
**THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE
UNITS AT A CERTAIN LEVEL**

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Abstract

The study of language units at a certain level is a fundamental aspect of linguistics that seeks to understand the underlying principles and structures of human language. This article delves into the theoretical foundations that underpin this field of study, exploring the various linguistic theories and frameworks that have shaped our understanding of language units. By examining these theoretical foundations, we can gain valuable insights into how language is organized and processed at different levels. Understanding these theoretical foundations is crucial for researchers, educators, and language enthusiasts alike, as it provides a solid framework for analyzing and interpreting language units in a systematic and meaningful way.

Keywords: Language unit, cognitive processes, conceptualization, categorization, cognitive semantics, the linguistic consciousness, the linguistic image of the world, the language system, cognitive activity, cognitive and linguistic mechanisms of meaning formation.

Modern research in various fields of humanities is characterized by a general tendency to actively search for new directions, methods and approaches. For linguistics, the study of language as a cognitive ability has become such a new direction. Using a specific scientific approach means recognizing a certain system of views regarding the object being studied, its nature and main features. As for language, this or that interpretation of the central problems of linguistics: about the nature of language, about the meaning of the word, the interaction of vocabulary and grammar, semantics and syntax, linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge was calculated.

The accepted system of scientific views creates the initial theoretical and methodological basis of research, serves as a starting point and main guide in the analysis of certain linguistic phenomena. Thus, the cognitive approach to the

study of language not only studies the objective properties of its units and categories, but also studies the ways of human perception of the world expressed in linguistic semantics, that is, the study of language through the prism of basic cognitive processes - conceptualization and categorization. Accordingly, one of the main methodological principles of this approach is that a person does not reflect the world in language, but creates it in his mind with the help of language. In general, this anthropocentric principle of research, which is widespread in the humanities, means for linguists not only the use of new conceptual and terminological apparatus and methods of analysis, but also a radical change of views about the nature of language, its tasks, the semantics of its units and categories, and its structure. The result of this change is the active development of new semantic theories and, in particular, the multi-level theory of meaning - cognitive semantics. Many researches in this field show that every time a person reshapes meanings and chooses the means of their expression, among other things, he uses his linguistic experience and does not build his statements only on the basis of ready-made words [9, p. 34].

The meaning of the linguistic phrase, according to R. Langacker, is that people are able to structure and interpret the content of the same cognitive field in different ways, to model any situation using different image schemes, in which certain semantics are not sufficiently formed under the influence of an objective situation [3. P. 78]. In addition, as many scholars have pointed out, linguistic expressions acquire their own meaning only within a certain conceptual system. Consequently, such connection of linguistic meanings and contents with the conceptual system of a specific person, the author of linguistic expression, undoubtedly has a causal nature and determines their content, because linguistic consciousness is not a separate independent module. It is integrated into the cognitive system of a person and comes with the types of interactions with the world, activities.

The active role of the individual in the formation of language meanings indicates the interpretive nature of the human mind and, as a result, the linguistic consciousness, the linguistic image of the world, the language system, all its units and categories, as well as the linguistic meaning of the language [5, p. 90]. In turn, this gives reason to talk about the third key, apart from the cognitive and communicative, interpretation function of language. The interpretative nature of the construction of the world in language can be manifested in various aspects: focusing on certain objects, events, determining their properties and relationships [13, p. 88], focusing on the perspective or elements of a certain conceptual

structure [15, p. 52], determining the point of view or cognitive information point [4, p. 27], choosing prototypes of the linguistic expression of knowledge or information within the language [2, p. 67]. In other words, a linguistic unit, from the point of view of cognitive semantics, acquires its meaning as a result of distinguishing a certain field in the corresponding cognitive field, which implies the systematization of this field using a certain scheme.

On the one hand, for the cognitive system to work, it must be structured in a certain way in relation to the environment, because our mind, according to philosophers, constantly monitors and controls human interaction with the environment [14, p. 5]. From a psychological point of view, this means the existence of a certain hypothetical model of the structure of the world in the human mind: its physical structure, the structure of society, the concept of the role of a person, the structure of his personality and activity. As a representative of a certain society, a person's one or another view of the world is reflected in collective knowledge, the structure of which serves as universal schemes for perceiving and understanding new knowledge. On the other hand, information in linguistic form must also be structured to become part of consciousness, its structure. In other words, the human cognitive system should be able to format the information it receives in a certain way (according to its structure and the structure of collective knowledge about the world). An unstructured mind cannot successfully absorb incoming information, because it cannot format it correctly, give it the necessary structure, establish the necessary connections with accumulated knowledge, that is, it cannot find a place for it in the cognitive system. A similarly structured mind faces the problem of processing and formatting information that is poorly structured (without proper support of collective schemas and models [7, p. 11]). As can be seen from the above, the schemes used by a person in the systematization and schematization of linguistic information also have an interpretative nature, which is manifested in the ability of a person to use various schemes for the formation of personal experience.

According to Luria, in the process of cognitive activity, a person uses two types of operational systems: a system of logical operations and a system of evaluation of emotional meaning and deep meaning [10, p. 56]. The second system, naturally, is a system of operations related to the interpretation of the world in language and knowledge about the world, a system that provides the implementation of the interpretation function through the individual use of the collective information structure. This fully corresponds to the definition of linguistic interpretation that we formulated earlier.

Linguistic interpretation of the world in the human mind and knowledge about the world can be divided into two main cognitive schemes or models: general, collective or traditional; and private, individual, or subjective. General schemes have a relatively universal character and are directly related to the structure of language and consciousness. These include, first of all, concepts, categories and proposals that make up the conceptual system of a person as a representative of a certain society and culture and directly affect his linguistic activity, for example: the formation of a linguistic image of the world, discursive activity, as well as general cognitive and meaning formation linguistic mechanisms. Specific schemes include structural peculiarities of individual conceptual systems, individual authorial methods of systematizing information and speech: specific concepts and categories, cognitive and linguistic mechanisms of meaning formation, various specific metaphorical and metonymic models, individual models of conceptual origin, conceptual integration, author's includes individual comparisons and metaphors, specific models of arranging sentences, texts, their lexical and grammatical design, models of speech construction as a whole. The specific use of these schemes in cognitive and discursive activity, in turn, is determined by the types of interpretation, which are distinguished by their object, goals and main functions [6, p. 54]. Let us recall that the object of linguistic interpretation can be directly verbal knowledge about the world. In the first case, its purpose is to reflect the diversity of objects, events and their characteristics as perceived by society or an individual. In the second case, it refers to the interpretation of existing knowledge in order to clarify, classify or evaluate it in accordance with the individual relationship of a given person. Accordingly, we can talk about three specific functions of language interpretation: selection, classification and evaluation.

The selection function is distinguished by the selective conceptualization and representation of the world in the human mind and is manifested in the linguistic symbols of the corresponding concepts.

The classification function occurs in connection with the classification of objects based on certain criteria and the formation of abstract concepts and names for the created classifications.

The evaluation function includes the schematization of experience in accordance with the system of collective and individual norms, ideals, stereotypes, values accepted in a certain culture.

The interaction of collective and individual aspects of linguistic interpretation is manifested in the use of general and separate cognitive schemes and models in

the implementation of its separate functions. Let's look at some examples of such usage. As general cognitive schemes of linguistic interpretation, concepts, categories and propositions help to form individual conceptual systems, their structure and content, convey individual physical and social experience of human interaction with the environment. This is manifested in the selective conceptualization of objects, events and their characteristics depending on the conditions of life and activity. The composition, structure and content, concepts and categories indicate the perception of the world by a certain society or person [1, p. 21]. For example, in the cognitive system of rural and urban residents, representatives of different ages and professions, the concepts of reality corresponding to the environment, age or profession and their names are shown in more detail below: farm, village council, shop, vegetable garden, river, pond, property, farm, highway, mansion, villa, high-rise building, skyscraper, cottage, winter garden, botanical garden, highway, branch street, boulevard, waterfront, supermarket, hypermarket, shopping mall.

The structure of lexical categories can be reasonably interpreted as a general scheme of linguistic interpretation [11, p. 90]. It reflects the principle of the unity of diversity, which reveals this potential. Lexical categories explain the world as a variety of similar objects and events, and at the same time, their specific features. Our mind, on the one hand, combines similar things into one category: houses, birds, cars, furniture, clothes, food, plants, etc. On the other hand, the structure of the category also presents its own characteristics in the form of internal division of various objects, for example, military equipment: tank, tankette, armored vehicle, tractor, gun, self-propelled anti-aircraft gun, mobile radar station, mobile missile system, etc.

At the same time, its role as a cognitive scheme for interpreting the lexical category structure is not limited to this. Taking into account the specific characteristics of objects, the similarity in the principle of organizing different categories and, in particular, their division into subcategories, allows establishing meaningful conceptual and intercategorical relationships between different subject areas based on the typology of these differences: shape, size, appearance, function, e.g.: the word "creature" includes living beings including humans, animals, birds, and fish, but they differ in appearance, size, behavior, abilities, and functions. It creates a basis for their comparative and evaluative interpretation by using the elements of one lexical category to define the objects of another subject area. Thus, the structure of the lexical category serves as a cognitive scheme for the secondary interpretation of knowledge about a certain conceptual

field: ram-"stubborn", ox-"big", sheep- "gentle", swan-"delicate", parrot-"white", like a nightingale-"sweet voice". This analogy can be observed both in the structure of conceptual and thematic areas and in the structure of lexical categories. Accordingly, a lexical category representing one conceptual and thematic field can be used to describe elements of another field or category: sing like a nightingale; repeat after someone like a parrot; swan song; donkey stubbornness and others.

Interpretation of knowledge about the universe is the main task of evaluative and, more broadly speaking, modal concepts and categories according to their nature and structural and substantive specificity: negation, modality, evidentiality, certainty/uncertainty, closeness, expressiveness, tonality, etc. Accordingly, these concepts and categories are cognitive schemes of secondary linguistic interpretation according to their functional direction. For example, the negation category describes knowledge about the world as follows:

- 1) the presence or absence of objects, events, symbols (missing, missing, silence),
- 2) their conformity or inconsistency with existing ideas (spelling error, deception, delay, etc.),
- 3) the absence or evaluation of one or another sign or skill as their negative characteristic (amateur, uncivilized, silent, rude),
- 4) interpreting speech acts in terms of conformity or inconsistency with the communicative goals and attitudes of the participants of communication (denial, disagreement, rejection, prohibition etc.).

At the same time, the very name of the negation function is explained by its structure and orientation to collective knowledge schemes that typify world objects and events, their properties and relationships.

The association with a specific function is a key feature of modal concepts and categories. The point is that before the formation of the module category, conceptualization of the function of linguistic objects is carried out, for example, not with their structural properties. So, in a certain sense, the specific function of language units acts as a module concept and serves as the basis for the formation of the corresponding category. At the same time, the structural specificity of the modular system of linguistic conceptualization and categorization directly depends on the structure of this function, its discretization. In other words, the function structure functions as a scheme that constructs the concept of a module and the corresponding category and, accordingly, as a cognitive scheme of linguistic interpretation.

In conclusion, the study of language units at a certain level is an essential aspect of linguistics that allows us to unravel the intricate principles and structures of human language. Through exploring the theoretical foundations that underpin this field of study, we have gained valuable insights into how language is organized and processed at various levels. The examination of linguistic theories and frameworks has provided us with a solid framework for analyzing and interpreting language units in a systematic and meaningful way.

By understanding the theoretical foundations, researchers, educators, and language enthusiasts can delve deeper into the complexities of language and contribute to the advancement of linguistic knowledge. This understanding enables us to uncover the underlying patterns and rules that govern language units, from the smallest sounds to the largest grammatical structures. It also allows us to explore how meaning is constructed and conveyed through language. Moreover, the theoretical foundations of the study of language units provide a basis for practical applications in fields such as language teaching, translation, and natural language processing. Educators can utilize this knowledge to design effective language instruction materials and strategies, while translators can employ it to accurately convey meaning across different languages. Natural language processing technologies can benefit from these theoretical foundations by incorporating them into algorithms and models for improved language understanding and generation.

In summary, the theoretical foundations of the study of language units at a certain level are crucial for our understanding of human language. They provide us with a comprehensive framework for analyzing and interpreting language units, allowing us to uncover the underlying principles and structures that govern language organization and processing. By delving into these theoretical foundations, we can gain valuable insights into how language works, contributing to advancements in linguistic research, education, and practical applications.

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