

Formation, Nature and Structure of the Concept

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20240576>

ABSTRACT

A person perceives the surrounding world through sensory organs. The received information is conceptualized in his (her) cognitive world, gets a name, and when it is realized, it is conveyed through that name or names. Concepts are gradually formed, enriched by taking on new shades of meaning. According to the characteristics of formation and the level of complexity, they are 1) objective and 2) abstract. Concepts with objects arise in the mind basing on the information received directly through the sensory organs and appear in the form of an image of a specific object and event. The second group of concepts arises on the basis of later, object concepts in human thinking.

Key words: *concept, nature, mind, structure, language, information*

INTRODUCTION

The concept has a certain structure because it is gradually formed and enriched in the mind and is related to other concepts. The structure of the concept, which is a multi-component mental unit, distinguishes between “core” and “peripheral” parts. The core includes signs and characteristics that reflect the meaning capacity of the concept with maximum completeness. In addition to the concept itself, its micro-concepts are also included in the core part. Microconcepts, in turn, are further divided into aspects relating to the environment, and they are divided into segments and elements.

Main part

Since the end of the last century, the development of the science of linguistics has gained a new momentum. Language as a subject of science is not studied by itself, in isolation, the phenomenon of language is its participation in the processes going on in the mind, and how the knowledge fixed in the mind is reflected and perceived in the language, etc. begins to be studied. A word rarely has a direct meaning by itself, or rather, a meaning exists in it, but this meaning is revealed in a certain context - word combination, syntactic whole, text and each time, depending on the specific context, its shade of meaning, “informative field” is revealed. This “opening” is not the same in discourse, speech and text. The main reason is related to “immediacy” in discourse and speech, i.e., happening at this moment and the participation of other factors in language factors in discourse at this time. It is noted that “language is now being studied together with other forms of intellectual activity, and the research object of linguistics is changing accordingly. The attention of the researchers is focused on the conscious language activity of the speakers of the language, and the language itself is taken as the main source of understanding” [Abdullayev 2012, p.308]. A very important issue is touched upon in this saying. This is taking the language itself “as the main source of understanding”. It is clear that the authors of this idea briefly summarizing the modern trends in linguistics and emphasize the important role of language in the process of understanding. However, deepening this idea and continuing, we can say that this is only one side of the issue. We can say that

language is not only a “source of understanding”, it is, to put it briefly, a means of understanding, a means that plays a key role in the grouping of formed concepts, and a means of realization and delivery of concepts. Since the concept is a mental event, all processes take place in the mental space, in thinking, but the process itself is impossible without the participation of language.

Information about the objects and events of the surrounding world is stored in the mind in the form of concepts, or rather, each perceived information is conceptualized, takes its place in the conceptsphere, enters into certain “connections” with the mental units there - concepts. This means that the concept does not exist by itself, in an “airless space”. Since it is closely related to mental units (concepts) in the conceptsphere, it is most likely structured in a certain way. When talking about its structure, researchers say the most diverse opinions, refer to different images, but a unified approach, a unified view of it has not yet been formed. Concepts are formed mainly on the basis of the direct sensory experience of a person: a person perceives reality through sensory organs, understands his (her) place in this reality and reconciles it with the concepts that already exist in his (her) mind and determines his (her) place among others or perceives them in the course of communication with other people, etc. In our opinion, although it is possible to extend this series, the most important is the first one, because it plays the role of foundation for others, the concepts or conceptual meanings that arise later for the formation of the conceptsphere are based on this foundation, that is, directly felt and perceived through the sense organs, as a certain image in the mind. Existing concepts are primary and most important, they are gradually enriched and complicated due to the expansion of the meaning capacity, acquire new shades, become abstract, and are reflected in abstract phenomena that are not felt through the sense organs.

This can be seen from the fact that abstract concepts must be explained through examples in order to be understood, which indicates that most of the concepts are figurative in nature. This or that meaning can be conveyed clearly and comprehensibly in the communication process due to imagery. As the number of signs related to the concept, its abstraction increases, the feeling of the concept can become a product of direct thinking along with imagery. At this time, it is necessary to take into account that in any case it is based on the feeling of the ground.

The concept does not appear at once and with all its signs, it is formed gradually, over time it acquires new shades of meaning or these shades change, or rather, the perception of the concept changes as a result of changes in the consciousness and life of the speaker of the language. The concept, which undergoes changes in time and space, bears the marks of various eras.

These “signs” may not be equally understandable for all speakers of the language, but they exist, and their study allows to illuminate the historical development path of the language and the culture of the language-speaker ethnoses. This necessitates a historical approach to the concept, because when the concept is first created (regardless of the individual’s level of consciousness), it is basically created as an unambiguous, concrete ‘image’ and this process takes place over a certain period of time. There are a number of ‘base images’ of very ancient origin, which have been complicated in the cognitive space for thousands of years, acquired specific features in each specific period, and are ‘open’ to change even now. It is possible to discover great historical and cultural information in such concepts of ancient origin, and for this reason, basing on the forms of realization of the concepts in different periods and conditions (discourse, context), it is possible to obtain quite complete information about a separate historical period and its peculiarities.

Concepts can be divided into two groups: 1) objective and 2) abstract. This division is based on whether the objects they represent can be perceived by the senses:

1) Subjective concepts are 'units' formed in the mind basing on the information received through sensory organs and formed in the form of a concrete image, and are typical for the early stage of understanding the world as a conscious being. Rather, a person's understanding of the world begins with the perception of these concepts. Concepts formed at this stage get a 'name' through language, this process is more or less similar in each individual, and the concepts formed on the basis of those individual experiences are reflected in the language of the ethnos, and basing on them, the national conceptsphere is ultimately formed. The cognitive process begins with concrete experience. After the formation of a certain conceptsphere, the empirical acquisition of 'knowledge' is gradually replaced by perception through abstract thinking, or rather, abstract concepts begin to dominate the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of the conceptsphere. Subjective concepts include seeing, hearing, etc. in the surrounding world which refers to what can be directly perceived through. For example, many objects and things that surround us - moon, stars, sun, tree, grass, water, fire, soil, bowl, spoon, bread, etc. - refers to subject concepts. Over time, subject concepts gradually become metaphorical, acquire 'abstract' meanings as well as direct meaning capacity. At present, when considering the language units that denote the names of such concepts in explanatory dictionaries, it is possible to distinguish those later metaphorical meanings.

2) Abstract concepts are the later stage of the development of human thinking, formed relatively late. Abstract thinking becomes possible only after the perception of the surrounding world through the senses and the formation of subject concepts. At this stage, it can be formed on the basis of the concepts that have been formed about the surrounding world and have already

received a 'name'. Basing on the acquired knowledge, abstraction becomes possible, and the resulting concept does not have an objective equivalent.

The information from watching the environment is reflected in the mind in the form of images, it takes place in the conceptsphere, and until the image receives a 'name', so to speak, it 'does not come into use', that is, it cannot be 'transmitted', 'delivered' to another language carrier. This shows that the 'nameless' concept does not exist as it cannot prove its existence.

Since the concept is formed in the mind and stored there, it does not come to be perceived through the sense organs. It is such a 'thing' that we understand its essence, but we cannot fully explain it. The fact that it is interdisciplinary makes it difficult to give a single definition of it, because in this regard, each science has its own basic knowledge, and they are taken as the basis for giving the definition. Fields of science such as philosophy, logic, psychology, cultural studies, and linguistics deal with the concept. Since the concept is related to human mental processes, it is one of the main terms in linguistics, precisely in cognitive linguistics.

The concept is usually associated with more than one lexical unit, that is, discourse (context), depending on the situation, a different language (more lexical) and in some cases non-linguistic units are used to realize the concept.

The existence of a connection between language and thinking is now an undeniable fact. "Cognitive processes that take place in consciousness do not affect language, but language also participates in the formation of cognitive processes" [Aghayeva 2019, p. 120]. He doesn't just participate, he plays a key role in the process, because a person thinks with images, but until these images are called by means of language, the thinker himself cannot understand what he is doing, or rather, if the formed images are not realized in discourse, speech through language, no one can know its existence.

Since the concept is a mental unit that is gradually formed and enriched, there is no doubt that it is structured in a certain way. However, how this structuring is going, what is the structure itself, where did it start and where and in what order is it evident, and it is extremely difficult to answer many such questions. None of the existing approaches is able to fully reflect the structure of the concept, its structural parts distinguished under different 'names', because each of the constituent elements contained in the concept itself is much more complex than can be schematically described. The majority of concepts, especially cultural concepts can be divided into more numerous parts.

The concept, which is constantly 'in motion' in the thought process and interrelated with other mental units, does not have a rigid structure, but nevertheless there are certain principles of its formation. Most cognitivists imagine the structure of a concept metaphorically: likening it to a snowball, a cloud, a stone fruit, etc. they resemble. Concepts are different according to their structure and content, but regardless of their type, the base layer of the concept is the image, that is, if we imagine the concept in the form of a fruit, the base part, the image, is its core. "The base image can fully cover the content of the concept, if the concept reflects specific feelings and imaginations, or if the concept is in the minds of very primitive thinking individuals. In more complex concepts, additional cognitive features superimpose the base image and form the fleshy part of the fruit. Signs can be many, they can create relatively independent conceptual (cognitive) layers and can be layered from a more concrete layer to a more abstract layer" [Aghayeva 2019, p.58].

In order to understand and then explain the structure of the concept, in order to accurately distinguish the 'elements' that make it up and to determine its location, it is first necessary, in our opinion, to clarify its essence, the mechanism of formation and, if possible, the means of realization. It is true

that we touched on this issue above, albeit at an elementary level, but the problem is so complex that it is impossible to fully clarify it with a few sentences and pages.

Researchers note that the structure of the concept is multi-component and distinguish historical layers that differ in its composition, for example, according to the time of creation and semantics. They are the result or 'sediment' of the cultural life of different periods: literal meaning (internal form), passive (historical), most recent (actual and active) [Stepanov 1997, p. 41]. Each of these layers can have an image, value and understanding component. To the image side 'characteristics of objects, events reflected in our memory and perceived through sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell'; to the concept side: 'fixation of the concept in language, its presentation, description, sign structure, definition, comparative characteristics of this concept with these or other concepts (because the concept never exists in isolation)'; and the value side refers to the importance of this mental derivative for both the individual and the collective. The national concept includes an active layer, which consists of the main relevant characteristic known and important to each of the carriers of culture. Passive layers (additional signs relevant for certain groups of cultural carriers) belong to the conceptspheres of individual subcultures [Karasik 2001, p. 78]. The expressive-emotional component can be added to this list as human thought is often related to feelings. The individual nature of the concept should be especially noted, because it is formed in the individual consciousness in the course of subjective activity, and then begins to 'spread' and becomes the concept of the general (certain social group or ethnos). This process is not instantaneous, a certain period of time passes from the time when the concept begins to form in the individual's mind until it becomes widespread.

The figurative component is the psychophysiological basis of the concept. According to Z.Popova and I.Sterny

[Popova 2010, p.21], the image component includes perceptual and cognitive images. They equally reflect the characteristics of the conceptualized object or event. It is not necessary that a cognitive (metaphorical) image enters the core of the concept as a structural element, while a concrete image in the individual mind encodes the concept for this language carrier. Obviously, the concept must be expressed in language. But there are concepts that are not reflected in the language. If a concept 'deserves' language representation, language has many means of representing it. This can be done through lexemes, phraseology, word combinations, sentences. But within the limits of linguocultural science, it is impossible to identify the concept with a separate word, because the concept exists not for the word itself, but for each of its dictionary meanings. The concept arises not from the meaning of the word, but from the collision of this dictionary definition with the historical experience of a person and his nation. It happens that a concept can be verbalized by a number of lexical units within the same language, and vice versa, several concepts correspond to the same sign. This can be seen more clearly when comparing different languages, because 'it is not only the lexical means and grammatical rules that distinguish different languages from each other, but the 'world' that opens behind each word for the speaker who uses them. That is why behind the words denoting the most ancient and universal objects and events, different meanings (at different levels and degrees) are revealed for different language speakers' [Ahmadova 2015, p.210].

It should be taken into account that the concept, as we have already mentioned, is both language and thinking, therefore language means convey only part of the meaning of the concept. We can see this from the presence of numerous synonyms, from the existence of the most diverse explanations of the same concept. "The meaning of the word is an attempt to create a general idea about the content of the

expressed concept, to draw the known limits of the presentation of its individual characteristics with that word" [Boldyrev 2001B, p.25].

In addition, the cultural concept is realized in the language not only through lexical and phraseological means, but also through precedent texts, etiquette formulas and speech-behavior tactics, repeated fragments of social life [Boldyrev 2001b, p. 12]. In cases where it is necessary to use whole texts to convey any concept, it can be said that it is complex and multifaceted, because in this case we are talking about understanding and reviewing whole situations.

Thus, the concept is a complex structure consisting of core and periphery. The core of the concept includes signs and characteristics that reflect its meaning capacity with maximum completeness. They are usually called subconcept or microconcept [Ahmadova 2016, p.173]. The periphery includes elements that are less connected to the core of the concept and reflect certain aspects and shades of its meaning, which are called aspects, segments, signs according to the distance from the center (core) and the degree of reduction of relations with it. As noted by U. Ahmadova, "Micro-concepts are divided into aspects, and they are divided into segments, and the same segment can belong to different micro-concepts" [Ahmadova 2015, p. 16]. The same can be said about the elements.

The structural parts of the concept at all levels 'intersect' each other both 'horizontally' and 'vertically' (in terms of hierarchy), and these intersections do not allow to fully reflect its structure schematically.

CONCLUSION.

Thus, a person comes into the world and begins to understand the surrounding world initially through the sense organs, concepts of objects and events related to them are formed in his mind (concepts with objects), and then abstract concepts are formed.

Concepts stored in the cognitive space of a person gradually become more complex and take on new shades of meaning. The structure of the concept can be taken schematically as an 'entity' consisting of 'core' (base image) and 'periphery' (additional cognitive features) parts. The main meaning of the concept and the micro-concepts more closely related to it can be attributed to the 'core', and aspects, segments and elements can be attributed to the periphery. But at this time it is necessary to take into account that this division itself is quite conditional. It is the core of the concept that is of the greatest value for linguoculturalology, because concepts are concentrated around some 'strong' (that is, emphasized in terms of value) point of consciousness, from which associative vectors extend. Therefore, the core of the concept consists of the most relevant associations for the speakers of the language, and the periphery (periphery) consists of less relevant associations. Of course, the speaker does not think about this when he expresses the concept through language units at a specific moment of speech. Depending on the location of the concept, it can be represented by a core element or a sign very far from the core, and in this case the speaker thinks about the fuller conveying of the idea and the accurate understanding by the addressee.

Declaration by Authors

Acknowledgement: None

Source of Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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How to cite this article: Nargiz Chingiz Pashazade. Formation, nature and structure of the concept. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2024; 11(5): 648-653. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20240576>
