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## **THE COGNITIVE AND LINGUOCULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF MEANING: CONVERGENCE, DIVERGENCE, AND INTEGRATIVE POTENTIAL**

*The article explores the relationship between cognitive linguistics and linguocultural studies as two complementary approaches to the analysis of meaning. The study is grounded in the theoretical assumption that meaning should be understood as a process of conceptualization emerging from the interaction of cognitive structures, embodied experience, and culturally mediated knowledge. It is argued that both approaches reject the formalist view of meaning as an autonomous linguistic entity and instead conceptualize it as a dynamic product of human interpretative activity. Special attention is paid to shared analytical categories such as concept, metaphor, frame, and categorization, which function as key tools for understanding how language represents experience. The paper demonstrates that cognitive linguistics primarily focuses on universal mechanisms of knowledge organization, whereas linguocultural studies emphasize cultural specificity, value-laden meanings, and historically shaped conceptual structures. The notion of the concept is examined as an integrative unit that bridges cognitive and cultural dimensions of meaning, highlighting its multidimensional nature, including figurative, evaluative, and symbolic components. Furthermore, the study addresses the role of conceptual metaphor and frame structures in shaping culturally specific patterns of interpretation across linguistic communities. Particular emphasis is placed on the axiological dimension of meaning, which reflects culturally embedded systems of values and influences interpretation beyond the denotative level. The findings suggest that integrating cognitive and linguocultural perspectives enhances the explanatory potential of semantic analysis and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of meaning construction. Such an integrative approach is shown to be particularly relevant for translation studies and intercultural communication, as it allows for a deeper awareness of culturally grounded conceptual differences. The article concludes by substantiating the importance of interdisciplinary research in addressing meaning as a complex phenomenon arising at the intersection of language, cognition, and culture.*

**Key words:** *cognitive linguistics, linguocultural studies, concept, conceptualization, metaphor, frame, categorization, axiology, intercultural communication, translation.*

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## КОГНІТИВНІ ТА ЛІНГВОКУЛЬТУРНІ ОСНОВИ ЗНАЧЕННЯ: КОНВЕРГЕНЦІЯ, ДИВЕРГЕНЦІЯ ТА ІНТЕГРАТИВНИЙ ПОТЕНЦІАЛ

*У статті досліджується взаємозв'язок когнітивної лінгвістики та лінгвокультурології як двох взаємодоповнювальних наукових підходів до аналізу значення. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена необхідністю переосмислення традиційних підходів до семантики в умовах сучасного міждисциплінарного наукового дискурсу, де мова розглядається як складний механізм репрезентації досвіду та культурно зумовленого знання. Вихідною теоретичною позицією є розуміння значення як процесу концептуалізації, що формується в результаті взаємодії когнітивних структур, тілесного досвіду та культурно зумовлених знань. Таке трактування ґрунтується на ідеї активної ролі суб'єкта мовлення у формуванні смислу, де інтерпретація залежить від контексту, попереднього досвіду та колективно поділюваних моделей світу.*

*Обґрунтовується, що обидві дисципліни відходять від формалістичного трактування значення як автономної мовної сутності та натомість розглядають його як динамічний продукт інтерпретативної діяльності людини. Це переорієнтовує дослідницьку оптику з опису мовних структур на аналіз процесів смислотворення, що відбуваються на перетині когнітивних і культурних чинників. Особливу увагу приділено спільним категоріям аналізу, зокрема концепту, метафорі, фрейму та категоризації, які функціонують як ключові інструменти осмислення мовної репрезентації досвіду. Зазначені категорії розглядаються як універсальні когнітивні механізми, що водночас набувають специфічного змістового наповнення в різних культурних середовищах.*

*Показано, що в когнітивній лінгвістиці акцент робиться на універсальних механізмах організації знання, тоді як лінгвокультурологія зосереджується на культурній специфіці концептуальних структур, їхній ціннісній наповненості та історичній зумовленості. Такий підхід дає змогу виявити, як загальні когнітивні принципи реалізуються по-різному залежно від культурного контексту та соціального досвіду мовної спільноти. Проаналізовано роль концепту як інтегративної одиниці, що поєднує ментальні та культурні аспекти значення, а також розглянуто особливості метафоричних моделей і фреймових структур у різних мовно-культурних спільнотах. Наголошено, що ці структури відображають не лише способи організації знання, а й системи цінностей, колективну пам'ять і культурні сценарії поведінки.*

**Ключові слова:** когнітивна лінгвістика, лінгвокультурологія, концепт, концептуалізація, метафора, фрейм, категоризація, аксіологія, міжкультурна комунікація, переклад.

**Problem Statement.** The problem addressed in this study concerns the need to reconcile universal cognitive models of meaning with culturally specific patterns of conceptualization. Despite significant advances in cognitive linguistics, the role of cultural and axiological factors in shaping meaning remains insufficiently integrated into theoretical models. This creates a gap in understanding how meaning is constructed at the intersection of cognition and culture, particularly in contexts involving translation and intercultural communication.

**Literature Review.** Recent research highlights a growing convergence between cognitive linguistics and linguocultural studies, grounded in their shared understanding of meaning as a mentally and experi-

entially constructed phenomenon. Scholars emphasize that meaning emerges through the interaction of cognitive structures, embodied experience, and culturally mediated knowledge, reflecting a shift away from structuralist models toward interpretative and interdisciplinary approaches (Langacker, 2008; Evans & Green, 2006).

At the same time, contemporary studies point to important differences in analytical focus. Cognitive linguistics primarily investigates universal mechanisms such as categorization, metaphor, and framing, while linguocultural research examines how these mechanisms are shaped by cultural values, historical experience, and collective memory. This distinction has been further developed in works exploring con-

ceptual variability across languages, demonstrating that even basic cognitive processes are influenced by cultural context (Wierzbicka, 1997; Kövecses, 2010).

Recent contributions also underline the importance of conceptual metaphor and frame semantics as tools for analyzing culturally embedded meaning. Studies show that metaphorical models and frames reflect dominant ideological and social patterns, influencing communication and interpretation across cultures (Fillmore, 1982; Kramsch, 1998). Additionally, growing attention is being paid to axiological meaning, which reveals how language encodes value systems and evaluative orientations (House, 2015).

Overall, current research supports the view that an integrated cognitive and linguocultural approach provides a more comprehensive framework for analyzing meaning, particularly in applied domains such as translation, intercultural communication, and language education.

**The aim of this study** is to examine the relationship between cognitive linguistics and linguocultural studies, to identify their common theoretical foundations and key differences, and to demonstrate how their integration contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of meaning as a culturally and cognitively grounded process.

**Results and Discussion.** The relationship between linguocultural studies and cognitive linguistics is grounded in their shared understanding of meaning as a mentally and experientially constructed phenomenon. This shared theoretical premise rests on the recognition that meaning is not a fixed system of correspondences but emerges through interpretative processes in which cognitive structures, embodied experience, and culturally mediated knowledge interact. Both approaches reject the structuralist view of meaning as an autonomous, purely linguistic entity and instead conceptualize it as a product of human cognition shaped by perception, embodied experience, and sociocultural knowledge. Such a perspective entails a fundamental reconsideration of semantic status, framing meaning as the outcome of dynamic cognitive activity that integrates sensory input, individual experience, and collectively maintained cultural models. This convergence reflects a broader epistemological shift in linguistics toward interpretative and experience-based models of meaning (Langacker, 2008; Evans & Green, 2006). This shift is closely associated with a move away from formalist paradigms toward interdisciplinary approaches that incorporate insights from psychology, anthropology, and neuroscience, thereby deepening the understanding of conceptualization processes. However, while cognitive linguistics tends to prioritize general cognitive

mechanisms common to all humans, linguocultural studies focus on culturally specific modes of conceptualization and interpretation. In particular, cognitive linguistics foregrounds universal principles of knowledge organization – such as categorization, framing, and metaphorization – whereas linguocultural studies emphasize their variability across cultural contexts, demonstrating how historical traditions, value systems, and symbolic practices shape distinct patterns of meaning construction.

Cognitive linguistics views language as an integral component of human cognition and emphasizes the role of conceptual structures such as concepts, frames, image schemas, and conceptual metaphors. Within this theoretical perspective, language is not treated as an isolated formal system but as a cognitive resource that reflects and organizes human experience, linking linguistic expression to perception, memory, and categorization. Meaning is defined as conceptualization, that is, as the dynamic process through which speakers structure and interpret reality (Langacker, 2008). This understanding foregrounds the active role of the speaker in meaning construction, highlighting that semantic content emerges through ongoing mental operations shaped by context, prior knowledge, and embodied interaction with the environment. Linguocultural studies adopt these analytical tools, but reinterpret them through the lens of culture, treating conceptual structures as repositories of collective cultural experience, historically shaped values, and socially shared. Such a reorientation underscores that these structures encode culturally specific patterns of worldview, reflecting accumulated historical memory, symbolic systems, and normative frameworks characteristic of a given linguistic community. Moreover, this approach draws attention to the ways in which shared meanings are maintained, transmitted, and transformed across generations, revealing the interplay between individual cognition and collective cultural continuity.

A key notion at the intersection of the two disciplines is that of the concept. It functions as a crucial analytical bridge linking cognitive mechanisms with culturally embedded systems of meaning, thereby integrating insights from both theoretical perspectives. In cognitive linguistics, a concept is understood as a mental unit organizing knowledge and experience, often structured around prototypes rather than fixed definitions (Rosch, 1978).

This prototype-based organization highlights graded category membership, where certain instances are perceived as more central than others, reflecting patterns of human categorization grounded in perceptual and experiential salience. In linguocultural stud-

ies, however, the concept is further defined as a culturally marked mental construct that includes not only a notional core; it also encompasses figurative, evaluative, symbolic, and axiological components. Such a multidimensional structure underscores the interpretative richness of concepts, as they encode layers of meaning shaped by cultural narratives, ethical norms, and collective memory. This expanded interpretation allows linguocultural analysis to account for national specificity and value orientation embedded in conceptual structures. It also provides a framework for examining how shared meanings are negotiated within a community and how they reflect broader ideological and historical developments. For example, the English concept freedom is strongly associated with individual autonomy, legal rights, and personal choice, whereas the Ukrainian *свобода* historically incorporates collective, moral, and existential dimensions shaped by national experience and historical struggle (Wierzbicka, 1997). This contrast illustrates how seemingly equivalent lexical items may encode divergent conceptual profiles, revealing differences in cultural priorities, social organization, and historical trajectories that influence the interpretation of fundamental values.

Another fundamental cognitive mechanism relevant to linguocultural analysis is conceptual metaphor. It occupies a central position in explaining how abstract knowledge is structured and communicated, serving as a link between embodied experience and higher-level conceptual organization. Cognitive linguistics demonstrates that metaphor is not merely a stylistic device; rather, it constitutes a basic mechanism of thought that structures abstract domains in terms of concrete experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

This perspective highlights systematic mappings between source and target domains, through which familiar, sensorimotor-based knowledge provides a framework for understanding more complex or intangible phenomena. Linguocultural studies emphasize that metaphorical models are culturally conditioned and reflect dominant value systems and sociohistorical priorities (Kövecses, 2010). From this viewpoint, metaphor functions as a carrier of cultural meanings, encoding collective attitudes, normative assumptions, and historically sedimented patterns of interpretation that vary across linguistic communities. For instance, the metaphor *TIME IS MONEY* in English linguistic culture foregrounds efficiency, productivity, and economic rationality, whereas Ukrainian metaphorical representations of time more frequently highlight continuity, fate, endurance, and historical memory, revealing different cultural attitudes toward tempo-

rality. Such contrasts demonstrate that metaphorical conceptualization is shaped by broader cultural frameworks, including economic structures, philosophical traditions, and historical experiences, which influence how societies perceive and evaluate fundamental dimensions of human existence.

Closely related to metaphor is the notion of *frame* or *scenario*, which refers to structured background knowledge activated in communication (Fillmore, 1982). Frames can be understood as cognitively stored schemata that organize expectations about typical situations, participants, and sequences of actions, thereby shaping how utterances are produced and interpreted in real-time interaction. Frames guide interpretation beyond literal meaning and play a crucial role in intercultural communication. They provide interpretative cues that enable interlocutors to infer implicit meanings, recognize communicative intentions, and align their understanding with contextually relevant knowledge structures. Linguocultural studies investigate how culturally specific frames regulate expectations, politeness norms, and communicative behaviour, and how frame mismatches may lead to pragmatic failure in translation and interaction (Kramsch, 1998). This line of inquiry highlights that communicative success depends on the degree of shared background knowledge and culturally embedded interpretative conventions, which are often taken for granted by native speakers yet remain opaque to outsiders. For example, English politeness strategies are framed by indirectness and mitigation, whereas Ukrainian communicative norms may allow greater directness without negative pragmatic implications. Such differences reflect distinct cultural models of interpersonal relations, including varying conceptions of respect, sincerity, and social distance, and they illustrate how divergent framing patterns can result in misinterpretation, unintended offense, or loss of pragmatic nuance in cross-cultural interaction and translation.

The process of categorization further illustrates the interaction between cognition and culture. Cognitive linguistics demonstrates that categories are prototype-based and gradient rather than rigidly defined (Rosch, 1978). This means that human cognition organizes knowledge around more or less typical representatives of a category, where boundaries remain flexible and context-sensitive rather than fixed. Such an approach challenges classical views of categorization rooted in strict necessary and sufficient conditions, highlighting instead the dynamic and experience-based nature of conceptual structures. Linguocultural studies extend this insight by demonstrating that prototypes themselves are culturally variable and ideologically shaped (Bartmiński,

2009). They show that what counts as a “central” or “typical” example within a category is influenced by historically developed value systems, social practices, and collective memory embedded in a given linguistic community. As a result, categorization reflects not only cognitive processes but also culturally mediated interpretations of reality. Lexical categories such as family, home, or work activate different prototypical images in English and Ukrainian linguistic cultures, which has direct implications for translation accuracy and intercultural understanding. For instance, the notion of “family” may evoke a nuclear structure in one cultural setting, while in another it may prioritize extended kinship networks, thereby shaping expectations, emotional connotations, and communicative norms. These divergences can lead to subtle yet significant mismatches in translation, where formally equivalent terms fail to convey the same conceptual depth or cultural resonance. Recognizing such differences enhances interpretive precision and fosters more nuanced intercultural communication by accounting for the underlying conceptual frameworks that guide meaning construction.

A particularly important contribution of linguocultural studies to cognitive theory lies in their emphasis on axiological meaning, that is, value-based interpretation encoded in language. This perspective shifts analytical attention from purely structural representations of meaning toward the evaluative layers that guide how speakers perceive, interpret, and assess reality. It underscores that meaning is inseparable from systems of values that are internalized by members of a linguistic community and reproduced through discourse. Cognitive linguistics often prioritizes descriptive conceptual structures, whereas linguocultural analysis foregrounds evaluative, normative, and moral dimensions of meaning. Such a distinction highlights complementary yet asymmetrical emphases: while cognitive approaches tend to model how knowledge is organized in the mind, linguocultural studies illuminate how that knowledge is filtered through culturally specific standards of desirability, appropriateness, and legitimacy. This analytical expansion reveals that conceptualization is always intertwined with culturally sanctioned judgments, even when these are not overtly expressed. Many linguistic units implicitly encode cultural judgments and value hierarchies that remain invisible at the denotative level, but are crucial for interpretation and translation (House, 2015). These implicit layers may manifest through connotations, metaphorical associations, stylistic markedness, or conventionalized patterns of usage that signal approval, disapproval, prestige, or marginality. As a result, the apparent neutrality of

lexical meaning often conceals a complex network of evaluative implications that shape communicative intent and reception. These axiological components pose significant challenges in translation, where semantic equivalence alone does not ensure cultural adequacy. A translation that accurately reproduces referential meaning may still distort or neutralize the value-laden aspects embedded in the source text, leading to misinterpretation or loss of pragmatic force. Therefore, effective translation requires sensitivity to culturally grounded evaluative frameworks, as well as the ability to reconstruct them in a way that resonates within the target linguistic and cultural environment while preserving the original’s interpretive depth.

From a methodological perspective, linguocultural studies employ cognitive linguistic tools – conceptual analysis, metaphor analysis, and frame semantics – while situating them within broader cultural, historical, and social contexts. This methodological synthesis expands the analytical scope of cognitive linguistics by embedding its instruments within a multidimensional interpretive framework, where linguistic phenomena are examined as products of both mental structuring and socio-cultural conditioning. It emphasizes that analytical tools acquire greater explanatory power when applied in conjunction with insights from cultural history, anthropology, and discourse studies, thereby overcoming the limitations of approaches confined to purely synchronic or decontextualized analysis. This integrative methodology enables scholars to trace diachronic shifts in conceptual systems and to reveal how language reflects collective memory, ideological change, and national identity formation (Sharifian, 2011). By systematically correlating linguistic data with historical developments, researchers can identify how evolving socio-political conditions reshape dominant metaphors, reconfigure conceptual hierarchies, and introduce new evaluative patterns into discourse. Such an approach highlights that language functions as a repository of collective experience, where traces of past events, cultural traumas, and ideological transformations are encoded and continually reinterpreted. Moreover, it provides a framework for examining how national identity is discursively constructed and maintained through recurring conceptual models, symbolic representations, and culturally salient narratives, which are transmitted across generations and adapted to changing communicative needs.

In foreign language education, the integration of cognitive and linguocultural perspectives fosters deeper semantic competence. This pedagogical orientation shifts the focus from surface-level lexical matching to an exploration of how meanings are inter-

nally organized within a cultural worldview, encouraging learners to recognize that linguistic expressions are embedded in networks of culturally shaped associations, evaluations, and experiential models. Such an approach positions language learning not as mechanical acquisition but as an interpretive process requiring engagement with cultural logics and value systems. Learners are encouraged to move beyond simple memorization of lexical equivalents and actively reconstruct culturally grounded conceptual structures. This reconstruction entails identifying culturally salient prototypes, understanding metaphorical extensions that resonate within a specific linguistic community, and recognizing how communicative norms influence meaning in context. By engaging in these practices, students develop the ability to interpret and produce meaning in ways that align with culturally specific expectations rather than relying on direct transfer from their native language. Such an approach enhances intercultural awareness, supports critical reflection, and significantly reduces the risk of pragmatic and interpretative failure in real communication (Byram, 1997). In practical terms, learners become more attentive to implicit evaluations, context-sensitive meanings, and subtle pragmatic cues that might otherwise lead to misunderstandings. They also acquire the analytical skills needed to question their own cultural assumptions, compare conceptual systems across languages, and navigate communicative situations where value-laden or culturally encoded meanings play a central role. This results in more nuanced intercultural interaction and a higher

degree of communicative effectiveness in diverse linguistic environments.

**Conclusions.** In summary, linguocultural studies and cognitive linguistics share an understanding of meaning as conceptualization, while diverging in analytical focus and explanatory scope. This convergence indicates a common epistemological foundation grounded in the view that meaning arises through mental activity shaped by experience, whereas their divergence reflects distinct research priorities and methodological orientations. Linguocultural studies enrich cognitive linguistics by foregrounding cultural specificity, value orientation, and historical depth, thereby extending cognitive models beyond universal cognition toward culturally embedded meaning-making. By incorporating insights into collective memory, symbolic systems, and historically conditioned patterns of interpretation, this approach broadens the analytical horizon and highlights the variability of conceptual structures across linguistic communities. Together, these disciplines provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing meaning as a dynamic interaction between mind, language, and culture, which is essential for both theoretical linguistics and applied domains such as translation and language pedagogy. Such an integrated perspective supports a more nuanced understanding of cross-cultural communication, facilitates the identification of potential sources of misunderstanding, and contributes to the development of more effective strategies in intercultural mediation, translation practice, and language teaching.

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