

THEORY OF CONCEPT IN COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

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Annotation. *This article deals with the investigation of concept in Modern Linguistics which discusses theory of concept in Cognitive linguistics. In addition, it gives some information about basic characteristics and general definitions of the concept.*

Key words: *concept, semantics, grammar, conceptual structure, conceptualization, linguistic cognition, contextual realization.*

Having analyzed a great number of researches works we have found out that Cognitive linguistics is one of the most interesting and disputable branches of linguistics that studies mental processes and their linguistic reflection in people's daily life. This science pays its prime attention to the language as a communicative unit which differs not only from the point of view of the nations and cultures, but also from one person to another. Every human being has its own communicative aim and language pragmatic peculiarities, which reflect his picture of the world that comes from the process of syntheses of everything around him in his mind. Our research work is devoted to the analysis of the one of the aspects of the study in cognitive linguistics- concept. In order to make the notion of cognitive linguistics more clearly, we want to mention some additional information taken from the internet resources that help us to define this branch of the linguistic science:

“Cognitive linguistics is a reaction of modern linguists to truth-conditional (objectivist) semantics and generative grammar, which were the dominant approaches to the study of language meaning and grammatical forms since the middle of the last century. Its major assumptions are that language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty but an integral part of human cognition and that linguistic knowledge of meaning and form is basically conceptual structure.

Language is a distinct human cognitive ability but the cognitive processes responsible for the storage and retrieval of linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge are basically the same. As a consequence, much cognitive linguistic research has focused on describing how concepts are organized (frames, domains, profiles and etc) and the range of conceptualization or construal operations as instances of more general

cognitive processes such as attention/ salience, comparison, perspective, Gestalt."

Cognitive linguistics encompasses a number of broadly compatible theoretical approaches to linguistic meaning and structure that share a common basis: the idea that language is an integral part of cognition and it reflects the interaction of cultural, psychological, and communicative factors which can only be understood in the context of the realistic view of conceptualization and mental processing.

The main assumption of cognitive linguistics is that linguistic cognition is an inextricable phenomenon of overall human cognition and as such we expect patterns and structures of cognition observed by psychologists, neurobiologists and the like to be reflected in language.²⁵ (source: www.eolss.net)

For cognitive linguistics meaning is the central issue, the meaning of words as well as the meaning of sentences; in other words the meaning of any linguistic expression no matter how small or big it is.²⁶ That is why, first of all, we need to clarify the meaning of a term "concept".

As we mentioned before, the basic study of the cognitive linguistics is attached to the analysis of mental processes, to the meaning of the word and to the connection of it in the linguo-culturological, linguo-pragmatic, and linguo-didactic features of the language in people's communication.

"The term "concept" is widely used in various scientific disciplines. Often the "concept" is used as a synonym for "notion", although the term "notion" is used in logic and philosophy, and "concept", as the term of mathematical logic, as entrenched in the science of culture, cultural studies."²⁷

This definition to the concept is given in the famous site- Wikipedia. For example in the works of E.S. Kubryakova is written that the term "concept" covers the domains of several research directions, define and refine boundaries of the theory, they form the basic postulates and categories: in cognitive psychology and cognitive linguistics concerned with thinking and learning, storage and processing of information²⁸, as well as in linguistics.(Kubryakova E.S. 1996, p.58)

However, mental objects, which sends the name of the "concept" does not have a common specific birth sign (belonging to the area an ideal - it is a property of the same values and meanings, ideas and thoughts, concepts and ideas, images and gestalt, etc.) and are rather the relationship of

²⁵ www.eolss.net

²⁶ Ungerer F and Schmid H., An introduction to cognitive linguistics.Pearson education limited:1996

²⁷ www.wikipedia.com

²⁸ Кубрякова Е.С., Демьянков В.З., Лузина Л.Г., Панкрац Ю.Г. Краткий словарь когнитивных терминов – М.: 1996. –С.58

"family resemblance", this relationship nominees named "game" where "we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and intersecting".²⁹

Word **conceptus** - medieval education, derivative (communion) of the verb concipere - con-capere "collect," "grasping," "light," "conceive", "beget." In classical Latin conceptus recorded only in the sense of the "pond", "inflammation", "Conception" and "fetus" (the fetus).

The word "concept" along with its producing has become a verb, of course, all the Romance languages and in English (Fr. cocept-concevoir, ital. concetto-concepire, span. concepto-concebir, port. conceito-conceber, Eng. concept-conceive), in the Russian language as it was also a trace semantics, i.e. its "inner form" has been reproduced by the word "понятие".³⁰ (Stepanov Yu.S. 1997,p.794)

In a synonymous pair the "concept –notion", the term "concept" isn't given in most of the Russian dictionaries. It's given only in the "Great Dictionary of Russian language"³¹.

The word "concept" and its terminological equivalents "lingvokulturema",³² "mythologema",³³ "logoepistema"³⁴ were extensively used in the Russian linguistic literature since early 90s.

Z.D. Popova, I.A. Sternin define the concept as a "global mental unit, which is a quantum of structured knowledge, the ideal essence, which is formed in the mind of man to his immediate operations with objects from his objective activity of human mental operations with the other, already existing concepts in his mind."

From the cultural aspect "concept" – is "the basic unit of culture in the mental world of man, this definition is given in the dictionary of the Russian culture by Yu.S.Stepanov."³⁵

Concepts, that arise in the minds of men are not based only on the meanings of words taken from dictionaries, but on the basis of individual, national, cultural and historical experience, and the richer the experience, the wider the borders of the concept, the greater the opportunity for the emergence of the emotional aura of the word, which is reflected in all

²⁹ Витгенштейн Л. Философские работы. Ч 1 – М, Гнозис, 1994. – С.11

³⁰ Степанов Ю.С. Константы. Словарь русской культуры. Опыт исследования – М, 1997. – 794 с.

³¹ Большой толковый словарь русского языка (БТСРЯ). М.: 1998 – С.454

³² Воробьев В.В. Лингвокультурология (теория и методы). М. 1997 – С. 44-56

³³ Базылев В. Н. Мифологема скуки в русской культуре // RES LINGUISTICA. 2000.-С. 130-134

³⁴ Верещагин Е.М., Костомаров В. Г. В поисках новых путей развития лингвострановедения: концепция речеповеденческих тактик, М. 1999. – С.70

³⁵ Степанов Ю.С. Константы: Словарь русской культуры – М.: Академический проект, 2001.- 820 с

aspects of the concept.³⁶ Here, we completely agree with the author Likhachyov.

According to Y.S. Stepanova's research work, we can define the concept - as "a bunch of culture in human consciousness, in a culture which is part of the mental world of man, when a person enters a culture, in some cases he affects it".³⁷

Concepts are not only conceived, they are experienced. They are the subject of emotions, likes and dislikes, and sometimes clashes.

As has already been mentioned, the concept - is wider than the concept "category". In the dictionary meanings of "concept" and "notion" - are close to each other. In English dictionaries "concept" - is defined as "idea behind the whole class of things," "conventional wisdom, the point of view" (general notion).

Also "concept" is defined as "someone's idea of how something is, or should be done".³⁸ There is an unexpected indication of a thinking person, leader, owner of certain ideas and points of view.

The concept is close to the mental world of man, to the culture, history, and has a specific character. The "concept" is semantically deeper and richer than notion. "The concepts are a collective heritage in the minds of the people, their spiritual culture. It is the custodian of the collective consciousness of the constants, that is, concepts that exist permanently or for a very long time".³⁹ (Stepanov Yu.S. 1997, p.794)

The concept extends the meaning of the word, leaving space for guessing, creating an aura of emotional words. One of the most significant differences related to the concept and the concept with their internal content were exposed by Yu.S. Stepanov in his work : "Constants :dictionary of the Russian culture", and there was said that the internal content of the word - it is its semantic connotations, plus, it is the totality of the lexical-semantic variants, plus expressive (emotional) stylistic coloring, estimation, etc. The inner content of the concept -is a kind of set of meanings, an organization that differs significantly from structuring the lexical and semantic variants of the word.⁴⁰ (Stepanov Yu.S. 1997, p.794)

Concepts are hierarchical and their relationships form a system "image of the world", "picture of the world." Perhaps the most successful terms that express concepts and communication system as cognitive structures, and

³⁶ Лихачёв Д.С. Концептосхема русского языка // Изв. АН СССР. Сер. лит. и яз. Т. 52, № 1, 1993. – С.144

³⁷ Степанов Ю.С. Константы: Словарь русской культуры – М.: Академический проект, 2001.- 820 с.

³⁸ Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1995 (<http://www.ldoceonline.com/>)

³⁹ Степанов Ю.С. Константы. Словарь русской культуры. Опыт исследования – М, 1997. – 794 с.

⁴⁰ Степанов Ю.С. Константы. Словарь русской культуры. Опыт исследования – М, 1997. – 794 с.

how language incarnations, are the terms "linguo-rithorical picture of the world" and "linguistic image of the world", as stated, that "the structure and system of linguo-rithorical picture of the world form the cultural concepts".

Infinity of the concept is defined of its existence as a cultural phenomenon: it is always there, making the movement from the center to the periphery and from periphery to the center, its substantive content is also limitless.

Eventfulness of the concept is defined by its function in the human mind, its participation in the thinking process. Concept and verbal, contextual realization of being in a relationship similar to the phoneme relations and sound, morpheme and morph. Language Concept is abstract, immaterial, while the speech, contextual realization are material and concrete.

The concept can be considered as the sum of its "external" and internal categorical relatedness, semantic structure, which has a strict logical organization. At the heart of the concept is original, prototypical model of the basic meaning of the word (i.e., an invariant of all the meanings of the word). In this regard, we can speak of the central and peripheral zones of the concept. The latter is capable of divergence, i.e., causing removal of new derivatives of the central values.

The concept plays the role of mediator between culture and person, realized in the language being the medium in which there is a conceptual representation of the general cultural concepts, such as 'being', 'reality', 'consciousness', 'knowledge', 'reason' " faith, "" experience, "the" thing "," reality "," activity ", etc.

When considering the language as a medium of representation of meaning, it is appropriate to correct the statement of Yu.S.Stepanov: "concept – is the meaning of the word" statement: the concept –is a meaning, embodied in the word by the subject of the word, based on existing concepts of the culture systems. ⁴¹

Concepts are of central importance to an overall theory of cognition and the mind. Our thoughts, especially those that express or involve propositions are analyzed and distinguished from one another by appeal to various facts involving concepts and our grasp of them. Similarly, our linguistic utterances that express propositions also express concepts, since concepts are normally thought to be closely related to, or even identified with, the meanings of entities like predicates, adjectives, and the like. Our

⁴¹ Степанов Ю.С. Константы. Словарь русской культуры. Опыт исследования – М, 1997. – 794 с.

understanding and interaction with the world also involves concepts and our grasp of them.⁴² (source: www.iep.utm.edu)

Our understanding that a given thing is a member of a given category is at least partly in virtue of our grasp of concepts, and so are our acts of categorizing.

Such capacities involve our knowledge in an essential way, and thus such philosophical issues regarding our epistemic capacities are tied to issues about concepts and their nature. There may be some features and capacities of the mind that do not involve concepts, but certainly the vast number of them do, and thus the task of identifying the correct general theory of concepts is significant to the philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, cognitive science, and psychology.

The issue of the nature of concepts is important in philosophy generally, but most perspicuously in philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. Most generally, concepts are thought to be among those things that count as semantic values or meanings (along with propositions). There is also reason to think that concepts are universals (along with properties, relations, etc.), and what general theory of universals applies to concepts is thus a significant issue with respect to the nature of concepts.

Whether concepts are mind-dependent or mind-independent is another such issue. Finally, concepts tend to be construed as the targets of analysis. If one then treats analysis as classical analysis, and holds that all complex concepts have classical analyses, then one accepts the classical view. Other views of concepts might accept the thesis that concepts are targets of analysis, but differ from the classical view over the sort of analysis that all complex concepts have.⁴³ (source: <http://www.iep.utm.edu>)

As semantic values, concepts are the intensions or meanings of sub-sentential verbal expressions such as predicates, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. Just as the sentence "The sun is a star" expresses the proposition that the sun is a star, the predicate "is a star" expresses the concept of being a star (or [star], to introduce notation to be used in what follows). Further, just as the English sentence "Snow is white" expresses the proposition that snow is white, and so does the German sentence "Schnee ist Weiss," the predicates "is white" in English and "ist Weiss" in German both express the same concept, the concept of being white (or [white]).

⁴² <http://www.iep.utm.edu/conc-cl/>

⁴³ <http://www.iep.utm.edu/conc-cl/>

The intension or meaning of a sentence is a proposition. The intensions or meanings of many sub-sentential entities are concepts.⁴⁴

Concepts are also generally thought to be universals. The reasons for this are threefold: A given concept is expressible using distinct verbal expressions. This can occur in several different ways. My uttering “Snow is white” and your uttering “Snow is white” are distinct utterances, and their predicates are distinct expressions of the same concept [white]. My uttering “Snow is white” and your uttering “Schnee ist Weiss” are distinct sentences with their respective predicates expressing the same concept ([white], again). Even within the same language, my uttering “Grisham is the author of *The Firm*” and your uttering “Grisham is *The Firm*’s author” are distinct sentences with distinct predicates, yet their respective predicates express the same concept (the concept [the author of *The Firm*], in this case).

Second, different agents can possess, grasp, or understand the same concept, though such possession might come in degrees. Most English speakers possess the concept [white], and while many possess [neutrino], not many possess that concept to such a degree that one knows a great deal about what neutrinos themselves are.

Finally, concepts typically have multiple exemplifications or instantiations.

Many distinct things are white, and thus there are many exemplifications or instances of the concept [white]. There are many stars and many neutrinos, and thus there are many instances of [star] and [neutrino]. Moreover, distinct concepts can have the very same instances. The concepts [renate] and [cardiate] have all the same actual instances, as far as we know, and so does [human] and [rational animal]. Distinct concepts can also have necessarily all of the same instances: For instance, the concepts [triangular figure] and [trilateral figure] must have the same instances, yet the predicates “is a triangular figure” and “is a trilateral figure” seem to have different meanings.⁴⁵ (source: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/conc-cl/>)

As universals, concepts may be treated under any of the traditional accounts of universals in general. Realism about concepts (considered as universals) is the view that concepts are distinct from their instances, and nominalism is the view that concepts are nothing over and above, or distinct from, their instances. *Ante rem* realism (or Platonism) about concepts is the view that concepts are ontologically prior to their instances—that is,

⁴⁴ Harman, Gilbert. 1999. “Doubts About Conceptual Analysis”

⁴⁵ <http://www.iep.utm.edu/conc-cl/>

concepts exist whether they have instances or not. *In re* realism about concepts is the view that concepts are in some sense “in” their instances, and thus are not ontologically prior to their instances.

Conceptualism with respect to concepts holds that concepts are mental entities, being either immanent in the mind itself as a sort of idea, as constituents of complete thoughts, or somehow dependent on the mind for their existence (perhaps by being possessed by an agent or by being possessable by an agent).

Conceptualist views also include imagism, the view (dating from Locke and others) that concepts are a sort of mental image. Finally, nominalist views of concepts might identify concepts with classes or sets of particular things (with the concept [star] being identified with the set of all stars, or perhaps the set of all possible stars). Linguistic nominalism identifies concepts with the linguistic expressions used to express them (with [star] being identified with the predicate “is a star,” perhaps). Type linguistic nominalism identifies concepts with types of verbal expressions (with [star] identified with the type of verbal expression exemplified by the predicate “is a star”).⁴⁶ (source: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/conc-cl/>)

Though we can conclude our part 1.1 by saying that concepts are valuable for people at all points. Without those people couldn't communicate at all, because concepts have communicative and semantic importance, they include cultural and pragmatic features. They are universal for all people. They exist, no matter we know about them or not yet. Concepts come from the imagination and the notion, and then, after the concept comes the meaning. This is the full picture of our perception of the world and communicative feature.

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⁴⁶ <http://www.iep.utm.edu/conc-cl/>

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