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An Analysis of Discourse and Its Constitutive Elements within the Framework of Cognitive Linguistics

Abstract

This article examines discourse itself, along with its internal elements, namely concept and frame. Initially, the notion of cognitivity and its primary features are discussed, followed by a presentation of various ideas and considerations found in the scientific literature related to discourse, accompanied by expressed attitudes toward these perspectives. Subsequently, the emergence of discourse and its internal elements are studied and analyzed. A concept is characterized as a series of frames that convey the same or similar ideas and imaginations, comprising a nucleus, a perinuclear zone, and a periphery. The nucleus of a concept is typically expressed in language through the initial lexical meanings of root words. A frame is defined as a set of concepts that contribute to the creation of the general meaning of a specific concept along with its nuanced interpretations. The frames forming the perinuclear zone serve as carriers of certain shades of the main idea and are generally expressed in language through grammatical forms and other auxiliary linguistic units. The frames that constitute the periphery of a concept possess the potential to express particular nuances of the main idea at specific moments and are typically represented in language by various linguistic units that manifest in distinct syntactic situations.

Keywords: *discourse, cognition, element, concept, frame*



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Bilişsel Dilbilim Çerçevesinde Söylem ve Kurucu Unsurları Üzerine Bir İnceleme

Absract

Bu makale söylemin kendisini, iç unsurları olan kavram ve çerçeve ile birlikte incelemektedir. İlk olarak, bilişsellik kavramı ve temel özellikleri tartışılmakta, ardından söylemle ilgili bilimsel literatürde bulunan çeşitli fikirler ve düşünceler, bu bakış açılarına yönelik ifade edilen tutumlar eşliğinde sunulmaktadır. Daha sonra, söylemin ortaya çıkışı ve iç unsurları incelenmekte ve analiz edilmektedir. Bir kavram, aynı ya da benzer fikir ve tasavvurları aktaran, bir çekirdek, bir perinükleer bölge ve bir çevreden oluşan bir dizi çerçeve olarak nitelendirilir. Bir kavramın çekirdeği tipik olarak dilde kök sözcüklerin ilk sözcük anlamları aracılığıyla ifade edilir. Çerçeve, belirli bir kavramın nüanslı yorumlarıyla birlikte genel anlamının oluşturulmasına katkıda bulunan bir dizi kavram olarak tanımlanır. Perinükleer bölgeyi oluşturan çerçeveler, ana fikrin belirli tonlarının taşıyıcısı olarak hizmet eder ve genellikle dilde dilbilgisel formlar ve diğer yardımcı dilsel birimler aracılığıyla ifade edilir. Bir kavramın çevresini oluşturan çerçeveler, belirli anlarda ana fikrin belirli nüanslarını ifade etme potansiyeline sahiptir ve tipik olarak dilde farklı sözdizimsel durumlarda ortaya çıkan çeşitli dilsel birimlerle temsil edilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Söylem, Biliş, Unsur, Kavram, Çerçeve*

Introduction

The cognitive approach, which represents one of the most recent developments in psycholinguistics, has established its significance within contemporary world linguistics. Its emergence and rapid advancement are emblematic of the current phase of linguistic study. Cognitive linguistics systematically investigates the psychological processes associated with the production, comprehension, and assimilation of speech, with particular emphasis on the interplay between language and thought. The formation of speech is fundamentally grounded in psychological mechanisms, as cognition and memory constitute the foundation of all linguistic activity and experience.

It is widely recognized that language is an integral component of history, arising from humanity's fundamental need to exchange information. As society evolves, attitudes toward the creation and development of language, as well as its role in human life, undergo gradual transformation. The processes of language and speech creation, their utilization in communication, and the transmission, reception, and acquisition of speech remain central to scholarly inquiry. Language is an active, dynamic system that is continually changing and developing, reflecting the interplay of psychological, communicative, and cultural factors. It serves as a vital element of

human cognitive activity. Furthermore, language, speech activity, and human thought are inextricably interconnected.

There exists a multitude of contentious issues concerning both the theoretical foundations and research methodologies of cognitive linguistics. Consequently, a rigorous approach to language-related questions grounded in the theoretical and empirical foundations of cognition is essential. Generally, when referring to the cognitive approach to language and speech, one addresses the processes of cognition, thinking, and understanding reality, specifically how individuals receive and interpret information from their surroundings and how they organize their mental activities to make decisions or take action. Cognitive linguistics primarily investigates the mechanisms of understanding, wherein language is regarded as a system of signs that encodes and transmits information. Various topics are explored within cognitive linguistics, including how individuals perceive, store, and utilize information related to language and its forms, the underlying mechanisms of communication, and theoretical insights into the general patterns of human cognitive activity. Thus, cognitive linguistics concentrates on addressing two principal questions: a) how common cognitive mechanisms are employed in the processes of language and speech production, and b) how cognitive and thinking mechanisms manifest themselves through language and speech.

A. Methods

Despite the emergence of cognitive linguistics in the middle of the 20th century, its initial embryos can also be found in the initial theoretical problems of 19th century linguistics. We come across ideas that can be considered the first step of cognitive linguistics in the works of I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay: “Based on linguistic thinking, it is possible to get information about all the beings that exist and do not exist in the world”. V. Z. Demyankov and Y. S. Kubryakova in cognitive linguistics regard language as a cognitive mechanism involved in encoding, decoding and transformation of information (Demyankov & Kubryakova, 1194). In cognitive linguistics, the complex relationship between language and thinking is studied at a new stage.

In Azerbaijani linguistics, a new theory related to the actual problems of psycholinguistics was put forward for the first time by M.B. Asgarov. “Linguo-psychological unity theory” that he founded is considered one of the latest achievements of cognitive linguistics. He gave a critical interpretation of the former Soviet and foreign linguistic theories and tried to show their positive and negative aspects (Asgarov, 2015). M. B. Asgarov proposed a new scheme based on the theories

before him, interpreted the mechanism of formation and cognition of language structural units of any level, and explained the systemic essence of language based on the theory of linguo-psychological unity.

According to M. B. Asgarov, the realized minimal unit is an “element of reality”, and the minimal unit that ensures the realization of cognizing is an “image of intellect”. He rightly points out that a person cannot fully understand reality at once. As each unit of reality is realized on the basis of its most important signs and characteristics, M. B. Asgarov calls them “elements of reality”, and the smallest units of cognizing and thinking “images of intellect.”

M. B. Asgarov conventionally divides the realization mechanism of the cognition process into four phases:

“The first phase is contacting with the unit of reality and the acceptance of its most obvious features into operational memory, the second phase is the formation of the first-rank image of the intellect, which affects the memorization of those features, and recording them in the main memory. The third phase - bringing the information in the main memory about the unit of reality to the operative memory, that is, recalling it, the fourth phase - is the practical use of information about the unit of reality” (Asgarov, 2015).

The portion of information stored in the human brain that consists of four-element codes is equivalent to concepts. This type of concept-information can express not only abstract concepts but also tangible entities, as well as concepts related to states and actions. Nowadays, *“linguists rarely use the term 'concept' in its classical sense; instead, they prefer to refer to mental structures known as 'concepts.’” (Askoldov, 1997).*

These concepts can be fully realized through both linguistic and non-linguistic means exclusively within discourse. Information regarding the concept may extend beyond conscious awareness through discourse, a process facilitated by verbal and non-verbal means. In traditional linguistics, the primary tool for this purpose has been the text. However, in cognitive linguistics, reliance on text alone is insufficient, as it is impossible to convey all the nuances of 'information' solely through written form. It is essential to consider all the internal elements of the discursive situation. This issue will be discussed in further detail below.

Since the late years of the previous century, the notion of discourse has become widely utilized across various fields of science and the information landscape, often encompassing different meanings. As a result, providing a sufficiently comprehensive definition of this concept

within any specific discipline proves challenging. The interpretation of discourse varies somewhat, and in some cases significantly, across different fields of study.

The term of discourse was first used in the science of linguistics in 1952 by the American scientist Zellig Harris in the article “Discourse analysis”. The article is written on the interpretation of large combinations from utterance. Z. Harris regards the discourse as a big part of the text than the sentence (Harris, 1952). But to accept and interpret the discuss just as a part of the text, we do not think it is very correct. Because the discourse must include other features of the process of the creation of the text, and it necessarily emerges in the discursive situation.

Soon after Z. Harris, the French scientist Emile Benveniste applied to the same notion and interpreted it as “speech attributed to the speaker” (Dessons, 2006). We think it would be more correct to talk about here the “speech process” created by the speaker. A. Kibrik, who writes about discourse, considers that discourse “in a very strange way has more communication potential than speech itself, and in terms of the potential to be researched with traditional linguistic methods, it has more linguistic characteristics than language itself” (Kibrik, Parshin, 2001). Whether discourse is closer to language, speech or text directly depends on what features of it are compared to language, speech or text. “Discourse is an empirical object that a linguist encounters when he discovers traces of the subject of the act of utterance, formal elements indicating the assignment of language to speakers” (Greimas & Malidier, 1999).

The point of view of Yu.S. Stepanov, who connects discourse with the concepts of an alternative world, fact and causality, is interesting. Stepanov also gives a broad linguistic and philosophical interpretation of discourse as a “language within a language”, presented in the form of a special social given. At the same time, discourse cannot be reduced to style, grammar or lexicon as just a language. It “exists, first of all, and mainly in texts, but those that have a special grammar, a special lexicon, special rules of word use and syntax, special semantics, and ultimately a special world” (Stepanov, 1995).

One of the widespread considerations about discourse in linguistics is that it is realized or presented as a type of oral speech that serves to convey information orally. In this case, the written speech is accepted as the equivalent of the text. For this very reason, that is, because “written speech is considered text, and oral speech is discourse”, all linguistic activities are limited to the analysis of text (written) and discourse (oral speech) (Makarov, 2003). We firmly believe that discourse is a complex of activities that ensure lively communication. Discourse or discursive process should

not be limited to oral or written speech. The text can be regarded as the static manifestation of produced speech.

Conclusion

At times, the internal elements of the psychological image associated with a unit of reality are conflated with the linguistic structural units that emerge from their reflection in language. It is important to note that psychological elements such as discourse, concept, and frame are generated as a result of realizing a unit of reality, along with its activity or condition. Conversely, speech, utterance, and word are the outcomes of this reflection in language. Equating the aforementioned linguistic structural units with psychological elements is not an appropriate approach. The totality of everything that exists in the environment constitutes reality or the real world, independent of our consciousness, whether we are aware of it or not. While humans interact with numerous aspects of the real world, their understanding encompasses only a small fraction of this vast array

Generally, individuals comprehend the units of reality with which they are in close contact and that capture their attention in various aspects. Consequently, they encode related information in their long-term memory. Among the information stored, the majority pertains to aspects or units that fulfill personal needs. Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that most realized entities are those that individuals require in their daily lives. People do not feel compelled to provide information about everything they understand. Rather, the aspects they wish to convey are encapsulated within a linguistic framework, ultimately generating speech that facilitates communication in relevant discursive situations.

In the context of the 'Theory of Linguo-Psychological Unity,' discourse is viewed as the manifestation of an abstract idea or a system of psychological images generated in the human brain. It reflects the lived experiences within a specific time frame and spatial context. According to this theory, discourse comprises a series of first-order elements of reality ($Er_1 + Er_1 + Er_1 + Er_1 \dots$), which facilitate the formation of speech utterances. This can be regarded as equivalent to the series of abstract ideas that emerge in the human brain as a result of comprehending speech. Furthermore, the most crucial element in the formation of speech is the initial idea, purpose, or goal. The series of second-order elements of reality in speech utterances consists of a complex of linguistic structural units ($Er_2 + Er_2 + Er_2 \dots$) that result from the reflection of discourse within the language system, manifesting as speech or text. Thus, discourse represents a linguo-psychological process or phenomenon that culminates in the creation of speech and text.

To put it more simply, discourse arises when an individual vividly conveys the information in their mind to another party. Oral speech, which constitutes one of the internal elements of discourse, is produced and transmitted by an active communicator and is received and interpreted by a passive communicator. In other words, discourse is generated and acknowledged within the context of live communication. This leads to the conclusion that the space and time in which discourse is created are crucial for the transmission of discursive information. Discourse is formed during the act of conveying information and can be both created and transmitted. What is accepted in this context constitutes a discursive situation, more precisely defined as the process of speech production occurring within a specific setting. This process may be conventionally referred to as discourse formation.

Thus, discourse signifies the unity of the real situation, time, space, and speech, all of which comprise the internal elements of discourse. The oral expressions of individuals engaged in the communicative process, the real circumstances surrounding this speech, and the inner feelings and emotions elicited by that speech all represent internal elements of discourse. Moreover, not only the active and passive communicators but also the presence of incidental participants or witnesses plays a significant role in the discourse formation process. The research conducted yields the following insights for discussion:

1) A discursive situation is a linguo-psychological process that serves to convey an idea to the other side and is realized by an active communicator.

2) Psychological elements such as discourse, concept and frame arise as a result of realizing the unit of reality, its activity or condition.

3) As a result of the realization of the discursive situation, word, utterance and speech are created.

4) It becomes necessary to restore the discursive situation by the person receiving the text formed as a result of the speech created in the discursive situation and its stabilization.

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