

The Core and Periphery of The Concept “Youth” In the Uzbek Language

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Abstract: In the lexicon of the Uzbek language, the word “youth” embodies multifaceted semantic features. Although the concept of “youth” initially existed as a biological category, its meaning is somewhat complex, broad and multi-layered. This article analyzes such fundamental and peripheral layers of meaning in the concept of “youth” and discusses their cultural identity.

Keywords: Concept, linguacultural studies, cognitive linguistics, semantics, concept core, periphery, semantic layer, conceptual consciousness.

Introduction: One of the main units of linguistic and cultural studies is the concept. The term “concept” was used and introduced into science by S. Askoldov in the first quarter of the 20th century in his article “Word and Concept”. He explains this word as follows: “Representatives of different nations communicate through concepts, and accordingly, the creation and perception of concepts is a two-way communicative process. Such a system existing in the linguistic space determines the uniqueness of the national worldview” [1;267-280]. As a result of the study of the concept in linguoculturology, the culture, worldview, national mentality and beliefs of a particular people were more clearly described through language. In the “Anthology of Concepts” [2;40], the concept is described with such definitions as “the interconnectedness of human consciousness”, “the global unity of mental activity”, “linguocultural concept”. At this point, the semantic content of the concept seems to be much clearer, that is, the concept is a cognitive and linguocultural universal, a structure related to the semantic meaning of the word. In the monograph “Cognitive Linguistics”, concepts form the basis of various categories formed in the human mind, serve as a reference point for them. Usually, as a general feature of the concept, it is noted that it does not have a clear appearance in terms of its internal structure, but this statement is not very close to the truth. After all, the image of the subject that forms the basis of the concept is quite clear, and the secondary parts, together with the abstraction, are

interconnected around a single basis (nuclear basis). Therefore, it is appropriate to recognize that the structure of the concept has a systemic character, [4;17] explains the linguocognitive properties of concepts.

The Main Part

Any concept expressed in language has a complex and multi-layered structure, the semantic boundaries of which can be both clear and flexible. Cognitive linguists, who have deeply analyzed the internal structure of concepts, describe this structure in the form of a core (prototype) and a periphery (peripheral layer). These two layers allow us to more clearly show the internal dynamics of the concept, its activity in language and thinking.

The core of a concept is the semantic center that distinguishes the concept from other concepts, expressing its main, stable and permanent features. The concept of the core combines the most universal, most quickly recalled and most widely accepted components of the concept. For example, the core of the concept of “age” contains such basic concepts as “life stage”, “energy”, “growth”, “new beginning”, without which the content of the concept of “age” cannot be fully imagined. The core element is quickly recalled in the mind of the speaker, has a stable stereotype, and appears as an unchanging basis in various texts.

The stability of the core makes it the main support

point of the concept. In conceptual thinking, when a person refers to a concept through a specific word or image, he first of all relies on this core. The core embodies the closest and most typical concepts semantically, and in this respect occupies the central place of the prototypical model. It should be noted that the core elements are closely related to national thinking, cultural traditions and universal human concepts. The periphery of the concept is a context-dependent, dynamic and changing semantic layer that forms around the core, but does not always constitute an integral part of the concept. Peripheral elements are often formed under the influence of subjective assessment, individual experience or social environment. They are less stable than the core, but they enrich the scope of the concept, giving it breadth and versatility. For example, the peripheral layer of the concept of "youth" may contain such concepts as "beauty", "vigor", "appearance", "fashionability", "vigor". Some of these may be important depending on the context, and sometimes they may be completely relegated to the background. Therefore, the boundaries of the periphery are not clearly defined, and it may narrow or expand depending on the situation in the text or speech of this concept. Peripheral elements are often formed through social stereotypes, cultural skills, individual associations. In this regard, they play an important role in the differences between national thinking and worldview. The periphery brings aesthetic, emotional, psychological diversity to the concept.

There are strong semantic connections between the core and the periphery in the concept. The core, as a stable center, attracts peripheral elements to itself, connecting them in meaning. At the same time, the periphery also plays an active role in the formation of the concept, since in different contexts peripheral elements can approach the core or even appear as the core. For example, in cultures associated with the concept of age, peripheral signs such as "beauty" and "vigor" are often emphasized to such an extent that they can even rise to the level of the core of the concept in a certain situation. This demonstrates the open and dynamic structure of concepts. Also, the boundary between the core and the periphery is not rigid. The same element can belong to the core or the periphery in different cultures or at different times. This confirms the flexible and processual nature of concepts in language and thought. To fully understand a concept, it is important to consider not only its core, but also the peripheral layer. Because the peripheral elements reflect the individual or group attitude of people to the concept, their emotional and evaluative approach. The core determines the logical and basic

basis of the concept. As a result of focusing only on the core in the analysis, many subtle and cultural aspects of the concept may be overlooked. Therefore, in the process of concept analysis in cognitive linguistics, the core and the periphery are considered as interconnected and complementary concepts.

The core and peripheral elements in the same concept may differ in different languages and cultures. For example, in the Uzbek language, the peripheral layer of the concept of "youth" emphasizes social signs such as being active in society, respect for elders and younger people, and adaptation to the community, while in Western languages, signs such as individualism, self-confidence, and independent decision-making associated with the concept of age are more emphasized. This situation once again demonstrates the need to analyze the concepts of core and periphery together in revealing the national and universal aspects of a conceptual system. From a linguistic point of view, the units that make up the core of a concept are concepts that are widely and stably used in the language, understood in the same sense by each speaker of the language, and in most cases have a biological, objective essence. In the Uzbek language, the concept of biological age occupies a special place in the main core of the concept of "youth". This concept means the number of years that have passed since the birth of a person. In any society, a young person has vital energy, physical endurance, and freshness of thinking, and these qualities are also mentioned in the Uzbek language in an inextricable link with the concept of "youth".

Age is not only a biological indicator, but also a specific period of life. It is at this stage that a person becomes physically strong, mentally active, has wide opportunities, and is full of dreams and hopes. In the Uzbek language, this state is expressed through the following combinations: young boy, young man, young girl, youth period, young generation, etc. These units enter the main core of the concept and ensure its stable formation in the language. In Uzbek language materials, the concept of age is often directly associated with strength and opportunities. For example, the combination "yosh kuch" expresses that young people are the driving force in society, while the expression "yosh avlod" has become a stable image denoting the owners of the future. In this, the future, development, and social responsibility of young people are emphasized. Such proverbs as "Yosh bor yerda kuch bor" and "Yosh kuch – el kuchi" that are widespread in the Uzbek language are also a reflection of the main concepts directly located in the core of the concept. At the core of the concept of age is another important aspect - a positive social assessment. In the Uzbek

people's thinking, youth is always interpreted as a positive, full of dreams and hopes, open to new opportunities, strong and hopeful stage. The images associated with youth have always been associated with optimism and confidence in the future in the language. For this reason, the concepts of age and strength are often used synonymously. For example, in the proverb "Youth is spring, old age is winter," youth is interpreted as the most beautiful, joyful period of life. The concept of youth is also widely covered in Uzbek literature as one of the central themes. In the works of writers such as Abdulla Qahhor, O'tkir Hoshimov, and Said Ahmad, youth is depicted as a stage of dream, aspiration, innocence, first love, and a bold step towards a big life. Through these images, one can see the artistic reflection of the main core meaning of the concept of youth. Thus, the core of the concept of "youth" consists of the following main components:

1. Life stage: youth is a biological and social period that includes childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.
2. Growth: youth is a process of development and formation, through which a person moves towards maturity.
3. Energy: youth is a symbol of strength, courage, and mobility.
4. New beginnings: youth is a period full of hopes, dreams, and plans.

These core concepts are also clearly reflected in Uzbek folk proverbs: "There is youth, there is power"; "He who learns in youth - learns in stone". In these proverbs, the concept of "youth" is directly linked to strength, learning and opportunity. These core elements are formed as a fixed, unchanging image in language and thought. In addition, core symbols are also in a leading position in fiction. In the works of Otkir Hoshimov, youth is depicted as a symbol of movement, aspiration for life and strength: "Young hearts only strive forward, they do not know what stopping is" [3;320]. In this line, the concept of youth fully corresponds to the main feature of the core - mobility, aspiration for dreams. This core is always stable in the minds of language speakers and is expressed openly and clearly in the language. The peripheral parts of concepts are often expressed through symbolic, mobile, emotional and national cultural forms of thought. Concepts located on the periphery are less fixed in the language, but constitute a very important layer from a cultural and psychological point of view. In the Uzbek language, the periphery of the concept of youth is very rich and diverse. First of all, youth is directly associated with such symbols as spring, dawn, flower, new tree, newly emerged sprout. Such a

connection arises from the deep views of the Uzbek people on nature, beauty and life cycles. In proverbs:

"Youth is like spring" – reveals the side of youth associated with beauty, joy, and new beginnings.

"A young tree bends" – indicates the ease with which young people are educated and raised.

Such proverbs show that educational, aesthetic, and symbolic concepts occupy a priority position on the periphery of the concept of youth.

The emotional and associative aspects of the concept of age are also widely reflected in the periphery. Youth is characterized by such aspects as playfulness, innocence, carelessness, and inexperience. In Uzbek folk art and everyday speech, youth is often expressed with such images as "blood boiling", "passionate", "warming up quickly", "cooling down quickly". This situation reflects the natural psychological state of youth and demonstrates the emotional richness of the language. In Uzbek literature, youth is often depicted as a symbol of love and suffering. In the works of Otkir Hoshimov, young heroes make mistakes on the path of dreams and searches, are refined in the school of life. This process further enriches the cultural and psychological layers of the periphery of the concept of age. Another important aspect is that the concept of age is also deeply rooted in the Uzbek sociocultural environment. Today, terms such as "youth policy", "youth center", and "youth day" are widely used in the political and social life of Uzbekistan. These concepts enter the periphery of the concept as a modern social layer and provide a new assessment of the place of youth in society. The peripheral layer of the concept "Youth" may include:

1. Beauty: youth is associated with beauty. In Uzbek folklore, "youth" is often mentioned together with beauty:
2. "Youth is spring, the beautiful time of girls".
3. Following fashion: young people are interested in modern clothes, phones or technology. This element is not core, because young people do not always have to follow fashion.
4. Gullibility: young people can be easily deceived due to their inexperience, this is also one of the peripheral elements.
5. Excitement: Although it is characteristic of age to quickly show their emotions, get angry or happy quickly, this is not a universal element, it depends on the context.

Conclusion

So, the concept of "youth" in the Uzbek language has both biological, psychological, cultural and social scope,

and by distinguishing its core and peripheral layers, this concept can be revealed more deeply and comprehensively. The boundary between the core and the periphery is not rigid, they are often in motion. In different eras and cultures, peripheral elements can become important and turn into the core. For example, in today's Uzbek society, youth is increasingly associated with technology and creative thinking. Therefore, the connection "youth = modern technology" may become part of the core of the concept in the future. On the other hand, the concepts of "growth" and "life stage" in the core are stable in almost every culture, but over time, attitudes to the growth process may change. Often, proverbs clearly reflect the dynamics of the core and the periphery: "Youth is restless, old age is quiet." In this proverb, youth is associated with noise, cheerfulness, and enthusiasm, but does this belong to the core? In fact, this is a peripheral image, because noise and cheerfulness may not always be characteristic of age. However, since this image is strong in the social consciousness, it sometimes approaches the center. Summarizing the above, the linguocultural elements reflected in the core of the concept of age reflect the ancient and modern views of the Uzbek people on age, their faith in movement, beauty, and the future, as well as sociocultural values that remind us of their lack of experience. The main elements that make up the core of this concept are abundantly expressed in language, texts, folk oral literature, rituals, and everyday speech. Therefore, the concept of age is linguistically and culturally inextricably linked to the thinking and lifestyle of the Uzbek people and is an integral part of the system of values that is passed down from generation to generation through language.

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