



DIFFERENTIATION OF TERMS “CONCEPT” AND “NOTION”

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Abstract: This article analyzes a series of terms – “concept”, “notion”, which are closely related to each other and constantly interact in modern linguistics. The applicability of this work is apparent, since its matter is characterized by a certain terminological ambiguity. Distinction of these terms is necessary to ascertain their roles in the acquisition, comprehension and expression of knowledge about the real world. The article reviews the main theoretic issues of cognitive and cultural linguistics and reviews the Russian and foreign literature on the subject of the study. Researchers observe both unifying and distinctive characteristics of these concepts. The author's opinion “notion” and “concept” are different terms. They are interrelated, but not equivalent. It seems reasonable that they belong to similar categories of thinking but are taken in different systems of relationships.

Keywords: Word, Lexical meaning, Concept, notion, English language, Russian language, Tatar language.

The term “concept” is one of the most complicated ideas in cognitive linguistics; it is quite difficult to be defined. In recent years, the term has been broadly interpreted and regarded as ambiguous in the social sciences and humanities.

It 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” “a gene of culture” etc. Today, the term “concept” is widely used in various fields of linguistics. It has entered into the notional system of cognitive, semantic, and cultural linguistics. Any attempt to understand and explain the essence of a “concept” leads to the realization of the fact that there is a number of related conceptions and terms, which are often used as synonyms, replacing each other in order to avoid monotonous repetition in real texts. Therefore, the majority of linguists point out the need to differentiate the terms “concept”, “notion” and “meaning”, because differentiation is necessary for establishing their roles in the processes of acquisition, comprehension and expression of knowledge about reality.

The representation of a concept in a language is usually attributed to a word, and the word itself gets the status of the concept name – the linguistic sign reproducing the concept content in the fullest and most adequate way.



The connection of concepts with the verbal means of expression is noted in almost all cognitive and linguistic-cultural definitions: “the notional (significative) image reflecting a fragment of the national picture of the world, summarized in a word “any discrete unit of the collective consciousness, which reflects an object of the real or ideal world, and is stored in the national memory of the language in a verbally designated form” and others. However, researchers have not yet agreed on the specific meaningful language units, which concepts are related to. Regarding the problem of concept verbalization, two statements deserve special attention. The first statement is that a concept always has its verbal expression, it is always identified by a word, and otherwise it is impossible to talk about the concept.

There is an opinion about absolute identity of a concept and a word. Any path to understanding always goes through denotation – “the mind has no empty forms, and it has no concepts without names” “for a man, every object exists only when it is comprehended by him, when it enters his mind and is expressed by a word. The second statement is as follows: “in the human mind, many fragments of reality are presented by images; many things can come in his view and be seen (and understood) without a special designation to him. Whole episodes unrelated to language often emerge in the human memory, which stores a variety of prints of the past – faces, objects, entire scenes” unit, able to actualize a set of different attributes. At the same time, it is independent of language, which confirms that verbalization is not a prerequisite for the concept existence.

Indeed, a concept sometimes has no direct correlates in the natural language (in this case, the term “lexical gap” is used). Then people have to use detailed descriptions, free combinations and explanations, which may denote the concept later. Such verbal gaps can be easily detected by comparison and analysis of lexical and phraseological paradigms in different languages [30]: for example, in the Russian and Tatar languages.

Although words and concepts materialize in the same sound (literal) complex, we must distinguish between these terms. We understand a word as a semantic content reflected in a lexical form and revealed in the dictionary entry, a concept – as a cognitive content in the same lexical form. Therefore, a word is the central conception of the lexical semantics and a concept – of cognitive semantics. Studying lexemes involves finding causes and ways of evolution in their semantics, as well as understanding of cross-relation with other lexemes,



analysis of the lexical meaning structure and semantic classification. Studying concepts aims to explore the language consciousness of native speakers. One of the most important differences between a word and a concept is related to their inner content. The inner content of a word is its semantics plus connotations, i.e. the set of semes and lexical-semantic variants plus expressive, emotional-evaluative and stylistic characteristics. The inner content of a concept is a set of meanings, the organization of which is significantly different from the structuring of semes and the lexical semantic variants of a word: a concept has layers, lexemes have sememes; a concept includes component- semantic features .

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