

Conceptual World Picture in the Danubian Communities' Language Consciousness

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Abstract: The article is focused on integral research of linguacognitive structure of concepts reflected in linguistic consciousness of native speakers of the Danubian communities. The stages and ways of concepts' studying; the structure of concept and its determinations existing in modern science are analysed, as well as the phenomenon "concept" is separated from contiguous notions and terminological synonyms. The field approach is grounded to the analysis of concepts; the principles of conceptual analysis are foreshortened in a semantic field. Based on the forming meanings the content of concepts is determined. The sense filling of the concepts is exposed in the nuclear planes and on the peripheral areas within the limits of the semantic fields. The typical and nationally-specific semantic constituents of explored concepts of the noted ethnic associations are found out.

Keywords: language consciousness; language mapping of the world; concept; semantic field; microfield; constituent

1. Problem Statement

Modern cognitive linguistics has been established as a science arisen at the intersection of cognitology (the science of knowledge), cognitive psychology (psychology of cognition), psycholinguistics and linguistics, and studies the mechanisms of language knowledge and the mechanisms of knowledge representation in a language (Кронгауз, 2001, p. 400; Шулежкова, 2004, p. 400).

The objectives of cognitive linguistics should be defined as an attempt to understand the following (Маслова, 2004, p. 256).

1. The role of language in the processes of cognition and understanding of the world.
2. Linguistic knowledge in the processes of receiving, processing and transmitting information about the world.

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3. Processes of conceptualization and categorization of knowledge, description of means and methods of linguistic categorization and conceptualization of culture constants.
4. Description of the system of universal concepts that organize the concept sphere and are the main rubrics for its division.
5. The problem of the linguistic picture of the world.

In this regard, the modern stage of the study of linguistic data is characterized by a new level of comprehension of the problems of verbal realization of national pictures of the world, combining cognitive and linguoculturological paradigms on a single methodological basis, developed in line with the anthropological direction of scientific knowledge. The unit for describing the picture of the world is a concept.

2. Critical Overview

In modern science there are three main approaches to concept analysis. These include: 1) system-linguistic, which is based on the comprehension of the concept in the aggregate of its linguistic parameters in the system of axes of syntagmatics, paradigmatics and associative links, which together allows to identify typical propositions, in the center of which the given concept is located. [3]; 2) denotative, in the focus of which there is the description of the extra-linguistic correlate of a proposition (Кошелев, 2001, pp. 119-124), and 3) significative, within which this phenomenon is comprehended in a comparative aspect through the analysis of its significative field, or through a simplified grid of universals of binary, ternary, quaternary and similar systems (Wierzbicka, 1991, p. 412), or in a complex of encyclopedic and linguistic components (Воркачев, 2002, p. 142), or in the unity of profane, secularized and mythopoetic meanings (Панова, 2000).

The existing approaches to understanding a concept in linguistics are reduced to linguo-cognitive and linguocultural understanding of these phenomena.

Linguo-cognitive researches have a typological orientation and are focused on identifying general patterns in the formation of mental representations. In tendency, they are oriented semasiologically: from meaning (concept) to language (means of verbalization) (Воркачев, 2002, p. 142).

The object of linguoculturological researches is the relationship between language and culture, manifested in the ways of linguistic expression of ethnic mentality. The

interest of scientists here is concentrated on the study of the specific character of the composition of mental units and is aimed at the accumulative and systematizing description of the distinctive semantic features of definite cultural concepts. Linguocultural studies are oriented rather onomasiologically and go from the name of the concept to the set of meanings nominated by it (Воркачев, 2002, p. 44-45).

3. Purpose of Investigation

The purpose of the article is to define the phenomenon “concept” and to separate it from contiguous notions and terminological synonyms, as well as to clarify linguacognitive structure of concepts reflected in linguistic consciousness of native speakers of the Danubian communities.

4. Research Course

Concept (in cognitive linguistics) is a term used to explain units of mental or psychic resources of our consciousness and that information structure which reflects human knowledge and experience; an operational content unit of memory, mental lexicon, conceptual system and language of the brain (*lingua mentalis*), the whole picture of the world reflected in the human psyche.

The study of the nature of concept in cognitive linguistics is of paramount importance. Any attempt to comprehend its essence leads to the realization of the fact of the existence of a number of related concepts and terms, which can be represented in the form of a quadriad: key word of culture – concept – notion – meaning. The problem of their differentiation is highly controversial in modern theoretical linguistics.

In the works of A. Wierzbicka, the concept is often used as a synonym for the term “key word of culture,” but we believe that these are different phenomena. The main thing that separates them is that the concept arises as a nuclear structure, comparable to the internal form of the word, and then “overgrows” with new meanings. A limited number of concepts with small variations function in all cultures, since they, changing their relevance at different stages of the development of the culture of society, do not disappear.

Key words are specific to each national culture. They have the following features: 1) fame and representation in native speakers’ minds; 2) high sense loading; 3) the

ability to evoke cultural associations among native speakers of a given language; 4) the ability to be used figuratively in speech; 5) high frequency.

The key word of culture does not lock senses as a concept, does not entail a trail of associations behind a conceptual meaning. A keyword has a stable expression plan, in contrast to a concept, the verbalization of which requires a high degree of variability.

The concept requires a higher level of abstraction; this is a kind of “idea”, “notion”. However, the correlation of a concept with a notion needs the following clarification: in fact, these terms are very close, but if we try to differentiate them in some way, then we should claim that the basis of a concept is logical, rational, and the basis of a notion is sublogical. At the same time, the content of a concept includes the content of a naive concept, but is not exhausted by it, since it encompasses the entire multitude of pragmatic elements of a name, manifested in its compatibility. And the compatibility of a name reflects both the logical and rational connections of its designatum (denotation) with others, and illogical, irrational, reflecting the emotional and evaluative perception of the world by a human being.

If notions are the collections of cognized and necessary features of certain objects, then concepts are not any notions, but only the most complex and important of them, without which it is difficult to imagine a culture. These are mental national-specific formations, the content plan of which is all the aggregates of knowledge about these objects (essential and insignificant indications), and the expression plan is the aggregate of linguistic means (lexical, phraseological, paremiological, etc.).

Considering the terms “concept” and “meaning”, it should be emphasized that they are also not in one-to-one correspondence. These linguistic phenomena are considered in different systems: meaning – in the language system, notion – in the system of logical relations and forms, concept is realized in its conceptual meanings.

A concept does not arise directly from the meaning of a word, but it is the result of a collision of a dictionary meaning of a word with a personal and national individual experience. A word with its meaning always expresses only a part of the concept. In our research, the point of view is adopted, according to which meanings construct a concept, closing inside and accumulating in its layers in the process of development.

Knowledge of various degrees of abstraction and formats can be behind the concept: 1) a concrete-sensual image; 2) representation (mental picture as a generalized sensory image); 3) scheme – a mental sample of an object or phenomenon, which has a spatial-contour character; 4) notion – a concept containing the most general,

essential features of an object or phenomenon, its objective, logically constructed characteristics (a notion is a concept devoid of secondary features from the standpoint of logical analysis); 5) prototype – a categorical concept that gives an idea of a typical member of a certain category; 6) a propositional structure, or proposition – a model of a certain area of experience, in which elements (arguments and connections between them) are isolated, their characteristics are given; it is a generalized logical model of relationships, reflected in deep grammar; 7) frame – a voluminous multicomponent concept, which is a “package” of information, knowledge of a stereotypical situation, a frame is a two-level structure consisting of vertex nodes that contain constant data for a specific situation, and terminal nodes, or slots filled with data from a specific situations; 8) scenarios, or scripts – dynamically presented frames, a sequence of stages, episodes that unfold in time; 9) gestalt – a conceptual structure, a holistic image that combines sensual and rational components in their unity, as a result of undivided perception of the situation, the highest level of abstraction: non-discrete, unstructured knowledge (Болдырев, 2000, p. 130).

Linguocognitive and linguocultural approaches to understanding concept, according to the point of view of V.I. Karasik are not considered mutually exclusive: concept as a mental formation in the consciousness of the individual is an outlet to the conceptual sphere of society, i.e. to culture, and the concept as a unit of culture is the fixation of collective experience, which becomes the property of the individual. These approaches differ in vectors in relation to the subject: the linguo-cognitive concept represents the direction from individual consciousness to culture, and the linguocultural concept is the direction from culture to individual consciousness (Карасик, 2004, p. 390).

The concept is related to the word, but it is more specific both in terms of expression (which is practically static) and in terms of content. The word has grammatical categories that do not apply to the concept. Being fixed in the dictionary, the word is enclosed within the framework of its meaning, which is clearly defined. When it comes to a synonym, this is a different word, though close in meaning.

Each linguistic unit uniquely combines the individual properties of the object seen by a person, which can be presented as a result of conceptualization carried out by the subject in the process of learning about reality. Consequently, the word is rooted in knowledge about reality and reflects them in various ways. The meaning of the word is fully, in fact, inexhaustible, since the actual meaning of each word is determined, in the final analysis, by all the wealth of moments existing in the mind

that relate to what is expressed by this word. It rests on the understanding of the world and on the internal structure of the general. It follows that the meaning of the word expressing the concept is not equal to the semantic content of the concept, which is much wider due to the layered structure of the concept, capable of absorbing the cultural experience of the people in general and the individual in particular. That is why cognitologists emphasize the importance of knowing the deep meaning, which is potentially present in the meaning as an element of its content, deploying in the semantic network of the cultural content of the concept.

Concepts are heterogeneous in terms of naming objects. On the one hand, we can single out the abstract concepts *life, liberty, security, law, sovereignty, equality, privacy, honour, freedom, worship, personality, dignity, health, well-being, education, respect, religiosity, culture, order, peace*, on the other hand, – concept-artifacts: *house, bell*, concepts-ideas about a person – *fool* and *holy fool* (=God's fool). No matter how contradictory, at first glance, the notion “subject concept” may be, we believe that it has the right to exist if in the linguistic consciousness a certain object is associated with culturally significant semantic series. In our understanding, the conceptual picture of the world should initially be formed by “subject” concepts. They are the most descriptive, specific, and can be easily fixed and formalized. It is the process of fixing and forming a “subject” concept that provides for its detailing and structuring, taking into account specific features. To the verbalizers of the concepts, we include the etymology of words, synonymy, antonymy, the circle of compatibility, typical syntactic positions, semantic fields, assessments, figurative associations, metaphors, phraseology, language templates. In other words, the paradigmatic and syntagmatic connections of concept verbalizers create a sphere of their implementation, which is individual for each concept. Definitions, semes as part of individual sememes, statements, texts and collections of texts can also be regarded as means of linguistic representation of concepts. Based on this data, the concept can be reconstructed.

The meanings of concept are traced at the level of etymology, then at the level of its fixation in the language (the meanings in which the word denoting it is recorded in dictionaries) and, finally, since the concept is usually recreated on the trail left in classical exemplary texts, the most valuable observations can be made by studying its manifestations in the artistic speech of great writers, because their works are the living environment for the development of the concept.

Thus, concepts, acting as basic, supporting linguistic elements, unite representatives of a certain linguocultural community, providing a basis for mutual understanding

between them through a set of potential conceptual meanings, in which the spirit of the people is embodied. The designation of a concept with a word allows one to define it as a phenomenon, a means of representing a cultural theme in a text.

5. Concluding Remarks

The article is focused on integral research of linguacognitive structure of concepts reflected in linguistic consciousness of native speakers of the Danubian communities. The stages and ways of concepts' studying; the structure of concept and its determinations existing in modern science are analysed, as well as the phenomenon "concept" is separated from contiguous notions and terminological synonyms.

6. Further Research

The prospect of research is to use the results for pragmatics study for fundamental investigation of conceptual paradigms of the Ukrainian, English and French language societies.

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