THE LINGUO-COGNITIVE INTERPRETATION OF LANGUAGE AND THE ESSENCE OF COGNITIVE CATEGORIES

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Abstract

This article analyzes the linguo-cognitive interpretation of language within the framework of modern cognitive linguistics. It substantiates the intrinsic relationship between language, human thinking, perception, and the processes of organizing and reconstructing knowledge. The essence of major cognitive categories—such as concept, mental model, and conceptual metaphor—is explored, and the function of language not only as a communicative tool but also as a mental system that structures the conceptual world model is explained. The research summarizes the contributions of scholars such as G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, R. Langacker, R. Jackendoff, A. Goldberg, and A. Wierzbicka to the development of cognitive approaches, along with studies conducted by Russian and Uzbek linguists. The findings show that language must be interpreted in close relation to cognitive, conceptual, and cultural contexts.

Keywords: Linguo-cognitive approach; cognitive linguistics; concept; mental model; conceptual metaphor; conceptosphere; cognitive meaning; language and thinking; cognitive grammar.

Introduction

The linguo-cognitive interpretation of language is one of the most dynamically developing branches of contemporary linguistics, in which language is studied in its interrelation with human thinking, perceptual processes, and the mechanisms that organize knowledge. At the core of this approach lies the mediating role of language between the external world and the system of knowledge stored in human consciousness. Linguo-cognitive theory views language not merely as a communicative system or a collection of forms, but as a universal mechanism for encoding, structuring, and reconstructing knowledge. Linguistic units are

understood as the verbalized forms of concepts and mental models that reflect a person's understanding of the world. Thus, behind lexical units stand not only meanings, but also imagery, experience, evaluation, cultural stereotypes, and cognitive structures.

Within this interpretation, the concept is regarded as one of the fundamental notions—a complex of knowledge formed in human consciousness and its expression through language. The function of language is to externalize concepts into verbal form, and therefore the meaning of linguistic units is understood in close connection with conceptual structures. Concepts are shaped by human activity, experience, social environment, and cultural context. As a result, linguo-cognitive analysis naturally becomes an interdisciplinary field connecting linguistics with psychology, philosophy, anthropology, and cultural studies. Meaning is examined not only through structural characteristics but through cognitive processes and mental mechanisms involved in knowledge acquisition. The linguo-cognitive approach emphasizes the active role of language in shaping human perception when explaining the relationship between language and thought. Language does not merely represent reality; it organizes it, categorizes it, and constructs a conceptual map. A person perceives, evaluates, and understands the world through categories available in their language. Therefore, the meaning of linguistic units is directly linked to mental structures, and studying meaning essentially means studying human cognition. Cognitive processes such as metaphor and metonymy play a crucial role in the formation of meaning and concepts. In modern linguo-cognitive research, the theory of conceptual metaphor has become a central instrument for explaining the deep interconnection between language and thought. The cultural dimension of language also occupies a central place in linguo-cognitive studies: language is seen as a conceptual system reflecting culture. Each nation's worldview is shaped through its unique concepts and the relationships among them. Thus, analyzing the cognitive meaning of linguistic units reveals not only their semantic content, but also societal values, traditions, and mentality. Social-historical factors, cultural experience, and collective memory play significant roles in the formation of language categories. Consequently, the linguo-cognitive interpretation explains language as an active mechanism of human consciousness, as a system of knowledge, and as the

fundamental material that constructs the conceptual world model. This approach treats language not only as a communicative medium but as an integral component of cognition. As a result, the scope of linguistic inquiry expands beyond internal linguistic structure to include the cognitive and cultural essence of language. Linguo-cognitive analysis offers a fundamental paradigm for understanding the complex interaction of language, consciousness, and culture in modern humanities. The linguo-cognitive interpretation of language was introduced and shaped by numerous scholars across different academic schools, though they share the common idea that language is a system intrinsically linked to human cognition and thought. The conceptual foundations of cognitive linguistics were established by American scholars George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who demonstrated that metaphor and metonymy are not merely stylistic phenomena but central cognitive mechanisms of human thinking. Their studies revealed how conceptual structures form in language and how they are mentally organized. Ronald Langacker further deepened this approach by developing cognitive grammar, emphasizing that grammatical categories are conceptual phenomena connected directly to perceptual processes. According to him, grammatical units are not external forms but linguistic reflections of cognitive processes.

Ray Jackendoff also made significant contributions to cognitive linguistics by demonstrating the inseparable relationship between language and mental representations, showing that linguistic systems cannot be separated from mental classification processes. Adele Goldberg developed Construction Grammar, explaining linguistic units from a cognitive perspective as unified structures of meaning and function. Thus, cognitive grammar, construction grammar, conceptual metaphor, and mental model theories form the solid scientific foundation of the linguo-cognitive approach. The development of this field in European scholarship is also linked to notable researchers. Anna Wierzbicka explored the relationship between language and culture and demonstrated the cultural grounding of concepts through universal semantic primitives. Her research broadened the understanding of cognition as shaped not only by individual thinking but by cultural codes. Gérard Lacroix, Gilles Fauconnier, and Mark Turner developed the theory of conceptual integration (blending), showing

how new meanings and concepts emerge through the merging of mental spaces in human cognition.

These theoretical ideas strongly influenced post-Soviet linguistics as well. Representatives of the Russian cognitive linguistic school—Y. Karaulov, E. Kubryakova, N. Boldyrev, V. Maslova, and others—studied language and consciousness through the conceptual domain of Slavic culture and the Russian language. Their work contributed to the scientific grounding of concepts such as concept, conceptosphere, cognitive system of language, and cognitive structures of text. This tradition spread into Central Asian linguistics, where Uzbek scholars such as Sh. Safarov, N. Yo'ldoshev, R. Rasulev, and Z. Qosimova further developed cognitive approaches, establishing the basis for studying cognitive meaning, culturally specific conceptual structures, cognitive metaphors, and mental models in the Uzbek language. Thus, the development of the linguo-cognitive approach represents the continuous progression of numerous academic schools and scholars. This paradigm has opened new horizons in linguistics, enabling comprehensive analysis of language in connection with the conceptual world model and cognitive mechanisms of human thought.

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