

The concept as a linguistic and semiotic way of representation of culture

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Abstract. The paper deals with the concept as a productive linguistic and semiotic way of representation and interpretation of culture. Culture is considered as a set of concepts and relations between them. The concept is defined as key word of culture. The concepts form the spheres of concepts, which could be called as “the language picture of the world”. The language pictures of the world represent the culture values of every nation. The concept is relevant to the culture on the three levels: consciousness, culture and language.

Keywords: *Concept, culture, sphere of concept, language picture of the world, nation.*

Introduction. The studying of the phenomenon of the concept becomes increasingly important in modern linguistics and semiotic. This phenomenon is the area of focus of both domestic and foreign researchers. An important aspect of modern conceptual analysis is the definition of the relationship between the concept and culture. Despite the relevance of this issue, there is a very small number of researches, which are devoted to the analysis of this aspect, which determines the relevance of the study.

The goals of the paper are:

- to describe the concept as a linguistic and semiotic way of representation of culture;
- to define the concept of “culture”;
- to represent the concept of “language picture of the world”.

Materials and methods. Methods of research represent a specific set of methods, research methods, and principles of knowledge, which are used in a particular science. In this paper the following methods and approaches of theoretical knowledge are used: analysis and synthesis of information.

A brief review of publications on the subject. Few attempts have been made to describe the concept as a linguistic and semiotic way of representation of culture, but in aspects of another studies. Let’s have a look on it in details. The researcher Yu. Yu. Stepanov has investigated the concept as a component of a culture. He has determined the interaction between culture and concept [0, 0].

The interaction between culture and concept was also noted by the researches V. I. Karasik and G. G. Slyshkin. The results of their work show that every culture determines the concept [0, 0].

According to the opinion of A. Vezhbytska [1], the concept defines the culture, it forms the central points of culture.

Results and discussion. The concept is considered as a productive linguistic and semiotic way of representation and interpretation of culture. In modern linguistics, this fact is explained by the fact that language is the key to the nature of human intellection and psyche. The studying of the concept – is the way of understanding the principles of the cultural structure of every nation, forasmuch as the concept is a set of emotive, cognitive, psychological and behavioural stereotypes of the nation.

According to the opinion of Yu. Yu. Stepanov, culture

is a set of concepts and relations between them [39, p. 40].

V. I. Karasik and G. G. Slyshkin speak about the relationship between the concept and culture. According to their opinion, every culture determines the concept. The researchers are of the persuasion that the concept is a mental projection of cultural elements [2, p. 76].

The researcher A. Vezhbytska [1] does not use the “concept” as a scientific term. The researcher introduces this definition as the “key words of culture”. “Key words are those words that are important and defining for a particular culture” [1, p. 35]. These words can be described as the central points which group cultural areas.

According to research of A. Vezhbytska, cultural concepts are the words that give a substantial, not trivial, unique information about particular culture. Thus, it is possible to note that every culture has the own specific cultural concepts, because all cultures and language pictures of the world are different in traditions, social structure, cultural characteristics, everyday life, own dishes, etc. Cultural concepts are stored in the collective consciousness of each particular nation. They form the sphere of the concept. An alternative to the definition of the “conceptual sphere” can be considered the definition of “language picture of the world”.

The definition of the “picture of the world” is fundamental. It refers to the concepts that represent the specificity of human existence. It is impossible to understand the world without understanding the language. Thus, forming in the consciousness of every nation, the language picture of the world forms represents the surrounding reality.

The picture of the world is a global image of the world, it is the result of human spiritual activity. It arises in the consciousness of a person in the course of the contacts with the world around.

A person forms the picture, idea of the world through the knowledge of the world. Thus, a certain model, a kind of “model of the world” arises in consciousness. The concept “world” stands out from the concept “picture of the world” as the concept “world” means a human interaction with the surrounding reality, and the “picture of the world” is the result of perception, processing and individual interpretation of information about the surrounding world by human consciousness.

All phenomena and objects of the external world are represented in human consciousness by internal images in

the form of a semantic field, a system of meanings, therefore, the picture of the world is a system of images that are impersonated through language.

In the modern sense, the picture of the world is perceived as a depiction of the world order, a kind of copy of the universe, which includes a description of laws the

world is arranged, the way of the universe's existing, interacting, developing.

Accumulating the experience, people reorganize it into the concepts, which are formed into the system. Schematically, this process can be represented at the fig. 1.

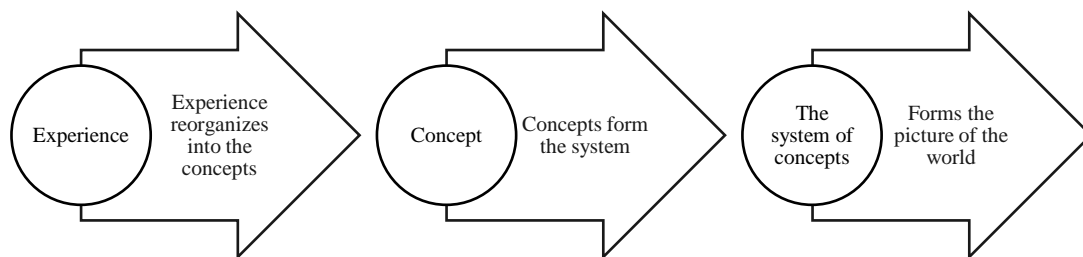


Fig. 1. – The scheme of the formation of the picture of the world

The main components of the linguistic picture of the world are concepts, therefore, the linguistic picture of the world and the sphere of the concept are alternative, interchangeable concepts.

Given the fact that the concepts of different nations differ from each other, it is advisable to conclude that the conceptual spheres are also different. The differences of the sphere of the concept characterize the differences between cultures, as well as the common features characterize the consanguinity of cultures.

The concept is the main representative of the cultural values of the people. Values are the regulators of behaviour, based on the reflection of the social and cultural significance of certain phenomena of reality.

Cultural values are culturally significant human attitude to the world. They form a system that predetermines human behaviour. Cultural values are reflected in the language. They are expressed by concepts – cultural dominants, which help to explain the features and specificity of ethnic mentality, especially the perception of the linguistic personality. Cultural dominants manifest as both cultural and individual concepts.

The cultural concept as a cultural dominant is closely related to the concept of individual concept. The individual concept arises in the consciousness becomes the basis for the formation of the cultural concept – the “consciousness of the nation”. The cultural concept can also become the basis for the formation of an individual concept. The cultural concept is perceived by the individual, comprehended through the prism of the consciousness. This interaction gives the rise to a new individual concept. We can retrace a certain tendency (Fig. 2).

Thus, the formation of cultural and individual concepts is a continuous process, which includes both of these two components.

The concept accumulates cultural values. The main features of the concept are complexity, versatility, mentality, integrity, conditionality, variability, limitation by the consciousness of the certain culture-bearer. It fixes the culture nonconformities of every particular nation.

This allows us to speak about the pictures of the world of peoples at the level of the content side of the conceptual sphere of speech, rather than its formal organization. The diversity of concepts depends on the way of life, needs, features of existence of a certain people.

Considering the structure of the concept as a cultural

phenomenon, a number of linguists divide it into three areas:

- the modern area;
- the historical area;
- the internal form, which is usually effaced in the consciousness of linguocultural speakers, but is fixed in the external (sound or graphic) form of the language.

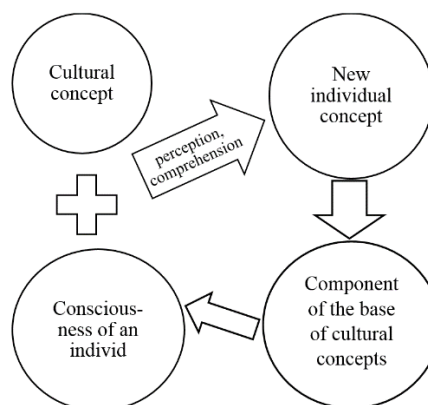


Fig. 2. – Interaction of individual and cultural concepts

The concept is relevant to the culture on the three levels: language, consciousness and culture. The relation of the concept with the three above mentioned spheres can be formulated as follows:

- Consciousness – is the domain of the concept (the concept lies in consciousness);
- Culture – it determines the concept (i.e. concept – is the mental projection of cultural elements);
- Language – is the sphere of the concept realization.

Conclusion. In view of the above said, it is possible to make a conclusion that the concepts represent the culture of every nation. They accumulate the cultural values and determine the differences and similarities of cultures. The concepts are characterized by complexity, versatility, mentality, integrity, conditionality, variability, limitation by the consciousness of the certain culture-bearer.

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