

THE CONCEPT: DEFINITION, SIGNIFICANCE, AND CLASSIFICATION

Mashkhura Safarova Dilmurodovna

Department of English Practical Course, Navoi State University

E-mail: mashhura.dilmurodovna08@gmail.com

ABSTRACT This article explores the concept as a key cognitive and linguocultural unit that reflects the relationship between language, culture, and human consciousness. The concept is defined as a multi-layered mental structure that includes semantic, cultural, and emotional components. Its internal structure consists of conceptual, value-based, and figurative layers. The study emphasizes the role of concepts in expressing national mentality, categorizing human experience, and preserving cultural memory. It also outlines common classifications, such as universal vs. national and informational vs. figurative types. The findings show that concepts serve as an essential link between language and worldview and play a significant role in cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, translation studies, and intercultural communication.

Key words: concept, worldview, cognition, linguoculturology, mentality.

ANNOTATSIYA Maqolada konsept til, madaniyat va inson ongini bog'lovchi asosiy kognitiv hamda lingvomadaniy birlik sifatida yoritiladi. Konseptning semantik, qadriyaviy va obrazli qatlamlardan iborat ko'p qirrali tuzilishi qisqacha tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda konseptning milliy mentalitetni ifodalash, inson tajribasini kategoriyalash va madaniy xotirani saqlashdagi ahamiyati ko'rsatiladi. Shuningdek, konseptlarning universal va milliy hamda informatsion va

obrazli kabi asosiy tasniflari beriladi. Xulosa sifatida konseptning til va dunyoqarashni bog'lovchi muhim birlik ekani ta'kidlanadi.

Kalit soʻzlar: konsept, dunyoqarash, kognitsiya, mentalitet.

АННОТАЦИЯ В статье концепт рассматривается как основная когнитивная и лингвокультурная единица, связывающая язык, культуру и сознание. Кратко описывается его многослойная структура, включающая концептуальный, ценностный и образный уровни. Подчёркивается роль концептов в выражении национальной ментальности, категоризации опыта и сохранении культурной памяти. Приводятся основные классификации, такие как универсальные и национальные, информационные и образные типы. В заключение отмечается, что концепт является важным звеном между языком и картиной мира.

Ключевые слова: концепт, картина мира, когниция, менталитет.

The term *concept* in linguistics—particularly in cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology—is defined as a complex mental construct in human consciousness. It is an intellectual unit formed through the processes of perceiving the world, analyzing experience and knowledge, and assimilating them within social and cultural contexts. A concept is broader than the lexical meaning of a word; it encompasses emotional, evaluative, and associative elements, which makes it an essential bridge between language and culture (Stepanov, 2001).

A concept reflects a nation's worldview, mentality, and cultural values. Y. S. Stepanov describes it as a core component of culture, since it embodies a people's historical experience, traditions, and mentality (Stepanov, 2001). D. S. Likhachov defines the concept as a product that

emerges from the interaction between the lexical meaning of a word and collective national perceptions (Likhachyov, 1993). In Uzbek linguistics, N. Mahmudov and Sh. Safarov consider the concept as a mediating unit linking language with human experience and culture, emphasizing its importance in lexical analysis and linguocultural research (Mahmudov, 2008; Safarov, 2009).

The internal structure of a concept consists of three main components:

1. **Conceptual layer** – associated with language, encompassing lexical and semantic meanings.
2. **Value layer** – linked to cultural context, reflecting moral and social values.
3. **Figurative (imagistic) layer** – connected with individual perception and emotional experience (Sternin, 2000).

For example, the Uzbek concept *do'stlik* (“friendship”) not only denotes loyalty and closeness, but also embodies such cultural values as sacred brotherhood, mutual respect, and social obligation (Mahmudov, 2008).

The Significance of the Concept in Linguistics

The concept reveals the intrinsic connection between language, culture, and human cognition. Since the second half of the 20th century, with the rise of the anthropocentric paradigm, the concept has become a central object of study, as language began to be viewed as a reflection of collective worldview and social experience (Kubryakova, 1996). The significance of the concept can be seen in the following aspects:

Expression of national mentality and cultural values-

For instance, the Uzbek concept *mehnat* (“labor”) reflects such values as diligence, patience, and social responsibility (Safarov, 2009). Concepts preserve historical memory, moral norms, and cultural identity, making them vital in linguoculturology (Likhachyov, 1993).

Analysis of human cognition- concepts participate in categorizing the world, structuring meanings, and interpreting reality (Jackendoff, 2002). The concept *ezgulik* (“goodness”), for example, reveals Uzbek moral ideals and cultural-psychological perceptions (Mahmudov, 2008).

Practical Applications

Concept analysis is widely used in lexicology, semasiology, paremiology, and literary studies. Uzbek proverbs containing concepts such as *do‘stlik* or *mehr-oqibat* reflect social values (Safarov, 2009). In literature—for example, in Alisher Navoi’s works—the concepts of *sevgi* (“love”) and *sadoqat* (“devotion”) embody aesthetic and philosophical dimensions of the Uzbek worldview (Likhachyov, 1993). Concepts are also essential in language teaching, translation studies, and intercultural communication (Stepanov, 2001).

Because of their interdisciplinary nature, concepts connect linguistics with psychology, anthropology, and semiotics, uniting cognitive and cultural experience (Jackendoff, 2002).

Classification of Concepts

Due to their multi-layered nature, concepts are classified in various ways. The most common classifications include:

Type of Classification	Description	Examples
Universal vs. National	Universal – common to all humanity; National – culturally specific	Universal: <i>time</i> ; National: <i>do‘stlik</i> with Uzbek cultural sacredness (Stepanov, 2001)
Informational vs. Figurative	Informational – factual; Figurative – metaphorical, emotional	Informational: <i>mehnat</i> ; Figurative: metaphorical imagery of <i>sevgi</i> (Kubryakova, 1996)

Degree of abstraction (Babushkin)	Concrete image, schema, notion, prototype, frame, scenario, gestalt	“Meeting” as romantic vs. business (Babushkin, 1996)
Structure (Sternin)	Single-layered (simple), multi-layered (complex), segmented	Simple: <i>uy</i> (“home”); Complex: <i>ezgulik</i> (“goodness”) (Sternin, 2000)

In summary, concepts in linguistics function as a key link between language, culture, and cognition. They reveal not only semantic meanings but also collective worldview, cultural values, and historical memory. In Uzbek linguistics, concept studies contribute greatly to research on national identity and cultural heritage. Their multifaceted classification allows researchers to analyze concepts from structural, cultural, semantic, and cognitive perspectives.

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