PHRASEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT

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Abstract: *The study of concepts occupies a central place in modern cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology. Concepts are viewed as culturally significant mental formations that reflect human knowledge, experience, and values. One of the most effective means of revealing conceptual content is phraseology, since phraseological units preserve collective experience, national traditions, and cultural stereotypes. The present article examines the relationship between concepts and phraseological units, emphasizing the role of phraseology in the verbalization of conceptual structures. The research highlights the cognitive and cultural significance of phraseological expressions and demonstrates how phraseological analysis contributes to understanding the linguistic worldview of a speech community.*

Keywords: *concept, phraseology, phraseological unit, cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, conceptualization, semantics, worldview.*

The anthropocentric orientation of contemporary linguistic research has led to growing interest in the relationship between language, cognition, and culture. Within this paradigm, the notion of the concept has become one of the key categories of linguistic investigation. A concept is generally understood as a mental unit that accumulates knowledge, experience, emotions, and cultural values associated with a particular phenomenon. Concepts are not only cognitive structures but also cultural formations that reflect the worldview of a linguistic community. Since concepts exist in human consciousness and are manifested through language, the study of linguistic means that verbalize concepts is essential for understanding the interaction between language and thought. Among various linguistic means, phraseological units occupy a special position because they represent stable expressions whose meanings often extend beyond the literal meanings of their components. Phraseological expressions preserve cultural memory, social experience, and traditional values accumulated over centuries. Consequently, phraseology serves as a valuable source for investigating conceptual structures and cultural meanings embedded in language. The analysis of phraseological units allows researchers to identify the semantic, cognitive, and cultural dimensions of concepts and to reveal how members of a particular linguistic community perceive reality.

The concept has been interpreted differently by scholars belonging to various linguistic traditions. In cognitive linguistics, concepts are regarded as mental representations that organize knowledge and facilitate cognitive processes. Linguoculturology emphasizes the cultural aspect of concepts and considers them repositories of collective cultural experience. According to Y. Stepanov, concepts are cultural phenomena that exist in the consciousness of speakers and influence their

perception of the world. V. Karasik argues that concepts contain conceptual, figurative, and value-related components, each of which contributes to the formation of cultural meanings. E. Kubryakova views concepts as cognitive structures that store and process information about reality. The multidimensional nature of concepts makes phraseological analysis particularly relevant. Phraseological units often contain metaphorical images, symbolic associations, and evaluative meanings that reflect different aspects of conceptual content. Through phraseological expressions, speakers encode their attitudes, beliefs, and cultural values. Therefore, phraseological analysis provides an opportunity to reconstruct conceptual structures and to understand the mechanisms through which cultural knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another.

Phraseology is traditionally defined as the branch of linguistics that studies stable word combinations characterized by semantic unity and reproducibility. Unlike free word combinations, phraseological units possess figurative meanings that cannot always be derived from the meanings of their individual components. Their semantic complexity makes them particularly valuable for conceptual studies because they reveal culturally significant patterns of thought. Phraseological expressions frequently emerge from collective experience and become fixed in language as symbols of social norms, moral values, and cultural traditions. The connection between phraseology and conceptualization is based on the fact that phraseological units represent linguistic manifestations of conceptual structures. Through metaphors, symbols, and evaluative meanings, they reflect how speakers categorize and interpret reality. For example, English phraseological expressions such as “the apple of one's eye,” “a chip off the old block,” and “born with a silver spoon in one's mouth” reveal cultural attitudes toward family, children, and social status. These expressions demonstrate that concepts are not abstract mental formations detached from language but dynamic cognitive structures actively represented through linguistic means. The process of phraseological analysis of a concept generally begins with the identification of phraseological units related to a particular conceptual domain. Researchers collect relevant expressions from phraseological dictionaries, corpora, literary texts, and spoken discourse. The collected material is then subjected to semantic analysis aimed at identifying recurring meanings and conceptual features. Particular attention is paid to metaphorical images, symbolic elements, and evaluative components that contribute to the conceptual representation. The next stage involves cognitive interpretation. At this level, phraseological units are analyzed as reflections of conceptual metaphors and mental models. Cognitive linguistics assumes that abstract concepts are frequently understood through more concrete experiences. Consequently, many phraseological expressions are based on metaphorical mappings that structure human thought. For instance, expressions associated with success, failure, love, or family often reveal underlying conceptual metaphors that shape cultural understanding of these phenomena. Through cognitive analysis, researchers can identify conceptual schemas and mental images that organize knowledge within a linguistic community.

An equally important aspect of phraseological analysis is cultural interpretation. Since phraseological units preserve historical and cultural information, they provide valuable evidence regarding the worldview of a particular society. Cultural analysis focuses on identifying social values, beliefs, traditions, and stereotypes reflected in phraseological expressions. Different linguistic communities may conceptualize similar phenomena in different ways depending on their cultural experiences. Therefore, phraseological units serve as indicators of cultural identity and collective memory. The cognitive significance of phraseological units lies in their ability to structure and transmit knowledge. They function as cognitive tools that facilitate categorization, interpretation, and evaluation of reality. Phraseological expressions often condense complex cultural experiences into concise linguistic forms, making them effective means of preserving and communicating knowledge. Their figurative nature enhances memorability and allows speakers to express sophisticated meanings through conventionalized linguistic patterns. The cultural significance of phraseological units is equally substantial. They embody social norms, ethical principles, and collective values that characterize a linguistic community. Through phraseological expressions, speakers inherit and reproduce cultural traditions, thereby maintaining continuity between generations. Many phraseological units contain references to historical events, religious beliefs, folklore, and everyday practices, reflecting the cultural background of the community in which they originated.

Comparative phraseological studies further demonstrate the importance of phraseology in conceptual analysis. By comparing phraseological units across languages, researchers can identify both universal and culture-specific features of concepts. Universal elements arise from shared human experiences and common cognitive mechanisms, whereas culture-specific elements reflect unique historical, social, and cultural conditions. Such comparisons contribute to a deeper understanding of intercultural communication and reveal how different linguistic communities conceptualize the world. The phraseological analysis of concepts therefore represents a productive methodological approach that combines semantic, cognitive, and cultural perspectives. It enables researchers to investigate not only the linguistic representation of concepts but also the broader cognitive and cultural processes underlying conceptualization. Through phraseological units, concepts acquire concrete linguistic forms and become accessible for scientific investigation. As a result, phraseological analysis contributes significantly to contemporary studies of language, cognition, and culture.

In conclusion, phraseological units constitute an essential source for exploring conceptual structures in language. Their semantic richness, figurative nature, and cultural specificity make them valuable instruments for revealing the cognitive and cultural dimensions of concepts. The study of phraseology provides insights into the mechanisms of conceptualization and demonstrates how language reflects collective experience and cultural values. Consequently, phraseological analysis remains one of the most effective approaches for understanding the relationship between language, thought, and culture in modern linguistic research.

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