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Conceptualization and the category of concept in R. Langacker's and L. Talmy's cognitive theory: Integration of cognitive and linguistic structures

Abstract

Cognitive linguistics is a relatively young field of linguistics which studies the processes of knowledge development and their emergence in language. Cognitive studies help understand to what extent language depends on cognition and, vice versa, to what degree the language system affects cognition. This paper aims to represent the category of concept as a link between cognitive and language systems based on the works of the founders of cognitive linguistics – R. Langacker and L. Talmy. The scientists are among those who consider cognitive processes as the main condition for generating concepts – semantic categories expressed in languages as lexical and grammatical meanings forming the system of language. According to Langacker and Talmy, concepts appear as a result of a long-term continual process of perceiving information from the environment by different sense organs, performing self-reflection and forecasting future. The development concepts is possible due to the framing principle of thinking, the cognitive ability to establish semantic nodes and create conceptual patterns that lay the basis for constant analysis of relations among the elements of cognitive systems and meaning extrapolation. Conceptualization as a result of information structuring, semantic links development and knowledge categorization determines the main properties of objects and phenomena, along with their values, for a social community. Since the status of linguistic invariants is acquired only by the most significant semantic features, language is viewed as part of culture and a matrix of valuable knowledge providing sustainable development of society in the long term perspective.

Keywords: cognition, semantic links, conceptual schemes, culture, cultural relativism, linguistic relativism, mental scanning, extrapolation

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For citation: Filyasova, Yu. A. (2024). Kontseptualizatsiya i kategoriya kontsepta v kognitivnoy teorii R. Langakera i L. Talmi: integratsiya kognitivnykh i yazykovykh struktur [Conceptualization and the category of concept in R. Langacker's and L. Talmy's cognitive theory: Integration of cognitive and linguistic structures]. *Teoreticheskaya i prikladnaya lingvistika [Theoretical and Applied Linguistics]*, 10 (2), 173–190.