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Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Approaches and Concepts in English and Uzbek Languages

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the formation, development and significance of cognitive linguistics in modern linguistics. The author summarizes the views of English and Uzbek linguists on cognitive linguistics and the stages of its formation. Cognitive linguistics emerged in the 1970s as a protest against formal linguistic approaches. Its basis goes back to the development of cognitive science in the 1960s and 1970s, such as human categorization and gestalt psychology. Although the initial research in this area was carried out by a small number of scientists, in the 1990s the number of cognitive linguists increased, and the Journal of Cognitive Linguistics and the International Society for Cognitive Linguistics were founded. Cognitive linguistics is an approach based on general principles, views and hypotheses, rather than a specific theory. This approach aims to study conceptualization patterns, considering language as a mirror of human thinking. The hypothesis that language reflects the structure and properties of human consciousness forms the methodological basis of this field. The article emphasizes the inextricable link between cognitive linguistics and social, cultural and linguistic processes. This direction is developing in collaboration with various disciplines, including psychology, anthropology, philosophy and computer science, opening up new opportunities for scientific research. Cognitive linguistics is aimed at studying the mechanisms of storing, expressing and transmitting knowledge through language, which is of great importance in studying the grammar of thought of Uzbek speakers. The article shows cognitive linguistics as a product of interdisciplinary dialogue and determines its place in scientific research. This article provides a detailed description of the stages of formation of cognitive linguistics in English and Uzbek linguistics

INTRODUCTION

Cognitive linguistics posits that language reflects fundamental cognitive processes and is deeply embedded in human experience. Unlike generative approaches that treat language as an autonomous system, cognitive linguistics views language as integrated with general cognitive abilities. This holistic perspective has fueled diverse research, spanning from metaphor theory to construction grammar, and provided insights into how language shapes and is shaped by cognition.

Cognitive linguistics is one of the contemporary directions in linguistics, emerging in the early 1970s as a response to dissatisfaction with formal approaches to language. The field builds upon advancements in modern cognitive science during the 1960s-1970s, especially studies on human categorization and theories like Gestalt psychology. While initial research was conducted by a small number of scholars in the 1970s and 1980s, the early 1990s saw a significant increase in researchers who identified themselves as “cognitive linguists.” The establishment of the journal *Cognitive Linguistics* in 1989-1990 and the founding of the International Cognitive Linguistics Society marked important milestones. Renowned cognitive linguist Ronald Langacker described this period as the “formation of cognitive linguistics as a broad and distinctive intellectual movement.”

Since cognitive linguistics is not a single, unified theory, it is often described as a “movement” or “initiative.” Instead, it adopts a collection of general guiding principles, assumptions, and perspectives. This has led to the development of complementary, partially overlapping (and sometimes competing) theories.

Like other linguists, cognitive linguists study language for its uniqueness, aiming to describe and explain its systematic nature, structure, functions, and how these functions are realized through linguistic systems. However, a distinctive aspect of cognitive linguistics is its premise that language reflects patterns of thought. Studying language from this perspective means examining patterns of conceptualization. Language serves as a mirror of

cognitive functions, providing insights into the nature, structure, and organization of thought and ideas.

The main distinction between cognitive linguistics and other linguistic approaches lies in its view that language mirrors certain fundamental characteristics and design features of human cognition. This assumption profoundly influences the methodologies, techniques, and models developed within cognitive linguistics. For example, one critical criterion for evaluating language models in this framework is their psychological plausibility.

METHODS

The term “cognitive linguistics” originates from the English word “cognitive,” meaning “related to knowing” (e.g., “to cognize – to know, understand, perceive,” “cognition – the process of knowing”) [7]. It is well-established that understanding and perceiving the world and reality is a complex process. While this process is sometimes directly linked to acts of comprehension or understanding, scientific evidence confirms that even animals possess basic abilities to analyze, synthesize, and generalize information, albeit in simpler forms.

Thus, when discussing cognitive activity, one should not limit it solely to cogitation (from Latin) – “thought, intellect.” Instead, consideration should also include the cogitatorium – the person engaging in cognitive activity and all associated non-mental (social, cultural, linguistic) processes. It is essential to recognize that thought results from purposeful human activity and manifests as an active engagement with reality during interpersonal communication.

Understanding the essence of cognitive linguistics is crucial for modern science. Cognitive processes rely on intricate relationships between thought, social interactions, and linguistic factors, showing that human cognition develops not only through individual knowledge but also through cultural and communicative processes.

Studying language not merely as a communication tool but as a primary means of understanding and knowing creates opportunities to explore worldviews, values, and various forms of thought. Furthermore, discussions of animals’ basic cognitive abilities provide deeper insights into biological and intellectual processes.

Cognitive processes extend beyond “mental activity.” They incorporate social and cultural phenomena, fostering comprehensive understanding of human thought and its relationship to the world. This makes cognitive linguistics a valuable interdisciplinary research area.

According to Sh. Safarov, cognitive linguistics is a product of interdisciplinary dialogue. He notes that any field aiming to study complex objects like language inevitably encounters significant challenges. However, such difficulties do not diminish interest in this area. Instead, the diverse applications of cognitive knowledge across various activities enhance its significance. Science motivates specialists from different fields to engage in cognitive research, leading to the integration and synergy of findings across disciplines.

The Development of Cognitive Linguistics

The formation of cognitive knowledge has established cognitive science as an independent scientific domain, supported by contributions from various disciplines. These ideas are widely reflected in psychological, philosophical, and linguistic literature. For example, G. Lakoff defines cognitive science as a field emerging from the study of the mind through psychology, linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, and computer science [13].

The close relationship between cognitive science and semantics is well-known. A. V. Kravchenko highlights that “cognitive linguistics prioritizes the study of mechanisms for storing, expressing, and transmitting knowledge through language” [3]. Drawing upon the rich theoretical heritage of global linguistics, the study of the cognitive-linguistic features of specific authors’ language use is also significant for understanding the “grammar of thought” among Uzbek speakers.

Cognitive linguistics explores language as a phenomenon within the scope of human cognitive capabilities. The field traces its origins to works like Noam Chomsky’s *Syntactic Structures* [11] and Richard Montague’s *Universal Grammar* [15]. Philosophical and psychological investigations into language and thought provided a solid foundation for the development of cognitive research in linguistics.

Noam Chomsky’s *Language and Mind* [10] systematically addresses the principles of studying language and cognition from a linguistic perspective. The book addresses essential questions such as “How does language contribute to understanding human

nature?” and “Does language use reflect human cognition?” The mid-1970s marked the emergence of cognitive linguistics as an independent theoretical and practical discipline, driven by the work of scholars like George Lakoff, Charles Fillmore, Ronald Langacker, Leonard Talmy, and Eleanor Rosch [12].

The development of the cognitive-linguistic approach is closely tied to the introduction of new terms. For example, C. Fillmore introduced “frames,” J. Lakoff proposed the “ideal cognitive model,” and J. Lakoff and M. Johnson developed the “conceptual metaphor theory.” Similarly, L. Talmy’s “reality frame,” G. Fauconnier and M. Turner’s “conceptual integration theory,” and R. Langacker’s “cognitive grammar” are notable contributions.

These innovations led to the establishment of a new direction in linguistics – cognitive linguistics. J. Lakoff and M. Johnson’s *Metaphors We Live By* [14] played a crucial role in forming this discipline, introducing key theories like conceptual domains, conceptual metaphors, and conceptual metonymy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the cornerstones of cognitive linguistics is the idea that linguistic expressions reflect underlying conceptual structures. These structures, often referred to as mental spaces or frames, enable humans to interpret and produce meaningful utterances. Metaphor and metonymy, for instance, are conceptual tools that shape abstract thought by mapping it onto concrete experiences.

Embodiment

The embodiment hypothesis asserts that language is grounded in sensory and motor experiences. Cognitive linguists argue that bodily experiences influence abstract thought and linguistic expressions, exemplified by spatial metaphors like “up is good” or “down is bad,” which align with physical experiences.

Usage-Based Perspective

Cognitive linguistics also emphasizes that language structure emerges from use. Patterns of linguistic behavior, including grammar, are seen as the product of repeated interactions and social communication. This usage-based view contrasts

with rule-based generative theories, highlighting the dynamic and adaptive nature of language.

Key Theoretical Frameworks

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Proposed by Lakoff and Johnson, this theory suggests that abstract concepts are understood through metaphorical mappings from more concrete domains. For example, the metaphor "time is money" reflects a conceptual mapping that influences expressions like "spending time" or "saving time."

Construction Grammar

This framework posits that grammatical knowledge consists of a network of constructions—form-meaning pairings—rather than abstract syntactic rules. Constructions range from simple words to complex sentence structures, illustrating the flexibility and creativity of language use.

Cognitive Grammar

Developed by Langacker, cognitive grammar focuses on the mental representations underlying linguistic expressions. It views grammar as inherently meaningful, rejecting the idea of arbitrary syntactic rules.

Applications and Implications

Language Acquisition

Cognitive linguistics offers insights into how children acquire language by emphasizing the role of embodied experiences and social interaction. It challenges nativist perspectives by demonstrating that linguistic competence arises from exposure and usage rather than innate rules.

Multilingualism and Translation

In the realm of multilingualism and translation studies, cognitive linguistics provides tools for understanding cross-linguistic variation and the cognitive processes involved in translating metaphors and cultural concepts.

Artificial Intelligence

Cognitive linguistic principles have influenced the development of natural language processing systems, particularly in improving machine understanding of metaphor, polysemy, and context-dependent meanings.

CONCLUSION

Cognitive knowledge serves as a strong foundation for research across various disciplines. Insights gained in one field can be integrated and developed in others, confirming the universality of cognitive research on the mind. This aligns with A. Nurmonov's view that "Language and thought are inseparable. Language is a material medium that shapes and expresses thought, reflecting the dialectic of form and content" [6].

Understanding the concept of the mind is vital in cognitive research. Viewing the mind solely as part of the human body may limit its full appreciation. Instead, focusing on cognitive and imaginative aspects allows for a holistic understanding of the harmony between body and mind, leading to deeper theoretical and practical insights.

By examining complex cognitive issues, we gain richer knowledge about brain processes and enhance our ability to comprehend and utilize these processes effectively. Language occupies a significant place in modern paradigms of global linguistics, emphasizing its role not only as a communication tool but also as a mechanism for understanding human cognition and thought.

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