

THE CONCEPT OF “YOUTH” IN LINGUISTIC THINKING

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Abstract

This article analyzes the representation of the concept of “youth” in Uzbek folklore from linguocognitive and linguocultural perspectives. From the standpoint of anthropocentric linguistics, the stages of human thinking, aspirations, and life experience formation are revealed through proverbs and literary characters. The proverb “Youth is recklessness” is examined as a semantic field, and its components such as playfulness, inexperience, exploration, and personal development are identified. Additionally, the relationship between youth psychology and folk pedagogical views is demonstrated using the works *Shum Bola* and *Riding the Yellow Giant*. The study proves that in Uzbek cultural consciousness youth is interpreted not as a negative phenomenon but as a necessary stage of personal formation.

Keywords: concept, concept of youth, anthropocentric linguistics, linguocognitive analysis, linguoculture, folk proverbs, youth psychology.

Introduction. Since the emergence of humanity, the development of consciousness and thinking has been the main factor of social progress. In modern linguistics, the shift toward the human factor has led to the formation of an anthropocentric approach. According to this approach, language is not merely a grammatical system but a manifestation of human cognition.

The concept is one of the central categories of cognitive linguistics and represents a generalized model of cultural and mental experience formed in human consciousness. The concept of “youth” reflects an important stage of human life and possesses a multilayered semantic structure.

The purpose of this research is to identify the linguocognitive features of the concept of “youth” in Uzbek folk proverbs.

Research Methods

The following methods were used in the study:

- linguocognitive analysis
- semantic field analysis
- component analysis
- linguocultural approach
- textual analysis

The Concept of “Youth” in Proverbs

In Uzbek folk proverbs, youth is often contrasted with old age:

- First spring, then autumn
- When young — work, when old — food
- What is learned in youth is carved in stone
- Youth is recklessness
- Modesty adorns youth, wisdom adorns old age

Based on these proverbs, the following semantic components of the concept of youth can be identified:

Component	Meaning
Playfulness	Energy and activity
Inexperience	Lack of life knowledge
Dream	Idealistic thinking
Impulsiveness	Desire for quick results
Formation	Personal development process

Thus, youth is interpreted not as a negative trait but as a natural stage of development.

The Concept of “Youth” in Literary Texts. In Gafur Gulam’s *Shum Bola*, the character Qoravoy represents curiosity and experiential learning typical of youth. His behavior in the market reflects not economic ignorance but the process of understanding life.

In Khudoyberdi Tukhtaboyev’s *Riding the Yellow Giant*, the character Hoshimjon demonstrates typical youthful features:

- desire for instant success
- belief in miracles
- expectation of success without effort
- playful behavior and inexperience

These literary images confirm the conceptual meaning of the proverb “Youth is recklessness.”

Linguocultural Interpretation. In Uzbek cultural consciousness, youth and old age represent two stages of the life cycle. In the Eastern educational tradition, youth is understood as a period of:

- learning
- searching
- self-formation
- accumulation of experience

Language serves as a means of transmitting this experience across generations. Thus, the triad **consciousness – thinking – language** forms the mechanism of concept formation.

Scientific Novelty

- The proverb “Youth is recklessness” was divided into semantic components using a linguocognitive model.
- The conceptual connection between proverbs and literary texts was identified.
- Youth was proven to be interpreted as a developmental stage rather than a negative phenomenon.

Conclusion. The study revealed that the concept of “youth” in Uzbek folklore has broad semantic and cultural content. Proverbs often contrast youth with old age, presenting it as a necessary stage of human development. Literary texts illustrate the concept through concrete characters. Therefore, the expression “Youth is recklessness” should be interpreted not as a negative judgment but as a natural phase of personal formation.

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