

## **THE PROBLEM OF CONCEPT IN LINGUISTICS AND COGNITIVE PROCESSES IN THE FORMATION OF LINGUISTIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

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**Abstract:** The article discusses the issues based on the notion of concept in cognitive linguistics and cognitive processes in the formation of linguistic terms and concepts. A concept is a semantic formation, marked by linguocultural specificity and in one way or another characterizing the bearers of a certain ethnoculture. At the same time, it is a certain quantum of knowledge that reflects the content of all human activity. The concept does not arise directly from the meaning of the word, but is the result of a collision of the dictionary meaning of the word with the personal and popular experience of a person. The article describes points of scientists on the notion of concept and analyses types of concepts by content.

**Keywords:** concept, cognitive linguistics, meaning of the word, linguocultural specificity, semantic formation, linguistic terms.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The concept is the core term of the conceptual apparatus of cognitive linguistics. Modern linguistics acknowledges the key place of the concept in cognitive linguistics. At the same time, one cannot help but note the variability of its content in the concepts of different scientific schools and interpretations of individual scientists. A concept is an element of a certain system of concepts of a carrier of consciousness and information about reality or the expected state of things in the world, and as such, the concept is associated with all possible and already existing opinions that reflect views of the world. The meaning of a concept includes conceptual memory or, in other words, the cultural memory of the word.

The concept can also be considered the basic unit of national mentality, i.e. a special way of individual and/or group worldview and worldview, which are set by behavioral attitudes and stereotypes, which is a feature of the thinking of a person or an individual social group.

When considering the complexity of the concept “concept”, it is necessary to use linguistic data: working with various types of texts, questioning native speakers as one of the types of sociocultural research, using materials from scientific research in psychology, cultural studies, sociology, etc.

In general, the concept is considered as a way of reproducing reality in the human mind as a conglomerate of meaning, which contains important cultural, linguistic, psychological, and philosophical information. The role of the concept in the broad sense of this concept is to connect scientific research in the fields of consciousness, culture and language.

Reality in itself cannot be considered an object of study of concepts. Only its reflection in the history and consciousness of peoples can be considered an object. This fact confirms the need to study concepts in a synchronous etymological space, which will contribute not only to participants’ representation of extralinguistic reality, but also to monitoring the dynamics of cognitive activity and the development of cross-cultural interactions from the point of view of linguistic components. Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that the concept is a category “mental, unobservable, and this gives a lot of scope for its interpretation” [10]. **DISCUSSIONS**

The adoption of the definition of “concept” in the scientific community gives the right to study not only the characteristic features and patterns of the language system from a new perspective, but also the operating principles of consciousness and culture, and therefore new facets of relationships traced in the relations between cognitive linguistics, linguodidactics, regional studies, psychology, cultural studies and other related disciplines. This expands the scope of the process of analyzing the content component in various linguistic phenomena, and also increases the depth and effectiveness of work carried out in the field of semantic phenomena. According to S.

Vorkachev, since the beginning of the 90s. In the XX century in linguistic science, the “concept” (N.Arutyunova, S.Askoldov-Alekseev, D.Likhachev, Yu.Stepanov, V.Neroznak, S.Lyapin), “linguocultureme” (V. Vorobyov) and “mythologeme” (V.Bazylev), “logoepisteme” (E. Vereshchagin, V. Kostomarov), but the term “concept” became the most frequent, most viable and commonly used, which in terms of frequency of use was significantly ahead of all other “proterminological new formations” [12].

S. Askoldov-Alekseev, who was the first to use the term concept in Russian science, defines it as a mental formation that replaces an indefinite set of objects, actions, and mental functions in the mental process [1].

Dmitry Likhachev uses the concept concept to denote a synthesized mental unit that reflects and interprets real-world phenomena based on the education, personal, professional and social experience of the individual. In his opinion, the concept is a kind of synthesis of various semantics of lexemes in the personal consciousness of a native speaker and gives them the opportunity to overcome the personalistic differences that exist between them in understanding words.

Based on the opinion of D. S. Likhachev, the concept does not arise from the semantics of words, but is a product of the convergence of the acquired meaning with the personal life experience of the individual. According to the scientist, the concept in linguistic communication performs a proxy function [6].

E. Kubryakova defines the concept as a productive unit “memory, mental lexicon, conceptual system and language of the brain, the whole picture of the world, quantum of knowledge” and believes that “the most important concepts are expressed in language” [4].

Vladimir Karasik's research summarizes the various concepts considered by different scientists. Among them he notes the following:

1) concept - a condensed history of the concept, covering abstract, concrete-associative and emotional-evaluative characteristics of the idea;

2) concept - individual comprehension, interpretation of the objective meaning of the concept as a meaningful minimum of meaning [10];

3) concept - an abstract concept of science, which is developed on the basis of a real everyday concept [6];

4) concept - the essence of the concept, depicted in meaningful forms (image, concept, symbol);

5) concepts - unusual cultural genes of a culture genotype, which self-organize as complex multidimensional functional-systemic idealized formations based on a conceptual or pseudo-conceptual basis.

V. Karasik himself defines concepts as mental formations that represent important typifiable parts of human experience that are in his memory” [6]. As part of this multidimensional mental formation, the scientist identifies figurative-perceptual, conceptual and value sides [Ibid., p. 71]. He believes that the concept is part of an individual’s social experience, “experienced information”, “a quantum of experienced knowledge”.

According to A. Zalevskaya, a concept is a perceptual-cognitive-affective formation of a dynamic nature that objectively exists in the human mind, which differs from concepts and meanings as constructs of scientific description [5]. It highlights the individual character of the concept as a non-one-dimensional synchronous structure. In her opinion, the concept is the property of the individual [4]. According to other linguists, a concept is an “operational unit of thought” [5, p. 43], “a unit of collective knowledge that has linguistic expression.” A mental formation that does not contain an ethnocultural feature, according to the scientist, is not included in the concept of the concept [Ibid.].

M. Pimenova defines this concept as follows: “What a person knows, believes, imagines about the objects of the external and internal world is what is called a concept. A concept is an idea of a fragment of the world” [10]

The notion of the concept sphere helps to understand why language is not just a way of communication, but a kind of concentrate of the culture of a nation.

In the vocabulary of the language D.S. Likhachev identifies four levels:

- 1) the vocabulary itself (including phraseological units);
- 2) dictionary type meanings;
- 3) concepts - some substitutions of meanings, “substitutes” hidden in the text, some “potentialities” of meanings that facilitate communication and are closely related to a person and his national, cultural, professional, age and other experience;
- 4) concepts of individual meanings of words, which depend on each other, constitute certain integrity and are defined as the concept sphere.

The richer the concept, the richer the national, estate, class, professional, family and personal experience of the person using the concept. Collectively, the potentialities discovered in the vocabulary of an individual person, as well as in the entire language as a whole, are called concept spheres by D. S. Likhachev.

The richer the entire culture of a nation is, the richer the conceptual sphere of a national language is – its literature, folklore, science, fine arts; it is correlated with the entire historical experience of the nation and especially religion.

The conceptual sphere of a language is constantly enriched if there is literature and cultural experience worthy of it. Therefore, writers and poets, bearers of folklore, individual professions and classes play a special role in creating the concept sphere. It even includes the names of works that, through their meanings, generate concepts, so the concept sphere of language is essentially the concept sphere of culture. The richness of a language is determined not only by the richness of its “vocabulary” and grammatical capabilities, but also by the richness of the conceptual world, the conceptual sphere, the carriers of which are the language of a person and his nation.

Since there is a connection between concepts determined by the level of culture, social status and individual characteristics of a person, one concept sphere is combined with another - for example, the concept sphere of the Russian language as a whole includes the concept sphere of a practicing engineer, in it - the concept sphere of the family, and in it, in turn, individual concept sphere. Each of the subsequent concept spheres simultaneously narrows the previous one and expands it. For this

work, it is advisable to make a clarification: in accordance with the theory of D. S. Likhachev, the concept sphere is understood as a set of concepts determined by the national, cultural and individual experience of a person. The work of Academician Yu.S.Stepanov also examines the concept of the conceptualized sphere of culture. Polemicizing with the teachings of F. de Saussure on the arbitrariness of the sign, Yu.S.Stepanov comes to the conclusion that naming in culture is non-random and introduces the concept of a “conceptualized area (sphere).” It is understood as “a sphere of culture where words, things, mythologies and rituals are united in one common idea (cultural concept)” [14].

It is obvious that, when introducing the concept of “conceptosphere,” both D.S.Likhachev and Yu.S.Stepanov adhere to a single linguocultural approach. Both concepts describe the same phenomenon from different points of view, although in D.S.Likhachev the term “conceptosphere” becomes ambiguous.

Despite the fact that the term “sphere”, in the words of Yu.E. Prokhorov, has become so “taken root” in humanitarian research that it seems natural, reasonable and logical, the scientist points out that “from the point of view of both logic and the formal understanding of the term itself, it not only does not clarify the essence, but also obscures it” [11].

Yu. E. Prokhorov argues that we are talking about a sphere as a closed structure: it has a core and a periphery, and by this it is asymmetrical and limited. At the same time, there is “a certain open boundless set of some closed units, which constitutes our knowledge, and the rules for the implementation of this knowledge, and the means for the implementation of this knowledge and rules.” Therefore, the scientist believes, it would be more logical to build another model that takes into account “those connections and relationships between objects of reality that determine the lexical-semantic system of a language, which are, of course, external to the language itself. But every sign system serves to designate precisely that which is outside the boundaries of the given system itself, and the meaning of the sign is revealed only outside of this system” [11].

Thus, the concept of the concept sphere helps to understand why language is not just a way of communication, but a kind of concentrate of the culture of a nation. According to cognitivism, the individual is studied as a system for processing information, and his behavior is explained in terms of his internal state, which is manifested, observed and interpreted as receiving, processing, storing information for the purposeful solution of life problems. According to V.Z. Demyankov, due to the fact that the solution of assigned problems is always associated with the use of language, it is language that has become the focus of attention of cognitive scientists [5]. The most important principle of cognitive science is the interpretation of a person as an individual who understands and produces information, guided in his mental activity by specific patterns, strategies and plans. Cognitive science is considered as the science of the general principles of control of mental processes in the human brain.

M. Pimenova defines concept as follows: “What a person knows, believes, imagines about the objects of the external and internal world is what is called a concept. A concept is an idea of a fragment of the world” [10]. In other linguistic works, a concept is defined as an extremely abstract idea of a cultural object that does not have a visual “prototypical image.” Although the author does not deny the possibility of visual-figurative associations associated with it. The scientist defines the national concept as the most general, extremely abstract idea of an “object” in a complex of all connections that can be combined with other words in a sentence. These connections are marked by ethnocultural specificity, are represented in the linguistic consciousness and are subject to cognitive processing. In her opinion, a concept is a kind of condensed deep meaning of an object [Ibid., p.269].

From the point of view of other scientists, “associative connections of the name of a concept belong to the sphere of verbalization of the concept and cannot be included in its content, but are only reflected in linguistic form and allow one to describe its content.” In addition, scientists believe that a concept may not have a substantive name or any linguistic name at all.

In other linguistic studies, the concept is defined as a non-continuous mental formation, the basic unit of an individual's mental code. They include the following among its characteristics:

1 relatively ordered internal structure;

2 the result of cognitive activity of the individual and society;

3 integrative encyclopedic information about the displayed object or phenomenon;

4 interpretation of this information by collective consciousness;

5 position of public consciousness towards a given phenomenon or subject. An understanding of the concept close to this was proposed by Marina Pimenova. She defines the concept as a certain idea of "a fragment of the world or part of such a fragment," which has a complex structure and is expressed by different categories of features, verbalized in a variety of linguistic ways and means. She believes that the concept reflects the categorical and axiological components of knowledge about fragments of the world, and the structure of the concept captures features that are functionally significant for a particular culture. At the same time, the scientist emphasizes that a complete conceptual analysis of any concept significant for a particular culture can only be possible by "investigating the most complete set of means of its expression" [10].

Thus, there are similarities in all the above definitions of the concept. Scientists define a concept as a discrete, semantically voluminous unit, a unit of thinking or memory, reflecting the culture of a people and being the basic unit of a person's universal subject code.

There are works in the linguistic literature that propose various typologies of concepts. Let's look at some of them.

Classification of concepts by S.A. Askoldova

1) educational;

2) artistic

Classification of concepts by Yu.S. Stepanova



1) scientific (isolates) “are formed as synonymous, at least in pairs, are paired statements (or in greater numbers), are not isolated”;

2) non-scientific (artistic) concepts that “do not lend themselves to paired statements” and are “absolute isolates” [1].

#### Classification of concepts by A.P. Babushkina

1) mental pictures - a set of images in the collective/national or individual consciousness of people;

2) the concept scheme forms a perceptual and cognitive picture of the world, articulated in a certain way by lexical means;

3) concepts-hyperonyms - definitions devoid of connotation;

4) concept frame - a diagram of scenes, a set of associates stored in memory;

5) concept scenario (script) - a diagram of events, presentation of information about stereotypical episodes, the sequence and connection of conceivable events indicated by a word, their dynamics;

6) insight presupposes a sudden understanding, grasping of certain relationships and the structure of situations as a whole, information about the design, internal structure or functional purpose of an object “packed” in a word;

7) the kaleidoscopic concept is the result of metaphorization; they do not have permanent fixed associates, since they are deployed either in the form of mental pictures, or in the form of a frame, diagram or script [2].

#### Classification of concepts by Z. D. Popova and I. A. Sternin

1) concept representation - a generalized sensory-visual image of an object or phenomenon;

2) concept diagram - some generalized spatial-graphic or contour diagram;

3) concept concept - essential features of an object or phenomenon, the result of their rational reflection and comprehension;

4) concept frame - a three-dimensional representation, a certain set of standard knowledge about an object or phenomenon);

5) concept scenario (script) - a sequence of several episodes in time, stereotypical episodes with signs of movement, development);

6) concept-gestalt - a complex, holistic functional mental structure that organizes the diversity of individual phenomena in consciousness) [12].

#### Classification of concepts by V. I. Karasik

1) parametric mental formations - categories for comparing the real characteristics of objects: space, time, quantity, quality, etc.

2) non-parametric mental formations - concepts with subject content, which, in turn, are divided into:

- regulatory – these are mental formations in the content of which the main place is occupied by the value component;

- non-regulatory – these are pictures, diagrams, scripts, hyperonyms, linguistic and cultural types, etc.

From the point of view of Yu.S.Stepanov, a concept is a more voluminous mental construct of human consciousness compared to a concept; a concept is “a certain total phenomenon, in its structure consisting of the concept itself and a person’s value (often figurative) idea of it” [14]. V. I. Karasik, following Yu. S. Stepanov, believes that these terms are significantly different: “A concept is a thought about objects and phenomena, reflecting their general and essential features, and a concept is an idea that includes not only abstract, but also specific associative and emotional-evaluative signs” [6].

The problem of the relationship between term and concept remains one of the central theoretical problems of cognitive linguistics.

Researchers such as G. G. Slyshkin, S. G. Vorkachev and a number of others believe that a concept always has a verbal expression, is necessarily named by a word, otherwise one cannot talk about the existence of the concept. Other scientists identify them, believing that “the number of concepts includes lexemes whose meanings constitute the content of the national linguistic consciousness” [12].

I.A. Sternin believes that verbal nomination, in principle, is not necessary for the existence of a concept, because modern psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic research shows that thinking and verbalization have different mechanisms.

Following I.A. Sternin, we also believe that the presence of a concept in the conceptosphere of a people and the presence of a linguistic unit to communicate about this concept are relatively independent things. The presence of a linguistic unit always indicates the presence of a certain concept among the people, but for the existence of the concept as a mental unit, its systemic linguistic objectification is not necessary.

Concepts can be expressed verbally not only by lexemes, but also by a wide range of other linguistic units. They can function without being verbalized because there are concepts that are not meant to be discussed with other people. In some cases, they can be described verbally without directly naming the concept itself (for example, I.A. Sternin in his book gives the example of V.I. Karasik “leave for later.” Thus, verbalization is not a prerequisite for the existence of a concept.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus, the classifications of concepts developed within the framework of cognitive linguistics contribute to the understanding of their structure, content, and purpose. Developing the most complete typology that takes into account the content, structural, and functional characteristics of concepts, their dynamic nature, and discursive and stylistic affiliation is one of the most pressing research tasks of modern linguistics. Thus, the presence of an intralingua or Interlingua lacuna in the concept sphere of a people does not mean that there is no concept in the national consciousness. Language nominates everything that is discussed in society and is important and relevant for it, but not what has become the subject of thinking. A nomination always indicates that a people have a concept, but for the concept to exist as a mental unit, its nomination is not necessary.

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