

## The conceptual worldview of Jorge Louis Borges' postmodern discourse

N. V. Chorna

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv  
Corresponding author. E-mail: natamar@i.ua

Paper received 16.08.17; Accepted for publication 22.08.17.

**Abstract.** The linguo-cognitive parameters of the conceptual worldview of Latin American writer Jorge Louis Borges have been researched. The conceptual worldview is a complex communicative cognitive mechanism of existing, preserving and demising cultural codes of a certain epoch. The conceptual worldview of Jorge Louis Borges' postmodern discourse uncovers author's cognitive system of artistic world through the study of text concepts which are characterized by key lexemes, conceptual metaphors and compositional structures.

**Keywords:** *conceptual worldview, postmodern discourse, conceptual analysis, concept, artistic image.*

Modern linguistics has made a methodological breakthrough that today allows getting a new stimulus, new aims and perspectives to investigate oral communication of the person in the society. Earlier the influence of philosophy and psychology imposed the humanitarian context on linguistics, but today the linguistic analysis becomes a part of philosophy and psychology. Defining the subject of linguistics as "linguistics has as its unique and true object the language envisioned in itself and for itself", Ferdinand de Saussure once created series of fields of science as psychology – social psychology – semiology – linguistics – internal linguistics – linguistics of the language – synchronous linguistics [1]. In modern communicative cognitive paradigm there is a situation when the movement from inside goes with reverse motion i.e. with the analysis of psychology as to the language, not to linguistics. The interpretation mechanism of postmodern artistic discourse is a cognitive activity as to defining the meaning of literary form, carrying out the conceptual analysis and correlating the conceptual structures with cognitive schemes of the reader. There lies the main peculiarity of new approaches to learning the language that specifies **the relevance of the research.**

**The purpose of the article** is to study the linguo-cognitive parameters of the conceptual worldview of Latin American writer Jorge Louis Borges.

**The working material** is Jorge Louis Borges' novels and short stories.

The theoretical basis of the scientific article have been the works of prominent Ukrainian and foreign linguists who studied the structural aspect of discourse and text (Claude Lévi-Strauss, U.M. Lotman, A.D. Belova, O.M. Kaganovska), semantic aspect (O.O. Solomarska, A.K. Moiseenko, M. Koseriu, R. Figeras, L.I. Saharchuk), linguo-cognitive aspect (V.B. Burbelo, L.I. Belehova, O.P. Vorobiova, M. Johnson, S.A. Zhabotynska, George P. Lakoff, O.S. Kubriakova, O.O. Selivanova).

**Methods of investigation** are based on the application of the conceptual analysis that explains the semantic structure of postmodern artistic discourse and determines the ways of its conceptual organization.

In the last decade of the XX century in linguistics there was a tendency to study the conceptual worldview of artistic discourse as a complex communicative mechanism, as a particular activity and a way of storing information, a form of culture and a product of a certain historical period, psychological existence of an individual etc. Within the cognitive-interpretative paradigm there is some semantic investigation to define mental informational structures objectified

by linguistic signs and renewing meanings on the basis of their analysis. The real investigation of artistic text can be with approach to literary work as a unified, multilateral and functional structure. O.O. Selivanova suggests three guidelines of systematic philological analysis of literary text – attention to semantic, contextual part of the text that is represented by textual category, to communicative deepness and esthetic quality of the text [2]. In modern linguistics the conceptual analysis of the text is considered to be the main method which purpose is to study the text in different contexts on the basis of interpretation of textual categories and components. V.O. Kuharenko considers the "concept" to be the main idea of the work as a leading category of artistic text. She claims there can be literary work without a plot, a topic, but there is none without concept. Everything introduced to the text functions there and forms the concept [3, p. 187].

The conceptual worldview of postmodern discourse is defined by conceptual analysis. Conceptual analysis, following the semantic analysis, uncovers the author's cognitive system at the level of his/her artistic work through the study of a real language and conceptual worldview comprehended by the author. In the study of conceptual worldview the difference between two ways of analysis is caused by the different levels of abstraction [4], because the conceptual analysis is viewed as the analysis of more specific concepts in terms of other more general concepts [3]. The semantic analysis serves to clarify the linguistic unit, specify the denoting, significant and connotational components while the conceptual analysis is connected not only with the interpretation of linguistic unit, but with the essence of verbal concept, the way of its organization in mentality, with developing principles of conceptual modeling of the meaning [5].

The sources of conceptual image of postmodern discourse are the universal concepts – *life, death, and love* – and marked concepts we distinguish using the advanced linguo-stylistical analysis of Jorge Louis Borges' artistic work at stylistic, textual, lexical, syntactical levels and decoding the informational array of literary work engaging background knowledge that actively run in cognitive formation and representation of the text. The level of text concept is actual because of meta communicative and meta linguistic functions that become the main sign of the development of genre-stylistic system in postmodern period. The concept is not only a way of higher expressiveness, emotionality, but also an intensifier of informational compression, because it is viewed as the general through the specific and serves to concisely realize poetic images in a small

text. The structures of delivering the knowledge are the ideal essences [6, p. 28]. The field of ideal is represented by different forms of reality in human mentality: sensual and mental images, ways of their operation and formation, intellectual values and orientation. The concept is verbalized and defined by the word otherwise its existence is impossible. Concept as a discrete semantic unit of collective consciousness reflected by the real and unreal world is stored in a memory of a native speaker in a way of designated substrate.

Since literary work is considered to be an author's worldview that reflects the specific perception of his/her reality, we can reconstruct typical author's individual features by reading his/her work. Cognitive model is an image of author's consciousness that is revealed by the reader-researcher on the basis of those verbal accents which have been placed by the author. Conceptual worldview is global, wholesome system of information about the universe that is being constructed and living inside the individual [5]. The formation of conceptual worldview basing on sensual, cognitive activity of a person is the result of conscious activity that allows using the system of knowledge more effectively, to realize one's life purpose. The image of the world is the product of perceptive, cognitive experience of the person. The worldview is not only the mirror reflection, but a certain interpretation. In our work we are trying to investigate the conceptual worldview within the basic concepts of Jorge Louis Borges' postmodern discourse. The purpose of the article is to sort out and carry out linguo-cognitive analysis of the strongest positions of the text and key words – lexical units of certain sense that serve to emphasize the main idea of the text, and the analysis of syntactic level of postmodern literary narrative. Within the conceptual image of Jorge Louis Borges' postmodern discourse we pick out the following typical concepts – INFINITY, ETERNITY, DEATH, IMMORTALITY, LABIRYNTH, LIBRARY, TIME. As long as key words carry out limited information in the text, they get the conceptual meaning and become conceptual components. Interacting with each other and creating fields and models they unite into textual concepts that actualize the personal senses of the author. The conclusions are based on the research of O.M. Kaganovska [7].

INFINITY. The concept is based on the usage of the vocabulary: “de un número infinito, interminablemente, interminable, obra de un dios, enorme, infinitesimal, iluminada, solitaria, infinita, perfectamente inmóvil, inútil, incorruptible, secreta”, which forms the main idea about infinite, cyclic manifold world: “Acabo de escribir infinita. No he interpolado ese adjetivo por una costumbre retórica; digo que no es ilógico pensar que el mundo es infinito” [452, c. 86-89]. The idea of the infinite world is supported by the following lexical markers: “Interminablemente; aire insondable”, “en el viento engendrado por la caída, que es infinita”, “la Biblioteca es interminable”, “libro cíclico es Dios”, “Miles de condiciones ...”, “... reducción de origen humano resulta infinitesimal”, “juno solo, aunque sea, hace miles de años!”, “así hasta lo infinito ...”, “bastaría un solo volumen, de formato común, impreso en cuerpo nueve o en cuerpo diez, que constara de un número infinito de hojas infinitamente delgadas” [8]. If the world is infinite then the time is infinite that creates intertextual message to the theory of cyclicity of time by T. D’haen: “Alguien propuso un método regresivo: Para localizar el libro A, con-

sultar previamente un libro B que indique el sitio de A; para localizar el libro B, consultar previamente un libro C, y así hasta lo infinito ...” [9, c. 134].

The realization of this concept on lexical level is found in the majority of J.L. Borges' works: “Biblioteca de Babel”... *hay lenguas de insensatas cacofonías, de fárragos verbales y de incoherencias*”, “Miles de codiciosos abandonaron el dulce hexágono natal ...”, “¡ un solo, aunque sea, hace miles de años!”, “Las ruinas circulares”: “nubes de alumnos”, “las noches” [9, c. 56], “El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan”: “... su antepasado no creía en un tiempo uniforme, absoluto. Creía en infinitas series de tiempos, en una red creciente y vertiginosa de tiempos divergentes, convergentes y paralelos. Esa trama de tiempos que se aproximan, se bifurcan, se cortan o que secularmente se ignoran, abarca todas las posibilidades” [9, c. 102], “Deutsches Requiem”: “... la infinita variedad de su mundo!” [8, c. 104], “La lotería de Babilonia” “En realidad el número de sorteos es infinito”, “Ninguna decisión es final, todas se ramefican en otras”, “La muerte y la brújula” “... una semana interminable ...”. [8, c. 133]. “La escritura del Dios”: “Vi infinitos procesos que formaban una sola felicidad ...” [8, c. 133]. The concept of INFINITY unfolds its meaning in the corresponding lexemes that are expressed by: 1. plural nouns: *miles, años, nubes, series, tiempos, procesos, posibilidades*; 2. adjectives: *solo, infinito, final, circulares, infinitas, paralelos, interminable*; 3. verbs: *abandonar, bifurcar, creer, aproximar, cortar, ignorar*. The conceptual disclosure of the notion of infinity is carried out through the perception of concepts ETERNITY – DEATH – IMMORTALITY.

The corresponding to the concept ETERNITY is the heading of J.L. Borges' short stories “Historia de la eternidad”, “La metáfora”, “La doctrina de los ciclos”, “El tiempo circular” [10]. The concept ETERNITY is identified as infinite time, cycle, roundabout, metaphor of time that are observed from the paradigm of their denomination: *eternidad, ciclos, circular*. For example, the short story “Historia de la eternidad”: “Eternidad es el tiempo circular de que está escrita la doctrina de los ciclos que en su parte se compone a la historia de la eternidad”, “Ninguna de las eternidades que planearon los hombres ... . es una agregación macánica del pasado, del presente y del porvenir. Es una cosa más sencilla y más mágica: es la simultaneidad de esos tiempos” [10, c. 11-15]. The conceptual information reflecting the general tendencies unfolds in the following nouns: *eternidad, tiempo, simultaneidad, insomnio, individuo, destino, historia, ciclo* та прикметників: *circu- lar, cíclico, universal, mágica, imposible*.

The concept of DEATH lies in the analysis of titles “Aleph” – “El inmortal”, “El muerto”, “Los Teólogos”, “Historia del guerrero y de la cautiva”, “Otra muerte”, “La escritura del dios”, “Abenjacán el Bojarí, muerto en su laberinto”, “Los dos reyes y los dos laberintos”, “La espera”, “El hombre en el umbral” [8]. This concept emphasizes its meaning in the following lexemes: *inmortal, muerto, otra muerte, guerrero, cautiva, laberinto*. All textual units are interconnected and are united by semantic and formal repetitions. The noun “death” is denoted negatively because it's often connected with war. Assuming death is not connected with war, then it's inevitable, expected from the point of view of any religion even if death is the transition to another world, another reality. If death is the transition to another

dimension, reality, then life and death are two parts of the whole, constant cyclic change of realities, the change of the reality of death to the reality of life. That is how the conceptual notion of ETERNITY unfolds into the metaphor "eternity-labyrinth of time" in the following titles: "Abenjacán el Bojarí, muerto en su laberinto", "Los dos reyes y los dos laberintos", "Aleph", "Casa de Asterión" [8]. Thus the conceptual field of the author's worldview is outlined INFINITY – DEATH – ETERNITY – TIME – LABYRINTH OF TIME – LABYRINTH.

Every field has its own configurations determined by new and archetypal poetic images. Metaphorical perception of the LABIRYNTH is possible because of the scheme-image of knowledge in the system of mental ability of a person. M.B. Yampolski in his "Demon and labyrinth" writes that labyrinth is a dark space where the body moves. This body builds his space with its movement and is not controlled by the sight. That's why the connection between discursive and sensual is different. Discursive is correlated with most regressive field of sensuality – tactile, with the world of cognitive schemes and routes, with diagrams. Labyrinth was built as a place of "sacrificed transfiguration", place of body transformation connected with bloodshed [10, c. 84]. A well-known Knossos belongs to labyrinths connected with sacrifice: "Cuentan los hombres dignos de fe que en los primeros días hubo un rey de las islas de Babilonia que congregó a sus arquitectos y magos y les mandó construir un laberinto tan perplejo y sutil que los varones más prudentes no se aventuraban a entrar, y los que entraban se perdían" [10, c. 38]. The determinant conceptual feature defined by the way of linguo-cognitive generalization procedure as prototypical is LABYRINTH – DEATH, i.e. if there is a labyrinth then there is a sacrifice, a person that gets into it: "Los dos reyes y los dos laberintos" – LABYRINTH-DESERT-DEATH [9, c. 157].

But the prototypical peculiarity of analyzed concept for a worldview of Jorge Louis Borges is a scheme LABYRINTH-WAY-INFINITY-CYCLE, i.e. labyrinth – infinity where everything repeats itself in cycles. For example, in "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan": "El consejo de siempre doblar a la izquierda me recordó que tal era el procedimiento común para descubrir el patio central de ciertos laberintos. Algo entiendo de laberintos; no en vano soy bisnieto de aquel Ts'ui Pen, que fue gobernador de Yunnan y que renunció al poder temporal para escribir una novela que fuera todavía más populosa que el Hung Lu Meng y para edificar un laberinto en el que se perdieran todos los hombres" [9, c. 102]. LABYRINTH-CYCLE – a story by J.L. Borges "Tema del traidor y del héroe": "De esos laberintos circulares lo salva una curiosa comprobación, una comprobación que luego lo abisma en otros laberintos más intrincables y heterogéneos ...", "... centenares de muertes, en patios cuyas formas y cuyos ángulos fatigaban la geometría, ametrallado por soldados variables, en número cambiante, que a veces lo ultimaban desde lejos; otras, desde muy cerca", "También había redactado una serie de poemas exprecionistas ...", "Minucioso, inmóvil, secreto, urdió en el tiempo su alto laberinto invisible" [9, c. 146], "El inmortal": "en esa rueda, que no tiene principio ni fin, cada vida es efecto de la anterior y engendra la siguiente, pero ninguna determina el conjunto", "postulado un plazo infinito con infinitas circunstancias y cambios, lo imposible es componer, siquiera una vez, la Odisea" [8,

c. 8 ]. LABIRYNTH-GAME: "... ciertas felicidades eran simple fábrica del azar", "... que la lotería es una interpolación del azar en el orden del mundo y que aceptar errores no es contradecir el azar: es corroborarlo", "... nadie había ensayado hasta entonces una lotería general de los juegos" [8, c. 66]. LABYRINTH-GAME-GASE – "Si la lotería es una intensificación del azar, una periódica infusión del caos en el cosmos ¿no convendría que el azar interviniera en todas las etapas del sorteo y no en una sola?", "los dictámenes del azar", "sus leyes laberínticas del azar", "una intensificación del azar", "nuestros historiadores ... han inventado un método para corregir el azar" [8, c. 69]. LABYRINTH-DREAM, as the state in a different world, as a metaphor of life: "ese caliente laberinto de tigres", "Del incansable laberinto de sueños yo regresé como a mi casa a la dura prisión" [8, c. 133], "... somos comparables al hechicero que teje un laberinto y que se ve forzado a errar en él hasta el fin de sus días ..." [9, c. 93]. DREAM – naturaleza dialéctica, materia, fantasma, hombre, dios, tarea, relato. At a lexical level a concept of a dream is defined by adjectives which give stylistic emphasis to the whole artistic image: caótico, dialéctico, incoherente, vertiginoso, ilusorio, divino, fantástico, enigmático.

Conceptual unfolding of the image of LABYRINTH is impossible without the reference to the concept of LIBRARY that is a basic artistic image of writer's individual picture of the world and the bearer of the conceptual information. The concept LIBRARY is presented as an adventure into the labyrinth. Analyzing the story "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan" and "La Biblioteca de Babel" we encounter a conceptual picture of the possible world where the world is a labyrinth-library, "garden where all the paths scatter", the person wonders searching for one's inner self "Me" that creates a conceptual metaphor – "life – a labyrinth, a garden with endless possibilities": "Llegamos a una biblioteca de libros orientales y occidentales."; "Gobernador de su provincia natal, doctor en astronomía, en astrología y en la interpretación infatigable de los libros canónicos, ajedrecistas, famoso poeta y calígrafo: todo lo abandonó para componer un libro y un laberinto" [9, c. 49].

Unfolding of textual concept of LIBRARY is based on using the vocabulary: "de un número infinito, interminablemente, interminable, obra de un dios, enorme, infinitesimal, iluminada, solitaria, infinita, perfectamente inmóvil, inútil, incorruptible, secreta", that creates the main idea about the endless, cyclic world repeating itself millions of times: "Acabo de escribir infinita. No he interpolado ese adjetivo por una costumbre retórica; digo que no es ilógico pensar que el mundo es infinito" [8, c. 86-89]. The thesis about the endless world is supported by lexical markers: "Interminablemente; aire insondable", "en el viento engendrado por la caída, que es infinita", "la Biblioteca es interminable", "libro cíclico es Dios", "Miles de condiciones ...", "... reducción de origen humano resulta infinitesimal", "¡uno solo, aunque sea, hace miles de años!", "así hasta lo infinito ...", "bastaría un solo volumen, de formato común, impreso en cuerpo nueve o en cuerpo diez, que constara de un número infinito de hojas infinitamente delgadas" [8, 9, 10]. If the world is endless then the time is endless that creates an intertextual reference to the theory of cyclicity by T.Danna: "Alguien propuso un método regresivo: Para localizar el libro A, consultar previamente

un libro B que indique el sitio de A; para localizar el libro B, consultar previamente un libro C, y así hasta lo infinito...” [8, c. 134]. Any system of beliefs or thinking is viewed by J.L. Borges as an intellectual formation, artificial order imposed on what could be chaos instead. All texts are effective (or not effective) and there is no hierarchy, no human’s hierarchy can get the superiority over another one: “... cada ejemplo es único, irremplazable, pero (como la Biblioteca es total) hay siempre varios centenares de miles de facsímiles imperfectos: de obras que no difieren sino por una letra o por una coma” [9, c. 92].

For example, in the story “La biblioteca de Babel”, using the main conception of his creative work that life is a universe, i.e. space that has other worlds repeating themselves, J.L. Borges creates a cognitive paradigm of his discourse – LIBRARY – BOOK – LABYRINTH – UNIVERSE – GOD, where the parts can change their places creating new possibilities for imagination: “... he peregrinado en busca de un libro, acaso del catálogo de catálogos”, “Ese libro cíclico es Dios”, “Este pensador observó que todos los libros, por diversos que sean, constan de elementos iguales: el espacio, el punto, la coma, las veintidós letras del alfabeto. También alegó un hecho que todos los viajeros han confirmado: no hay, en la vasta Biblioteca, dos libros idénticos. De esas premisas incontro-

vertibles dedujo que la Biblioteca es total y que sus anaqueles registran todas las posibles combinaciones de los veintitantos símbolos ortográficos (número, aunque vastísimo, no infinito) o sea todo lo que es doble expresar: en todos los idiomas” [9, c. 94-95]. LIBRARY is a typical conceptual symbol of J.L. Borges artistic discourse. The concept of LIBRARY is observed as artistic image that embodies natural possibility of a person to see another reality or to approach it that is presented in the following verbs: mirar, publicar, descubrir, ocultar, saber.

The artistic text is viewed as an integral formation that realizes different means of oral and mental levels in the study of conceptual worldview. In the conceptual worldview of postmodern discourse the natural substratum to the linguistic and mental scheme transfers the accent either to psychoanalysis or the personality of an author or a reader. The level of text concept is actual thanks to meta communicational or meta linguistic functions. The concept is not only the means of higher expressiveness, emotionality, but also the means of intensifier in the compression of information. The detected concepts are not only the basis to the formation of the conceptual worldview of J.L. Borges, but also the key components of the conceptual worldview of the postmodern discourse in general.

#### ЛІТЕРАТУРА

1. Соссюр Ф. де. Заметки по общей лингвистике / Ф. де. Соссюр. – М.: Прогресс, 1990. – 280 с.
2. Селиванова Е.А. Основы лингвистической теории текста и коммуникации: [монограф. учебн. пособие] / Елена Александровна Селиванова. – К.: Фитосоциоцентр, 2002. – 336 с.
3. Кухаренко В.А. Интерпретация текста / В.А. Кухаренко. – М.: Просвещение, 1999. – 192 с.
4. Гурко Е. Деконструкция. Тексты и интерпретация / Е. Гурко, Ж. Деррида. – Минск, 2001. – 400 с.
5. Залевская А.А. Текст и его понимание / Александра Александровна Залевская. – Тверь: Тверск. гос. ун-т, 2001. – 177 с.
6. Бабушкин А.П. Типы концептов в лексико-фразеологической семантике языка / А.П. Бабушкин. – Воронеж: Изд-во Воронеж. ун-та, 1996. – 178 с.
7. Кагановська О.М. Текстові концепти художньої прози: [монографія] / Олена Марківна Кагановська. – К.: Вид. центр Київськ. нац. лінгв. ун-ту, 2002. – 292 с.
8. Borges Jorge Luis. El Aleph / Jorge Luis Borges. – Madrid: Biblioteca Borges Alianza Editorial, 2004. – 201 p.
9. Borges Jorge Luis. Ficciones / Jorge Luis Borges. – Madrid: Biblioteca Borges Alianza Editorial, 1999. – 219 p.
10. Borges Jorge Luis. Historia de la eternidad / Jorge Luis Borges. – Madrid: Biblioteca Borges Alianza Editorial, 2004. – 176 p.

#### REFERENCES

1. Saussure, Ferdinand de. Course in General Linguistics. / Ferdinand de Saussure. – New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.
2. Selivanova, Ye.A. Fundamental of Linguistic Theory of the Text and Communication: Monographic textbook. / Yelena Aleksandrovna Selivanova. – Kiev, 2002. – 336 p.
3. Kujarenko V.A. Interpretation of Text. / V.A. Kujarenko. – Moscow: Prosveshenie, 1999. – p. 192.
4. Gurko E. Deconstruction: Texts and Interpretation. / Elena Gurko, Jacques Derrida. – Minsk, 2001. – 400 p.
5. Zalevskaya A.A. Text and Interpretation / Aleksandra Aleksandrovna Zalevskaya. – Tver: Tver national University, 2001. – 177 p.
6. Babuschkin A.P. Types of Concepts in the Lexical and Phraseological Semantic Language / A.P. Babuschkin. – Voronezh: Voronezh State University, 1996. – 178 p.
7. Kaganovska O.M. Textual concept of Literary Prose: Cognitive and Communicative Dynamics. / Olena Markivna Kaganovska. – Kyiv, Kyiv National Linguistic University, 2002. – 292 p.
8. Borges J.L. Aleph / Jorge Luis Borges. – Madrid: Library Borges Alianza Publishing House, 2004. – 201 p.
9. Borges J.L. Ficciones / Jorge Luis Borges. – Madrid: Library Borges Alianza Publishing House, 1999. – 219 p.
10. Borges J.L. A History of Eternity / Jorge Luis Borges. – Madrid: Library Borges Alianza Publishing House, 2004. – 176 p.

#### Концептуальная картина мира постмодерного дискурса Хорхе Луиса Борхеса

Н. В. Черная

**Аннотация.** Статья посвящается исследованию лингвокогнитивных параметров выражения концептуальной картины мира латиноамериканского писателя Хорхе Луиса Борхеса. Концептуальная картина мира – это сложный коммуникативно-когнитивный механизм существования, сохранения и передачи культурных кодов определенной эпохи. Концептуальная картина мира постмодерного дискурса Хорхе Луиса Борхеса раскрывает когнитивно-авторскую систему построения художественного мира через изучение текстовых концептов, которые характеризуются ключевыми лексемами, концептуальными метафорами и композиционными структурами.

**Ключевые слова:** концептуальная картина мира, постмодерный дискурс, концептуальный анализ, концепт, художественный образ.