

The Etymology of the Word ‘Agır’ and Its Semantic Expansion within the Framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory

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Abstract:

In Turkish some origins of words have not been fully clarified. One such word is ‘agır’. Although different opinions have been put forward regarding the origin of the word, some researchers trace the origin of ‘agır’ back to ‘ag-’. Still, there is no comprehensive study, revealing the derivational and semantic relationship between the verb ‘ag-’ and the word ‘agır,’ from which is thought to be derived. In this study, the etymological connection between ‘ag-’ and ‘agır’ was first examined in light of historical data. Then, the polysemous structure that the word has acquired over time is evaluated according to Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. In this theory, conceptual metaphors enable abstract concepts to be understood through concrete experience and cultural accumulation. Thus, it has been determined that ‘ag-’ was first used in the Orhun Inscriptions to mean ‘to go up, to rise’ and that its basic meaning expresses a vertically oriented physical movement. This movement has been associated with abstract concepts such as ‘value,’ ‘worth,’ ‘power,’ and ‘importance’ in a historical and cultural context; thus, through conceptual metaphors and metonymic relationships such as ‘what is above is valuable’ and ‘what is above is powerful’ conceptual metaphors and metonymic relationships have caused the formation of meanings such as ‘difficult,’ ‘crowded,’ ‘valuable,’ and ‘rich.’ The study was conducted based on texts from the Orhun, Karahanid, Uyghur, Kipchak, Old Anatolian Turkish periods, and etymological dictionary data. The findings present a historical and cognitive linguistic analysis of the polysemy of ‘agır’.

Keywords:

Etimoloji, Semantik, Tarihsel Semantik, Kavramsal Metafor, Ag-, Agır.