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COGNITIVE GRAMMAR IN COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

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ANNOTATSIYA:

This article examines the formation, theoretical foundations, and role of Cognitive Grammar in contemporary cognitive linguistics. The study discusses the fundamental principles of Cognitive Grammar, including the symbolic thesis, the usage-based approach, the semantic nature of grammatical units, and the lexicon–grammar continuum. The findings demonstrate that Cognitive Grammar explains grammatical phenomena through their close relationship with human cognition, conceptual systems, and language use, highlighting its theoretical and practical significance in modern linguistic research.

Introduction

Cognitive linguistics studies the role of language in human cognition. At the core of cognitive linguistics lies the concept of conceptualization, according to which language, shaped through its phonetic, lexical, and grammatical structures and rules, gives rise to concepts in the human mind. The system of linguistic signs is organized and idealized in cognition, enabling concepts to combine and form mental representations of new knowledge. Language reflects the interaction of psychological, communicative, and cultural factors; in other words, language and its structure reveal how the human mind functions. The cognitive function of language involves understanding how meanings are organized and stored in human cognition. In this respect, cognitive linguistics plays a crucial role. Its primary objective is to investigate what kinds of knowledge humans possess, how this knowledge is represented and stored, and how it is applied. The discipline approaches the relationship between language and cognition from different theoretical perspectives. From this standpoint, cognitive linguistics is generally divided into three main branches:

– Cognitive Phonology;

– Cognitive Semantics;
– Cognitive Grammar.

These branches examine language not merely as a system of formal rules but as a phenomenon closely connected with human thought and cognitive processes. Each branch possesses its own distinctive characteristics. Among them, cognitive grammar occupies a particularly significant position.

Literature Review

Cognitive grammar is a branch of cognitive linguistics that examines language by relating grammatical structures and rules to human perception, reasoning, and emotions. Within this framework, the study of language is not limited to syntax or morphology; instead, considerable attention is devoted to the semantic aspects of grammatical structures. Grammatical constructions are analyzed in relation to human experience, cognition, and culture. For example, individuals mentally organize grammatical rules, systematize words and phrases, and derive meaning from them. When the order of elements within a sentence changes, the meaning interpreted by the speaker or listener also changes[36].

Cognitive grammar interprets grammar as an integral component of the general human cognitive system. In this approach, grammar is not regarded as an autonomous set of formal rules but rather as a system that reflects human perception of the world, experience, and conceptual knowledge. Consequently, cognitive grammar places greater emphasis on the cognitive functions of linguistic forms in meaning construction than on their formal structural properties.

Cognitive grammar does not represent a single unified theoretical model; instead, it constitutes a conceptual framework that integrates various scholarly approaches. Within this framework, some researchers focus on the cognitive foundations of grammatical categories and the mechanisms underlying them in human thought, whereas others describe grammatical constructions as the fundamental units of language. Another group of scholars investigates the historical development of grammatical forms and the process of grammaticalization, explaining how lexical items gradually evolve into grammatical markers.

Research Methodology

This study is based on the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics, with particular emphasis on cognitive grammar. A descriptive and analytical research design was employed to examine the fundamental principles of cognitive grammar and their role in explaining the relationship between language, cognition, and conceptualization. The study draws on a qualitative analysis of relevant scholarly literature, including the works of Ronald W. Langacker and other leading researchers in cognitive linguistics. Comparative analysis was also used to identify the distinctive features of cognitive grammar in relation to traditional grammatical approaches. The findings were interpreted through the cognitive linguistic

[36] Qurbonova K. Kognitiv tilshunoslikka oid atamalarning izohli lug‘ati. – Namangan: Mashrab, 2026. – B. 17

perspective, focusing on symbolic units, the usage-based model, and the conceptual functions of grammatical structures.

Results and Discussion

Like the lexicon, grammar structures conceptual content and expresses it in symbolic form. Therefore, grammar also possesses an imagic character. Whenever we employ a particular grammatical construction or grammatical morpheme, we select an image that conceptualizes the described situation from a particular perspective in accordance with our communicative intentions[37].

One of the fundamental theoretical principles of cognitive grammar is the principle of symbolic units[38]. According to this principle, every grammatical unit of language consists of an inseparable unity of form and meaning. Thus, grammatical units are not merely formal structures; they also encode specific conceptual content. For this reason, cognitive linguistics maintains that grammar cannot be studied independently of meaning.

A symbolic unit consists of two primary components: the semantic pole and the phonological pole. The semantic pole represents the conceptual content conveyed by a linguistic unit, whereas the phonological pole refers to the expression of that content through speech, writing, or sign. These two components are intrinsically interconnected within the system of linguistic knowledge in the human mind, and neither can exist independently of the other. Consequently, linguistic units are interpreted not simply as sequences of sounds but as conceptual structures that carry meaning.

This approach in cognitive grammar is, to some extent, consistent with the classical structuralist conception of the linguistic sign. However, the cognitive model establishes a much closer relationship between symbolic units and the human conceptual system as well as cognitive processes. Linguistic units are regarded as components of the knowledge system stored in the human mind and activated during language use.

This principle also allows grammatical constructions to be interpreted as independent carriers of meaning. For example, although active and passive voice constructions may describe the same event, they differ in their conceptual orientation. An active construction directs attention to the agent performing the action, whereas a passive construction foregrounds the entity affected by the action. Therefore, the choice of a grammatical form is directly related to how information is conceptualized and from which perspective it is presented to the listener or reader.

Accordingly, cognitive grammar argues that there is no strict boundary between lexical units and grammatical constructions. Both are symbolic units that integrate form and meaning and differ only in the degree of semantic specificity. Lexical units express relatively specific conceptual content, whereas grammatical constructions convey more generalized and

[37] Langacker R. W. An introduction to cognitive grammar.//Cognitive science, 10(1), 1986. – P. 15.
[38] Ungerer F. H, Schmid H. J. An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics. – London, New York: Longman, 1996. – P. 476

schematic meanings. This perspective constitutes one of the central theoretical claims of cognitive grammar—the continuum between lexicon and grammar.

Furthermore, grammar serves as a means of constructing complex conceptualizations and expressing them symbolically. However, grammar itself should not be equated with these conceptualizations. Grammatical structure functions as a supporting framework that enables speakers to construct and communicate complex semantic structures[39].

Another important theoretical principle of cognitive grammar is the usage-based approach[40]. According to this approach, grammatical knowledge is not viewed as an innate and immutable system but rather as a body of knowledge that develops through the repeated use of language in authentic communicative situations. In other words, linguistic knowledge emerges through the generalization of experiences accumulated during language use and through the cognitive reinforcement of recurrent linguistic patterns.

From this perspective, language knowledge and language use are inseparable processes. The more frequently linguistic units are used across diverse communicative contexts, the more firmly they become established as stable cognitive structures. Consequently, grammatical knowledge is derived from actual communicative experience and forms the knowledge base that guides subsequent language use. For this reason, cognitive grammar does not treat linguistic competence and performance as opposing phenomena; instead, it regards them as mutually interacting aspects of a single cognitive process.

Within the cognitive model, every speech event is viewed as the simultaneous realization of form and meaning. During communication, speakers construct conceptual content while expressing it through speech, writing, or other communicative modalities. As a result, the semantic and phonological dimensions of linguistic units are activated simultaneously, and the association between them becomes increasingly strengthened within the speaker's cognitive system.

The usage-based approach also recognizes the dynamic nature of grammatical knowledge. The linguistic system is continuously enriched and refined through new communicative experiences. Grammatical constructions and linguistic patterns that are used regularly gradually become conventionalized and eventually develop into stable grammatical elements of the language. Thus, language use contributes to the formation of grammatical knowledge, while existing grammatical knowledge, in turn, facilitates successful future language use. This reciprocal relationship constitutes the central principle of the usage-based model in cognitive grammar.

Conclusion

In conclusion, cognitive grammar is one of the contemporary linguistic approaches that explains linguistic phenomena in close relation to human cognition and conceptual knowledge. This study has provided a systematic overview of the theoretical foundations of

[39] Langacker R. W. Discourse in cognitive grammar.// Cognitive linguistics, 12(2), 2001. – P. 184
[40] Ungerer F. H, Schmid H. J. An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics. – London, New York: Longman, 1996. – P. 478

cognitive grammar and identified the key features that distinguish it from other grammatical frameworks. The findings demonstrate that cognitive grammar offers an important methodological framework for analyzing linguistic units from the perspectives of meaning and language use. Future research should focus on investigating this approach more extensively using data from the Uzbek language and exploring its potential applications in various fields of applied linguistics.

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