

THE CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE OF MODERN LINGUISTICS

Javliyev Mansurbek Odil o'g'li

The teacher of Termez state university

Ochilova Shakhnoza Mamarajabovna

The student of Termiz state university

bintumamarajab@gmail.com

Abstract: this article is devoted to defining the structure of concepts in modern linguistics. The various points of view on this issue, deals with the most famous classification, the definition of basic concepts: "concept", "conceptual structure", "interpretant". The article aims at describing and presenting of such a complex structure as a concept. The object of the study is discussed in its various manifestations and identified informations in the conceptual linguistics.

Keywords: concept, structuralist, semiotics, morphophonemics, interpretant, anthropology, multifunctionality lingvocognitive, cultural studies, structure, the national language.

Аннотация: данная статья посвящена определению структуры понятий в современном языкознании. Рассмотрены различные точки зрения по данному вопросу, рассмотрена наиболее известная классификация, определение основных понятий: «концепт», «концептуальная структура», «интерпретант». Целью статьи является описание и представление такой сложной структуры, как концепт. Объект исследования обсуждается в различных его проявлениях и выявляется в концептуальной лингвистике.

Ключевые слова: концепт, структуралист, семиотика, морфонематика, интерпретант, антропология, лингвокогнитивная полифункциональность, культурология, структура, национальный язык.

The study of structure, i.e., of the interrelations of the various elements of language, has been one of the central concerns of modern linguistics and has largely defined the direction of its development. It has given rise to a number of structuralist schools and has spilled over into several related disciplines, such as anthropology, semiotics, and poetics, for which it has become a method of inquiry and a badge of identity. The term "structuralist" itself was apparently first adopted by the Prague Circle, which sought to describe language as a network of relations and treat it in conjunction with its multiple functions. The rise of structuralism as an intellectual trend and method of research was not limited to the science of language. It emerged around the same time in a number of disciplines in reaction to the blunt empiricism of the late 19th century, which treated even logic as an inductive science and which combined a strong belief in observable facts with an equally strong distrust of abstraction and inference. The problems of structure and of the types of relations that hold between the elements of a language were then put on the agenda of various schools of linguistics which gave them quite different solutions, particularly since the Cours had defined them in highly suggestive but largely inadequate terms. While most structuralists would readily accept the basic, yet age-old proposals of the Cours, namely that language is a system of signs consisting of two facets, a signans and signatum, that it is a tool of social interaction endowed with a conventional force, and that there is a difference between langue and parole, they differed from Saussure on a number of issues, including the treatment of language as a structured whole. The import of the various structuralist schools that sprang up in Europe and the United States between the two World Wars and after may in fact be judged by the content they imputed to the concept of structure and by the type of relations they attributed to language. Although the structural approach has in recent times been challenged by other approaches, there is little doubt that the concepts and methods developed by the former have deeply modified the science of language. The possibilities which this "robust" and "classical" structuralism has opened up obviously do transcend the field of comparativism, though at

this point one can hardly envisage their direction or limits. But since the problems of structure pertain to the fundamental relations of language, one can hardly assume that their investigation will cease, no matter under what name such studies will ultimately evolve. In the following remarks I shall give a short survey of the history of ideas that have gravitated in one or another form toward the problems of structure, and then offer some proposals of how the overall problems of structure might be tackled and further pursued. I shall now advance some ideas of how we may broach the problem of structure in language as a whole, i.e., with regard to the relations between the various levels and the relations between the elements of each particular level. My discussion will of necessity be schematic because of the limitations of time and because some of the problems require further and far more detailed analysis. Students that are called "rich systems" of which language is one - have defined them as consisting of a number of parts that interact with each other in complex ways. The interrelations between the parts (the so-called "inter- componential relations") are in such systems looser than the relations that hold between the elements belonging to the same part (the "intra-componential relations") (Simon 1962: 468ff). This definition applies eminently to language if we substitute the notion of "level" for that of "part". The primary problem we face is the determination of the kinds and number of levels, since there is no general agreement on the matter. A lack of functional criteria would make it almost insurmountable. A case in point is the treatment of morphophonemics, which some linguists have defined as a level that is no longer phonology and not yet morphology. Some approaches to transformational grammar have done away with morphology, and have lumped together phonology and morphophonemics; word formation and lexicology are treated by some scholars as different levels. Since function is in my opinion the only solid criterion for the discrimination of levels, I shall distinguish only three traditional levels: a level of phonology, a level of morphology (in the broad sense of the word), and a level of syntax. Phonology deals with the sound system of a language (i.e. with those elements which pertain to its "second articulation"). It is the level that includes both the phonemes and their variants, or in other terms, the distinctive, as well as the redundant, configurational, and expressive features. Morphology is the study of those elements which carry a meaning, or in Peirce's terms, those which have an "interpretant". This level encompasses the grammatical and lexical elements of a language, or those which hinge on the word as the carrier of grammatical and/or lexical meanings. The word itself is, however, a heterogeneous and ill-defined unit and requires for its interpretation reference to the underlying grammatical structure of a language. The level of syntax, finally, deals with the various types of sentences and their internal relations. Despite their functional and formal differences, the three levels of language exhibit a pervasive isomorphism. Thus each level is heterogeneous, comprising different components and functions; each contains primary and obligatory elements, and elements which admit a greater or lesser degree of variation; each comprises monofunctional units, as well as units which carry more than one function; and each consists of a number of subsystems which vary in their hierarchy and mutual relations. The multifunctionality of phonological elements bring us in turn to the question of the relation of phonology to morphology, or more specifically, to the role of phonemic elements in the grammatical system of a language. The use of such elements is highly selective and is known to vary from language to language, as well as within each individual language.

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