification of SOFT POWER concept in the political media discourse have never been analyzed.

The term “soft power” was first coined by Harvard Professor Joseph Nye in his 1990 book “Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power”. He subsequently developed the concept in his 2004 book “Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics”. J. Nye strongly believes that there are two main types of power, which are denoted by the concepts of “hard power” and “soft power” [5]. Traditionally, the country’s dominance on the world stage was determined by “hard power” which means the tools of external pressure that in the process of communication, forces the object of influence to obey a stronger partner. The “hard power” usually includes armed, economic and administrative pressure [12, c. 7].

As opposed to traditional approaches, J. Nye proposes to use another way of influence – “soft power”, which can be defined as power implemented in the form of a certain communicative impact, in which the dictated behavior is perceived by the recipient as his own free and voluntary choice, bringing, moreover, joy and pleasure to the subject. Unlike “hard power”, “soft power” is not perceived as a force that acts from the outside [Ibidem]. “Soft power” is the ability to achieve the desired through the voluntary participation of allies, not through coercion or handouts [5]. It occurs when a country attracts by its culture, political ideals, values, foreign policy programs and is increasingly important for solving problems that require multilateral cooperation. In other words, “soft power” is something that

allows you to influence public views, preferences and ideals without direct and hard pressure. As a result of the effective use of “soft power” tools, it becomes possible to influence the mental structures of mass consciousness, which leads to the illusion of mutual interest, trust, respect, mutual understanding and on this basis the influence of the country on the political and humanitarian processes in the world and in a particular state [9, c. 106].

After reviewing the history of the concept being analyzed and having considered the encyclopedic information about the phenomenon reflected by it, we proceed directly to the linguistic aspects of its analysis.

SOFT POWER concept is verbalized by a substantive phrase: the main word is a noun, which has a dependent adjective. Compatibility of the abstract name *power* with the adjective *soft*, nominating sensitive, tactile characteristics, generates a rather vivid conceptual metaphor, which P. B. Parshin defines as tactile (sensory). The domain of conceptualization of tactile feelings is the source domain in this case, and the target domain is the domain of conceptualization of the socio-political relations [7, c. 13]. But as SOFT POWER concept interests us, first of all, as the concept functioning in political media discourse we, relying on works of A. P. Chudinov and E. V. Budaev, refer this conceptual metaphor to political ones.

The scientists stated above have devoted numerous works to studying the political metaphor phenomenon, history of its emergence, methodology of research and other aspects. Analyzing extensive material, A. P. Chudinov and E. V. Budaev convincingly prove the fact that in “modern science the idea of political metaphor as the tool for understanding, modelling and assessment of political processes as a lever on social consciousness was created” [2, c. 3]. Besides, “understanding of the fact that the metaphor is primarily a mental, rather than language phenomenon, often initiates research aimed at studying political metaphors as a means of reflection of conscious or unconscious ideas about political reality” [ibidem].

Researchers of the political metaphor are interested in two types of correlation of the metaphor and conceptual system of a person. On the one hand, corpus-based research of metaphors allows revealing structures of the “collective subconscious”, which are not expressed explicitly. It is possible to formulate this aspect as “consciousness (the subconscious) defines metaphors” and respectively the analysis of metaphors is analysis of conceptual structures. At the same time, the pragmatical potential of metaphors is intentionally used in political discourse for reconceptualization of the picture of the world of the addressee. This approach can be expressed in the formula “metaphors define consciousness” [1, c. 24]. Linguists draw the conclusion that “the political metaphor is a significant tool of manipulation with public consciousness” [10, c. 123].

As we have defined earlier, the expression *soft power* is metaphoric. Moreover, being combined with various predicates, it generates new conceptual metaphors, every time forming, as we see it, a kind of “metaphor squared”. To find metaphorical expressions in the selected material, we have used the method of purposive sample. Factual material for this article was selected taking into account the ideas of G. Lakoff, who notes that conceptual metaphors have various frequency exponents of productivity. The measure of productivity is, first, the number of conventional language expressions coding this conceptual metaphor, and secondly, the number of substantial characteristics carried over from the source domain to the target domain [3, c. 496-497].

It should be noted once again that all examples are obtained from the Reverso Context dictionary [11], which makes extensive use of news sources.

According to the results of the analysis of compatibility, the most productive means of objectification of SOFT POWER concept in modern English is **the subject metaphorical model**, which in G. Lakoff’s works has the name of an ontological one. According to the scientist, our experience of dealing with physical objects makes basis for an enormous variety of ontological metaphors that is ways of interpretation of events, actions, emotions, ideas, etc. as objects [4, c. 408].

Within the considered model the most frequent conceptual metaphor (hereinafter referred to as CM) is SOFT POWER → RESOURCE, which is derived from:

- compatibility with the verbs *to possess, to have, to wield, to use, to preserve* designating existence of a certain resource or action with it:

(1) *By 1989, they had little soft power left.* (2) *The Soviet Union possessed a great deal of soft power in the years after World War II.* (3) *But Bush missed another lesson implicit in his analogy: the importance of using the soft power of culture.* (4) *Indeed, America’s willingness to criticize its political leaders enables the country to preserve soft power.* (5) *The UN Secretary General can wield the soft power of persuasion but little hard economic or military power;*

- compatibility with the verbs *to squander, to lose* indicating possibility to be spent due to certain circumstances:

(6) *It squandered American soft power and created a danger that Iraq may become a haven for terrorists.* (7) *The USA has lost a great deal of its soft power over the past eight years;*

- compatibility with the verbs *to need, to lack* expressing the need to possess a useful resource:

(8) *China currently lacks soft power.* (9) *Almost every leader needs a certain degree of soft power.*

Usefulness of a resource is also confirmed in the following context where its loss leads to regress:

(10) *The loss of soft power would be a setback for Europe, the Balkans, and international stability.*

It is also characteristic of the expression *soft power* to combine with the verbs indicating ability of restoration – *to recover, to regain*:

(11) *America was unpopular at the time of the Vietnam War, yet it recovered its soft power.* (12) *What can the US do to regain its soft power in the world?*

The need for accumulation and multiplication of the resource is proved by numerous examples of compatibility with the verb *enhance*:

(13) *China tried to enhance its soft power by staging the 2008 Olympics.*

The above examples prove once again that the state's availability of a resource that is associated with an entity represented by SOFT POWER concept is evaluated positively. On the contrary, its absence is negative.

It should be emphasized that many researchers, both foreign and Russian, say that many politicians and statesmen fundamentally misunderstand the term "soft power". They often speak of the *use* of soft power, which is fundamentally contrary to the Nye's interpretation. In this regard, P. Parshin's explanations are of interest. According to them, "soft power" is "not a way to use power, but its vector; soft power is an attractive force, which, by the way, implies not only a different type of metaphorical rethinking, but also a different degree of metaphorization: a vector is one of the parameters of power in its strict, physical sense. Following Nye's interpretation, soft power is not applied and cannot be used due to its categorical nature – it can be possessed as a certain resource (which allows us to call this interpretation as 'resource'). Possession of soft power is a state that opens up the possibility of various actions to the owner, but it is neither an action nor an activity. Moreover, and this is fundamentally important, the effect of soft power understood in this way is manifested in the actions / behavior / activities of not the holder of soft power, but of the subject experiencing its impact" [8, c. 11].

The "resource" understanding of "soft power" correlates with the conclusions we obtained in our analysis of the compatibility of the name of the concept. Considering the high productivity of the CM SOFT POWER → RESOURCE, it can be concluded that, despite the discrepancies, the majority of speakers understand this term exactly as its creator J. Nye assumed. We should note that the Russian researcher P. B. Parshin (we have already referred to his works above) also finds out that "soft power" in political discourse is perceived primarily as a "political resource" [6].

More specific to the CM SOFT POWER → RESOURCE may be SOFT POWER → GOODS metaphor, which in the following contexts is derived from compatibility with the verb *to produce* and with the expression *huge stores of*

(14) *In short, South Korea has the resources to produce soft power, and its soft power is not a prisoner to the geographical limitations that have constrained its hard power throughout its history.*

In the context above, another bright metaphor stands out: *soft power is not a prisoner*, structuring the concept according to the anthropomorphic metaphorical model.

(15) *Europe has the world's healthiest and most educated population, its largest economy, and huge stores of soft power.*

A number of contexts also make it possible to talk about the financial / economic metaphor SOFT POWER → MONEY derived from compatibility with the verbs *to capitalize on*, *to invest* and with the expression *to make investments*:

(16) *He failed to capitalize on the soft-power boost afforded to Russia by hosting the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi.* (17) *With the Cold War's end, Americans became more interested in budget savings than in investing in soft power.* (18) *With its establishment of Confucius Institutes to promote Chinese culture, China has made major investments in soft power.*

It is necessary to clarify that the objectives of this study did not include a critical analysis of political discourse, aimed at studying the ways in which social power exercises its domination in society. We adhere to the descriptive approach to the description of political metaphors dominant in Russian linguistics, in which the desire to describe and explain phenomena prevails while avoiding ideological evaluation. A. P. Chudinov and E. V. Budaev believe that it is not due to the fact that the authors do not have civic stand but due to the ideas about the criteria of scientific objectivity of the study [2, c. 23].

The analysis of factual material makes it possible to distinguish two peculiarities of the corpus studied: 1) the main source of the study of the conceptual metaphor of SOFT POWER is political media discourse (texts created by journalists, politicians or their speech writers, but not ordinary native speakers); 2) the metaphor under study, having appeared in the USA, no longer belongs only to the American national discourse. It seems that the vivid metaphor used by J. Nye to designate the category he introduced, contributed to the spread of SOFT POWER concept: since 2005 this term has appeared in many journalistic and popular analytical publications, in the statements of the highest rank politicians, including the Russian ones [8, c. 4]. The researchers conclude that "a kind of global interdiscourse has emerged in the use of modern political metaphor, in the frame of which the political communication of various states combines a significant number of metaphorical models of the same type, which bring together national pictures of the world, forms of categorization and conceptualization of political reality" [2, c. 92].

Thus, summarizing the findings of modern researchers in various fields, we have analyzed the history of the emergence and encyclopedic information about SOFT POWER concept. We have also determined that the expression *soft power* is a metaphor, and combining with various predicates it generates new conceptual metaphors. Analyzing the compatibility of the name of the concept, we have made a conclusion about a "resource" understanding of "soft power" in the political media discourse.

Confirming the theses on the continuous development and change of concepts as mental units, we should note that the main innovation proposed by J. Nye is the introduction of SMART POWER concept, defined as a reasonably balanced combination of soft and hard power.

The analysis of SMART POWER concept is a relevant and poorly studied aspect and can be considered as a perspective of the present study.

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**МЕТАФОРИЧЕСКАЯ РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯ КОНЦЕПТА *SOFT POWER*  
В СОВРЕМЕННОМ АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ**

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Статья посвящена анализу одного из концептов новых форм политической коммуникации – концепта *SOFT POWER*, введенного в оборот Джозефом Наем и представляющего собой политическую метафору. Авторы анализируют историю возникновения и энциклопедическую информацию о данном концепте. В фокусе внимания авторов находятся механизмы метафорической репрезентации концепта *SOFT POWER*. Наиболее продуктивным средством его объективации в политическом медиадискурсе является предметная метафорическая модель. Высокая частотность концептуальной метафоры *SOFT POWER* → *RESOURCE* свидетельствует о «ресурсном» понимании «мягкой силы».

*Ключевые слова и фразы:* концепт; концептуальная метафора; политическая метафора; мягкая сила; предметная метафорическая модель; ресурс; политический медиадискурс.