

**Methodological bases of
conceptology: features
and structure of the
linguo-cultural concept**

METHODOLOGICAL BASES OF CONCEPTOLOGY: FEATURES AND STRUCTURE OF THE LINGUO-CULTURAL CONCEPT

BASES METODOLÓGICAS DE LA CONCEPTUALIZACIÓN: CARACTERÍSTICAS Y ESTRUCTURA DEL CONCEPTO LINGUOCULTURAL

ABSTRACT

In this article, two approaches to the studying the concept are investigated. The first approach defines concepts as complex, organized semantic forms. The second approach denotes that the concept and the term are used as synonyms and are interchangeable. As a result of the study of various interpretations of the term “concept”, the following basic features of the concept are singled out: the availability of the name; cognitive character (ability to process, store and transfer knowledge and experience); an open mental structure, capable to changes and transformations; verbalization through various linguistic units; cultural and historical reference; value character; presence of both verbal and non-verbal forms. The concept, being a unit of cognitive level, reflects a linguistic view of the world. It consists of perceptions and associations arising in the human mental process which are expressed by means of the verbal signs, concepts corresponding to them, the peculiar “labels” which have taken roots in our mind..

KEYWORDS: Language, speech, concept, society, culture.

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RESUMEN

En este artículo, se investigan dos enfoques para estudiar el concepto. El primer enfoque define los conceptos como formas semánticas complejas y organizadas. El segundo enfoque denota que el concepto y el término se usan como sinónimos y son intercambiables. Como resultado del estudio de varias interpretaciones del término “concepto”, se destacan las siguientes características básicas del concepto: la disponibilidad del nombre; carácter cognitivo (capacidad de procesar, almacenar y transferir conocimiento y experiencia); una estructura mental abierta, capaz de cambios y transformaciones; verbalización a través de varias unidades lingüísticas; referencia cultural e histórica; personaje de valor; presencia de formas verbales y no verbales El concepto, al ser una unidad de nivel cognitivo, refleja una visión lingüística del mundo. Consiste en percepciones y asociaciones que surgen en el proceso mental humano que se expresan mediante los signos verbales, los conceptos que les corresponden, las “etiquetas” peculiares que se han enraizado en nuestra mente.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lenguaje, habla, concepto, sociedad, cultura.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication between individuals, and culture is a certain level of society development [L.R. Sakaeva, M.A. Yahin, R.R. Yalalova, 2017]. Nowadays the development of science is determined by the numerous attempts of scientists to reconsider the concepts and phenomena rooted in people's minds. Moreover, human cognitive activity is a continuous process based on the identification and distinction of objects of the environment – the formation of certain sets of conceptual systems. (Ling et al., 2016) In this regard language is no exception, as formation of ideas of the world is not only intuitive, but also by means of verbal signs. In modern linguistics, scientists have not reached a common view on the definition of the concept yet. There is no a single-valued definition of the concept, because this word has an anthropocentric character and is associated with mental activity. (Salavati-Niasari et al., 2015) The concept reflects a “world-image”, collective interpersonal values, ideals, intellectual characteristics, and also conveys the emotional coloring of this or that phenomenon. T. Hobbes, W. Ockham, P. Abailard and other scientists are the founders of the term concept, its definition and development. They belonged to philosophers of the Middle Ages, who considered the concept as universals, generalizing the characteristics or properties of things created mentally, drawing attention to relevant and significant information. They understand the concept as a result of cognitive and mental activity, representing a kind of bridge between the world of thought and the world of being (material world). Thus, in the scientific discourse under the influence of medieval doctrines, the basics of the concept as a subjective phenomenon associated with speech, formed in the process of abstraction, imagination, as well as sensual and practical mastering, were created. Modern formulation of the term concept contains specified components, but is broadened in its structure. The

representatives of the logical philosophy considered the concept not only as a subjective term, but also an objective one. In 1928 S.A. Askoldov introduced the term “concept” into linguistics, defining it as a unity of objects of the same form, acting as a substitute. D.S. Likhachev, continuing S.A. Askoldov doctrine, holds the view that the concept like an algebraic expression, does not fully cover the meanings, because each individual considers them in its own way, accepting or denying, according to life experience and education.

2. METHODS

Linguistics has a great number of various methods nowadays. But we have used definite ones. The analysis of theoretical and supporting data comprise the usage of such methods as continuous sampling method (selection of factual data); inductive-deductive method (making sense and integration of theoretical information and observation) descriptive-analytical analysis.

3. RESULTS

Most researchers consider that the concept is a complex mental system that includes the semantic content and also personal attitude to the given concept, as well as other components: 1. universal, specific for each individual; 2. national-cultural, revealing aspects of the cultural environment; 3. social, showing the attribution of a person to a particular social strata; 4. group, characterizing the belonging to the sex or age group;

5. personal, distinguished by an individual assessment of an event or phenomenon that represents the result of upbringing, education, and the experience received. According to researchers it is important for the concept to construct an associative field, in order to define associative connections and verify the meaning of the concept. The ethnic group always assesses what is “right” and what is “wrong”. I.A. Sternin believes that values stimulate us to different actions. Deviant behavior is convicted [I.A. Sternin, 2000].

Taking into account different points of view, the main features of the concept can be distinguished: cognitive character; existence of a name; variability; potentiality; verbaliza-

tion through various linguistic units; manifestation in various forms: terms, symbols or images; cultural and historical reference; value character; occurrence of both verbal and nonverbal forms.

To sum up, it can be noted that the concept can exist in someone's mind in the form of certain terms, and also acts as a synthesis of associations, internal experiences and emotions, symbols and images, knowledge and experience. The concept is the result of various cultural factors: the influence of politics, religion, art, etc., forming some a kind of cultural layer, which connects a person with the outside world.

4. DISCUSSION

In modern cognitive linguistics "concept" becomes a core term, which is more often used by researchers dealing with problems of linguistic representation of cognitions.

"Concept" as a linguistic term helps to distinguish and study mental objects that represent units which express our conception of the world and create a schematic image of the word, making the model of consciousness accessible to perception. G. Fauconnier and G. Lakoff operate with such concepts as "cognitive models and mental spaces structured by them, which are a certain field of conceptualization of ideas. Within its framework situations are recognized: the past, the present and the future, as well as the construction of hypothetical situations and the interpretation of abstract categories". Mental spaces have a purely cognitive status and are absent beyond thought [G. Lakoff, 1982].

R.W. Langacker, taking into account conceptualization, interpretes this process widely enough – as new knowledge, practical experience and well-established concepts. With the exception of the conceptual content, the meaning of each language unit is based on a certain scheme, or configuration, laying on the content of the concept. In this case, each particular configuration relies on a separate meaning of the word. The concept as a result represents a collection of words and meanings expressed in configurations [R.W. Langacker, 1991.].

Ch.W. Morris understanding the "concept" differs from previous ones, in which this term, was used as a cognitive entity, determined by units of knowledge or culture, characterized by such features as impersonal character, lack of specific content and form. According to scientist, the term "concept" is used to denote an element of a certain structure. In comparison with other independent units, the concept fulfills an official function: it establishes connection between them in the conditions of their implementation.

In our research we adhere to the Yu.S. Stepanov definition of the concept, in which on the one hand this term acts as a "bunch of culture" in the human mind, and on the other hand, the concept is an "intermediary between man and culture", at the same time a person is a part of it, who influences it from time to time [Yu.S. Stepanov, 1997].

Scientists understand structure as an internal form of an object, the constituent parts of which are related by common features. Thus, M.V. Pimenova considers that the structure of the concept should be understood as a set of common characteristics which are necessary to authenticate a phenomenon or object as part of a picture of the world [M.V. Pimenova, 2004].

While Yu.S. Stepanov notes the complexity of the structure of the concept, indicating its similarities with the structure of the term, and the content of historical and cultural components [Yu.S. Stepanov, 1997]. According to N.N. Boldyreva point of view, the structure of the concept is determined by the characteristics of the core and periphery. The author believes that concrete–figurative characteristics as a result of cognitive activity are located in the center, while the abstract features created under the influence of theoretical knowledge form the periphery.

In V.I. Karasik and G.G. Slyshkin works linguistic-cultural concept is represented by a complex unit. Studying functions of the concept, its structure and content, taking into account the variability of this phenomenon, scientists identified specific characteristics of the linguistic–cultural concept:

1. The complexity of existence, here the concept acts as a linguistic cultural unit, which should be studied in conjunction with

the consciousness, language and culture of the people;

2. The concept has a mental character and is distinguished by its complexity multidimensional nature;

3. The base point of the concept is its value, because its purpose is to reflect culture of particular people;

4. The boundaries of the concept are conditional, they are vague and changeable, because the elements of its structure are closely connected, at the same time forming other concepts;

5. At the same time the concept is limited in the native speaker's mind. One linguistic-cultural concept can be interpreted differently by native speakers, this implies individual and collective understanding of the concept;

6. Three-component or three-level sets the obligatory presence of three so-called components, namely: factual knowledge, valuable orientation (customs and traditions), figurative element (associations arising in the native speaker's subconscious mind);

7. One concept denotes several linguistic units at once, hence its meaning is not reduced to only one definite one.

8. Ability to be poly-classified, and others [V.I. Karasik, 2001].

In many studies, special attention is paid to Yu.S. Stepanov concept, who notes that the concept has three "layers":

1. The basic actual feature which is used by all or the prevailing part of the native speakers;

2. additional features which are significant only in the minds of individual native speakers;

3. The internal form, represented in the etymology of the concept [Yu.S. Stepanov, 1997].

Yu.S. Stepanov confirms that the concept reflects the cultural heritage formed in the people's mind. He emphasizes that the collective consciousness holds values that can exist for many years .

The concept is formed by means of the lexes and phraseological units, word combinations; sentences, texts or even the whole set of texts. Formally, scientists distinguish two types of concept:

1. stable, with strong connections between the language means of verbalization, fixed in the people's minds;

2. changeable, with its personal formation and representation, in fact not verbalized.

S.G. Vorkachev studies the concept only from a semantic point of view. He defines the following semantic components of the concept:

1. Conceptual side (signification of concepts and features of phenomena), figurative side (interconnection of linguistic and cognitive sense), "significant" side (position of the concept in the language system);

2. Discrete unity, which is the relation between a conceptual, descriptive and efficient instrument, concentrated in the semantics of a linguistic or non-linguistic sign;

3. Concept as a term related to culture, can reflect its two sides: conceptual and emotional;

4. The value component is active only interacting with the conceptual and figurative component;

5. The semantic integrity of the concept is achieved by expression of the image at first (awareness of the basis of the sign), next – the concepts and only afterwards the symbol (the cultural-value component) [S. Vorkachev, 2004].

The concept is formed through world cognition, processing information and consolidating it on the linguistic level. A.P. Babushkin offers the following features of linguo-cultural concept within the context of his doctoral dissertation:

1. The concept is a mental unit that reflects the interconnection and interdependence of its elements.

2. Concepts as units of information structure are ideal images.

3. The concept is expressed through words, otherwise it is impossible to assert about its existence [A.P. Babushkin, 1997].

5. SUMMARY

In linguistic literature interest in the concept is related to language, which acts as means of knowledge and communication. It is considered, that studying the concept, language and culture interact as terms connected with each other. This idea is reflected in A. Vezhbitskaya, Yu.S. Stepanov and other scientists' works. The problem of correlating the concept and language units is that the concept and the word are commonly expressed. A. Vezhbitskaya considers the terms "word" and "concept" as interchangeable and uses such conditional concepts as "concept-minimum" and "concept-maximum, which indicate that native speaker understands the meaning of the word respectively [A. Vezhbitskaya, 1996].

The concept has the ability to verbalize through various sign forms. With the expansion or reduction of the number of words forming the concept, connection with particular linguistic units can change. The concept contains the term, but is not limited by it, deeply covering the content of words. Foreign linguists R. Hudson and R. Jackendoff believe that in different languages concepts and ideas about cultures usually differ, since they reflect the objective reality in a different way. K. Hardy having analyzed a set of works and interpretations of "concept" doesn't correlate it to a concrete term. She considers that concepts are semantic phenomena with a complex organized structure, the verbal definition is not able to disclose all completeness and wealth of this linguo-cultural phenomenon as the individual with his own thinking understands a certain concept in different ways [C. Hardy, 1998].

G.G. Slyshkin and V.I. Karasik, representatives of lingua-cultural direction, define the concept as a multidimensional mental unit with a dominant valuable element which has no clear boundaries, since lexemes, phraseological units, phrases, sentences, and even texts being part of it, are interpreted in different way. They state that the linguo-cultural concept, being conditional and mental unit, should be studied comprehensively, focusing

not only on language, but also on culture and people's mind .

People keep most of knowledge about the world in their minds. They develop and change their mind about a particular phenomenon, complicating or simplifying its meaning. It follows that lexical meaning is a component of the concept, without identifying it. This conclusion is based on the achievements of American linguists J. Lakoff, R. Langacker, and others [E. Wüster, 1979]. They introduced the term of a cognitive context similar to the concept. This term consists of background information that reflects culture of the people.


Thus, the concept can be considered as "a unit of a higher level than a meaning" [L.S. Olschki, 1965]. It reflects not only the lexicographic meaning (derived from dictionaries), but also the psycholinguistic meaning (conveying the understanding of cultural experience and traditions) and the general so-called encyclopedic knowledge of people about reality.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Over the last decade, the study of the concept has become widespread, a large number of works have been written. Science has come a long way of development. As a result, new scientific directions appeared which study the conceptual picture of the world, culture, ideology in the linguistic mind of the people as a whole. Nowadays, there two approaches studying concepts. The first approach is defines concepts as complex, organized semantic entities. The second denotes that the terms and concepts are used as synonyms, are interchangeable. The first approach is adopted by most Russian linguists, such as V.I. Karasik, Z.D. Popova, G.G. Slyshkin, Yu.S. Stepanov, I.A. Sternin, as well as foreign ones: K. Hardy, E. Sapir, B.L. Whorf, R. Hudson and others. The term "concept" finds wide application in various fields of linguistics and has entered into the conceptual framework cultural linguistics, as well as semantics and cognitive science. As a result of the study of various interpretations of the "concept", the following basic features of the concept are singled out: the availability of the name; cognitive character (ability to process, store and transfer knowledge and experience); an open mental

structure, capable for changes and transformations; verbalization through various linguistic units; cultural and historical reference; value character; occurrence of both verbal and non-verbal forms. The concept reflects the linguistic picture of the world and consists of the unity of perceptions and associations in the human mental process and expressed through the means of verbal signs, concepts correlated with them, certain “labels” rooted in our mind. This unity is common in Russian and American cultural linguistics and is aimed at a comprehensive study of languages, cultures and people’s mind.

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