

# THE LANGUAGE OF MOTIVATION: THEORY IN ACTION

Elina Paliichuk

*Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Ukraine, e.paliichuk@kubg.edu.ua*

Motivation drives success. With support as an anchorage for a future personality, parenting is a resource-consuming process requiring from adults continuous learning of mentorship techniques. Home-schooling is gaining popularity all over the world and raises new concerns and challenges among parents and educators across the globe. Especially in recent time, when this form of education has been predetermined by Covid-19 pandemic. Traditionally studied from a psychological point of view, the issue of motivation becomes the subject matter of linguistic research. Application of cognitive linguistic theory (Paliichuk 2011) provides a new insight into the question of motivation for students, both teenagers and young people. Basically, the applicability of the image-schema theory of Mark Johnson (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, Johnson 2005, Johnson 2013) for development of motivational verbal toolkit is brought into focus. This theory presupposes that we perceive the world through certain pre-conceptual entities that structure our language and thinking in terms of spatial relations.

The case study embraces the analysis of professors' speech from the point of view of cognitive linguistics. The aim is to spot the dominant image-schemas underlying the phrases the top professors use to describe their pedagogical activity and to develop recommendations both for teachers in schools and for parents, eager to provide effective support for home-schoolers. The material includes 70 textual fragments taken from 56 online publications from the websites of universities and colleges.

At the conceptual level, the observations over the language data in publications allow us to point out at the prevalence of such image-schemas as UP-DOWN, PATH, LINK, CONTAINER, IN-OUT. These pre-conceptual entities that guide our perception are actualized in the speech, for example: (PATH) *what steps they might take to pursue their dreams* (Jane Hall, Associate Professor, School of Communication); (PATH+OUT) *Each student has unique talents, so it is important to be flexible about their desired career paths* (David A. F. Haaga, PhD, Professor and Chair, Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences); (LINK) *In my teaching and mentoring, I strive to help students make connections between their course work and the real-world problems* (Evan Berry, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, College of Arts and Sciences); (UP+IN/OUT) *An important part of our mission as educators is to provide the kind of context that encourages and supports students' growth and success within and beyond classrooms* (Christine B. N. Chin, PhD, Professor, School of International Service), (CONTAINER) *Students aren't vessels to be filled; good teaching and mentoring are first and foremost about activating their enthusiasm* (Ken Conca, PhD, Professor of International Relations, School of International Service), etc. (*Outstanding Mentors*).

At the verbal level, these image-schemas manifest in the lexical units bearing the meanings of *support, encourage, growth, help, connection, interaction, unique*, etc., abstract nouns denoting feelings and emotions such as *inspiration, gratitude*, etc., prepositions of direction (*to, toward, within, in, out, beyond*, etc.), adjectives used in comparative and superlative degrees of comparison (*best, more, higher*, etc.).

The applicability of the image-schema theory lies in that these linguistic findings shed light on how image-schemas facilitate motivation in education and development. As a result of consideration of the motivational language from the image-schema perspective, a check list has been developed to help the parents build their communication to support the home-schoolers.

The recommendations include a specific verbal toolkit to practise the motivational and supportive communication with teenagers and school undergraduates. The recurrent usage of certain phrases by adults teaching home-schoolers may activate certain spatial shapes in thinking and help children visualise their objectives, for instance, as destination points, progress and learning process as a path or a journey towards the result, tasks and aims as certain steps, the perception in terms of the *upness* may stimulate their growth, achievement, improvement of skills, while phrases with preposition *out* may focus on their uniqueness and talent, e.g. *stand out from a crowd*. Feelings can be *contained*, which may relieve children from stress and frustration, and verbal units actualising the image-schema *link* may instil confidence in learners in that they may rely on help, interaction, and cooperation with their mentors. The conscious use of the image-schema charged language facilitates guidance through learning process and organization of the strategy, providing conducive psychological environment.

Parents' awareness of the image-schema theory may serve a resource for motivation in learning process and development of the required skills. As a follow-up to this philological analysis, an empirical research will be undertaken. The data of a survey among home-schoolers and parents will be processed statistically, which will point out at the relevance of the application of the image-schema theory in family education as well as feasibility of the theory for solving specific educational issues in general.

## REFERENCES

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*Elina Paliichuk is a PhD linguist with 20 years of post-qualified experience in academic and business domains. Graduated from Kyiv State Linguistic University in 2001. Defended PhD paper "Linguistic and Conceptual Peculiarities of Human Trafficking Situation in Modern English-Language Media Discourse" in 2011. An Assistant Professor at the Chair of English Philology and Translation at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Kyiv, and a co-founder of "Lingvocom Linguistic Center". The expertise embraces applied linguistics, language education, higher education, cognitive linguistics (frame modelling, image-schema theory, conceptual metaphor theory), mediallynguistics, empirical methods of research, translation. A Lecturer of Stylistics of the English Language, Research Supervisor. Interested in the newest trends within cognitive and discursive paradigm as well as in interdisciplinary studies. Associate Translation Fellow at EU-funded Project "Association4U" (2017-2019). Mother of two home-schoolers (aged 13 and 8), seeking effective methods of parenting and eager to share linguistic ideas across the world and scientific communities.*