

# PROBLEMS OF THE CONCEPT IN THE LINGUISTICS

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## Abstract

This article devotes to learn concept, it's meaning, structure and mental representation. Concepts are defined as abstract ideas or general notions that occur in the mind, in speech, or in thought. They are understood to be the fundamental building blocks of thoughts and beliefs. They play an important role in all aspects of cognition. As such, concepts are studied by several disciplines, such as linguistics, psychology, and philosophy, and these disciplines are interested in the logical and psychological structure of concepts, and how they are put together to form thoughts and sentences. The study of concepts has served as an important of an emerging interdisciplinary approach called cognitive science.

**Keywords:** Concept, linguistics, cognitive linguistics, cognition, theory.

## Introduction

The concept is one of the relevant problem and the smallest unit of Cognitive Linguistics. The meaning of concept is lighted up in cognitive science, metaphysics and philosophy of mind. From the ancient scholar Aristotle's work to "The Classical Theory of Concepts" the linguists know about the definition of the term concept. The next scholar worth mentioning about concept is a language philosopher Gottlob Ferge. He defined the distinction the concept and object in the language philosophy in 1892. Concept signifies any sentence that expresses in singular thought consisting of an expression that denotes an object (it can be proper name or a general term with the definite article) together with a predicate. This term is employed actively by the cognitive linguistics in its categorical apparatus as a missing cognitive "link" in the content of which the associative-figurative evaluations and understandings are included in addition to that notion. Today, the term "concept" is entered into various fields of linguistics. It is widely used in the notional system of cognitive, semantic and cultural linguistics. The study of the concept in modern linguistics is very importance. However, any attempt to comprehend the nature of the concept is associated with a number of the most diverse points of view. The intensive research of it in the field of cognitive linguistics has shown a great disparity in the understanding of the term "concept".

V. Evans believes that the concepts internally are organized by the field feature and include a sensual image, informational content and interpretative field. Sensual image in the structure of a concept is formed by perceptual cognitive features. These features arise in the native speakers' minds reflecting the environment through the organs of senses. Figurative features form a metaphorical interpretation of objects and phenomena. The structure of the concept is formed



by cognitive classifiers and are merged with cognitive features which vary in the degree of brightness in the minds.

Thus, like most new scientific notions, “concept” was introduced with a certain degree of pathos and sometimes through a cognitive metaphor: it was called “a multi-dimensional cluster of sense”, “a semantic slice of life”.

The theory and description of concepts must separate the contents and the structure of a concept. The concept structure includes the basic structural components of various cognitive natures which form the concept – the sensual image, the informational and interpretational fields. The concept structure is known as a series of cognitive attributes which belong to each of these constituents of the concept. The content of the concept is formed by cognitive attributes which reflect individual properties of the conceptualized object or phenomenon. It is described as a combination of these attributes. The core and the near, remote and extreme peripheries are the contents of the concept. It is intrinsically structured based on this pattern. Appurtenance to a certain content zone is determined, primarily, by brightness of the attributes in the consciousness of the respective concept carrier. Description represents ranging of the attributes from the core to the periphery from a much to a less clear attribute. The concept has internal structure and represents the result of cognitive activity of the person and the society. It bears comprehensive encyclopedic information about the reflected object or phenomenon, about interpretation of such information by public consciousness and about the attitude of the public consciousness to a certain phenomenon or object. The concept may reflect the level of public perception of a specific phenomenon or an object, but belonging exclusively to individual consciousness, being a certain quintessence of individual cognitive acts, the concept sometimes may not include such information. In the 90-s of the past century quite a few theories emerged about cognitive linguistics. Along with “concept”, they provided for active studies of “linguocultureme”, “mythologeme” and other similar phenomena. The concept often was identified as the representation and was interpreted as “algebraic expression of the meaning”, “culture keyword”, “culture cluster in human consciousness”, “a bunch of representations, notions, knowledge, associations, feelings which accompany the word”, “the main culture cell in the human mental world”, “knowledge about the signified in all its links and relationships”. A meaningful memory unit represents structured knowledge quanta of the language sign meaning. It is obvious, that the concept becomes clear only through the language, but from our point of view, the concept has yet mental nature and is actually nonobservable.

Meaning and concept coincide only in scientific terms that have no general meanings e.g. legal, medical or grammatical usages of the word case. In other aspects meaning and concept do not coincide:

1. Concept is emotionally and stylistically neutral. Meaning may include non-conceptual parts: *kid, gorgeous, birdie*.

2. One and the same concept can be expressed differently: *die - pass away, kick the bucket*.

3. The number of concepts does not correspond to the number of words and meanings. One concept may be expressed by several synonymous words:

*child, kid - infant*. One polysemantic word may express several concepts:

*draw - “move by pulling“ (draw a boat out of the water), “obtain from a*



source“ (draw water from a well), “make with a pen, pencil or chalk“ (draw a straight line). Some words do not express concepts at all: well, must, perhaps.

Words expressing identical concepts may have different meanings and different semantic structures in different languages: house – uy; blue - ko’k, havorang. In conclusion we can say that concepts are mostly international, meanings are nationally specific.

In contemporary philosophy, there are at least three prevailing ways, to understand what a concept is: Concepts as mental representations, where concepts are entities that exist in the mind. Concepts as abilities, where concepts are abilities peculiar to cognitive agents (mental states). Concepts are abstract objects, as opposed to mental objects and mental states.

In cognitive linguistics, abstract concepts are transformations of concrete concepts derived from embodied experience. The mechanism of transformation is structural mapping. This theory contrasts with the rationalist view that concepts are perceptions of an independently existing world of ideas, it denies the existence of any such realm. It also contrasts with the empiricist view that concepts are abstract generalizations of individual experiences, because the contingent and bodily experience is preserved in a concept and not abstracted away. When the mind makes a generalization such as the concept of tree, it extracts similarities from numerous examples; the simplification enables higher-level thinking.

The classical theory of concepts is the oldest theory about the structure of concepts it refers to as the empiricist theory of concepts, and it can be traced back to Aristotle. The classical theory of concepts says that concepts have a definitional structure. Adequate definitions of the kind required by this theory usually take the form of a list of features. These features must have two important qualities to provide a comprehensive definition. Features considered by the definition of a concept must be both necessary and sufficient for membership in the class of things covered by a particular concept. A feature is entailed necessary if every member of the denoted class has that feature. A feature is considered sufficient if something has all the parts required by the definition. For example, the classic example “*bachelor*” is said to be defined by “*unmarried and man*”. An entity is “a bachelor” only if it is both “unmarried and a man”. To check whether something is a member of the class, you compare its qualities to the features in the definition. Another key part of this theory is that it obeys the law of the excluded middle, which means that there are no partial members of a class, you are either in or out.

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