



APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF THE CONCEPT

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18724819>

Babanazarova Sokhiba Abdusharipovna

Doctoral student of Khorezm Ma'mun Academy

Abstract. *This article is devoted to the analysis of the concept as one of the central notions of modern cognitive linguistics. The study aims to systematize various scientific approaches to the interpretation of the concept and to clarify its cognitive, linguistic, and cultural characteristics. The research is based on theoretical works of Russian and foreign scholars in the fields of cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, philosophy, and psychology. Descriptive, comparative, analytical-synthetic, cognitive, and discursive methods are applied in the study. The results show that the concept is a complex, multidimensional mental unit that reflects not only logical knowledge but also emotional, evaluative, and cultural components of human experience. It is established that the concept differs from the notion by its dynamic nature, cultural conditioning, and discursive realization. The study also reveals that conceptualization and categorization are fundamental cognitive processes that structure human knowledge about the world, resulting in the formation of the conceptsphere. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the theoretical foundations of cognitive linguistics and may serve as a basis for further interdisciplinary research.*

Key words: *concept, cognitive linguistics, mental unit, conceptualization, categorization, conceptsphere, discourse, linguoculturology.*

INTRODUCTION

At present, the concept is regarded as one of the fundamental notions of cognitive linguistics. However, although the concept is a widely used term in modern cognitive linguistics, its content differs significantly in the conceptions of various scientific schools and individual scholars. Therefore, there is still no strictly established interpretation of this notion. The point is that “the concept is a category that is a product of thinking and cannot be directly observed, which

creates very broad possibilities for its interpretation. Today, the category of concept is also used in the studies of philosophers, logicians, psychologists, and cultural theorists, and it incorporates interpretations of all these fields beyond linguistics” [1; 21].

In the words of A.V. Prokhorov, the diversity of approaches and views on the study of the concept demonstrates the complexity of this notion and the difficulty of providing its precise definition [2; 15].



Materials. As the material for this study, theoretical sources created within the framework of cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology were selected. In particular, scientific works, monographs, and articles by Russian and foreign linguists devoted to revealing the essence of the concept notion were examined. Specifically, the views of N.N. Boldirev, E.S. Kubryakova, V.I. Karasik, G.G. Slishkin, I.S. Sternin, Z.D. Popova, S.A. Askoldov, Yu.S. Stepanov, O.V. Akinzhelova, V.F. Novodranova, as well as scholars working in the fields of philosophy and psychology, were used as research material. In the course of the study, such terms as concept, notion, conceptualization, categorization, and conceptsphere were considered as the main objects of research.

Methods. The study employed general scientific and special linguistic methods. In particular, the descriptive method was used to present and explain existing views on the concept notion; the comparative method was applied to conduct a comparative analysis of the terms concept and notion; the methods of analysis and synthesis were used to identify, generalize, and systematize definitions of the concept; the cognitive-analytical approach was employed to determine the formation, structure, and functional features of the concept in human consciousness; and the discursive approach was applied to reveal the dynamic nature of the concept in real communicative processes. These methods

served to ensure the theoretical validity of the study.

Results. As a result of the study, it was established that interpretations of the concept notion in modern cognitive linguistics represent a multifaceted and complex phenomenon. The concept, as a product of thinking, manifests itself as a mental unit that structurally and semantically integrates knowledge about objective reality in human consciousness. It was revealed that the concept is not merely a logical notion but also includes cultural, emotional, and evaluative components.

In addition, the distinction between the terms concept and notion was clarified: while a notion is mainly scientific and abstract in nature, the concept is closely connected with human experience, emotional states, and cultural values. In the course of the study, the sources of concept formation, their dynamic nature, and their active realization in discourse were theoretically substantiated. As a result, the conclusion was drawn that the concept is an elementary unit of the conceptsphere existing in human consciousness.

Discussion. Many scholars have attempted to systematize knowledge related to the concept. Usually, the following approaches are identified in the study of this notion: the linguocognitive approach (N.N. Boldirev, E.S. Kubryakova, V.V. Krasnikh, and others), the psycholinguistic approach (A.A. Zalevskaya, N.A. Krasavskiy, K.F.



Sedov, and others), the linguocultural approach (G.G. Slisshkin, G.V. Vorkachyov, S.X. Lyapin, Yu.S. Stepanov, V.I. Karasik, and others), the linguistic approach (L.O. Cherneyko, T.V. Matveyeva), and the cognitive approach (V.M. Karasik, G.G. Slisshkin, M.Yu. Oleshkov, A.I. Prikhodko, and others).

Z.D. Popova writes that the formation of concepts in human consciousness occurs on the basis of the following sources: 1) reality perceived directly through the sense organs; 2) human activity and interaction with the world of objects; 3) mental operations of thinking, such as generating new knowledge based on existing knowledge; 4) social experience, that is, general knowledge acquired in the process of education or everyday communication; 5) independent learning, for example, when a child asks “what is democracy?” or when an adult looks up the meaning of an unfamiliar word in a dictionary – thus becoming acquainted with the corresponding concept [3; 4].

Below, we consider several definitions of the concept, since it is impossible to reason about it without analyzing the definitions given to it.

I.S. Sternin considers the following characteristics to be fundamental for the concept: mental nature, discreteness (a separated, independent mental unit), structuredness, informational richness, openness, and consolidation in consciousness. The author defines the

concept as follows: “a concept is a discrete mental unit that belongs to the basic knowledge domain of a particular individual and has an ordered internal structure. It is also the result of the cognitive activity of the individual and society, carrying a certain semantic load” [4; 8].

The concept is a global unit of thinking, a mental image that embodies a structured form of knowledge. The concept is a “repository” of human knowledge about the world [5; 12]. The concept is “a mental representation that determines how things are connected and categorized” [6; 16].

As early as the twelfth century, Pierre Abelard believed that names expressed through sound do not, by their nature (naturaliter), enter into the things they name, but rather exist as a result of being “assigned” to things by people. This “assignment” was granted to humans by the Teacher – God Himself. At the same time, according to Abelard, names (sounds and entire sentences) serve as “tools for perceiving things” [7; 280]. The concept enters the listener’s consciousness as an integral means of perceiving an object.

The essence of the concept becomes even clearer when it is contrasted with the notion. At present, the terms concept and notion are clearly distinguished, as they are rarely used interchangeably. They belong to different fields of science. The term “notion” is mainly used in disciplines such as logic and philosophy.



The term “concept,” however, “has been actively used in Russian linguistic literature since the early 1990s and later gained a firm position in cultural studies.” Linguist O.V. Akinzhelova, who studied the concept from a linguocultural perspective, notes: “although it serves as the basis for studying language and culture, it does not fully belong either to the field of language, to the field of culture, or to both simultaneously. The concept is a mental unit, an element of consciousness, associated with knowledge that reflects the essential features of an existing object. The concept is rich in content and is closely connected with the world of culture. All concepts contain ideas formed in different periods and at different historical stages. Unlike notions, concepts are not only comprehended intellectually but are also felt and experienced, since they are objects of emotions, likes and dislikes, and sometimes contradictions” [8; 48].

Comparing the concept and the notion, V.F. Novodranova expresses the following view: the concept is a logical category agreed upon by scholars in order to provide a common “language” for scientific communication. In her opinion, the concept is formed naturally in the process of human object-oriented cognitive activity, whereas the notion emerges in the course of scientific and practical activity [9; 59].

According to X. Demiral, the notion of concept is widely used within the fields of philosophy, psychology,

linguistics, linguoculturology, and literary studies [10; 17]. Analyzing the concept as a literary category, he defines it as follows: “Concepts perform a generalizing or substitutive function, identify the main features that are significant in the spiritual, material, and other aspects of social life, and possess mental content; in addition, the literary (artistic) concept, apart from the above-mentioned characteristics, also has a specific aesthetic function, which indicates the specificity of its study.” According to S.A. Askoldov, the most important function of the concept is also the function of substitution. This is because the concept, as a product of thinking, replaces numerous objects of the same type in the process of cognition. The concept can substitute not only real objects but also certain aspects of objects or real actions [11; 267]. At the same time, although a general understanding of the concept has been formed in modern science, various terms—such as “philosophical concept,” “cognitive concept,” “linguoculturological concept,” “artistic concept,” “literary concept,” “mythopoetic concept,” “individual-author concept,” and others – do not have clearly defined semantic differences. Nevertheless, studies interpreting the notion of the artistic concept point out its dual nature: on the one hand, the artistic concept reflects the semantic structure of individual-author consciousness; on the other hand, it is a system-forming element of the artistic worldview, that is,



a component of the generalized artistic picture of the world.

In recent studies, the dynamic nature of the concept has increasingly been emphasized as one of its important features. This dynamism is “associated with the realization of the concept in communicative conditions specific to discourse and with its form of existence in discourse,” whereby the concept appears not only as a unit of mental representations or culture but also as a realized unit occurring in real communicative processes.

Analyzing the functioning of concepts and the structures that store knowledge within them from the perspective of discursive practices makes it possible to take a new look at their structural-semantic characteristics. At the same time, the growing interest of linguists in the properties of concepts is also connected with this. The relevance of this issue is explained by the formation of the cognitive and functional-communicative aspects of concepts. E.S. Kubryakova states: “...a linguistic phenomenon acquires full significance only when it is considered at the intersection of conceptualization and communication” [12; 11–12].

Conceptualization and categorization are among the most important functions of cognitive activity. Categorization consists in “dividing the world into categories, that is, grouping objects or phenomena into groups and classes in order to identify the essential

relationships between them” [13; 139]. Categorization is a cognitive process whose essence lies in dividing existence and knowledge about it into separate categories according to ontological fields. This process makes it possible to determine which group a particular object belongs to and thereby establish hierarchical relationships such as “class-class member.”

Conceptualization is a process that creates connections between different forms of knowledge and “studies the structure, essence, and interrelations of this knowledge.” As a result of conceptualization, phenomena of the real world are organized, generalized, and reflected in human consciousness as a semantically unified structure. This process enables individuals to memorize, store, and retrieve information when necessary.

The result of these processes is the conceptosphere, which we understand as an ordered integral set of all concepts existing in human consciousness. This is a system of human representations and knowledge about the world that reflects human experience and is consolidated in consciousness. Thus, the concept is an elementary unit of the conceptosphere.

Conclusion. In conclusion, the concept is one of the central and multidimensional notions of cognitive linguistics, and it is difficult to limit it to a single, rigid definition. The concept is a mental unit formed as a result of human cognitive activity, integrating knowledge



about the world, emotions, and cultural experience. The study shows that through the processes of conceptualization and categorization, humans comprehend, organize, and consolidate their understanding of the surrounding world in consciousness. The discursive and

dynamic nature of concepts ensures their active participation in real communicative processes. These conclusions may serve as a theoretical basis for further research in cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology.

REFERENCES:

1. Попова З.Д., Стернин И.А. Когнитивная лингвистика: Учебное издание/ Москва.: Восток-Запад. 2007. – С. 21.
2. Прохоров Ю.Е. В поисках концепта / - Москва.: Флинта, 2004. – С. 15.
3. Попова З.Д., Стернин И.А. Понятие концепта в лингвистических исследованиях. – Воронеж: Изд-во Воронеж ун-та, 1999. – С. 4.
4. Стернин И.А. Методика лингвоконцептологического анализа. – СПб.: РГПУ им. А.И. Герцена, 2006. - Вып. VIII. - С. 8.
5. Суслович С.В. Когнитивно-дискурсивные характеристики концепта труд/работа как дискурсивно-коммуникативной единицы: Дисс. ...канд. филол. наук. – Архангельск, 2011. – С. 12.
6. Бабушкин А.П. Типы концептов в лексико-фразеологической семантике языка. – Воронеж: Изд-во Воронеж. гос. ун-та, 1996. – С. 16.
7. Лосев А.Ф. Имя: Избранные работы, переводы, беседы, исследования, архивные материалы/ А.Ф.Лосевф. – СПб.: Алетея, 1997. – С. 280.
8. Акинжелова О.В. Концепт «мера» как фрагмент русской языковой картина мира(на материале пословиц, поговорок и фразеологизмов): Дисс. ...канд. филол. наук. – Липецк, 2008. – С. 48.
9. Новодранова В.М., Лейчик В.М. Понятие и концепт // Научно-техническая терминология. Научно-технический реферативный сборник. Вып. 2. М. 2002. С. 59.
10. Демирал Х. Концепт «культура» в прозе В.С.Маканина: Дисс. ...канд. филол. наук. – Москва, 2020. – С. 17.
11. Аскольдов С.А. Концепт и слова // Русская словесность. От теории словесности к структуре текста. Антология. – М.: Академия, 1997. – С. 267.
12. Кубрякова Е.С. Язык и знание. – М.: Языки славянской культуры, 2004. – С. 11-12.
13. Вежбицкая А. Понимание культур через посредство ключевых слов. – М.: Языки славянской культуры, 2001. – С. 139.