

THE STUDY AND INTERPRETATION OF CONCEPTS IN COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

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Abstract: This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of cognitive linguistics, its relationship with language, thinking, perception, and cognitive processes, as well as scientific interpretations of the concept. The study highlights the distinctive features of a concept in comparison with a general notion and examines its linguistic, cognitive, and linguocultural characteristics. Particular attention is given to the semantic, figurative, evaluative, and cultural components of conceptual analysis. A concept is interpreted as a generalized mental unit that reflects human knowledge, experience, imagination, and values. The results demonstrate that studying concepts in cognitive linguistics is essential for revealing the relationship between language and thought, identifying the national-cultural worldview, and explaining the deeper semantic layers of linguistic units.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, concept, conceptual system, language and thought.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in global linguistics in studying language in close connection with human cognition, perception, knowledge systems, and cultural experience. As a result of this approach, new scientific directions have emerged in linguistics. One of these is cognitive linguistics, which interprets language not merely as a means of communication or a grammatical system, but as a complex mental phenomenon reflecting knowledge and representations formed in the human mind.

One of the central notions of cognitive linguistics is the concept. A concept is a mental unit that integrates a person's knowledge about reality, personal and social experience, cultural values, emotional attitudes, and evaluative criteria. Therefore, studying a concept goes beyond determining the lexical meaning of a word; it also involves uncovering the deep semantic, cultural, and psychological layers underlying linguistic units.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that although research on cognitive approaches in Uzbek linguistics is increasing, the essence of the concept and its relationship with such units as "notion," "meaning," "image," and "linguocultureme" still require systematic analysis. Conceptual analysis is particularly important in studying how national mentality and cultural values are reflected in language.

The aim of this research is to analyze theoretical approaches to the study of concepts in cognitive linguistics, identify their key features, and demonstrate their role in explaining the relationship between language and thought.

Research Methodology

The study employs descriptive, comparative-theoretical, semantic, and conceptual analysis methods. The descriptive method is used to explain theoretical views on cognitive linguistics and the concept. The comparative-theoretical method allows for the comparison of different scholars' definitions of the concept. Semantic analysis helps clarify the relationship

between concepts and word meanings, while conceptual analysis identifies the knowledge, imagery, evaluative, and cultural components within a concept.

The research is based on the works of scholars such as N.N. Boldyrev, G. Miller, J. Bruner, H. Gardner, Sh. Safarov, S.A. Askoldov, T. Mardiyev, and O.Q. Yusupov.

Main Discussion

Cognitive linguistics studies how knowledge is formed, stored, processed, and expressed through language in the human mind. It considers language not as a simple system of signs reflecting the external world, but as an active product of human cognition. Through language, individuals name, classify, evaluate, and perceive reality. Thus, language serves not only as a communication tool but also as a mechanism for understanding and interpreting the world.

The emergence of cognitive linguistics is closely linked to the development of cognitive sciences in the second half of the twentieth century. These sciences—spanning psychology, philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, artificial intelligence, and neuroscience—investigate the nature of human knowledge and its organization in the mind.

According to N.N. Boldyrev, one of the primary tasks of cognitive linguistics is to identify knowledge structures through language and explain their mechanisms of linguistic representation. This distinguishes cognitive linguistics from structural linguistics, where emphasis is placed on formal relationships between linguistic units, whereas cognitive linguistics focuses on their connection with mental knowledge systems.

Table 1. Differences between “Notion” and “Concept”

Criterion	Notion	Concept
Content scope	Expresses logical-definitional features	Encompasses knowledge, imagery, evaluation, experience and cultural content.
Mode of expression	Mainly explained through definition and clarification	Expressed through linguistic units, text, imagery, association and values.
Field of study	Studied within logic, semantics and terminology	Analyzed within cognitive linguistics, linguocultural studies and psycholinguistics.
Cultural connection	Cultural component is not always central.	Directly connected with national thinking, traditions and values.
The term concept originates from the Latin <i>conceptus</i>, meaning “notion,” “idea,” or “mental representation.” However, in modern linguistics, it is not identical to a simple notion. While a notion reflects logical and definitional content, a concept is broader—it includes not only knowledge about an object or phenomenon but also emotional attitudes, evaluations, imagery, cultural experience, and national values. For example, the word “happiness” may lexically denote a state of joy or satisfaction. However, the concept of happiness varies across cultures. In Uzbek linguoculture, it is often associated with family, children, health, peace, kindness, social harmony, honest work, and respect within society. Scholars note that concepts consist of several components: - Semantic component (lexical meaning and relations), - Figurative component (mental images and associations), - Evaluative component (positive, negative, or neutral attitudes), - Linguocultural component (cultural values and traditions).		

For instance, the concept of “homeland” encompasses not only a geographical territory but also emotional and cultural meanings such as ancestral heritage, patriotism, loyalty, responsibility, and independence.

Results and Discussion

The analysis shows that a concept in cognitive linguistics is not merely a lexical unit but a complex mental-linguistic phenomenon integrating knowledge, emotions, cultural values, and evaluations. It serves as a key unit linking language and thought.

The findings indicate that:

Concepts reveal the relationship between language and cognition.

They possess national and cultural specificity.

Conceptual analysis requires examining multiple components simultaneously.

Research on concepts in Uzbek linguistics is still developing and requires further exploration.

Conclusion

Cognitive linguistics is a modern field that studies language in relation to human cognition, perception, and knowledge systems. Within this framework, language is viewed as the expression of conceptual structures in the human mind. The concept is a central category, encompassing knowledge, experience, imagery, evaluation, and cultural values.

The study confirms that a concept has a broader scope than a simple notion. While a notion primarily reflects logical characteristics, a concept also includes emotional attitudes, cultural experience, and national worldview. Therefore, analyzing concepts requires going beyond dictionary meanings to examine their figurative, evaluative, and cultural dimensions.

Research on concepts in Uzbek linguistics plays an important role in uncovering national mentality, cultural values, and the deeper semantic layers of language.

Future studies should focus on analyzing key concepts such as “happiness,” “homeland,” “mother,” “kindness,” “patience,” “honesty,” and “honor” based on literary texts, folklore, phraseology, and contemporary discourse.

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