



THE LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATION OF COURAGE IN THE SEMANTIC FIELD OF SPIRITUALITY

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ANNOTATSIIYA/ АННОТАЦИЯ

Mazkur tadqiqotda *jasorat* ma'naviyat semantik maydonini tashkil etuvchi muhim qadriyatga yo'naltirilgan konseptlardan biri sifatida lingvistik jihatdan tadqiq etiladi. Jasoratni shunchaki mardlik yoki qo'rqqanlikning leksik ekvivalenti sifatida talqin qilishdan farqli ravishda, maqolada u axloqiy, emosional, psixologik va ma'naviy ma'nolarni o'zida mujassamlashtirgan ko'p o'lovchi lingvokognitiv kategoriya sifatida yondashiladi. Tahlilda *jasorat* konseptining *mardlik*, *matonat*, *qat'iyat*, *qadr-qimmat*, *viydon*, *e'tiqod*, *fidoyilik*, *sabot* va *mas'uliyat* kabi tushunchalar bilan semantik munosabatlariga asosiy e'tibor qaratiladi. Shuningdek, jismoniy va axloqiy jasorat o'rtasidagi farqlar hamda ushbu konseptning ingliz tilida voqelanishini ta'minlovchi metaforik modellar alohida tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda semantik maydon tahlili, komponent tahlil, konseptual tahlil, kontekstual interpretatsiya hamda konseptual metafora tahlili metodlaridan foydalanilgan. Mazkur maqolada jasorat tushunchasining faqat insonning qo'rqqanligi yoki xavfga qarshi turishi bilan cheklanmay, ma'naviy-axloqiy qadriyatlar tizimi bilan uzviy bog'liq holda ifodalanishi tahlil qilinadi. Jasoratni ifodalovchi birliklarning semantik xususiyatlari, ularning qat'iyat, iroda, viydon, mas'uliyat, e'tiqod va qadr-qimmat kabi tushunchalar bilan mazmuniy aloqasi aniqlanadi. Shuningdek, jasoratning til birliklari orqali bevosita va metaforik ifodalanish shakllari ko'rib chiqilib, uning jismoniy, ruhiy va ma'naviy ko'rinishlari o'rtasidagi semantik farqlar yoritiladi. Tahlil natijalari jasorat konseptining tilda ko'p qatlamli mazmuniy tuzilishga ega ekanligini va uning ma'naviyatga oid tushunchalar bilan o'zaro aloqador holda shakllanishini ko'rsatadi.

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ANNOTATION

The present study examines the linguistic representation of *courage* as one of the significant value-oriented concepts constituting the semantic field of spirituality. Rather than treating courage merely as a lexical equivalent of bravery or fearlessness, the article approaches it as a multidimensional linguocognitive category incorporating moral, emotional, psychological, and spiritual meanings. The analysis focuses on the semantic relations between *courage* and such concepts as *bravery*, *fortitude*, *determination*, *dignity*, *conscience*, *faith*, *sacrifice*, *perseverance*, and *responsibility*. Particular attention is paid to the distinction between physical and moral courage and to the metaphorical models through which the concept is verbalized in English. Semantic-field analysis, componential analysis, conceptual analysis, contextual interpretation, and conceptual metaphor analysis are employed. The article also examines the semantic interaction between courage and other elements of the spiritual domain, emphasizing how linguistic units encode not only behavioral actions but also internal moral motivation. Particular attention is given to the ways in which courage is associated with personal responsibility, ethical choice, inner strength, and resistance to difficulties. The analysis demonstrates that the linguistic representation of courage reflects culturally significant perceptions of human character and spiritual values. This approach contributes to a broader understanding of how abstract moral concepts are structured and expressed through lexical and metaphorical resources of language.

Introduction

The anthropocentric orientation of contemporary linguistics has considerably expanded the scope of research into abstract concepts representing the inner world of human beings. Language is increasingly interpreted not simply as a means of transmitting information but as a cognitive and cultural mechanism through which individuals conceptualize emotions, values, moral norms, social experience, and spiritual phenomena. From this perspective, concepts such as *faith*, *conscience*, *dignity*, *hope*, *patience*, *compassion*, and *courage* constitute particularly important objects of linguistic investigation because their meanings are formed at the intersection of linguistic semantics, cultural evaluation, human experience, and social consciousness.

Among these concepts, *courage* possesses a complex semantic structure. At first sight, it may appear to denote primarily the ability to confront danger without fear. Such an interpretation, however, does not fully reveal its conceptual content. Linguistic usage demonstrates that courage may be manifested not only in physically dangerous circumstances but also in situations requiring an individual to tell the truth, defend another person, resist injustice, preserve personal dignity, acknowledge one's mistakes, remain faithful to one's convictions, or accept responsibility for difficult decisions. Consequently, courage cannot be reduced to physical bravery. Its semantic potential encompasses psychological stability, moral determination, perseverance, responsibility, self-control, and commitment to values.

This semantic complexity makes it possible to examine courage as a component of the broader semantic field of spirituality. Spirituality in linguistic representation encompasses concepts connected with the individual's internal system of values and the moral regulation of behavior. Faith, conscience, dignity, justice, compassion, patience, hope, sacrifice, responsibility, and courage form interconnected elements of this field. Their semantic boundaries frequently overlap because one spiritual quality can serve as the condition for the manifestation of another. For instance, commitment to justice may require courage, faith may provide inner strength, conscience may motivate a courageous decision, while sacrifice may become the consequence of acting courageously.

The relevance of studying courage within this field lies precisely in this interconnectedness. Courage serves as one of the mechanisms through which an internal value becomes an external action. An individual may possess a belief in justice, truth, loyalty, or responsibility, yet these values acquire practical significance when the person is prepared to defend them under conditions of pressure, uncertainty, or risk. Therefore, courage occupies an intermediate conceptual position between spiritual conviction and moral behavior.

The purpose of this research is to determine how courage is linguistically represented within the semantic field of spirituality and to identify its principal lexical-semantic, conceptual, metaphorical, and axiological characteristics. Particular emphasis is placed on revealing the

internal semantic organization of the concept and explaining its relationship with other spiritually marked concepts.

Literature review

The study of abstract concepts has become an important direction in contemporary linguistics, particularly with the development of cognitive, semantic, and linguocultural approaches. Within this framework, increasing attention has been devoted to the linguistic representation of concepts associated with human emotions, moral values, social experience, and spirituality. D. A. Cruse emphasizes the importance of examining meaning not as an isolated phenomenon but in relation to other semantic and pragmatic dimensions of language [1, 23]. This approach provides a theoretical basis for investigating *courage* as a concept whose meaning is shaped through its semantic relations with other value-oriented linguistic units.

The cognitive interpretation of linguistic meaning is particularly relevant to the analysis of courage. V. Evans and M. Green consider language as closely connected with conceptualization and human cognitive experience, emphasizing that linguistic structures reflect the ways in which people organize and interpret knowledge [2, 57–59]. From this perspective, courage can be examined not simply as the meaning of an individual lexical item but as a conceptual structure involving several interconnected components, including fear, danger, determination, self-control, perseverance, and value-oriented action. Such an approach makes it possible to identify the cognitive features underlying different linguistic manifestations of courage.

The theoretical principles of lexical semantics also provide an important foundation for understanding the internal organization of the semantic field of courage. D. Geeraerts emphasizes the systematic and conceptual organization of lexical meaning, which allows semantically related units to be analyzed in terms of their similarities, differences, and relations within a broader lexical structure [3, 78]. In the context of the present study, this perspective is useful for distinguishing such semantically related concepts as *courage*, *bravery*, *valor*, *boldness*, *fortitude*, *determination*, and *resilience*. Although these lexical units share certain semantic components, each highlights a particular aspect of courageous behavior.

J. Lyons's approach to semantics is also relevant to the differentiation of lexical meanings and semantic relations. His work demonstrates the importance of examining relationships among lexical items rather than interpreting words independently of their semantic environment [8, 79]. This theoretical position supports the treatment of *courage* as the semantic center of a wider group of lexical units. The semantic proximity of *courage* to *bravery* and *boldness*, for example, is accompanied by differences in emphasis: bravery is frequently associated with confronting danger, boldness with confidence and readiness to act, while fortitude emphasizes endurance in difficult circumstances.

The relationship between lexical meaning and conceptual categorization is further developed in J. R. Taylor's research. His analysis of linguistic categorization demonstrates that conceptual categories may contain internally differentiated members rather than being organized exclusively according to rigid boundaries [10, 78–90]. This perspective is particularly applicable to the concept of courage because its linguistic representation extends from physical acts of bravery to moral and spiritual forms of determination. Consequently, courage may be understood as a category with a central semantic core and a number of contextually differentiated manifestations.

Conceptual metaphor theory constitutes another significant theoretical foundation for the present research. G. Lakoff argues that conceptual structures are systematically influenced by embodied human experience and that abstract domains can be understood through more concrete experiential domains [5, 11–14]. This approach is important for explaining metaphorical expressions in which courage is conceptualized through physical stability, movement, resistance, or struggle. Expressions involving standing, confronting, fighting, and overcoming demonstrate how physical experience becomes a source for conceptualizing abstract moral and psychological qualities.

The theory developed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson provides a broader explanation of the relationship between bodily experience and abstract conceptualization. According to their approach, metaphor is not merely an ornamental feature of language but an important mechanism through which people conceptualize abstract phenomena [6, 109]. In the linguistic representation of courage, this principle can be observed in expressions associated with the *heart*, physical strength, standing, resistance, and struggle. The metaphorical association between the heart and inner strength, for instance, contributes to the conceptualization of courage as an internal emotional and spiritual resource.

Z. Kövecses further develops the cognitive study of metaphor by demonstrating how abstract concepts are structured through recurring

metaphorical patterns grounded in human experience [4, 102]. This theoretical perspective is especially relevant to the identification of such conceptual models as *COURAGE AS STRENGTH*, *COURAGE AS STANDING*, and *COURAGE AS STRUGGLE*. Within these models, abstract psychological or moral experiences are represented through concrete physical actions and spatial relations. Thus, expressions referring to standing firm or fighting fear encode moral persistence and psychological resistance through embodied imagery.

R. W. Langacker's cognitive approach also contributes to the interpretation of meaning as a phenomenon related to conceptual organization and human experience. His framework emphasizes the cognitive basis of linguistic structures and the role of conceptualization in meaning formation [7, 33]. Applied to courage, this perspective makes it possible to consider the concept as a dynamic configuration involving a subject, an obstacle or threat, an internal resource, and an intentional response. Such a configuration explains why courage is linguistically associated not only with danger but also with decision, responsibility, and value-oriented behavior.

J. I. Saeed's semantic framework is relevant to the analysis of contextual variation in meaning. His treatment of semantic relations and contextual interpretation supports the view that the meaning activated by a lexical unit may vary according to its linguistic and communicative environment [9, 45]. In the case of *courage*, contexts involving soldiers, rescue workers, physical danger, or confrontation foreground physical courage, whereas constructions such as *the courage to tell the truth* or *the courage to defend one's principles* activate moral and spiritual dimensions of the concept.

A. Wierzbicka's research provides an additional cultural and semantic perspective for interpreting value-oriented concepts. Her approach emphasizes the relationship between semantic structures and culturally specific systems of human understanding [11, 20]. This perspective is significant for the study of courage because the concept cannot be separated from culturally shaped notions of faith, conscience, dignity, sacrifice, responsibility, and moral commitment. Consequently, courage may acquire different contextual meanings depending on the value system within which it is represented.

The reviewed theoretical approaches demonstrate that courage should be examined as a multidimensional linguistic and conceptual phenomenon. Semantic theories provide a basis for identifying its lexical relations and contextual variations, while cognitive linguistic approaches explain the conceptual structures and metaphorical models through which courage is represented. The existing theoretical perspectives therefore make it possible to examine courage not merely as a synonym of bravery or fearlessness, but as a complex value-oriented concept located at the intersection of psychological experience, moral evaluation, and spirituality.

Methods

The study employs semantic-field analysis, componential analysis, contextual analysis, conceptual analysis, and conceptual metaphor analysis. Semantic-field analysis is used to identify the lexical-semantic relations of *courage* with related concepts such as *bravery*, *fortitude*, *determination*, *dignity*, *conscience*, *faith*, and *responsibility*. Componential analysis is applied to identify the core semantic features of courage, including danger, fear, difficulty, intentionality, self-control, and determination. Contextual analysis is used to distinguish physical, moral, psychological, and spiritual manifestations of courage in different communicative contexts. Conceptual metaphor analysis examines metaphorical models through which courage is represented in terms of strength, standing, struggle, resistance, movement, and the heart. The combination of these methods makes it possible to analyze the linguistic representation of courage as a multidimensional concept within the semantic field of spirituality.

Results

The analysis demonstrates that the linguistic representation of courage has a multidimensional structure. The lexical item *courage* functions as the semantic center, while a number of related units specify different dimensions of the general concept. *Bravery*, for example, is closely associated with willingness to face danger and is therefore particularly productive in contexts describing physical risk. *Valor* possesses a more elevated stylistic and cultural character and frequently occurs in descriptions of heroic behavior. *Boldness* foregrounds confidence and readiness to undertake an action that others may avoid. *Fortitude*, by contrast, emphasizes endurance, especially under prolonged suffering, hardship, or emotional pressure. *Determination* focuses on firmness of purpose, while *resilience* foregrounds the capacity to recover and continue after difficulty [8, 79].

The differences between these lexical units show that the semantic field of courage is internally differentiated. Courage is not simply

synonymous with all forms of strength. Physical strength, emotional stability, determination, and moral firmness become components of courage only when they function in relation to an obstacle, danger, fear, or potential loss. This observation allows courage to be understood as a dynamic rather than static quality. It becomes visible through a person's response to a challenging situation.

One of the most important results of the analysis concerns the semantic relationship between courage and fear. In everyday interpretation, these concepts are often treated as opposites. Linguistic analysis, however, demonstrates that this opposition is not absolute. If an individual experiences no fear because no threat or difficulty is perceived, the resulting action is not necessarily conceptualized as courageous. Courage becomes semantically relevant precisely when an obstacle is recognized and consciously confronted. Therefore, fear may function as a conceptual background against which courage is evaluated. [10, 78-90]

Expressions such as *overcome one's fear*, *face one's fears*, *find the courage to speak*, and *have the courage to continue* support this interpretation. In these constructions, courage does not eliminate the existence of fear; rather, it represents the internal resource enabling the subject to act despite it. The semantic relation can therefore be interpreted as one of transformation: fear is initially represented as an inhibiting force, while courage changes the direction of behavior from avoidance to action.

This observation is especially important when courage is considered within the semantic field of spirituality. Spiritual courage is not characterized by emotional invulnerability. On the contrary, it presupposes an awareness of personal vulnerability combined with the capacity to subordinate fear to a higher value. The value involved may be truth, justice, loyalty, faith, dignity, responsibility, or concern for another person. Consequently, the semantic structure of courage contains not only an emotional component but also an axiological one.

A particularly significant distinction emerges between physical courage and moral courage. Physical courage is typically associated with danger threatening bodily safety. It can be represented through contexts involving war, rescue, physical confrontation, natural disasters, or other hazardous circumstances. The primary semantic components in such cases are danger, fear, physical risk, and decisive action.

Moral courage has a different semantic configuration. It arises when an individual faces not necessarily bodily danger but social, psychological, professional, or ethical consequences. A person who *has the courage to tell the truth* may risk criticism or rejection rather than physical injury. A person who *stands up for what is right* may encounter social pressure. Someone who *has the courage of their convictions* demonstrates readiness to remain faithful to a principle despite opposition. [5, 11-14]

The verb combinations used in these expressions are linguistically revealing. The phrase *stand up for* conceptualizes moral action through the physical image of rising or standing. Similarly, *stand one's ground* transforms spatial stability into psychological or moral firmness. The subject metaphorically remains in the same position despite an opposing force. Thus, vertical physical stability becomes a source domain for conceptualizing internal spiritual stability.

This relationship produces one of the most productive metaphorical patterns associated with courage: courage as standing. Expressions such as *stand firm*, *stand one's ground*, *stand up for someone*, and *stand up for one's beliefs* associate courage with an upright and stable physical position. At the conceptual level, external verticality corresponds to internal firmness. A person who "stands" metaphorically refuses to abandon a value, belief, or position.

Another significant conceptual pattern is courage as struggle. Expressions such as *fight one's fears*, *battle adversity*, *struggle against injustice*, and *confront difficulties* conceptualize internal and external problems as opponents. The courageous individual becomes metaphorically represented as a participant in a struggle. This metaphor is especially important because it transforms abstract phenomena such as fear, injustice, despair, or temptation into entities against which action can be directed.

The concept of the heart also occupies an important position in the linguistic representation of courage. Expressions such as *take heart*, *lose heart*, *faint-hearted*, and *have the heart to do something* demonstrate a culturally established association between the heart and inner emotional or spiritual strength. In these cases, the heart is conceptualized not merely as a biological organ but as a symbolic center of determination and emotional resilience. The contrast between *take heart* and *lose heart* is particularly revealing: courage is metaphorically represented as the acquisition or preservation of an internal spiritual resource, whereas discouragement represents its loss. [6, 109]

The semantic relationship between courage and dignity also deserves attention. Dignity represents an individual's awareness of personal moral

worth, whereas courage enables the individual to protect that worth when it is threatened. In situations of humiliation, coercion, discrimination, or injustice, courage becomes a mechanism for preserving dignity. Therefore, the concepts are related through the semantic component of resistance.

A similar relationship exists between courage and conscience. Conscience functions as an internal moral regulator that evaluates actions in terms of right and wrong. Courage becomes necessary when the requirements of conscience conflict with external expectations or personal interests. The expression *the courage to do the right thing* illustrates this interaction. Here, courage is not an autonomous value; it functions as the practical means through which moral judgment is transformed into action.

The relationship between courage and responsibility further expands this interpretation. Accepting responsibility frequently involves acknowledging negative consequences or admitting one's own error. Consequently, expressions such as *have the courage to admit a mistake* demonstrate that courageous behavior may involve self-evaluation rather than confrontation with an external enemy. The "opponent" in such situations may be pride, fear of criticism, or concern about social reputation. This broadens the semantic field of courage from external confrontation to internal moral struggle [2, 29].

Another closely connected spiritual concept is faith. In spiritually marked discourse, faith may function as a source of courage because it provides a framework through which fear and suffering are interpreted. Linguistically, this relationship is often expressed through combinations of inner strength, hope, trust, and perseverance. Courage generated by faith differs from impulsive boldness because it is grounded in a stable value system. In this sense, faith contributes to the motivational dimension of courage [11, 20].

The analysis also demonstrates an important semantic connection between courage and sacrifice. Courageous action often presupposes readiness to accept a personal cost. The cost may involve physical safety, social position, comfort, material interest, or reputation. However, sacrifice alone does not automatically constitute courage. It acquires this meaning when the loss is consciously accepted for the sake of a value perceived as more important than personal benefit. This feature is particularly relevant to the spiritual interpretation of courage because spirituality frequently organizes values hierarchically, distinguishing between immediate personal interest and higher moral principles.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that courage should be interpreted as an axiologically marked concept whose full meaning emerges through interaction with other concepts. Its position within the semantic field of spirituality is determined not merely by its positive evaluation but by its functional role. Courage enables a person to transform internal conviction into practical behavior.

This interpretation makes it possible to distinguish courage from semantically adjacent concepts such as fearlessness and recklessness. Fearlessness emphasizes the absence or low intensity of fear, whereas courage may exist in the presence of considerable fear. Recklessness, meanwhile, involves risk but lacks the necessary components of responsible evaluation and meaningful purpose. A reckless action can therefore resemble courageous behavior externally while differing from it at the semantic and axiological levels.

The decisive distinction lies in the relationship between risk and value. In courageous behavior, risk is accepted because the action is perceived as necessary, meaningful, or morally justified. In reckless behavior, risk may itself become the objective or may be accepted without sufficient awareness of consequences. This explains why courage is generally positively evaluated within spiritual discourse while recklessness is often negatively marked [3, 78].

The analysis further reveals that courage possesses a layered conceptual organization. Its basic layer includes danger, difficulty, fear, strength, and action. Its psychological layer incorporates self-control, determination, resilience, and endurance. Its moral layer includes conscience, responsibility, integrity, justice, and dignity. Finally, its spiritual layer is connected with faith, sacrifice, hope, devotion, and commitment to values. These layers are not isolated from one another; rather, they interact depending on the context.

From a linguocognitive perspective, this layered organization explains why the word *courage* can occur naturally in very different communicative situations. A soldier may demonstrate courage in battle, an individual may show courage by resisting social pressure, another person may require courage to forgive, and someone else may demonstrate courage by acknowledging personal failure. Although the situations differ, they share a common conceptual structure: the subject encounters an obstacle associated with fear or possible loss, activates an internal resource, and chooses an action regarded as meaningful or valuable.

Particularly significant is the fact that spiritual courage frequently shifts the direction of conflict from the external world to the individual's internal world. In physical courage, danger is often externally identifiable. In moral and spiritual courage, however, the principal conflict may occur between fear and conscience, self-interest and responsibility, comfort and truth, or social conformity and personal conviction. Language represents this internal conflict through metaphors of struggle, strength, standing, resistance, and movement [4, 102].

Thus, expressions connected with courage reveal a general cognitive tendency to conceptualize abstract spiritual phenomena through embodied experience. Physical stability represents moral firmness; physical struggle represents psychological conflict; movement forward represents overcoming difficulty; and the heart represents the center of inner strength. These metaphors do not merely decorate speech. They structure the way courage is cognitively interpreted and linguistically communicated.

The analysis consequently suggests that courage occupies an integrating position in the semantic field of spirituality. Faith can provide motivation for courage; conscience can determine the direction of courageous action; dignity can constitute the value being protected; responsibility can require courage; perseverance can maintain courageous behavior over time; and sacrifice can become its consequence. Courage therefore connects several otherwise distinct spiritual concepts within a unified semantic network.

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Conclusion

The linguistic analysis of courage demonstrates that this concept possesses a complex semantic, cognitive, and axiological structure. It cannot be adequately defined simply as bravery or absence of fear. Courage presupposes the existence of an obstacle, awareness of possible negative consequences, activation of internal strength, and a conscious decision to act despite fear or difficulty.

The study has established that the lexical-semantic environment of courage includes *bravery*, *valor*, *boldness*, *fortitude*, *determination*, *resilience*, and *fearlessness*, but these units represent different aspects of the broader conceptual domain. Their semantic differentiation demonstrates that courage combines several dimensions of human experience, including physical resistance, emotional control, psychological endurance, moral determination, and spiritual commitment.

The analysis of moral courage is especially important for understanding the place of the concept within spirituality. When courage is associated with truth, conscience, dignity, justice, faith, sacrifice, and responsibility, it acquires an explicitly axiological character. In such contexts, courage functions as the mechanism through which an internally accepted value is converted into practical action. It therefore mediates between belief and behavior, conviction and decision, spirituality and social conduct.

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