

METHODS OF STUDYING THE CONCEPT «CHILD»

Khujamberdiyeva Gavhar Ilhom kizi
Denau Institute of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy
Teacher of the department of Foreign Language
and Literature upper courses»
E-mail: gavhar0697@gmail.com

Annotation

This article is devoted to the linguocultural analysis of the concept “child.” The research highlights the importance of studying this concept from the perspectives of linguistics, cultural studies, and psycholinguistics. The paper employs key methodological approaches including semantic analysis, discursive approaches, psycholinguistic experiments, and contextual analysis.

Keywords: child concept, linguoculturology, semantic analysis, discursive approach, psycholinguistic experiment, phraseological analysis, cultural studies, lexical expression, contextual analysis, linguistics.

INTRODUCTION

To study concepts, one must utilize methods that reveal their structure and semantic potential. Based on the chosen research material, various approaches to concept analysis are identified. These include lexical sources, textual data (information about the function of words expressing the concept within texts), and experimental data (results of psycholinguistic experiments).

MAIN PART

The key word — the core lexical representation of a concept — is the focus of many studies. In determining the key word, criteria such as polysemy and high frequency of use are often considered. Other studies examine groups of words expressing the concept (synonym rows, lexico-semantic fields, derivatives from the same root word). These methods and resources are used in both cases. For our research, we selected methods most suitable for analyzing the “child” concept: to determine its core, we examine the semantic structure of the key word by analyzing its definitions in various explanatory dictionaries. We also include examples from texts, which sometimes help refine dictionary definitions.

Diachronic analysis is also employed, involving etymological data to understand the development and formation of the key lexeme's meaning.

We also explore the deep semantic structure of cultural concepts, lexical metaphors and phraseologisms (at the conceptual level), and the internal structure of linguistic systems expressing concepts. Different paradigms representing the “child” concept are analyzed in various volumes and types:

Synonym sets of the key word: such analysis focuses on differential features of the concept;

Lexical-semantic, associative-semantic, and lexical-phraseological fields: not only synonyms are included but also antonyms, hyponyms, and hypernyms, aiming to identify the concept's core and periphery. This process constructs a conceptually structured image system reflecting a specific fragment of reality through various associative similarities;

Derivational field of the key word: analyzing the semantics of derivatives and derivational potential of the key lexeme helps identify additional cognitive features of the “child” concept. Some researchers (Voyeudskaya, Popova, 1999) use the method of constructing a lexico-grammatical field for the key word, highlighting the semantic constraints of specific lexical units, which clarifies derivational limitations.

Analysis of proverbs and aphorisms: According to Z.D. Popova and I.A. Sternin, “analyzing proverbs gives the researcher insight into the conceptual explanatory field.” This includes stereotypical ideas, judgments, evaluations, and interpretations, which may contradict one another but together form a complete concept, clearly visible in popular consciousness and significantly shaping thinking and behavior. The authors also note that analyzing the explanatory field reveals how the features of a concept evolve over time and how different groups perceive it. This “multi-layered and multi-dimensional” nature means that features derived from explanatory fields form the concept's periphery. When using proverbs, one must consider whether the expressions are still relevant in modern consciousness. Thus, modern text analysis and data from psycholinguistic experiments are necessary to describe the concept's content and reveal its current relevance in speakers' minds.

Discursive analysis of concepts: The nature of discourse — its linguistic-social and dynamic characteristics — determines the value of this approach. Many scholars view discourse both as a process and as a result. According to V.V. Krasnykh, “discourse is verbalized thought activity, understood as the sum of

process and result, incorporating both linguistic and extralinguistic factors.” Scholars also discuss the “actual” and “potential” dimensions of discourse. E.I. Sheigal explains that “actual” discourse refers to real speech activity in a specific social sphere — it is processual and tied to real life and time. It includes analyzed speech texts reflecting the interaction of linguistic, paralinguistic, and extralinguistic factors. On the other hand, “potential” (or “virtual”) discourse is a semiotic space designed to support a specific communicative domain, encompassing language tools and non-verbal signs related to speech, as well as precedent utterances and texts. Sheigal emphasizes that this form of communication has its own set of speech activities and genres that model typical speech behavior.

CONCLUSION

This research has carried out a linguocultural analysis of the “child” concept. Studying the concept from linguistic, cultural, and psycholinguistic perspectives aids in understanding its role in language and culture, as well as the differences in interpretation among various social groups. The comprehensive use of methodological approaches — including semantic, discursive, and psycholinguistic methods — ensured a deeper analysis of the concept. This work makes a valuable contribution to the field of linguistics and cultural studies and may serve as a useful guide for educators and researchers alike.

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