

CONCEPT AS A THE MAIN RESEARCH OBJECT OF COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

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Abstract : The article considers the notion of the concept in its relation to the meaning of the word. Similarities and differences between these two constructs are identified. The dual nature of the concept is discussed. In this article defines cognitive approach, concept and conceptualization. This article determines the basic notion of Cognitive Linguistics. This article dwells upon the basic unit of cognitive linguistics, which is a concept. Firstly, we provide an overview of major scientific works written by foreign linguists who pay attention to special aspects and lines of research. Secondly, we analyse conclusions on modern problems in linguistics that are drawn in cognitological studies conducted since the end of the 20th century. We also touch upon the course and practice of cognitive linguistics while considering the connection between cognition and language.

Keywords: cognition, concept, Cognitive Linguistics, language, Linguoculturology, Linguoconceptology.

Introduction

The concept is the category of thinking, it is an aspect of thought. Concept also can be termed as an abstract idea, a unit of thought, associated with a corresponding representation in language. Concepts exist in the mind as abstract entities independent of terms used to express them.

The notion of “concept” is considered to be one of the main notions of Cognitive Linguistics, Linguoculturology, Linguoconceptology and other linguistic disciplines of the anthropocentric paradigm. Yet it remains one of the most controversial issues in Cognitive Linguistics. First and foremost, the question that causes a good deal of confusion for those involved in the field is the understanding of what concept really is. There exist many definitions presented in the works by foreign and Russian scientists such as M. Heidegger, G. Lakoff, G. Picht, G.V. Alefirenko, N.D. Aruryunova, S.A. Askoldov, A.P. Babushkin, G.I. Berestenev, E.

S. Kubryakova, D.S Likhachev et al, who outline both differences and some common traits of this notion[1].

Methodology

Cognitive linguistics is a scientific sphere that studies the knowledge about the world formed in the human mind, its inner structures, representative methods and regularities. Cognitive linguistics also aims at modeling the world and the structure of linguistic cognition. The world representation is formed in one's mind through feelings (tactile, visual, taste-bud) on the level of notion (signs, worldview) or thoughts organisation. When these matters are being formed in one's mind, they represent the known information about the world.

Today the category of concept appears in the studies of philosophers, logicians and Psychologists. D.S. Likhachov used this term to refer to the generalized cognitive unit, which reflects and interprets the phenomena of reality, depending on

education, personal experience, professional and social experience of a native speaker

[2]. Yu.S. Stepanov considers that a concept is the "content of the notion",

A.P. Babushkin believes the concept as a discrete mental unit which reflects the object

of real or imaginary world and is kept in the national memory of native speakers in the

verbalized form [3]. In the Brief Dictionary of Cognitive Terms the concepts are determined

as "operational meaningful unit of memory, conceptual system, brain language, and the whole picture of the world reflected in the human mind" [3, p. 90].

In common usage the term mainly indicates "idea" or "notion". In a narrower sense it is an

abstract idea , sometimes defined as a "unit of knowledge". The concept has an only cognitive

status and does not exist outside mind.

The complication of the concept is a two-way connection between language and mind. Mental categories are represented through linguistic categories, and at the same

time are defined by them; in other words, the culture defines the concept (i.e. the

concept is a mental projection of the elements of the culture). The relationships between the phenomena of “language” and “culture” are complicated, as the language is both the part of the culture and an external factor to the culture; language and speech are the areas where the concept is “objectified”.

Results

A concept is a unit that preserves and proceeds information about reality. It is an ethno cultural group of words and a basic mental phenomenon that expresses the natives’ cognitive consciousness. A concept is a small unit of an ideal consciousness and experience of native speakers. Nowadays, cognitive approach, concept and conceptualization have become traditional, and in the context of its priorities, the language has not already considered as something that exists “in itself and for itself”. Today, the term “concept” has gained great popularity in science. The image of concept is as bipartite unity of knowledge, on the one hand is facing the language, the other hand is to the mental world of man [4]. Considering the concepts “a bunch of culture in human consciousness”, the researchers N.D.Arutiunova, Y.S.Stepanov, A.D.Shmelev, E.S.Yakovlev show the basic concepts that exists in each and actual for every person, however, they are not only universal, but also are nationally specific.

In spite of the fact that the present state of linguoculturology research is characterized by a lack of general methodological foundations and common conceptual approaches; additionally there is no clear theoretical basis, commonly accepted terminology, fundamental assumptions, which would allow representatives of different directions and trends achieve mutual understanding.

Discussion

It is especially important to reveal the relation between the concept and the meaning of the word as it affects both the determination of the subject of cognitive linguistics and the development of methods for analyzing the semantics of the language.

On the one hand, the concept and the meaning of the word share some similarities. Human mind, localized in the brain reflects the objective and subjective reality. Both

the concept and the meaning are the reflection of reality (objective and subjective). They have cognitive nature and present the result of the reflection and cognition of reality by the human mind. In other words, the content of the concept reflects certain

aspects of the phenomena of reality, and so does the meaning of the word, which has a cognitive nature.

On the other hand, they have certain differences. The meaning and the concept are the products of the different levels. We can oppose the concepts and the meanings as

mental units, which belong to the cognitive and linguistic human consciousness respectively. The concept is a product of cognitive human consciousness, while the meaning is the product of linguistic consciousness.

The meaning in relation to the concept appears as a part of its content, which is relevant to this linguocultural community. Many cognitive linguists agree that components of lexical meaning reflect only significant conceptual features, but not all

of them. The structure of the concept is much more complicated and more varied than

the lexical meaning of the words.

The meaning conveys certain cognitive features and components that make up the concept, but it is always only part of the semantic content of the concept. For the explication of the content of the concept numerous lexical items as well as experimental

studies to complement the results of linguistic analysis are required. Thus, the meaning

and the concept are correlated as communicatively relevant part and a mental whole.

The term “concept” came into linguistic usage from logic, regarded as a synonym of the term “notion”. In modern logic “concept” is defined as “an integral complex of the object’s qualities”.

Another problem of concept typology is one of the theoretical problems of cognitive linguistics.

Let’s consider the existing typology done from the cognitive point of view. One of the first classification proposed by A.P.Babushkin(2006) was elaborated according to the form of expression and representation in vocabulary. He distinguishes the following types:

- 1) Lexical concepts – represented by lexical words:
wedding, happy, knowledge, mind
- 2) Phraseological concepts – phraseological units that represent one concept:
Guardian angel, Achilles heel, golden calf
- 3) Concrete concepts, denoting concrete objects:
stone, mother, book, girl, rabbit, apricot
- 4) Abstract concepts represented by abstract notions: mind, happiness, justice, knowledge.

Within this classification the scholar also distinguishes the following subtypes of concepts:

- A) Mental image: animal-cat, fruit-apple, vegetable-carrot
- B) Schemas detailed images: lion- the king of forest
- C) Frames associations which relate elements, situation from the human experience: wedding, shopping, walking, skating
- D) Insights knowledge about specific functions of objects:
book, notebook, mobile phone, guitar, television, curtain
- E) Scenario knowledge about events in dynamics:
accident, trip, travelling, fight, examination
- F) Kaleidoscopic concepts scenario related to emotions and feelings:
happiness, fear, love, hate

So, there are a lot of approaches to the problem of concept typology. The scholars provide a number of classifications based on different criteria. It should be stressed that concept typology is not a simple matter and any discussion of it is bound to reflect more than one angle of vision.

Let's look at some important concepts in cognitive linguistics.

Mind is the ability of a person to act purposefully within this connection, which leads to knowledge, understanding and allows to understand the universal relationship of values, things and events. This is the mechanism of formation of knowledge, which is the purposeful realization of knowledge in the process of interaction of a particular organism with environment.

Knowledge is the ability to have experience and understanding that is both subjectively and objectively correct, and based on objective and subjective aspects it is possible to think and draw conclusions that provide purposeful behavior. Knowledge is a dynamic functional structure that shapes the world style and is the product of the processing of cerebral and non-cerebral experiences.

The cognitive basis is the sum of the necessary knowledge that all linguists in a given

linguocultural society should possess. The cognitive base is formed through cognitive structures, while cognitive structures in turn shape our competence and form its basis. The cognitive base performs unifying and differentiating functions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper presents the following essential characteristics of the concept: being central part of Cognitive Linguistics. The concept is the sense of emotional and cultural marking, the mental essence responsible for shaping, processing, storage and transfer of knowledge. Therefore, the concept contains emotional, expressive, evaluative components. The concept has nation-specific features, it is the main part of culture, presumably, it is structured. The concept can be various type and different complexity, it has a soft structure.

The concept codified in the consciousness both by a notion and an individual sensual image. Depending on the level of understanding of these essences, the conceptual focus can be manifested by notion or a basic idea which are based on the most stable central substantial components that cover the main essence of the concept content.

The theory and description of concepts must separate the contents and the structure of a concept. The concept structure includes the basic structural components of various cognitive nature which form the concept – the sensual image, the informational and interpretational fields.

The basic category of cognitive linguistics (a concept) is a linguistic phenomenon arising from the combination of logical models that systematise, regulate and classify the cluster-organized knowledge of some ethnos, and show the integrity of language patterns in synonymous, associative, binary and other relations. A concept is the main object of cognitive linguistics.

The conceptual space of any given language defines the purview, view of life and consciousness of the corresponding ethnos and its distinctive members. Therefore, a semasiological category should be considered from a theoretical-cognitive viewpoint. The study of a concept enriches the range of meanings and provides an opportunity to analyse this phenomenon from an anthropocentric point of view. Anthropocentric approach in linguistics displays the category of meaning in a new perspective.

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