

TRENDS IN CONCEPT CLASSIFICATION AND RESEARCH METHODS IN  
WORLD LINGUISTICS

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**Abstract.** This article analyses the new trends in the classification of the concept and in the methods of its study in modern linguistics. The article examines how the interrelationships between language, thought and culture are interpreted in foreign and Uzbek linguistics, and highlights the role of concepts and related notions within an anthropocentric paradigm. A comparative analysis is conducted on the universal and specific (national) attributes of the concept in English and Uzbek languages and cultures, using the concept of 'clothing' as an example. The research findings indicate that the concept of clothing holds a significant place in the minds of both peoples, but that its semantic composition and cultural connotations possess distinctive features in each culture. The conclusion of this work presents the significance of the conceptual approach in the study of language and culture, as well as recommendations for future research.

**Keywords.** Concept, language and thought, culture, anthropocentric paradigm, lingvoculturology, concept of clothing, comparative analysis, conceptosphere, cognitive linguistics.

**Introduction.** The issue of the interrelationship between language, thought and culture has held a central position in linguistics, becoming an important area of research for the discipline throughout the 20th century. In contemporary linguistics, an anthropocentric paradigm based on the human factor has become established, proposing the study of linguistic phenomena in relation to human thought, social life, and culture. The triad of language, thought and culture is regarded as an inseparable phenomenon, with language being emphasised as the primary factor reflecting a person's worldview and cultural experience. In particular, according to the theory of linguistic relativism, the perception and thought of the world by speakers of different languages also differ significantly. In other words, each nation depicts the world in its own unique way through its language, which lays the groundwork for the formation of various cultural principles [2].

The intrinsic link between language and culture has long been acknowledged in the scholarly works of foreign and Uzbek linguists. For example, while V. von Humboldt described language as the "spirit of a nation", scholars such as E. Sapir and B. Whorf provided scientific evidence to substantiate that language influences thought. According to N.S. Trubetskoy, "no word can exist without cultural connotations; that is to say, in comparison, it must have certain common elements of meaning"[3]. This idea highlights the importance of the national-cultural context in the meaning and use of linguistic units. Similarly, in Uzbek linguistics, the interrelationship between language and culture has been extensively researched, and local scholars such as D. Khudoyberganova[4] and M. Hakimova have particularly emphasised the expression of national thinking and mentality through language.

This study focuses on the perception of "concept" widely used in modern linguistics and on the methods for its investigation. In recent years, concept theory has undergone significant development in world linguistics, particularly in the Russian and Uzbek linguistic schools.

Conceptual analysis is regarded as an effective method for studying intercultural differences, identifying semantic shifts in translation processes, and illuminating the cognitive structures underlying linguistic units. The relevance of this article also lies in the fact that it demonstrates the scientific and theoretical foundations, as well as practical examples, of the harmony between language and culture through a comparative analysis of the concept of "concept" in Uzbek and English. In the analysis of the "clothing" concept, we sought to reveal the similarities and differences in the worldviews and values of representatives of two different cultures through a conceptual approach [11].

**Review of literature.** The relationship between language and thought has been extensively explored within the fields of anthropological and cognitive linguistics. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (theory of linguistic relativity) posits that the grammatical and lexical features of different languages influence worldview[2] . For example, because some languages have different systems for colour or kinship terms, speakers of those languages categorise these phenomena somewhat differently in their thinking. Thus, language is revealed not only as an expression of the human thought process but also as its shaper.

At the same time, culture is also a factor that directly influences thought and language. Through language, a person passes on their cultural experience, customs and values from one generation to the next. For example, in most languages, the concept of a "linguistic worldview" is used to study how the world is categorised in the language of each people. The integrative field known as linguoculturology is specifically focused on researching the points where language and culture intersect, analysing the national-cultural meanings in language units, the wisdom expressed through folklore and paremiology, as well as metaphors and symbols. It is noted that the ideas of linguists such as W. von Humboldt, A. A. Potebnya, L. Weisgerber, E. Sapir, and B. Whorf played a significant role in the formation of the discipline of linguoculturology[8] . In Uzbek linguistics, in recent years, scientific and practical conferences have been organised aimed at the joint study of the triad 'language – thought – culture', and a number of studies have been conducted in this area. In particular, in the scientific collections and articles entitled "Language, Thought, Culture", the harmony between national consciousness and linguistic expression has been explored on the basis of various materials [3].

Based on the theoretical sources above, to correctly interpret the meaning of language units, it is necessary to take into account the cultural connotations underlying them. Proverbs, riddles and idiomatic expressions are among the most vivid sources reflecting the relationship between language and culture. For example, in English, "*Clothes make the man*" is a proverb, and the Uzbek proverb *Kiyimiga qarab kutib oladilar, aqliga qarab kuzatadilar* (first impression are made by clothes, last impression by character) has a similar meaning, with both suggesting that people are initially judged by their outward appearance. However, some other proverbs reflect different cultural perspectives. While the English idiom "*Wolf in sheep's clothing*" warns of a false disguise, in Uzbek the saying "*Kalla boshqa, salla boshqa*" (*The head is one thing, the turban is another*) also indicates a discrepancy between outward appearance and true nature. So, the analysis of proverbs and idioms of different peoples serves to understand the cultural and spiritual content of the language [4].

In modern linguistics, the perception of "concept" is regarded as a key category for studying the structure of human thought and knowledge. One of the main principles of the anthropocentric (human-centred) paradigm is to study language as a product and a tool of the human mind. In this regard, cognitive linguistics investigates the meanings and functions of language in relation to the human mind. According to the cognitive approach, behind every word and concept lies a specific mental concept. A concept is a notion formed in the human mind, enriched with

meaning and cultural content, and is a wider and deeper cognitive unit than the lexical meaning. For example, while the lexical meaning of the word 'home' is a building, its concept in our minds may also include additional associative layers such as '*security, family, and homeland*' [5].

Linguists, when defining the concept, call it a "quantum of knowledge" or a mental structure. E.S. Kubryakova and her co-authors define the concept as "a quantum or generalisation of knowledge of varying content and form, a cognitive structure that forms in the human mind" [6]. The concept serves as an anchor point in the human mind for forming and organising various categories. It encompasses the object's essential characteristics as well as the associated imagery and evaluative attitudes. For example, the concept of a 'flower' encompasses not only the biological understanding of a flower but also its perception as a symbol of beauty, its symbolic (e.g., the rose as a symbol of love) and emotional value.

Concepts are complex and multi-layered in their structural content, and researchers study their composition by breaking it down into various components. A.N. Stepanov and representatives of the Russian school of conceptology emphasise that a concept has a primary (semantic) layer, an imagetic layer, and an axiological (evaluative) layer. At the same time, concepts are classified according to various criteria. For example, they are distinguished as abstract and concrete concepts according to their content, and as universal and nationally specific concepts according to their cultural significance. Concepts can also be grouped according to their features of expression in language. Researchers note that according to the manner of their linguistic realisation, concepts can be lexical, phraseological and even grammatical (syntactic) in nature [7]. For example, some concepts are expressed by a single word (for instance, the concept of "*freedom*"), while others are manifested more through phraseology (for example, the concept of "*happiness*" is often found in proverbs and riddles).

In the spiritual and material cultures of various peoples, the concept of "clothing" holds special significance. Clothing is a product of a universal human need and, first and foremost, possesses functional attributes such as protecting the human body and adapting to the climate. Therefore, the concept of 'clothing' exists in all cultures, and its core meaning is universal: it is associated with meanings such as covering, concealment (wrapping), decoration, and symbolism. The common structural elements of the clothing concept include units of perception such as types of garments (headwear, outerwear, footwear, etc.), their materials (cloth, leather, wool), colour, and size. In both English and Uzbek, a rich lexical layer related to clothing has developed, and in both languages there are common hypernymic concepts – words such as "*kiyim*" and "*kiyim-kechak*" (clothes). The concept of clothing is a mental unit occupying an important place in the concept sphere of the English and Uzbek peoples, meaning that this concept is understood and relevant to both peoples [6].

However, if one considers the nationally specific aspects of the "clothing" concept, it becomes apparent that in each culture this concept has its own distinctive semantic and associative colours. First, we can observe differences in lexical composition. For example, in Uzbek the names of national costumes are numerous: *do'ppi, salla, chopon, atlas, ko'ylak, lozim, paranji* and so on. In English, various types of clothing (often related to Western culture) are expressed through words such as beret, tuxedo, gown, kilt and veil. It seems that each language has its own specific names that reflect the clothing traditions of its people. These names often turn out to be realia concepts that cannot be directly translated into other languages and can only be explained descriptively. For example, the Uzbek "*do'ppi*" – the national headdress – can be simply called a *cap* in English, but that term does not fully convey its distinctive national ornamentation and symbolic significance.

The cultural facets of the clothing concept are also reflected in its history, social function and aesthetic perspectives. Research shows that traditional English (British) clothing has played a primarily functional role for centuries, and by the modern era, it has largely been preserved for

ceremonial and festive purposes. For example, in the UK today, only the Scottish kilt or certain official attire at the royal court (lords' robes, the Royal Guard's uniform) is referred to as national dress. For the general public, Western style of dress is the norm in everyday life – suits, shirts, jeans, and so on. Western fashion emphasises personal taste and contemporary trends, striving to highlight individuality through a variety of materials and designs. For example, in the English press or in advertisements, clothing is often portrayed as a means of self-expression, which is also an important attribute of the Western concept of dress [8].

In Uzbek culture, however, the attitude towards national dress is different: traditional garments still hold significant importance in certain ceremonies and life events. Garments such as the "Atlas" dress, *doppi*, *chopon* and *kimxob* are widely used at weddings and national holidays and are valued as symbols of national identity and tradition. There is a Uzbek proverb: "*Kiyimning yaxshisi- bayramda*" (i.e. good clothes should be saved for celebrations), which also shows that clothing is not only a daily necessity but also a symbolic and cultural asset. The chopon is an ancient Uzbek upper garment that not only protects from the cold but also expresses national grandeur. For example, in literature the chopon is often depicted as a symbol of hospitality and respect: there is a custom of presenting it to honoured guests. In English, there is no exact equivalent for the term "chopon"; it can only be described as a "*quilted robe*" or a "*traditional coat*". While fur coats are a type of luxurious clothing worn in winter in Russian and Uzbek culture, the English mainly encounter such coats in historical films or fairy tales, as they are of less significance in their climatic and cultural context. In Russian and Central Asian tradition, a fur coat was a symbol of wealth and status – for example, in Russian, a 'sable coat' (sable fur coat) was a sign of nobility. Although the Uzbek concept of "chopon" and the Russian "shuba" (fur coat) partially correspond, the English term "fur coat" is devoid of any specific national or historical context. Nevertheless, in Russian and Uzbek culture, the fur coat is also noted as a symbolic image of winter – for example, there are instances of describing the winter cold as "*po'stinni ichiga kirib olgan qish*" (*winter that has crept into the fur coat*). In English, however, a bitterly cold winter is described as an '*icy winter*' or '*freezing cold*', where the image of a coat is not prominent.

Another difference in the clothing concepts of the two peoples is their aesthetic and moral norms. In Uzbek culture, clothing is closely linked to modesty and decency: there is a concept of "*Yashirin kiyim – yashirin odob*", meaning that modest attire is approved in both women's and men's society. In English society, personal freedom and comfort take precedence in dress, although a *dress code* is observed in formal settings (for example, at work or ceremonies). At the same time, expressing social status through clothing is widespread in both cultures: For example, in English there are the expressions "*white-collar*" (an office worker) and "*blue-collar*" (a manual worker), while in Uzbek there is also the idiom "*yoqasini oppoq qilish*" (to be an official) or "*humo qashqa doppi kiygan*" (a respected person, where the image of the humo bird on the doppi indicates that it is worn only by dignitaries). Such examples demonstrate that the concept of clothing also possesses a social semantics.

As the above generalisation shows, the concept of clothing possesses both universal and distinctive characteristics, and its interpretation and expression vary from culture to culture. In English and Uzbek, the lexical-semantic field of this concept is broad and rich, encompassing a number of related semantic fields (for example, the categorisation of types of clothing and clothing-related phraseology). At the same time, each language has unique clothing names and expressions specific to that nation's way of life, which define the concept's national colour and attributes.

**Research methodology.** This research was conducted using a comparative-linguistic-cultural approach. As the practical linguistic material, units pertaining to the concept of 'clothing'

were selected from written sources in English and Uzbek – dictionaries, collections of proverbs, and literary and journalistic texts. In particular, the meanings of the word "clothes" and its related key terms were analysed using data from the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language (2007) and the Oxford English Dictionary. Additionally, a list of proverbs and sayings containing the concept of 'garments' was compiled from paremiological sources in both languages, and a comparative analysis of their content was conducted. For the corpus analysis, occurrences of the concept 'garments' (e.g., the word '*garments*' and its types, '*clothes*', '*dress*', '*wear*', etc.) were explored in a small-scale text (from various newspapers and literary texts), and their typical contexts were analysed.

The study employed a combination of descriptive and comparative methods: first, the composition of the concept within each culture was described, and then its similarities and differences were compared. Using the method of semantic analysis, the denotative and connotative meaning components of the "clothing" concept were distinguished. In studying phraseological units, attention was paid to the underlying metaphorical basis and cultural symbolism. For example, when analysing expressions involving the "headwear" component (do'ppi, shlyapa), contextual meanings that convey the cultural value of headwear (for example, not throwing away the do'ppi – to preserve honour and modesty) were explained.

Another important aspect of the research methodology was the integrative approach, which involved ethnographic and historical data alongside linguistic analysis. In particular, information on the history and traditions of dress of the Uzbek and English peoples was considered as factors influencing the formation of the concept. For example, historical facts were cited regarding the standardisation of clothing during the Industrial Revolution in England and the changing social function of national costumes; Similarly, it was noted that in Central Asia (particularly in the Turkestan region), under Russian influence, new clothing terms (such as 'palto' and 'kostyum') emerged and entered the local conceptual system[9].

Overall, the aim in selecting research methods was to achieve semantic depth and multifaceted evidence. For this reason, not only linguistic units but also the cultural codes and social contexts behind them were analysed. This allowed the concept of "clothing" to be studied not as a mere sum of linguistic units, but as a cognitive-cultural phenomenon.

**Research findings and discussion.** The analyses conducted using the theoretical foundations and methods outlined above revealed a number of interesting findings. Firstly, it was confirmed that the concept of "clothing" is an important conceptual field in both English and Uzbek culture. In the lexicon of both languages, several lexical-semantic groups can be distinguished that constitute this field:

- Headwear (English: *hat, cap, turban, crown*; Uzbek: do'ppi, telpak, salla, etc.);
- Outerwear (English: *coat, jacket, robe*; Uzbek: kurtka, chapan, kamzul, etc.);
- Underwear (English: *shirt, dress*; Uzbek: ko'ylak – in Uzbek, the word "ko'ylak" is often used in a general sense);
- Footwear (English: *shoes, boots*; Uzbek: etik, kovush, etc.);
- Accessories (English: *gloves, belt, scarf*; Uzbek: gloves, belt, scarf, etc.).

All of these categories exist in both English and Uzbek, demonstrating the universality of the concept. However, within each category, elements with national characteristics can be found. For example, in the headwear category, there are terms such as *the bowler hat* or *top hat*, which are specific to English culture, and have no traditional Uzbek equivalent (as the Uzbek people did not have such types of headwear). Conversely, the Uzbek "salla" or "doppi" are concepts that

do not exist in English culture; the word “*turban*” can partially convey the concept of a “*salla*”, but it is not an inherently English word, being a term borrowed from Eastern culture.

Analyses show that the core semantic content of the clothing concept – the notion of an “item that covers the body” – is almost identical and stable in both languages. However, the peripheral part of the concept, namely its figurative and cultural associations, exhibits cross-linguistic differences. One of the main metaphors surrounding the concept of ‘clothing’ in English is to imagine ‘life as a stage, people as actors, and clothing as part of the role’. For example, the expression “*to dress the part*” means to dress in accordance with a particular social role (position), suggesting that in the theatre of society, clothing is part of the set. In Uzbek culture, there is also the notion of ‘*dressing for the occasion*’ (for example, ‘*clothes for the place, coat for the lad*’), but this is not so much a broad metaphor as a simple piece of practical advice. Another difference is that in English there is the expression “*to wear the trousers in the family*” (to wear the trousers in the family – i.e. to be the head, to make the decisions), where trousers, as a man’s garment, have long been a symbol of authority; Such an expression is not found in Uzbek, and although the concept of a patriarchal society is similar, clothing is not referenced in its expression.

These findings confirm the importance of the method of conceptual analysis in linguistics. Indeed, to comprehend the entire worldview and the product of the national consciousness behind a simple word, it is necessary to study it in such a complex manner.

**Conclusions and suggestions. Based on the above analyses, the following conclusions can be drawn:**

1. The triad of language–thought–culture is one of the fundamental principles of linguistics research, and to fully grasp the meaning of language units, they must be examined within the context of this triad. The examples presented in this work (proverbs and phraseological units) once again confirm the inseparable connection between language and culture. Language is the product of human thought, reflecting the culture and mentality of a people[2] .

2. The concept of a concept has proven to be an effective tool in modern linguistic analysis. Within the anthropocentric paradigm, referring to a concept allows one to link linguistic phenomena with the conceptual structures in the human mind[1] . As we saw in the case of the ‘clothing’ concept, the conceptual approach revealed deep layers of meaning behind the lexical units of a domain and distinguished between national and universal features.

3. A comparative analysis of the ‘clothing’ concept shows that universality and distinctiveness are characteristic features of many concepts. In other words, while core concepts exist in the minds of every people (due to needs and experiences common to humanity), each culture enriches them with its own ‘colours’. Although the concept of clothing is functionally similar for both the English and the Uzbek, the surrounding associations, evaluations, and symbolic meanings differ. For example, while the English view clothing through the prism of fashion and personal style, for the Uzbek, modesty and national identity are of greater importance in dress[3] .

In conclusion, it can be said that the classification and study of concepts is one of the most fruitful areas of contemporary linguistic research, offering broad opportunities for the comparative study of different languages and cultures[5] . An analysis of a specific concept such as ‘clothing’ can serve as a model for the future study of other concepts (e.g., ‘food’, ‘home’, ‘beauty’, etc.) in a similar manner. Through such developments, we gain a deeper understanding of the common human experience and the unique national spirit that underpin the lexical richness of world languages.

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