

Concept as the Basis of Linguistic-Culture

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Introduction

Concepts are central to linguo-culturalism, the interdisciplinary study of the relationship between language and culture. Concepts serve as a repository of cultural content and values, transmitting cultural identity from generation to generation. Each culture has its own concepts that are deeply embedded in its language and reflect its history, beliefs, and experiences. A. Vezhbitskaya has studied how language-specific terms reflect cultural norms and values, arguing that cultures can be understood through their key words [18,263]. For example, the concept of 幽玄 (yūgen) expresses a deep understanding of the beauty of the universe and the mysterious and unknown. The concept of yūgen expresses a deep and subtle feeling, and refers to thinking and appreciation that goes beyond ordinary perception. Concepts serve as cognitive units that emphasize the inseparability of language and culture in the formation of human thinking, helping us understand cultural differences and similarities. Y. Stepanov introduced the idea of the concept sphere and argued that concepts act as key nodes where language, thought, and culture intersect [22,44].

Language and culture are interrelated, and together they form concepts and enrich them in meaning. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that concepts are formed through metaphors that are deeply rooted in cultural and physical experiences. This approach explains how abstract cultural concepts such as time or morality are constructed through metaphorical systems [7,11]. Language is a repository of cultural memory, and concepts are its building blocks. They embody the worldview, values, and norms of a society. For example, the Arabic concept "بركة - barakah" refers to divine blessings, indicating the centrality of religious belief in the unique Arab culture. Yuri Lotman proposed that language and texts serve as cultural memory. In his work on the semiosphere, he shows how concepts function as units of meaning within broader cultural and linguistic systems. He analyzes how cultural concepts are encoded in texts and signs within the semiosphere. He suggests that religious and mythological symbols are carriers of cultural concepts [16,217]. Yuri Stepanov studies the constants of language and culture. He introduces the idea of conceptospheres, or clusters of meanings that reflect cultural priorities and values. He studies how the concept of freedom in American culture is the opposite of the concept of collectivism in Asian cultures [22,83]. V. Karasik analyzes cultural concepts as dynamic units within a language system that reflect the worldview and values of any language community [19,73]. The study of cultural and linguistic change reveals how language is reflected, shaped, and shaped in cultural contexts. A. Vezhbitskaya studied how the simplest elements of universal semantics and language-specific cultural scripts shape human thinking and communication in her theory of Natural Semantic Metalanguage. In her work, she connects concepts with linguistic and cultural phenomena [18,44]. Based on this, it can be said that cultural and linguistic changes affect the level of significance of concepts and the subtleties of content. K. Kramsch discussed how concepts serve as building blocks for intercultural communication. She emphasized the two-way relationship between language and culture, stating that language serves as both a carrier of culture and a means of cultural exchange, and revealed how cultural concepts develop and adapt in intercultural communication [1,44]. Kovecses, in the field of metaphor and emotion, studied cultural changes in conceptual metaphors and revealed the universality and variability of metaphors in culture [17,10]. Different languages may prioritize certain concepts over others, leading to differences in how people classify and think about the world. Languages develop specialized vocabularies to reflect particular

cultural priorities. For example, English speakers have multiple words and phrases for the concept of "democracy," reflecting how the concept is conceptualized and its importance in those cultures. Hawaiian may have many concepts that represent ocean conditions that are important to a maritime culture.

Z. Kovecses's research on cultural variation in metaphor has examined how linguistic metaphors reveal culturally specific conceptual frameworks. He has studied how metaphorical frames shape cultural concepts and differ across cultures. He has argued that cultural concepts such as love or happiness are metaphorically expressed and differ across cultures [17,35].

Cultural and linguistic variation is a phenomenon specific to each society and its spoken language, and refers to the diversity of languages and cultural norms that arise due to differences in geography, history, social structure, and interaction. These changes reveal how language and culture influence each other and shape human experience and worldview. Changes in language and culture, in turn, serve as the basis for the development of concepts or the emergence of new concepts.

Linguistic change is manifested in differences in the use of language between speakers or groups of speakers, influenced by factors such as region, social class, ethnicity, gender, and context. In modern philosophy, Ludwig Wittgenstein studied how language play is embedded in forms of life, and how linguistic meaning is linked to cultural norms. He showed that the meaning of language is determined by its use in specific social contexts [11,5]. Dell Hymes emphasized the importance of cultural context in understanding how language functions in society and introduced the concept of communicative competence [3,29]. Languages develop differently in different regions. For example, regional dialects of English (there is a difference between British English and American English). Ethnolinguistic communities adapt languages to reflect their own characteristics. For example, Singlish (Singaporean English) incorporates elements from Malay, Tamil, and Mandarin, reflecting Singapore's multicultural society.

Cultural variation refers to differences in the relationships, beliefs, values, and behaviors between societies or communities. Culture shapes how people interact with each other, organize, and interpret their world. For example, greetings include bowing in Japan and shaking hands in the West; dining etiquette includes sharing a bowl in Ethiopia and using individual dishes in the United States. Gendered language use can vary depending on gender, social roles, and expectations. For example, in Japanese, men and women have historically used separate pronouns (ぼく、僕 – boku and 私 – watashi).

Cultural and linguistic variation interact. Language, as a reflection of culture, reveals cultural attitudes toward nature, social relationships, and emotions. Language structures influence and shape cultural practices and norms. Languages with developed gendered noun classes (e.g. Spanish, French) can reinforce gender differences.

Language is both a product and a vehicle of culture. Boas, studying the role of language in shaping culture, argues that linguistic diversity reflects cultural differences [5,5]. We agree with Boas that cultural priorities and norms are often reflected in linguistic diversity and vice versa. Cultural and linguistic variation highlights the richness of human diversity, reflecting how societies adapt to their environments and histories.

Core cultural concepts. The study of core cultural concepts (often referred to as core cultural values or "cultural universals") has been the focus of scholars in fields such as linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies. There are cultural concepts that cover social and human spheres that are common to societies. One of them is the concept of family, which is expressed differently in collectivist and individualistic cultures. The concepts of honor and shame are important in Middle Eastern, East Asian and Mediterranean cultures, while the concepts of freedom and equality are central to Western democratic societies. The concepts of spirituality and religion are considered universal and are expressed in different ways in different cultures.

Clifford Geertz was engaged in the interpretation of cultures. Emphasizing the symbolic nature of culture, he said that concepts are intertwined with rituals, art and language. He argued that culture is a system of inherited concepts expressed in symbolic forms such as myths and rituals that transmit and perpetuate cultural knowledge. For example, he saw concepts such as "honor" or "purity" or "hierarchy" as symbolic systems. It has been suggested that such concepts incorporated into rituals help to transmit these ideas to future generations [2,33].

National cultural identity is reflected in the fact that concepts such as "freedom", "family" or "dignity" have their own interpretations in different cultures, and are often shaped by historical and linguistic contexts. Language is a mirror of culture, and vocabulary, idioms and proverbs reflect the cultural concepts and values of a society. Cultural concepts are often interconnected and form conceptual networks that express a collective worldview. Geert Hofstede studied the consequences of culture. He talks about the dimensions of cultural concepts that affect communication and knowledge transfer. He identified dimensions of culture that shape cultural behaviors and concepts such as individualism versus collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. For example, he said that autonomy and personal achievement are central concepts in individualistic societies, while collectivist societies emphasize harmony and family concepts [6,209]. Francis L.K. Hsu studied cultural differences between Americans and Chinese. They compared the main cultural concepts of individualism in American culture and collectivism in Chinese culture [4,76].

Bruner, contributing to the work of E. Sapir and B. Lee Whorf on linguistic relativity, studied how language affects perception and cognition, and argued that cultural concepts are encoded in linguistic structures [9,33]. The specificity of cultural concepts is that they are almost impossible to translate literally. They reflect the specificity of mentality and specific ways of interacting with the environment. For example, the concept of "freedom" is associated with human rights and personal autonomy in Western culture, while in Eastern culture it may express responsibility to society.

Wejbicka studied how linguistic terms reflect cultural concepts and values, arguing that cultures can be understood through their key words. Using its natural semantic metalanguage system, it has identified universal semantic bases (primes), such as "good", "bad", "desire" and how they are expressed in culturally specific ways [18,263]. Thus, concepts often serve as "cultural keywords" that capture basic social values. They are studied in cultural linguistics to illuminate what is important to a particular group. For example: In German, the concept of "Heimat" evokes a deep sense of one's homeland, combining the concepts of physical place, belonging and emotional connection.

The formation of concepts of time and space is associated with the formation of linguistic expressions of cultural ideas about time and space. Time in English is represented by linear metaphors, for example ("the future is ahead"). In Aymara, it is represented by nonlinear metaphors ("the future is behind"). The concept of place is expressed in relative terms (left, right) in Western languages, and in absolute terms (north, south) in Indigenous Australian languages.

Cultural norms and politeness are reflected in language. Languages encode cultural norms of politeness and hierarchy. For example, Korean has complex honorifics that indicate respect based on age and status, while English expresses politeness more through tone and expression. N. Ufimtseva has studied Russian cultural concepts such as "truth" (правда) and "justice" (справедливость) and their role in linguistic worldviews [21,4]. Gary Ferraro and Susan Andreatta have examined cross-cultural concepts such as kinship, religion, and identity and their linguistic expressions [15,252].

Mircea Eliade has studied the role of the concepts of "sacred" and "profane" in the formation of cultural and religious norms. In his research, he revealed that concepts such as "sacred space" and "ritual" are universal but culturally specific [12,27].

Cultural knowledge transmission. Concepts are crucial for the intergenerational transmission of culture and are a fundamental element of the cultural code. They help to encode shared experiences such as rituals, folklore and traditions, preserve them in language and ensure continuity. They are used to transmit moral values, social norms, myths and traditions. Jerome Bruner, studying acts of meaning, highlighted stories and storytelling as important tools for the transmission of cultural concepts [9,33]. H.K. Bhabha, studying the location of culture, introduced the concept of the “third space”, according to which cultural concepts are discussed and transmitted across borders [8,53]. Roland Barthes, studying how cultural myths (concepts) are transmitted through media and symbols, revealed the formation of collective cultural consciousness [14,107]. Joshua Fishman studied the role of language as a vehicle for the transmission of cultural concepts in the context of language preservation and revitalization [10,10].

Nikolai Tolstoy studied the relationship between folklore, language, and cultural concepts, emphasizing the role of folklore in the formation and transmission of collective cultural memory, and drew attention to the interaction between historical events and their mythological representations. He showed how specific cultural concepts were expressed linguistically and symbolically in Slavic traditions [20,151]. Pierre Bourdieu developed the concept of habitus, and emphasized how cultural concepts are embodied and unconsciously transmitted through social norms [13,72]. Jan Asman analyzed how cultural memory systems, such as written texts and oral traditions, serve to preserve and transmit cultural concepts over time.

Conclusion. The fact that concepts are linguocultural phenomena suggests that our understanding of concepts is shaped by both language and culture. According to this view, concepts are not simply abstract mental representations, but are deeply embedded in the linguistic and cultural contexts in which they arise. Just as language plays a central role in creating and communicating meaning, culture plays a similar role in shaping our interpretation and use of concepts and in providing the shared norms, values, and experiences that influence them. In other words, concepts are not universal or fixed; they are shaped by the specific ways in which language classifies and structures reality and are influenced by the cultural practices and beliefs of a particular community. This means that to fully understand a concept, we must take into account both the linguistic basis that expresses it and the cultural context that gives it meaning.

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