

THE CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE IN DIFFERENT CULTURES: CROSS-LINGUISTIC AND SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES

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Abstract: This article analyzes the ways in which the concept of knowledge is expressed in different languages and cultures. The research focuses on the study of lexical units, semantic shifts, lexical gaps, and conceptual metaphors related to knowledge, based on the approaches of linguistics, semantics, and cognitive science. It is found that the expression of knowledge in different languages depends not only on grammatical forms, but also on cultural values and models of thought. The results show that although the concept of knowledge is a universal phenomenon, its linguistic expression and semantic boundaries differ significantly in different cultural contexts.

Keywords: knowledge, linguoculturology, semantics, cognitive linguistics, interlingual differences.

Introduction

The concept of knowledge is an important component of human thought and culture. It is studied not only in the fields of epistemology and philosophy, but also as one of the central concepts in linguistics, cognitive science, and cultural studies. The fact that the ways of expressing knowledge in different languages are not the same indicates the complex relationship between language, thought, and culture. Each language expresses the concept of knowledge through its own semantic system using certain categories and lexical units. Therefore, the linguistic expression of knowledge is often formed depending on cultural values, historical experience, and models of social thinking.

Linguistic studies emphasize that language influences the way a person perceives the world. This idea is based on the theory of linguistic relativity put forward by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf. According to this theory, the grammatical and semantic structure of language plays an important role in shaping human thought³¹. Therefore, the concept of knowledge is expressed in different languages through different semantic boundaries. For example, in some languages, knowledge and understanding are represented by separate lexical units, while in others these concepts can be expressed by a single common word.

Modern cognitive linguistics also pays special attention to the study of cross-cultural interpretations of the concept of knowledge³². The theory of conceptual metaphor, developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, suggests that knowledge is often explained through metaphorical models³³. For example, knowledge is associated with images such as “light”, “seeing”, or “finding a way”. The purpose of this article is to analyze the linguistic and semantic features of the concept of knowledge in different languages and cultures. The study aims to determine how knowledge is expressed in different languages, how semantic shifts and lexical gaps arise, and how these processes are related to cognitive and cultural factors.

Research Methods

³¹ Sapir, Edward. *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1921, pp. 1–258

³² Usarova D. Style and methodological adaptation in literary translation // *International Journal of Discourse on Innovation, Integration and Education*. – 2020. – T. 1. – No. 3. – pp. 58-60

³³ 7. Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, 1980, pp. 3–32

This study was conducted based on an interdisciplinary approach to determine how the concept of knowledge is expressed in different languages and cultural contexts. The study used several scientific methods based on the achievements of linguistics, cognitive semantics, and linguoculturology. One of the main methods of the study is comparative semantic analysis. Using this method, lexical units expressing the concept of knowledge in different languages were studied and their semantic properties were compared. In particular, the meaning of units such as “knowledge”, “understanding”, “wisdom”, “bilim”, “tushunish” and “hikmat” in English, Uzbek and other languages was analyzed. This approach made it possible to determine how the category of knowledge is classified in different languages.

The method of cognitive-linguistic analysis was also used. This method is aimed at studying conceptual models formed in human thinking through language units. The study also analyzed metaphorical forms of expression of the concept of knowledge. In this process, the views of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who founded the theory of conceptual metaphor, were used as a methodological basis. In addition, the connection of the concept of knowledge with the cultural context was studied using the method of linguocultural analysis³⁴. It was analyzed how the views, values, and social experience existing in different cultures regarding knowledge are reflected through language units. This approach made it possible to identify not only the linguistic, but also the cultural semantic features of the concept of knowledge. As a result, the methods used served to identify interlingual semantic differences in the concept of knowledge, indicate lexical gaps, and conduct a deeper analysis of the relationship between language and thinking.

Results

The results of the study showed that the concept of knowledge does not have the same semantic structure in different languages. In different language systems, lexical units expressing knowledge are classified differently, and these differences are formed in connection with cultural and cognitive factors. As a result of comparative analysis, it was found that while in some languages, concepts related to knowledge are expressed through several separate semantic units, in other languages they are used within the framework of a common meaning. In English, the concept of knowledge is expressed through several independent lexical categories. For example, the words “knowledge”, “understanding” and “wisdom” denote different levels or cognitive stages of knowledge. This distinction allows us to semantically distinguish between factual, analytical and normative forms of knowledge. Although in Uzbek there are units such as “bilim”, “tushunish” and “hikmat”, their use is often formed depending on the context and cultural interpretation.

The analysis also showed that there are lexical gaps in some languages. Some concepts have a clear expression in one language system, but their exact equivalents are not found in other languages. Such situations can cause problems of semantic compatibility in the translation process. Lexical gaps also reflect differences in cultural experience and social thinking. The results also showed that there are common trends in the metaphorical representation of the concept of knowledge. According to cognitive linguistics research, knowledge is often expressed through metaphors such as “light”, “vision” or “opening”. This phenomenon shows that the process of understanding knowledge is related to perception and experience³⁵. In general, the results of the study confirm that, although the concept of knowledge is a universal phenomenon, its linguistic expression and semantic boundaries

³⁴ Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, 1980, pp. 3–32

³⁵ Dirven, René, and Marjolijn Verspoor. *Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics*. John Benjamins Publishing, 2004, pp. 25–68.

differ significantly in different languages. These differences clearly demonstrate the interrelationship between language, thinking and culture.

Analysis and discussion

The results of the study showed that the representation of the concept of knowledge in different languages is closely related to the relationship between linguistic systems and cultural thinking. The differentiation of lexical units related to knowledge in different language systems is associated with the ways of perceiving the world and social experience of people, which reveals the relationship between language and thinking. The classification of knowledge through linguistic units is manifested not only as a linguistic phenomenon, but also as a cultural and cognitive process. According to the theory of linguistic relativity, language influences the formation of human thinking. This idea was developed by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, which emphasizes that language structures partially determine the way a person imagines the world. The results of the study also show that the semantic boundaries of the concept of knowledge are formed differently in different languages, confirming certain aspects of this theory.

It is also determined that the metaphorical representation of knowledge is associated with cognitive processes. Research conducted within cognitive linguistics, in particular the theory of conceptual metaphors developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, shows that knowledge is often expressed through images based on experience. For example, knowledge is associated with metaphors such as “light”, “vision” or “discovery”. These metaphors serve to connect the human cognitive process with perception and experience.

The analysis also revealed that lexical gaps are of great importance. The concepts of knowledge that exist in some languages do not have a complete equivalent in other languages. Such situations create semantic ambiguities in the process of translation and intercultural communication. At the same time, this phenomenon also shows that the concept of knowledge has cultural characteristics. In general, the results of the analysis confirm that the linguistic expression of the concept of knowledge is formed in connection with culture, historical experience and social values. The study of semantic differences in different languages is of great theoretical importance not only for linguistics, but also for cognitive science and intercultural communication research.

Conclusion

This study showed that the representation of the concept of knowledge in different languages and cultures is closely related to linguistic and cognitive factors. The results of the comparative analysis confirmed that, despite the fact that knowledge is a universal concept, its semantic boundaries and lexical expression differ significantly in different language systems. Each language classifies knowledge based on its historical development, cultural values, and social experience. During the study, it was found that the concept of knowledge is expressed through several independent lexical units in some languages, and in other languages, it is expressed using more general semantic units. This indicates that the process of categorization of knowledge has cultural and cognitive characteristics. It also showed that lexical gaps in different languages can create problems of semantic compatibility in the translation process of the concept of knowledge.

The results showed that the metaphorical representation of the concept of knowledge is also related to cognitive experience. Knowledge is often described through images such as light, vision, or revelation, which serves to connect the human cognitive process with the experience of perception. Such metaphors may be similar across cultures, but their semantic interpretations vary depending on the cultural context. Overall, the results of the study confirm the interrelationship between language, thought, and culture and demonstrate the

importance of an interdisciplinary approach to studying the concept of knowledge. A deeper study of semantic differences in different languages can serve as an important scientific basis for the development of future research in linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, and intercultural communication.

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