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The Concept and its Essence in the Context of Linguoculturology

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Abstract

This article examines the Concept and its essence in the context of linguoculturology. In linguistic research in recent decades, special attention has been paid to the creation of a holistic concept of the relationship between language and thinking, ways of expressing extra-linguistic reality in language, knowledge about the world, and the laws of organization of the “linguistic picture of the world.” As an analysis of theoretical literature shows, the term “concept” is actively included in the terminological system of modern science.

Key words: concept, language, linguistic personality, concept structure, linguoculturology.

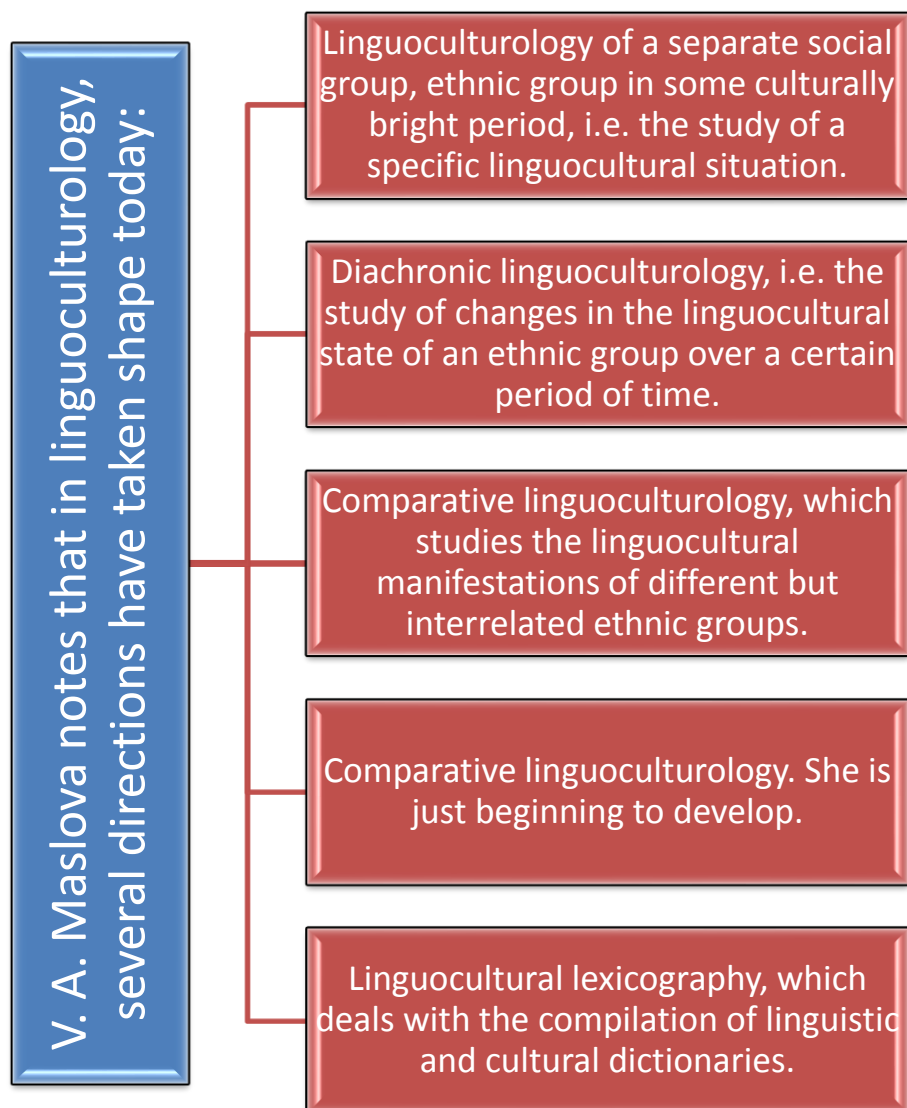
In modern linguistics there is a tendency to study language as a productive way of interpreting human culture. This is explained by the fact that language is the key to the system of human thought, to the nature of the human psyche, it serves to characterize a nation. According to M.M. Akhmedova, language “can open the way both to an understanding of a person’s style and to the life events of past generations.” [1] His “calls” for the study of culture were heard by domestic cultural anthropologists.

An analysis of the works of Russian scientists over the past 10-15 years allows us to notice in modern Russian linguistics an increasingly pronounced tendency towards the intensive formation of a new direction - cultural linguistics. The tasks of linguoculturology include the study and description of the relationship between language and culture, language and ethnicity, language and national mentality [2], it was created, according to the forecast of Emile Benveniste, “based on the triad - language, culture, human personality” and represents linguoculture as a “lens , through which the researcher can see the material and spiritual identity of the ethnos.” The basis of the categorical apparatus of linguoculturology is the concepts of linguistic personality and concept, the epistemological formation of which is not yet completed.

This article is devoted to the term “concept”, which is the core term of the conceptual apparatus of cultural linguistics. Its fundamental, multifaceted study presupposes the obligatory appeal of scientists to the analysis of the most different levels or tiers of language through the use of various research methods. The priority is the lexico-phraseological level of the language, in which the facts of the material and, accordingly, spiritual culture of a person are most clearly recorded in symbolic form; in general, the value orientations of a particular society, the system of its moral, ethical and aesthetic preferences are reflected, illustrating the features of the mentality of a particular linguocultural communities.

He calls the cultural concept the main unit of linguoculturology, and as units of study he puts forward realities and “background meanings, i.e., meaningful characteristics of concrete and abstract names” [2]. It seems very

important that language serves for linguoculturology not as an object of study, but as a “mirror”, “piggy bank”, “carrier” and “tool” of culture, and it is interested in what elements of culture and how they are reflected, stored, transmitted and formed with using language. The objectives of this scientific discipline include the study and description of the relationship between language and culture, language and ethnicity, language and national mentality; it was created, according to Benveniste’s forecast, “based on the triad - language, culture, human personality” and represents linguoculture as a lens through which the researcher can see the material and spiritual identity of the ethnic group [3].



It seems that the basis of the categorical apparatus of linguoculturology is the concepts of linguistic personality, concept and linguocultural type, the epistemological formation of which, apparently, has not yet been fully completed [3]. The content of a linguistic personality usually includes the following components:

1) value, worldview, component of the content of education, i.e., a system of values, or life meanings. Language provides an initial and in-depth view of the world, forms that linguistic image of the world and the hierarchy of spiritual ideas that underlie the formation of national character and are realized in the process of linguistic dialogue communication;

2) cultural component, i.e. the level of mastery of culture as an effective means of increasing interest in the language. Involving facts of the culture of the language being studied, related to the rules of speech and non-speech behavior, contributes to the formation of skills of adequate use and effective influence on the communication partner;

3) personal component, i.e. that individual, deep thing that is in every person [5]. A person is the bearer of a national mentality, which can be explored through language, which is the most important means of identifying a person.

The word “concept” is a translation from the Latin *conceptus* - “concept”, from the verb *conciere* “to conceive”, i.e. literally means “conception”. The linguocultural approach to understanding the concept is that the concept is recognized as the basic unit of culture, its concentrate. Yu. S. Stepanov writes that “the structure of a concept includes everything that makes it a fact of culture - the original form (etymology); history condensed to the main features of the content; modern associations; grades, etc.”. Concepts in this understanding are often correlated with a naive picture of the world, opposed to the scientific picture of the world; researchers talk about “concepts of practical philosophy”, such as “truth”, “fate”, “good”, etc. [4].

The expression of a concept is the entire set of linguistic and non-linguistic means that directly or indirectly illustrate, clarify and develop its content.

Description of a concept is a special research procedure for interpreting the meaning of its name and nearby designations. For example: definition, contextual analysis, etymological analysis, paremiological analysis, interviewing, questioning, commenting. The concept is based on the original, prototypical model of the basic meaning of the word (i.e., the invariant of all meanings of the word). In this regard, we can talk about the central and peripheral zones of the concept.

A concept as a unit of structured knowledge has a mobile field structure and can be described in terms of core and periphery. “The core will include the prototypical layers with the greatest sensory-visual concreteness, the primary, most vivid images; more abstract features will form the periphery of the concept. The peripheral status of a particular conceptual feature does not at all indicate its insignificance or unimportance in the field of the concept; the status of the feature indicates the extent of its distance from the core in terms of the degree of concreteness and clarity of figurative representation.” For example, the concept of time can be described as a field structure. The core of the concept will be considered to be its designations: time, time, period; and the periphery is the weather, morning, work, and so on [3].

In addition to the conceptual component, the value level is also distinguished in the structure of the concept. Values are associated with the development of society, they determine social actions, establish final and intermediate goals. Social institutions reflect the value priorities of a culture with their goals and methods of action. In an effort to fulfill their roles within these institutions, people orient their behavior towards cultural values. Values and norms of behavior are a significant part of human experience and are naturally reflected in language. Their representation in language is systemic in nature and can be considered as one of the sides of the linguistic picture.

The structure of the linguocultural concept, in addition to the conceptual and value component, also has a figurative one. The figurative side of the concept is the relevant signs of practical knowledge. It is connected with the way of knowing reality and is not always completely reflective. The figurative component of the concept is created thanks to the naive, often stereotypical ideas of speakers about the object and is built on the basis of their associations and perceptual observations [2].

In search of the most correct definition of a multidimensional term, some researchers interpret the concept based on the internal form of the term: the word “concept” is a tracing paper from the Latin *conceptus* -

“concept”, from the verb concipere “to conceive”, i.e. literally means “conception”. According to the dictionary meaning, “concept” and “notion” are close words. But research shows that the concept is semantically deeper, richer than the concept. “Unlike concepts in the proper sense of the term, concepts are not only thought, they are experienced. They are the subject of emotions, likes and dislikes, and sometimes clashes. The concept is the main cell of culture in the mental world of a person” [5].

The difference between a word and a concept is that the word and the concept are materialized in the same sound/letter complex, and this circumstance gives rise to some difficulties, giving rise to a number of questions.

One of the most significant differences between a word and a concept is related to their internal content. The internal content of a word is its semantics plus connotations, that is, a set of seems and lexical-semantic options plus expressive/emotional/stylistic coloring, evaluativeness, etc. The internal content of a concept is a kind of set of meanings, the organization of which differs significantly from structuring seven and lexical-semantic variants of the word. Scientists see the criteria for distinguishing concept and meaning in the fact that the concept expands the meaning of the word, leaving opportunities for conjecture, additional fantasy, further thought, and creation of the emotional aura of the word.

The difference between meaning and concept lies in the internal volume, content. The relationship between concept and meaning is determined by their categorical status. The content of a concept is broader than its meaning, since “concepts... retain their structure and do not lose the features included in this structure throughout the history of the people... The structure of concepts is only replenished by identifying additional features [3].

Attempts are being made to define the concept as a certain “reservoir of meaning” as “something” that is the starting point, the starting point of the semantic content of a word, and at the same time the final limit of development and exists only within a certain culture [4]. So, a concept is nothing more than a multidimensional semantic formation belonging to the collective consciousness, expressed through language, including in its structure personal and folk cultural and historical experience, the emotional aspect of the word; performing the function of a carrier and transmitter of meaning.

In conclusion, I would like to note that in the linguistic understanding of the concept, three main approaches have emerged. Firstly, in the broadest sense, the number of concepts includes lexemes, the meanings of which constitute the content of the national linguistic consciousness and form the ‘naive picture of the world’ of native speakers. Researchers suggest that the totality of such concepts forms the conceptual sphere of language, in which the culture of a nation is concentrated. The determining factor in this approach is the way of conceptualizing the world in lexical semantics, the main research tool is a conceptual model, with the help of which the basic components of the semantics of a concept are identified and stable connections between them are identified. Secondly, in a narrower sense, American scientists include semantic formations that are marked by linguocultural specifics and in one way or another characterize the bearers of a certain ethnoculture as concepts. The totality of such concepts does not form a concept sphere as a kind of holistic and structured semantic space, but occupies a certain part of it - the conceptual area. And finally, the concepts include only semantic formations, the list of which is quite limited and which are key to understanding the national mentality as a specific attitude to the world of its bearers.

A generalization of points of view on the concept and its definitions in linguistics allows us to come to the following conclusion: a concept is a unit of collective consciousness that leads to higher spiritual values, has a linguistic expression and is marked by ethnocultural specificity. Thus, in linguocultural studies, a concept is interpreted as a meaning-generating unit that connects in the minds of native speakers different concepts that are significant for culture. What is important for us is the conclusion that the concepts of each language are

also unique and original. Therefore, what is of particular importance for one ethnic group may turn out to be completely insignificant for another.

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