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**LINGUOCULTURAL CONCEPTS: PROBLEMS OF STUDY AT THE PRESENT
STAGE**

Lee Jong Soo

ljsrus@hanmail.net

Ajou University in Tashkent (AUT)

Abstract: Linguacultural concepts are key notions that reflect the specific nature of a national mentality and culture, expressed through linguistic means. Their study is an important task in modern linguistics and cultural studies, but it is fraught with a number of methodological and theoretical difficulties. Linguacultural concepts, as universal structures of consciousness, manifest themselves in language as stable images, meanings, and value orientations, shaping national identity. They not only reflect but also actively construct reality, influencing the perception of the world and the behavior of native speakers. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of cultural codes and the underlying motives and mentalities inherent in a particular ethnic group.

Keywords: linguoculturology, cultural studies, concept, language, meanings, ethnicity, linguistic means

**ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ КОНЦЕПТЫ: ПРОБЛЕМЫ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ
НА СОВРЕМЕННОМ ЭТАПЕ**

Аннотация: Лингвокультурологические концепты представляют собой ключевые понятия, отражающие специфику национального менталитета и культуры, выраженные языковыми средствами. Их изучение является важной задачей современной лингвистики и культурологии, однако сопряжено с рядом методологических и теоретических трудностей. Лингвокультурологические концепты, будучи универсальными структурами сознания, проявляются в языке как устойчивые образы, смыслы и ценностные ориентации, формируя национальное самосознание. Они не только отражают, но и активно конструируют реальность, оказывая влияние на восприятие мира и поведение носителей языка. Такой подход позволяет глубже проникнуть в суть культурных кодов, понять глубинные мотивы и особенности мышления, присущие определенному этносу.

Ключевые слова: лингвокультурология, культурология, концепт, язык, смыслы, этнос, языковые средства

In the study of concepts, linguocultural concepts constitute the fundamental notions that reflect the distinctive features of the national mentality and culture as expressed through linguistic means¹². Their study is an important task of modern linguistics and

¹² Samsitova L. Kh., Baynazarova G. M. The Concept of the "Concept" in Linguocultural Studies: History of Development, Structure, and Classification. – Ufa: Bulletin of Bashkir University, 2014. – P. 1373–1375.



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cultural studies; however, it is associated with a number of relevant methodological and theoretical issues.

A particular difficulty in the study of linguocultural concepts is represented by their implicitness and latent nature. Very often, they are not expressed directly but are concealed behind metaphors, idioms, proverbs, and other units of language, requiring the researcher to carry out subtle analysis and interpretation¹³. Moreover, concepts are dynamic; they are transformed under the influence of historical, social, and intercultural contacts, which complicates their classification and systematization.

Methodological difficulties are associated with the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach that combines the methods of linguistics, cultural studies, psychology, anthropology, and philosophy. The selection of appropriate research tools that make it possible to identify, describe, and analyze the multifaceted nature of concepts is one of the primary tasks¹⁴. The development of a scientifically substantiated research procedure that takes into account all the relevant nuances remains an important issue.

Theoretical problems concern the definition of the very notion of the "concept", its relationship with other linguistic and cognitive categories, such as "notion", "image", and "meaning"¹⁵. The absence of a unified terminological framework and clear criteria for the identification of concepts complicates comparative research and the generalization of the obtained results. The development of a universal theoretical model capable of encompassing the entire diversity of linguocultural concepts is considered to be a promising direction of research.

Despite these difficulties, the study of linguocultural concepts opens up boundless opportunities for understanding the profound foundations of national culture and intercultural communication. It contributes to overcoming stereotypes, fostering tolerance, and enriching human knowledge of the diversity of the world.

The main problems in the study of linguocultural concepts are their definition and identification. In particular, the absence of a single, generally accepted definition of the concept complicates its identification in the text and in linguistic consciousness. The variability of interpretations (from a mental representation to a pragmatic unit) gives rise to the fragmentation of research¹⁶.

Speaking about the source base and methodology, it should be noted that the absence of clear criteria for selecting texts for analysis and the diversity of the methods employed (content analysis, discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics) lead to difficulties in comparing results and drawing general conclusions. Researchers often operate with different corpora of data, which makes their studies not always replicable¹⁷. Another difficulty of the research lies in the question of how to translate an abstract construct into

¹³ Lakoff G., Johnson M. *Metaphors We Live By*. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. – P. 3–9.

¹⁴ Evans V. *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. – Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. – P. 24–31.

¹⁵ Samsitova L. Kh., Baynazarova G. M. The Concept of the "Concept" in Linguocultural Studies: History of Development, Structure, and Classification. – Ufa: Bulletin of Bashkir University, 2014. – P. 1373–1378.

¹⁶ Evans V. *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. – Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. – P. 36–45.

¹⁷ van Dijk T. A. *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*. – London: Sage Publications, 2011. – P. 1–18.



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observable variables. There is no unified set of research tools for accurately measuring the presence or intensity of the concept under investigation in the text or in the consciousness of language users, which complicates quantitative research.

Another problem is cultural and linguistic specificity. The meanings and functions of the concept may vary considerably depending on the cultural context and the language system. Ignoring these differences when extrapolating the results obtained from one language/culture to others leads to distorted interpretations and an incomplete understanding of the phenomenon¹⁸.

The development of appropriate research tools for the identification and description of such concepts as "artificial intelligence", "consciousness", or "freedom" at the intersection of cognitive science, linguistics, and philosophy constitutes a complex yet highly productive task. The cognitive approach, focusing on mental representations and processes, makes it possible to gain a deeper understanding of how a person comprehends and categorizes the world¹⁹. Semantic analysis, in its turn, provides tools for studying the meanings of words and their interrelationships, thereby revealing the structure of the concept at the language level. The discourse approach, emphasizing the context and the social aspects of communication, demonstrates how concepts are formed, transformed, and used in real discussions, reflecting cultural and ideological attitudes²⁰.

The real difficulty lies in the fact that none of these methods, when applied separately, is capable of fully encompassing the multifaceted nature of the concept. The concept cannot be reduced to a set of mental elements, abstract meanings, or communicative practices. It is a dynamic entity existing at the intersection of the individual and the collective, the internal and the external, the verbal and the non-verbal. Therefore, researchers increasingly resort to combined strategies, striving to achieve a more comprehensive and complete description.

The combination of, for example, the cognitive and semantic approaches may make it possible to identify the universal cognitive structures underlying the concept and, at the same time, to analyze how these structures are verbalized and specified in different languages and cultures. Semantic analysis may serve as a kind of "map" of the verbal manifestations of the concept, while the cognitive approach may serve as a "navigator" helping to understand which mental mechanisms underlie the choice of particular words and expressions.

In its turn, the integration of the discourse approach with the two previous approaches makes it possible to move from static descriptions to a dynamic understanding. Discourse analysis makes it possible to see how the concept "comes to life" in real communication, becomes an instrument of persuasion, identity formation, or the transmission of values. This makes it possible not only to describe the concept but also to explain its role and functions in society.

¹⁸ Wardhaugh R. *Language and Culture*. – Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. – P. 10–18.

¹⁹ Evans V. *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. – Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. – P. 48–60.

²⁰ van Dijk T. A. *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*. – London: Sage Publications, 2011. – P. 45–58.



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The selection of appropriate research tools and their combination requires not only a profound understanding of each method but also a clear justification for the chosen strategy. It is necessary to substantiate why this particular combination of methods will make it possible to reveal the essence of the concept under study in the fullest and most accurate way, taking into account its specific characteristics and the objectives of the research. Such justification becomes a guarantee of the scientific validity and persuasiveness of the obtained results²¹.

Another important issue in the study of linguocultural concepts is intercultural communication. A comparative study of concepts in different cultures reveals difficulties in translation and interpretation. Universal notions may have different connotations and scopes in different linguocultures, which leads to intercultural misunderstandings²².

A significant influence on intercultural communication is exerted not only by vocabulary and grammatical structures but also by the deeply rooted perceptions of time, space, status, and personal boundaries that exist within every culture. For example, what is regarded in one culture as a direct and honest expression of thought may be perceived in another culture as rudeness or tactlessness. In its turn, an indirect approach intended to preserve harmony and avoid confrontation may be interpreted as insincerity or concealment²³.

The problems of translation and interpretation become more acute when it comes to "high-context" and "low-context" cultures. In high-context cultures, most information is conveyed non-verbally, through context, relationships, and shared background knowledge. An attempt to translate such a message literally, without taking its implicit meanings into account, is doomed to failure. In contrast, in low-context cultures, information is conveyed predominantly in an explicit, verbal form, which makes literal translation more effective but may lead to the omission of subtle cultural nuances²⁴.

Concepts related to family, friendship, authority, and success also demonstrate significant differences. For example, the notion of "success" may be associated with personal achievements and material well-being in one culture, whereas in another it may be associated with contributing to the common good, respect for elders, or spiritual development. These differences in interpretation may lead to false expectations, disappointment, and conflicts in interactions between representatives of different linguocultures²⁵.

Thus, effective intercultural communication requires not merely the knowledge of languages but also a profound understanding of cultural codes, stereotypes, and value orientations. Awareness of the potential "pitfalls" in the interpretation of universal notions and readiness to adapt one's own communication style are key factors in building mutual

²¹ van Dijk T. A. Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction. – London: Sage Publications, 2011. – P. 79–90.

²² Ferraro G. P., Andreatta S. J. Cultural Anthropology: A Perspective on the Human Condition. – Boston: Cengage Learning, 2015. – P. 267–275.

²³ Hall E. T. Beyond Culture. – New York: Anchor Books, 1976. – P. 15–32.

²⁴ Hall E. T. The Silent Language. – New York: Doubleday, 1959. – P. 83–101.

²⁵ Ferraro G. P., Andreatta S. J. Cultural Anthropology: A Perspective on the Human Condition. – Boston: Cengage Learning, 2015. – P. 301–315.

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understanding and achieving successful cooperation in a multinational and multicultural world.

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