

## The Issue of "Concept" and "Conceptosphere" in Modern Linguistics

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**Abstract:** To date, in the field of modern linguistics, the question of what belongs to the concept of thinking and what belongs to the language remains open. On the one hand, there are views that there is nothing linguistic in the concept at all. This article analyzes the concept and conceptosphere.

**Keywords:** concept, conceptosphere, semiotics, pragmatics, linguistic culture, anthropocentrism, imagen, logogen

Nowadays, the term “concept” is very actively used in various branches of modern humanities that profess the ideas of anthropocentrism: in philosophy, psychology, political science, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, semiotics, literary criticism, etc. With all the variety of interpretations, the concept in these different scientific directions still has a certain common content component - it is a certain invariant of meaning, an elementary unit of information of various types, in a certain sense opposed to generally accepted forms of logical thinking - concept, judgment and inference.

In linguistics, the use of the scientific concept “concept” is mainly characteristic of linguocognitive linguocultural strategies of scientific research [Rakhilina; Arutyunova; Nikitina; Frumkin; Babushkin; Tokarev; Vorkachev; Zalevskaya; Karasik; Ruchina, Gorshkova; Boldyrev; Nikitin; Slyshkin; Karasik, Slyshkin; Kryuchkova; Sternin; Anthology of concepts; Guseva; Unsigned; Prokhorov; Pimenova; Radbil and others]. The importance of the study of concepts in modern language science is emphasized by the fact that approximately from the beginning of the 2000s. began to talk about the formation of such a special field of interdisciplinary scientific research as “linguistic conceptology” (“linguo-conceptology”) [Vorkachev 2005].

The first mention of the concept in the domestic scientific and cultural space dates back to 1928 and belongs to S.A. Askoldov-Alekseev: “A concept is an elusive flickering of something in the mental horizon that occurs with the rapid pronunciation and understanding of such words as “Thousand-gon”, “justice”, “law”, “right”, etc. <...> This “something,” without evoking any artistic “images,” creates an artistic impression that results in some kind of spiritual enrichment. <...> A concept is a mental formation that replaces for us in the process of thought an indefinite set of objects of the same kind” [Askoldov 1997: 267-269].

Interest in the concept was revived in the 60s. XX century in the famous work of D.S. Likhacheva: “The concept does not directly arise from the meaning of the word, but is the result of a collision of the dictionary meaning of the word with the personal and folk experience of a person. When considering how a word, meaning and concept are perceived, we should not exclude the person. The wider and richer the cultural experience of a person, the wider and richer the potential of the concept. And the word, and its meanings, and the concepts of these meanings do not exist on their own in some independent weightlessness, but in a certain human “ideosphere”” [Likhachev 1997: 281].

The concept, as it were, “grows” from the dictionary meaning of the word, “replaces” it in the speech of an individual as a representative of an ethnic group and acts as a result of the semantic expansion of the dictionary meaning due to the individual experience of the speaker and the culturally significant meanings behind this word in people's worldview. Concepts are open semantic formations with growing meanings. Everyone can perceive them differently, but there is always some invariant representation. It is thanks to the content reservoir of the concept that a person has the opportunity for verbal creativity, for discovering new meanings in a word and for updating the “emotional aura of the word”.

The introduction of linguocognitive and linguoculturological research tools into the domestic scientific environment is associated with the next stage in the development and deepening of the scientific concept of “concept,” which can be roughly dated to the late 80s–90s. XX century Two understandings of the concept—cognitive and linguocultural—are formed independently of each other.

Cognitive understanding of the concept is associated with the works of [Rakhilina 1989 and 1998; Frumkina 1991 and 1992; Kubryakova 1992, 1994, 1999 and 2004; Demyankov 1994 and 1995; Cherneiko 1995 and 1997, etc.]. The concept is perceived as a format of knowledge about the world, a tool of cognition - knowledge of the world, embodied in language. Compare, for example, the position of E.S. Kubryakova: “A concept is an operational meaningful unit of memory, mental lexicon, conceptual system and language of the brain, the entire picture of the world reflected in the human psyche” [Kubryakova 1994: 90].

In this context, the concept is understood as an elementary mental scheme that reflects the work of our consciousness to reflect reality; as an information structure that represents the experience of perceiving the world and knowledge about the world of an individual; as an operational and meaningful unit of memory. A concept is a quantum of knowledge about the world, a “clump of meaning” through which a person structures reality in the “mental lexicon”, “language of thought” (*lingua mentalis*) and organizes and directs its cognitive activity to master physical, mental and social reality.

L.O. Cherneyko understands the concept similarly, who connects the concept with a mental structure in which, through “grasping” by a linguistic name, different types of knowledge about a certain object or substance are, as it were, collected into a single one – “empirical knowledge, knowledge by opinion, knowledge by trust, knowledge by faith, that is, everything that is brought under one sign and predetermines the existence of the sign as a known cognitive structure, and also constitutes the volume and content of linguistic knowledge” [Cherneyko 1997: 287].

The concept in cognitive interpretation is a specific correlate of a more general, generic phenomenon, which A. Paivio called “mental representation”. Mental representation is any kind of units and phenomena of the mental, psychic plane, such as symbols, images, diagrams, propositions, scripts, frames, etc. Mental representations, according to A. Paivio, are divided into two classes – *imagens* (figurative), which represent something through pictures, drawings, diagrams, etc., and *logogens* (verbal), which act as a reflection in “mental lexicon” of linguistic phenomena – words, expressions, sentences, etc. The concept, in this regard, has a two-sided essence: “A concept as a unit of the conceptsphere may or may not have a verbal expression” [Popova, Sternin 2003: 36].

However, at one time A. Vezhbitskaya drew attention to the fact that the most significant concepts in culture are encoded in natural language [Vezhbitskaya 1997]. Also L.O. Cherneyko, following D.S. Likhachev and V.V. Kolesov, speaks of the concept as a kind of “memory of the word”,

which is updated at the necessary moment of operating in discourse with any meanings and is extinguished in the situation of ordinary everyday use of the word [Cherneyko 1997: 203].

Thus, in the cognitive interpretation, a concept is defined as an elementary mental representation that identifies in consciousness any segment of the external environment or internal world. It is not difficult to see that the concept understood in this way is, in a certain sense, opposed to such a standard and generally accepted form of thinking as the “logical concept.” Being a representation and not a concept, a concept is not necessarily a product of logical, rational thinking. It also includes an extra-logical, irrational moment; it can have figurative, evaluative, subjective-expressive semantic components, which is unthinkable for the concept.

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