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CONCEPT AS A BASE UNIT OF COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

Summary. *The article explores the concept as the fundamental unit of analysis in cognitive linguistics defining it as a complex mental formation that encapsulates and structures human knowledge. A concept is not only simply a dictionary definition but a multilayered construct comprising conceptual, figurative and value-based components. Structurally, it includes a central core-representing the primary, culturally stable meaning-and peripheral layers that hold associative, evaluative and context-dependent nuances.*

The article concludes that concepts act as the interface between thought and language, reflecting both individual cognitive processes and the collective cultural worldview. Their dynamic nature makes them essential for understanding how meaning is constructed, stored and communicated within human cognition.

Keywords: *cognitive, concept, anthropology, figurative meaning, conceptual core, evaluative components, conceptual structure*

Introduction: The concept is a bridge between culture and thinking. This bridge is a person's mental thought with the super-specific power of culture. This effective mental structure or structures creates the concept. Apart from the concept is unifying function it has a protective/preservative quality. It is the mental landfill where all processes take place. The concept can also be called a word web. Everyone understands the same word differently, since as people are different, so their understanding is different too. Humans from their birth were programmed like a computer until death. Their behavior, attitude, speech, it is the "programs" that shape. The concept is also one of the mental programs. Throughout life this mental program (concept) containing the experiences is the formation of a person as a personality serve. This means that each word has different concepts in different people manifests itself. The words included in our mental lexicon fall into the word net and do not perceive (conceptualization) process. Rich concept arises from rich experience, weak concept arises from experience.

Each person has an individual outlook, concepts and conceptual system. Words as the core of concept thinking combinations, sentences and texts create new meanings, thanks to them becomes relevant. Concepts are divided by some linguists into two parts: 1) Linguistic concepts; 2) Cognitive concepts.

Linguistic concepts can also be called national concepts. Being national, national concepts come from culture. Non-national concepts are products of other cultures. In general cognitive linguistics are not considered to be opposite trends, but rather together in this direction they are moving forward. They have the same approach on certain issues. But what sets them apart it is a matter of thought-to-culture or culture-to-thought. According to cognitivists the concept moves from thought to culture. Linguistics are the reverse of the movement they claim that it is oriented towards culture-thought. Linguistic cultural values, myths, folklore, historical memory, traditions, collective mentality, associations, the soul of the people as a whole, codifies its energy and transforms it into cognitive structures. As a result of this, cog-



nitive concept includes linguistic and cultural features and is "flag-bearing" took responsibility. The target of all these processes is to create an intellectual person or to raise a perfect person.

Cognitive linguistics is a rapidly developing branch of modern linguistics. This branch is younger and newer than the others. That is why, cognitive linguistics covers controversial issues on theoretical points as well as in research methods. For this reason a serious approach to language issues related to the theoretical and empirical foundations of cognition is required. Cognitive linguistics has taken its place in modern world linguistics. So its emergence and fast development appear in the modern stage.

Although cognitive linguistics emerged at the end of the 20th century, its subject still found in the initial theoretical problems of XIX century linguistics. Subject of cognitive linguistics I.A. Beaudoin de Courtenay also had his thoughts about it: "Based on language thinking in the world linguistic knowledge of all beings, existing and non-existent, can be determined. Y.S. Kubryakova notes that cognitive linguistics is the language of interest to linguistics and such as thinking, the basic functions of language, the role of man for language and language for man examines issues. Linguistic issues were resolved in the last decades of the 20th century. [9, с.105]

Research object: Conceptual and contextual descriptive method, cultural analysis and methods were applied in the research work.

The deep point to unique methods of modern cognitive linguistics explores a cognition. According to Y.S. Kubriakova cognitive linguistics, cognitive psychology, philosophical theoretical cognition, logical analysis of language, related to a number of sciences such as neurophysiology. Even cognitive anthropology, cognitive sociology and new fields called cognitive literature have also appeared. In other words, every humanitarian a special field related to cognitive approach and cognitive analysis has been formed in science. Cognitive understanding is a process, a reflection of a person's understanding of those around him.

Concept understanding is directly related to the language map of the world.

"Language map of the world", It is accepted that the founder of the concept is V. von Humboldt. Later, this work was continued by Y. L. Weisgerber, I. Herder. E. Sepir and B. L. Whorf's theory of linguistic relativity has a special role in this matter. Prof. F. Veysalli's views on this concept interesting: "... the language could not fully reflect everything that is in the national consciousness of the people for this view is limited in a certain sense and is on one level. And more language awareness reflects historical resistances, the current conceptual sphere of ethnos is not fully reflected in the language. The people thinking is connected to the surrounding world through language, at any stage of the existence of the people of the world the cognitive landscape can be restored in general terms. Linguistic landscape with cognitive landscape cannot be equated because language expresses only what is important for communication. The important thing in communication is to express the concept that is important for the culture of the people is being. Cognitive world in one way or another to human thinking and behavior affects the landscape. The division in language that reflects the cognitive picture of the world is, in fact, not through language but through cognitive classifiers. Language only realizes cognitive association. Although there is no more effective tool for the concept sphere than language, language is the concept sphere reflects fragmentary. Thus, the world's conceptual landscape and language landscape are mental and reflects the form and content of verbally connected consciousness" [3, s.56]

According to E. Sepir and B. L. Whorf, people see the world through the lens of their language acquire, languages differ according to their "language maps of their world" and in different languages speaking people have different mindsets. In linguistics, the world map is the world's cognitive or conceptual map. It is divided into two parts, a conceptual map and a language map of the world.



The "invisible connection" or "dependence" of the world between man and the world gave the basis for the emergence of the map. The way a person wants to see the world also draws the contours of this world in his mind and "in his own world"; 'in the spirit world' he is alone with his impressions, he begins to form his "mental model". This is called a "personal map".

Since this process is related to language, it is called "language map of the world". "The map" is the two of us we divide into parts:

1. National map;
2. Global map.

National map of the world as a result of all the activities of a member of an ethnic group its image, its contacts with the surrounding world, are transmitted from generation to generation at the appropriate stages of development a systematized collection of all knowledge and ideas about the knowing world and is the availability of opportunities to express in the native language.

Global map :Learning a foreign language or languages not native to an ethnic group ideas about the world, the spiritual world, culture, knowledge, is a collection of ideas and codes.

The "human concept", which is one of the fundamental concepts of all worldviews, is at the center of philosophical ideas about the world. Philosophical ideas about man and his nature can be found in the pre-philosophical worldview, mythology. The first world view of ancient peoples is that they believed that there were supernatural, mythical people in mythology. Conceptualization of reality is the perception of a person's mental construction of the subject of reality and phenomena of information received about the world.

This leads to the emergence of worldviews about the world in the form of fixed concepts in the mind of a person.

Perceiving the environment, the world, a person forms general concepts, and the system of knowledge about the world forms a conceptualized map of the world. Man is a universal concept. Its interpretation is different in different languages, so that for each language it is necessary that what features of it are defining for the given conceptsphere. The lexeme "human" is used in Azerbaijani, "человек" in Russian, and two lexemes -man and human, which define a person in English. In English, the human concept consists of two main lexemes, which differ from each other in terms of their lexical meaning. Previously, human lexeme was widely used in oral speech, literature, and folklore. In modern English, the lexeme "human" is used in scientific texts. In oral speech and texts, the human lexeme is replaced by the man lexeme. The human concept has a complex structure. The set of general concepts is made up of the concept core.

The study of the linguistic conceptualization of reality raises the problem of interaction between people, language and culture. The peak of the "human-language-culture" triangle is undoubtedly human. Naturally, all existing language and culture show the importance of the human factor. The process and results of man's understanding of himself and reality, man's assessment of himself and the surrounding world are reflected in the language. In language, the image of a person is everything, that is, a person can talk about himself and others in science, religion, culture, and everyday life. The role of the human factor in language and the formation of his speech is determined in the subject apostasies of man.

A concept is a mental construct that represents a category of objects, actions, feelings, or ideas. According to Russian linguist V.A.Maslova, a concept is a "quantum of culturally significant knowledge" that exists in the minds of speakers and is reflected in language. Unlike lexical meanings, concepts are not tied to single words. One concept may be expressed by various lexical items and grammatical forms, while a single word may refer to multiple conceptual fields depending on context.

Traditional linguistic units are based on form and structure. For example:

A phoneme is the smallest sound unit.

A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning.



A lexeme is a word or a family of word forms.

In contrast, the concept is a cognitive unit. It doesn't have a fixed linguistic form but it is expressed variably across different languages and cultures. While morphemes and lexemes belong to the language system, concepts belong to the mental world of speakers and are associated with thinking rather than speaking.

Modern linguistics (e.g., Vorkachev, Stepanov, Kubryakova) have identified several structural components within a concept :

Definitional core :The basic, dictionary-like understanding

Figurative component :Metaphorical or image-based associations

Evaluative component: Cultural, emotional, or ethical value judgements [5, p.76]

Cultural and linguistic variation: Concepts are shaped by cultural experience and worldview. Different languages may encode the same concept differently or attach different values to the same category. For example, the concept of freedom in Western cultures emphasizes individual rights, while in some Eastern cultures, it may be associated with social harmony or collective responsibility.

This variation highlights that concepts are not universal in content, even if they may be universal in function. Studying conceptual differences helps linguists understand cross-cultural communication and translation challenges.

Cultural Specificity of Concepts are not universal in content-even when labeled with the same word. Different cultures assign different associative and emotional values to concepts.

Examples : Freedom in the U.S emphasizes individual rights, in some Asian cultures, it may relate to harmony within social roles.

The concept of honor may be tied to personal integrity in one culture and family reputation in another.

Even color concepts like blue or white may vary in meaning across cultures and languages.

This makes concepts central to intercultural communication, translation, and language teaching.

In cognitive linguistics language is seen as part of human cognition, shaped by perception and experience. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson introduced the idea of conceptual metaphors -where abstract concepts are understood in terms of more concrete ones.

There are different types of concepts in linguistics according to their meaning. The concept of Human occupies a central position in linguistic inquiry, particularly in semantics, cognitive linguistics, anthropological linguistics, and language philosophy. This article explores how the human concept is represented, structure, and utilized in language, and how it reflects cognitive, cultural, and social realities across linguistic systems.

Language is inherently human and one of its primary functions is to describe, express and shape human experience. Among the core conceptual domains in linguistics, the human concept stands out as both universal and deeply culture specific. It encompasses mental representations of human attributes, roles, relationships, behaviors and values, which are embedded in the vocabulary, grammar and metaphors of a language.

The human concept refers to the mental and linguistic representation of what it means to be human – physically, psychologically, socially and ethically. It includes notions such as gender, age, emotion, consciousness, morality, social roles (e.g. parent, teacher, leader) and biological identity. These ideas form the basis of many lexical items and grammatical categories.

Cognitive linguistics and human concept. In cognitive linguistics, human experience is seen as foundational to conceptual structures. The embodied cognition theory argues that our understanding of language is shaped by our bodily interaction with the world. Thus, spatial metaphors like “I am feeling down” or “He's on the top of the situation” are grounded in physical human orientation.

Human-centered metaphors are also essential in framing abstract domains.



From an anthropological linguistic view, human-related concepts often reveal cultural values and worldviews. Languages may place emphasis on community or individuality. The way languages encode respect, politeness, age and hierarchy reflects how cultures define human interaction and worth.

Human concept is a central pillar of language, guiding not only vocabulary and grammar but also the broader cultural and cognitive frameworks through which we understand the world. Its study offers vital insights into how language reflects human nature, organizes knowledge and mediates social interaction.

In modern linguistics, the notion of concept has gained prominence due to the influence of cognitive science and the study of language-thought relations. While traditional structuralist approaches prioritized word and sentence as the primary linguistic units, contemporary research recognizes the concept as a central mental construct that underlies lexical and grammatical expression.

The concept acts as a bridge between linguistic signs and the extra-linguistic world, enabling speakers to encode, store, and retrieve knowledge. This paper explores the theoretical grounding of the concept, its typology, and its significance in linguistics.

The concept is often described as the minimal unit of linguistic consciousness. Words are seen as the material form of concepts, while grammar structures their relationship in discourse.

Cognitive linguistics views language as an instrument for conceptualizing the world. Here, concepts are dynamic—they can evolve, merge, or split based on cultural and social change. Prototype theory shows that category membership is graded, with some instances being more representative than others.

Since concepts are shaped by cultural experience, they often differ across languages, creating challenges for translations and intercultural communication. For example, the English concept privacy does not have a direct equivalent in some languages, requiring descriptive translation.

The concept serves as a basic cognitive-semantic unit in linguistics, connecting the mental representation of reality with its linguistic expression. Understanding concepts is essential for semantic theory, lexicography, language teaching, and translation studies. Future research should continue integrating cognitive and cultural approaches to better capture the complexity of conceptual systems.

The concept is increasingly recognized as a central unit of analysis in modern linguistics, bridging mental representation and linguistic expression. This paper examines the theoretical foundations of the concept, its typology, and its role in meaning formation. Drawing on cognitive linguistics, semantic field theory and cultural linguistics, it offers a comparative analysis of English and Azerbaijani examples to illustrate the universality and cultural specificity of concepts. The study concludes that the concept functions as a cognitive-semantic nucleus within language, linking thought, culture and communication.

In traditional linguistics, the word was often treated as the minimal unit of meaning. However, the rise of cognitive and cultural linguistics has shifted focus to the concept as a more fundamental unit. Words are the material embodiment of concepts, but the concept itself exists at a mental-cognitive level.

Concepts allow speakers to structure reality, categorize experience, and exchange knowledge. They function not only in lexical semantics but also in syntax, discourse and pragmatics. For instance, the concept freedom shapes idioms, political discourse and grammatical structures in both English and Azerbaijani, though with culturally nuanced interpretations.

Concepts like freedom (eng. freedom, az. Azadlıq) share a denotational core but differ connotatively. In English-speaking cultures, it often emphasizes personal autonomy, in Azerbaijani, it can also carry historical and political resistance connotations.



Role of concepts in linguistics:

In lexicon: Concepts determine the naming units and their semantic relations.

In syntax: Conceptual structures influence argument structure and verb valency .

In discourse: Key concepts shape thematic progression and rhetorical strategies.

Example: In political discourse, the concept democracy can dictate argumentation patterns and lexical choices.

The concept is not only a basic unit of linguistics but also a central cognitive and cultural category. Its analysis reveals how language reflects and shapes human thought. Comparative research between English and Azerbaijani shows both universality and variability, underlining the need for integrating semantic, cognitive and cultural approaches in linguistic study.

A concept is a mental idea or category that groups together objects, events or ideas based on shared features. For example, the concept "dog" includes all animals that fit the characteristics we associate with dogs.

Why are concepts important in linguistics? Language works by linking words (sounds or written forms) to concepts in our minds. Without concepts, words would have no meaning. Concepts help us:

1. Understand and categorize our experiences
2. Communicate efficiently by sharing common mental images or ideas
3. Organize vocabulary and grammar around meaningful units

How are concepts represented?

Concepts can be:

Concrete (like chair, apple)- things we can see or touch

Abstract (like freedom, love)-ideas or feelings we can't touch but understand.

Core meaning: What the concept basically is.

Associations: Emotions or cultural ideas linked to the concept.

Extensions: Different ways the concept can be used or understood

Concepts across languages and cultures:

Some concepts are universal(like mother), but many are culture-specific. For example, the English concept privacy might not exist in the same way in other languages, leading to differences in how people think and talk about related ideas.

Concepts as a unit of analysis

In linguistics,analyzing concepts helps us understand:

How words get their meaning

How language reflects culture and thought

How people from different backgrounds understand or misunderstand each other.

The study of the "human concept" in linguistics often draws from philosophy of mind and epistemology. Ancient thinkers like Plato and Aristotle saw concepts as mental representations of reality. In linguistics, this philosophical idea connects to how language encodes mental categories.

In Azerbaijani, the equivalent term is "insan" or "bəşər", depending on context. Both terms share the semantic core of "rational being" but differ in stylistic and register usage. Many languages encode the concept with roots linked to earth, morality or social belonging .

The concept human is central to ethical discourse (human rights, human values) and to distinguishing our species from other forms of life. Its connotations may vary across cultures: in some contexts, it implies compassion and morality;in others, it emphasizes vulnerability and imperfection.

This article examines the linguistic representation of the concept, focusing on its semantic structure, metaphorical extensions, and cross-linguistic parallels. Drawing on approaches from cognitive linguistics, semantic field theory, and cultural linguistics, the study identifies the core components of the concept and explores how they are realized in the English language, with



comparative notes from Azerbaijani. The findings highlight the interplay between biological, cognitive and social features in shaping the conceptual profile of human.

In English, the lexeme human functions both as a noun and as an adjective. The concept human in linguistics reflects a rich interplay of biological reality, cognitive capacity and cultural values. Its lexical behaviour, metaphorical uses and cross-linguistic parallels illustrate how language encodes not only what humans are, but also how societies perceive themselves in relation to the world.

Research outcomes: Every word is an idea, every idea is a concept, but every concept can be composed of one or more ideas. Our thinking is rich with ideas and will come to the light of day is waiting. These expectations are realized thanks to concepts. The concept has its value capacity. Ideas become concepts when they attach value. Worthless ideas do not become concepts because a person is always himself, his surroundings, his place of residence, the world, etc. has positive thoughts about attempt to "produce", looks to the future with more hope, in a word, searches for the meaning of life. Thus, he wants to see his life interesting. Of course, with valuable ideas to make it so must live. A person creates a system of ideas while developing himself in an appropriate way. Of this thanks to which the value exchange between concept and idea becomes inevitable. Consisting of values over time, ideas give rise to ideology or ideologies.

Scientific results of the article: The research confirm that the concept constitutes a fundamental unit of linguistic and cognitive analysis, serving as a mediator between language and thought. It has been established that the concept possesses a multidimensional structure, incorporating not only the denotative and lexical meanings of linguistic signs but also culturally determined, emotional and experiential components. The study demonstrates that concepts function as cognitive-semantic constructs, integrating verbal, visual and associative elements and that their formation is influenced by both universal cognitive mechanisms and specific socio-cultural contexts. The classification of concepts into universal, national-cultural and individual types reveals that each category exhibits distinct structural characteristics, with a stable core of essential features and a variable periphery containing associative and connotative layers.

Scientific novelty of the article: Scientific novelty of the study lies in the comprehensive theoretical substantiation of the concept as a primary and independent unit of linguistic and cognitive analysis. Unlike previous approaches that treated the concept predominantly as a semantic or lexical phenomenon, the research presents it as a multidimensional cognitive construct integrating linguistic, cultural. Emotional and experiential layers of meaning. The study offers a refined classification of concepts-universal, national-cultural and individual-based on their structural and functional characteristics, thereby extending the typology traditionally employed in cognitive linguistics.

The importance of the article: The article is important for its theoretical and practical contribution to cognitive linguistics, defining the concept as a key link between language and thought. By integrating linguistic, cultural and cognitive perspectives, it offers a more comprehensive approach to semantic analysis and facilitates deeper cross-cultural understanding.

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L.S.Məmmədova

Konsept koqnitiv dilçiliyin əsas vahidi kimi Xülasə

Biz bu məqalədə koqnitiv dilçilik, onun müasir humanitar fənnlər olan psixolinqvistika, sosiolinqvistika, etnopsixolinqvistika, etnolinqvistika, komputer dilçiliyi, siyasi dilçilik, dil şəxsiyyəti və s. sahələrlə əlaqəsindən bəhs etməyə çalışmışıq. Tədqiqat işinin aktuallığı ondan ibarətdir ki, artıq XX əsrin 70-ci illərində meydana gələn koqnitiv dilçilik bir çox dilçi alimlərə imkan verdi ki, dilə tamamilə müxtəlif nöqtəyi-nəzərdən yanaşsınlar və beləliklə də, bu tədqiqatlarının genişlənməsinə səbəb olmuşdur. Koqnitiv dilçiliyin əsas vahidi konseptdir. Konsept özündən qabaqki terminlərin bildirdiyi mənanı özündə cəmləşdirərək çoxşaxəli olmağa başlamışdır. Bu yanaşmaların genişlənməsi, konsept haqqında tədqiqatların genişlənməsinə gətirib çıxarmışdır. Bir çox alimlər tərəfindən konsept düşüncə vahidi olaraq qəbul edilir. Tədqiqat işinin praktiki əhəmiyyəti ondan ibarətdir ki, bu məqalə magistr dissertasiyalarının yazılmasında, elmi mühazirələrdə, xüsusi fənnlə bağlı kursların tədrisində istifadə olunabilir.

Açar sözlər: koqnitiv, konsept, antropologiya, obrazlı məna, konseptual məna, linqvistik məna, konseptual struktur

Л.С.Мамедова

Концепт как основная единица когнитивной лингвистики Резюме

В статье рассматривается концепт как фундаментальная единица когнитивной лингвистики. Концепт определяется как ментальная репрезентация знаний и опыта человека, отражающая его восприятие мира. Автор подчеркивает, что язык не просто передает информацию, но и структурирует знания через концепты. Особое внимание уделяется когнитивным процессам, таким как категоризация, метафоризация и образное мышление, которые формируют концептуальные структуры. В статье проводится сравнительный анализ англоязычных и азербайджанских концептов, выявляются их лексические, семантические и культурные особенности. Научная новизна работы заключается в комплексном подходе к исследованию концептов как ключевых элементов человеческой когниции и языка.

Ключевые слова: когнитивный, концепт, образное значение, антропология, концептуальное значение, лингвистическое значение, концептуальная структура

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