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Cognitive Linguistics And Its Main Terms

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Abstract: This article explores and examines the emergence of the term cognitive linguistics within Uzbek, Russian and English linguistic studies, highlighting its vital concepts and their significance.

Introduction: Within the field of cognitive attention, this term refers to the study of how language participates in the conceptualization of the world, how linguistic structures interact with cognitive mechanisms, and how language and thought jointly influence learning processes. The emergence of this term in modern linguistic scholarship dates back to the early 1970s, coinciding with the rise of cognitive sciences. Its theoretical foundations were substantially elaborated in the 1980s by leading representatives of cognitive linguistics such as George Lakoff, Ronald Langacker, and Leonard Talmy. Their works established a new paradigm that placed human cognition—not isolated linguistic forms—at the center of linguistic inquiry.

Within this paradigm, a variety of notions such as concept, conceptualization, subconcept, frame, scenario, and script have become essential analytical tools for understanding the cognitive essence of linguistic meaning.

Conceptualization refers to the mental process through which external reality is reconstructed in the mind in the form of cognitive images. This process involves the modelling of real or imagined objects, states, relations, and events through mental representations and symbolic structures. Conceptualization allows individuals to interpret the world by organizing experience into structured cognitive units concepts. Moreover, conceptualization stands at the core of cognitive linguistics. It refers to the process by which external reality and human experience are mentally represented, interpreted, and organized into structured cognitive units. These internal representations are not static "pictures" but dynamic mental models shaped by perceptual, cultural, and emotional factors. For example, the lexical item house does not merely evoke the denotative meaning of a building; instead, it activates a complex network of associations such as comfort, intimacy, protection, family life, and emotional security. This demonstrates that language meaning extends beyond lexical definitions and is deeply embedded in culturally shaped cognitive structures.

Scholarly interpretations of conceptualization vary considerably. Some researchers contend that conceptualization reflects the formation of new ideas and mental models, suggesting that linguistic semantics and conceptual content form a continuum without strict boundaries. Thus emerges the position that meaning is inseparable from mental representation.

Ronald Langacker, one of the founders of Cognitive Grammar, describes conceptualization as a continuous flow of perceptual and cognitive activity. According to his view, conceptualization encompasses the entire spectrum of mental experience, whether expressed linguistically or not. His conceptual structure emphasizes that meaning is grounded in human cognitive processes and perceptual interactions with the world. This insight underscores the central claim of cognitive linguistics: linguistic meaning cannot be understood independently of human cognition.

The study of conceptualization enables linguists and terminologists to uncover the deeper cognitive nature of linguistic meaning. Moreover, examining conceptualization across diverse domains—particularly in terminology—permits the reconstruction of culturally and socially specific world images. Langacker underscores the importance of this endeavor by

arguing that the complexity or distance of achieving a full conceptual model does not invalidate the conceptual foundation of meaning.

Eleanor Rosch's prototype theory shows that categories are not defined by rigid boundaries but by central, "best examples."

For example, in the category bird, a sparrow is a more prototypical member than a penguin. This principle extends to linguistic meaning and conceptualization.

In this sense, conceptualization is the dynamic process by which humans take sensory input and construct meaningful interpretations, activating networks of concepts grounded in culture, experience, and cognition.

In cognitive linguistics, concepts constitute the fundamental building blocks of human knowledge. They do not exist in isolation; instead, they form interconnected systems organized into categories. Categorization is the cognitive process of grouping entities based on shared features as a crucial mechanism through which humans interpret and structure reality.

As Kubryakova asserts, "the formation of a category is closely related to the emergence of a concept or a network of interconnected concepts". Categorization relies on identifying characteristic features that allow individuals to perceive particular objects or events as similar or belonging to the same class. Judgments about category membership are thus the product of comparing conceptual structures at varying levels of abstraction.

Conceptualization, therefore, includes not only the mental construction of entities but also the selection, ordering, and integration of information necessary for meaningful communication and speech production.

A subconcept represents a structurally subordinate component of a larger concept, contributing to an internal conceptual hierarchy. For example, the concept family may encompass subconcepts such as father, mother, child, grandfather, and grandmother. These subconcepts demonstrate how broader conceptual domains are internally differentiated and how their cognitive content is activated in specific communicative contexts.

R. Jackendoff and J. Lakoff introduced the notion of a cluster concept—a set of related concepts that are activated together as a coherent cognitive unit. This approach reflects the integrated and holistic nature of conceptual organization in the mind.

The concept of a frame, introduced by Charles Fillmore, refers to a structured set of knowledge necessary for understanding a particular situation or event. A frame encapsulates the participants, attributes, relationships, and typical actions associated with a given domain of experience. It activates not only the lexical meaning of a word but also relevant cultural, situational, and experiential knowledge.

For instance, the restaurant frame includes cognitive roles such as waiter, customer, menu, order, service, and payment. When a single element of the frame is mentioned, the remaining elements become activated automatically in the mind. This demonstrates the organizational function of frames in structuring human knowledge and facilitating comprehension.

Uzbek scholar A. Mamatov highlights that cognitive linguistics examines how such conceptual units—reflected in lexical, phraseological, and textual forms—convey layers of meaning that mirror human experience. According to his perspective, frames represent multi-component conceptual structures that encapsulate stable and conventionalized knowledge about objects and phenomena.

Given this, the study of frames is particularly valuable for analyzing artistic discourse, where the cognitive organization of imagery often relies on frame-like structures and script-based narrative patterns.

A scenario or script is a temporal extension of a frame, representing the sequential unfolding of events typical of a particular situation. Scenarios derive from cultural, social, and experiential knowledge and exhibit features of rituality and predictability.

For example, a birthday scenario typically follows the pattern:

guests arrive → gifts are exchanged → candles are blown out → cake is cut → songs are sung.

A restaurant dining script similarly includes the following sequence:

entering → being seated → viewing the menu → ordering → eating → paying → leaving.

Scripts function as cognitive blueprints that enable individuals to navigate social situations efficiently. They also play a crucial role in text comprehension, as they allow readers to infer unspoken or implicit elements based on shared cultural knowledge.

Cognition is a foundational concept in cognitive linguistics, encompassing the processes of acquiring, storing, processing, transmitting, and generating information. Through these processes, individuals form concepts, integrate experiences, and develop stable conceptual systems that guide perception and linguistic behavior. In essence, cognition provides the mental infrastructure upon which conceptualization, categorization, and framing are built.

Cognition is one of the central concepts in cognitive linguistics. It encompasses the processes of receiving, storing, transferring, and processing information. Cognition underlies the formation of human knowledge in the form of concepts and ensures their stabilization as part of the conceptual system.

Thus, frames, scenarios, and scripts function as cognitive mechanisms that reveal the interdependence of language and thought. They present themselves in the human mind as mental structures that organize meaning, experience, and social knowledge.

CONCLUSION

In summary, frames, scenarios, scripts, concepts, and subconcepts constitute essential cognitive mechanisms that reveal the intricate relationship between language and thought. They operate as mental structures that organize meaning, systematize experience, and shape social knowledge. Within the cognitive linguistic framework, these mechanisms demonstrate that language does not merely label the world but actively participates in constructing and interpreting it.

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