Concept as the Main Research Object of Cognitive Linguistics

Kunimzhan Sadirkyzy Abdikalyk[a], Zhanar Altynbekovna Abitzhanova[a], Zhamilya Kerimbaevna Otarbekova[a], Gulyaim Kablakatovna Kaidarova[a], and Gulzhan Abutalipovna Seidullayeva[b]

[a]Kazakh State Women's Training Teacher University, Almaty city, KAZAKHSTAN;
[b]KazGASA, Almaty city, KAZAKHSTAN

ABSTRACT

This article dwells upon the basic unit of cognitive linguistics, which is a concept. Firstly, we provide an overview of major scientific works written by foreign linguists who pay attention to special aspects and lines of research. Secondly, we analyse conclusions on modern problems in linguistics that are drawn in cognitological studies conducted since the end of the 20th century. We also touch upon the course and practice of cognitive linguistics while considering the connection between cognition and language.

In order to study a concept, which is a linguo-philosophical unit of linguistics, we examine the associative and semantic field of the concept "woman" in the Kazakh and English cultures. The linguo-philosophical analysis of the macro concept "blue" and its associative and semantic field in the English and Kazakh languages show that its cultural and personal meaning greatly differ. We prove that conceptual borders of any language display purview, knowledge, feelings, world outlook and life position of the respective ethnos and its distinctive members.

Introduction

It is well-known that the study of cognition has been developing from way back. With intellect, thoughts and consciousness existing from the birth of a human being, cognition has become the major object of research. Such prominent scientists as Aristotle, Plato and Al-Farabi who made the first

CORRESPONDENCE Kunimzhan Sadirkyzy Abdikalyk ✉ murat7508@yandex.kz

contribution into the history philosophy expressed an idea that language could be a cognitive tool. For example, language is regarded as a cognitive tool in Plato's "Kratylos".

However, major features, study object, research lines and notions of cognitive science were first introduced by western scientists. G. Miller called cognitive science "the symposium of an information theory" that emerged in the 1950s [1]. In 1960, J. Bruner accompanied by G. Miller opened the centre of cognitive studies in Harvard University. This centre has made a significant contribution into the formation of cognitive linguistics. J. Bruner's scientific works revealed some problems concerned with cognitive linguistics [2].

In the half of the 20th century cognitive linguistics was analysed with the help of basic knowledge within a modern anthropocentric paradigm. The modern state of global and Russian linguistics is characterised by an anthropocentric approach. Such new area as cognitive linguistics was formed thanks to an anthropocentric paradigm. The source and formation way of this new scientific field can be found in European linguistic works, namely in Wilhelm von Humboldt's linguo-philosophical conception [3], and in the U.S. scientific ideas expressed by F. Boas [4], E. Sapir [5] and B.L. Whorf [6]. In the 1960s, many scientists paid much attention to B.L. Whorf's research-and-practice theory [7].

By the end of the 20th century a theoretical approach of cognitive science had begun to improve and spread heightening the interest of linguists. Such foreign scientists as G. Lakoff [8], M. Johnson [9] and Teun Adrianus van Dijk [10] published their works on cognition. Scientists working in the framework of cognitive sciences paid special attention to a language as a means to characterise the "linguistic world-image". Modern linguistics studies a language in its most-developed mode that depicts human beings and their objective reality in an ideal form. The problem of a human being and a language has lately come in the spotlight since a full-fledged study of any given language is impossible if it is analysed within linguistic borders. Any language should be surveyed through its native speakers and the society they form because their usage of this language makes people special and highlights peculiar features of the language itself. Studying the nature of linguistic units is a cognitive activity. They serve as means of expressing thoughts. A cognitive activity comprises informative, denotative and referential linguistic activities. Thus, a language is more than names of some objects and notions, it is a special mindset, the representation of human experience gathered throughout the years, and it cannot function without social interference.

German philosopher and linguist W. von Humboldt (1767-1835) was the first to analyse such crucial notions as language, thinking and reality. In L. Weisgerber's opinion, language cannot express the objective reality, it reveals only a person's subjective take on it. That is why cognition is determined by a certain language. "Language is a key to the world" [11]. In this case, the scientist assimilated language and cognition (thoughts), and studied them without reference to the world (objective reality).

The term "cognitive science" initially meant the process of acquiring information, its proceeding, preserving and further using. As a result, this scientific branch was concerned with the formation and enrichment of knowledge held within a human brain. While analysing the role of language in the process of cognition G. Harman said: "Language fulfills a vital function

among other cognitive sciences as it conveys thoughts. Language can also influence the manner of cognition" [12].

Russian scientists could not but make their contribution into cognitive linguistics. There are several fundamental works concerned with a cognitive theory of language. V.A. Maslova wrote: "Cognitive linguistics is based upon cognitivism and exists in the framework of modern anthropocentric paradigms that expand the range of linguistic studies" [13]. Cognitive linguistics is closely connected with cognitivism, which is a study of the thinking mind, its mental functions and activities. The research object is peoples' cognition that embraces supervision and control, as well as the formation of one's mindset, representations, symbols and signs that lay the foundation of systematised knowledge. The cognitive world of any given person is determined through their mental actions and life experience. In this regard, language is a main sign that define these actions.

Methods

Cognitive linguistics is a scientific sphere that studies the knowledge about the world formed in the human mind, its inner structures, representative methods and regularities. Cognitive linguistics also aims at modeling the world and the structure of linguistic cognition. The world representation is formed in one's mind through feelings (tactile, visual, taste-bud) on the level of notion (signs, worldview) or thoughts organisation. When these matters are being formed in one's mind, they represent the known information about the world.

Basic methods of cognitive linguistics can be summarized the following way: collecting information about the world that is formed in the human mind before mastering a language; grouping these data into a single system; defining the world in the human mind; revealing the representation of this world image in the corresponding language, etc.

Cognitive linguistics, or cognitive metaphor theory serves as a means to systematise and form linguistics with regard to concepts of the linguistic world image. The concept of any given word is determined through its semantic and associative field. Words express the information in the semantic and associative fields, and they are regarded as separate elements of cognitive and pragmatic meanings. "Cognitive science is mostly concerned with human cognitions. Besides seen actions, it also studies their mental representations, inner world images, patterns, signs that serve as symbols of the cognitive language model, strategies – all these matters lay in the foundation of human actions. Thus, the human cognitive world is analysed through actions and activities. The whole human activity and thoughts themselves are formed through language. It is the language that builds motives and beliefs, and predicts their possible results" [13].

Cognitive linguistics studies cognitive structures, linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge system, and the realisations of such actions as collecting, proceeding and applying linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge. Decoding information through a language sign relates to the competence of cognitive linguistics.

Linguistic typology, ethnolinguistics, neurolinguistics, psycholinguistics and cultural studies influenced the formation of cognitive linguistics. The term "cognitive linguistics" initially denoted neurolinguistics. The main object of

cognitive science is language. It is impossible to understand the nature of other cognitive phenomena without language. When language was analysed from this viewpoint, a new linguistic paradigm was formed. A cognitive branch within modern linguistics has three objectives, i.e. we study the nature of thinking process, its mastering and applying.

The French linguists said that understanding the world and environment is realised through sensory receptors, as well as their explanation. Thus, language reflects the images of their sensory visions rather than the objective reality, environment, items or phenomena [14].

The main objective of cognitive linguistics is to study cognitive capabilities of a person using certain methods and tools. The analysis of different languages enables linguists to find common features and then form common rules. Linguistics systematically studies linguistic phenomena, draw an analogy between aspects in one or more languages. Cognitive linguistics surveys the conceptual system through linguistic phenomena [15].

While contemplating cognitivism, V.A. Maslova wrote: "Cognitive science pays much attention to human cognitions and studies observed actions, their mental representations (their inner images, patterns), symbols and strategies that give rise to the above-mentioned actions based on the gathered knowledge, i.e. the cognitive world of a person is being studied through behaviour and activity of that person which are closely accompanied by language. In this case, language lays the verbal and cogitative foundation of any given human activity, forms its motives and motives and beliefs, and predicts their possible results" [13]. The main research object of cognitive science is a human cognition. Besides supervision and control, there are more methods to analyse cognitions, including the definition of their mental representations (inner cognitive process), symbols, the knowledge system and human strategies. Thus, the cognitive world of a person is defined through experience and mental activity. Language serves as a basic sign that provides people with information on this activity. Language is also a result of information proceeding that takes place in the human mind.

A. Baitursunov mentioned the correlation between cognition and language in the beginning of the 20th century. Later linguists revealed a social, psychological and cognitive function of language. Kazakh scientist A. Baitursunov pays special attention to the connection between language and mental system. K. Zhukbanov also wrote about a cognitive function of language and its connection with the human mind. The fact that all words of any given language must be comprehended proves that language depends on the way of thoughts, mind and cognition. K. Zhukbanov's primary ideas are as follows: the analysis of language with regard to physiological and psychological characteristics of a person, the evaluation of language as a means of communication and the result of human activity, a way to learn more about the world around.

In the framework of cognitive science old concepts are proceeded and considered in a new light. For example, the nature of realia (items, phenomena, events) causes different world images in the mind. Some of them are given through images, others are expressed by simple notions, and still others are conveyed in the form of symbols.

A concept is a linguo-philosophical unit that was introduced thanks to an anthropocentric approach in linguistics. A concept defines and groups almost every possible meaning of any given word and their development.

Philosopher Anselm (1033-1109) was the first to introduce the term "concept". In the Latin language it has several meanings: conseptio – 1) a connection, code, system; 2) warehouse; 3) signing legal acts; 4) seeds receiving; 5) a sentence [16]. The dichotomy of language and thinking has been considered in the Russian linguistics. It is widely believed that the following scientists laid the theoretical foundation of the term "concept": E.F. Karsky, A.A. Shakhmatov, A.A. Potebnja, A.N. Afanasiev, V.N. Teliya, A.N. Sobolevsky, D.S. Likhachov, V.V. Vorobiev, V.A. Maslova, N.D. Arutyunova, E.S. Kubryakova, A.N. Morokovsky, N.K. Ryabtseva, V. Airapetyan, V.V. Kolesov, A.Ya. Gurevich, A. Wierzbicka, M. Minsky, etc.

The term "concept" has many definitions and representations. Professor V.A. Maslova analysed various definitions and provided her own variant: "A concept is a semantic unit that has linguo-cultural features and characterises speakers of any chosen ethnoculture. While reflecting an ethnic mindset, a concept marks the ethnic language world image and serves as the so-called brick to build "the house of our being" [13].

Results

A concept is a unit that preserves and proceeds information about reality. It is an ethno cultural group of words and a basic mental phenomenon that expresses the natives' cognitive consciousness. A concept is a small unit of an ideal consciousness and experience of native speakers.

Let's analyse the concept "woman" in the Kazakh and English cognition. In the Kazakh language the concept "woman" has a semantic field. The associative field of the concept "woman can be defined as follows:

A woman – *mother, beautiful, clever, a good person, nice, a fair woman, pretty, honest, sister, dining room, a mother of children, wife, with delicate psyche, weak, love, a guardian of the hearth, married, pregnant,"if all girls are nice, where do bad women come from", a family's blessing, long-haired, wearing headcloth, good-hearted, a mother of a son, with wrinkles on her face, sad, an artery, life-giving, a teacher, "if a woman gets angry, it makes a cooking pot boil harder", speaks quietly, patient, "if a man is a head, then a woman is his neck", tidy, katun (a wench), immature, untidy, baibishe (elder wife), tokal (second wife), kundes (one man's wives), etc.*

A bad woman – *cruel, a stepmother, impudent, stubborn, a hell-raiser, a cuckoo-like mother, a foundling, inhospitable, ill-mannered, always argues with her mother-in-law, a gossip girl, sluttish, proud, boastful, wicked, sour-tempered, a late riser, often comes late like cows to field.*

A Kazakh girl – *long-haired, wearing jewellery, pretty, well-mannered, as white as milk, Bayan, Kuz Zhibek, Togzhan, Akbilek, black-haired, hazel-eyed, respects her mother tongue and traditions, red, a tulip, a flower, does not leave a trace when walking, has thick plaits, a skull-cap, a skull-cap decorated with an eagle-owl's feathers, like Manshuk and Alia, "A girl is prohibited to have forty families", "The road a girl is going is narrow", a girl, beautiful, frisky.*

A Kazakh woman – *respectful, well-behaved, modest, pretty, active, swift, serious, well-mannered, preserves national traditions, patient, endures all asperities, manages her household, considerate, courteous, well-dressed, obeys her husband, a cradle, brings up her children, does not stand up to anyone, does not cross a road, Gulbarshun, Kurtka, wearing a saukele (traditional hat), knows her place, skillful, swift-handed, respects her husband, down-dressed, beautiful.*

A mother – *mother's milk, colostrum, expresses her love, kind, holding a baby in her arms, happiness, the significant other, respectful, beautiful, clever, caring, beloved, a heroine, a dining room, a kitchen, cooks tasty food, Earth Mother, the Motherland, worth more than gold, a village, brings out into society, the Earth's creator, a family's hearth, brings up a new generation, wearing white headcloth, a lullaby, a mother always thinks about her child, a mother's kind and warm palm, Domalak ana, Naiman ana in "Buran stop", a spring, a source.*

A grandmother – *a father's mother, a mother's mother, kind, kind-hearted, old, an old woman, clever, understanding, a palm, a kimeshek (traditional headgear), large white headcloth, a full dress, a long dress, a waistcoat, a grandfather, a village, the most respected, a fairy-tale, a protector, a grandchild, a caring family member, batter, bawyrsak (fried dough), navat (crystallised sugar), raisin, sweets, Indian tea, brings up her grandchildren, Zere, Aiganum, ichigi (traditional high boots), a boot, fair-faced, gives advice, knits socks, spins fibres, pulls wool, wears ring bracelets, superstitious, makes embellishments.*

A mother-in-law – *a husband's mother, a daughter-in-law's mother, modest, loves her daughter-in-law as her own daughter, "a daughter-in-law often looks like her mother-in-law", leads the way, can teach everything, brings up children, is watching you, speaks ill of her daughter-in-law, a provoker, is jealous of her son.*

An elder daughter-in-law – *a woman, an elder brother's wife, a sister-in-law, a brother-in-law, cheerful, gives advice, a friend, "a daughter-in-law meets a lucky one", sympathetic, strict, friendly, envious, a nice person, speaks quitly, Akbala in "Botagoz", modest, skillful, handy, pours tea with a smile, etc.*

An elder sister-in-law – *a husband's elder sister, older, kind, caring, gives advice, obstinate, a frequent guest at the parents' home, confrontational, provokes, unites two groups of people, often gives instructions, a well-respected guest of the family, likes to criticise, etc.*

A younger sister-in-law – *a girl, beautiful, a husband's younger sister, unveils her secrets, spoiled, provokes, Erkekuz, Shurailum, playful, proud, capricious, likes giving orders, a daughter-in-law's helper, etc.*

An old woman – *an aged woman, hard-bitten, knowledgeable, walks with a cane, with a wrinkled face, weak, bad-tempered, confrontational, gives advice, grey-headed, a witch, Baba-Yaga, helpless, walks in an urban park, goes to her neighbours in the village, spins fibres, pulls wool, felts, etc.*

A younger daughter-in-law – *a younger brother's wife, a young woman, the one that comes from another family, beautiful, a curtain, betashar (a part of the Kazakh wedding ceremony), shashu (a part of the Kazakh wedding ceremony), "Daughter, I am speaking to you, and you, daughter-in-law, should listen and make a mental note", an early riser, milks cows, bakes bread, greets, nice,*

friendly, Saltanat in "Gauhartas", daughter-in-law Tole bi Danagul, bashful, bolis a samovar, clears up in a yard, etc.

The associations mentioned above are typical of the Kazakh culture and constitute the concept "woman".

These associations and their associative field outline the nature, subjective knowledge, influence of some social phenomenon and the subjective linguistic field of the universe that characterise a certain ethnos.

In the English culture the concept "woman" has a different meaning. Like the Kazakh young people, the British practised arranged marriages in the Middle Ages. If a girl or a boy got a wealthy spouse, they could improve their financial standing and acquire a better social status. Therefore, rich and poor families paid much attention to the wealth of a future spouse, and later men regarded their wives and daughters as their property. Even rich women could not file for divorce. There was also a law that prescribed married women to give all their property into the hands of their husband. This law had been in force till 1882.

The English women were responsible for all household chores, while the wives of civil servants also had to control the mansion, supervise employees, examine their land lots, and took charge of harvest, sowing and cattle if their husbands were away on business. In case the mansion was under attack, the wife had to protect it. She had to do household chores, take care of guests, lay in enough products for the winter, salt meat, weave, sew clothes, know medicinal herbs and the ways to use them. Besides, she had to know about poor and sick people living in the village, mind geese and pigs, work in fields, cook cottage cheese, and grow vegetables. However, a woman's primary responsibility was giving birth to children, especially boys.

During the war of 1914 women were working on plants instead of men, otherwise Great Britain would not have withstood the war. In 1918, women made 29% of the total labour force. The corresponding studies have shown that most women of that period were doing their household duties or working on plants. There were a few women holding senior positions and climbing a career ladder. This behaviour was considered to be unusual for females, which was expressed in the following phraseological units: *women in state affairs are like monkeys in glass shops; a woman, a spaniel, and a walnut-tree, the more you beat them the better they be; a woman an ass and a walnut-tree, bring the more fruit, the more beaten they be*. In the Middle Ages the life of both English and Kazakh women was really difficult. The church taught women to obey their husbands. Back then there were two viewpoints on women in England. Firstly, women were regarded as pure and sinless like Virgin Mary. Secondly, women were similar to Eve, caused problems for men and could not be trusted. This religious belief proved that women should obey men unquestionably.

According to rules of the ancient English society a married woman had to look at her husband as her master. If a woman disobeyed, she was punished and beaten. By 1850 domestic violence against women had become a major problem in Great Britain. The English men had regained the rights to beat their wives with a "thin forefinger-thick cane" till 1891. They could also lock their wives in a separate room. In the 18th century there were still evidences of selling wives on market places. One museum has records of a man named Samuel Whitehouse

selling his wife to someone under the name of Thomas Griffiths for a little more than a pound in 1733.

It is known that the Kazakh men used to beat their wives even for small mistakes. Nowadays this kind of domestic violence can still be found in some Kazakh families, but it is written off as an undesirable event of family life. *Chercher la femme* (look for the woman) is among the proverbs that are still being used in Great Britain in its original form. The proverb can be literally translated from French as "look for the woman", i.e. whatever bad things happen you should search for a woman as a person behind all the troubles. There are also similar proverbs in the Kazakh language where women are underestimated if compared to men. For instance, *do not trust the horse you ride and the woman beside you*; *do not borrow money from the new rich, and do not tell the wife your secrets*; *a single woman's cunning can be loaded on forty donkeys*; *a woman without intellect is like a frog without a tail*, etc. These proverbs originated from the social situation of those days.

The Kazakh men paid much attention to the fact that their bride should be honest, housewifey and well-respected. This tradition explains the following proverb *it is better to marry a high-minded woman you have not even seen than a beautiful one you have met*. When the English and Kazakh sayings are being analysed, it becomes clear that their content differs. For example, compare the English proverb *first thrive and then wife* with the Kazakh counterpart *you will not get more cattle until you marry*. These two examples of ethnic purviews mirror each other.

The dominant ideas that have national, cultural and cognitive meaning can fill their ranks due to specific and non-specific language patterns. From this viewpoint, the names of denotations and significants connected with the concept "blue" can have "a dominant idea possessing a conceptual meaning" depending on the mindset of any given ethnos. From a linguo-philosophical point of view, the meaning of the macro concept "blue" can be explained in the following manner: blue – colour, blue – sky, blue – grass, blue – rawhide, etc. These meanings are used in accordance with a speaker's knowledge, emotional and expressive state and creative thinking to make one's speech more poetic. The structure of the macro concept "blue" is really complicated since the cracking of its so-called code will shed light on the following logical models: Көк – дурак, безмозглый (Kok – idiot, stupid), Көк – весна (Kok – spring), Көк – отец (Kok – father), Көк – Всевышний (Kok – God), Көк – горе и беды (Kok – grief and sorrow), Көк – кашля (Kok – cough), Көк – неспелый (Kok – unripe), Көк – борода (Kok – beard), etc.

The concept "blue" is a linguistic, logical and philosophical category, and a cognitive unit that has an ethnic, cognitive and cultural meaning of depicting the universe. The macro concept "blue" as a linguistic, logical and philosophical unit within an anthropocentric paradigm is regarded as a basic linguistic and logical patterns that from the mindset of poets, writers and ethnos.

A colour can convey various moods (joy, sorrow, passion, indifference) and can influence a psychophysical state. Each colour has a certain symbolic meaning. The harmony of favourite colours can be seen in national dresses, everyday items and the language itself (proverbs, phraseological units). Many phraseological units are connected with the colours blue, white and red, which are the colours of the U.S. and British flags.

The English language is rich in phraseological units with colour components. The colour symbolism helps to better understand the mindset of any ethnos. The English phraseological units with colour components are mostly include blue, red and white.

The colour blue in the English language is associated with consistency, honesty, honour, royal power and nobility. It is also the colour of doubt and sorrow. Blue means the colour of a sea and the sky, it is often used by military men. *Blue blood* – a descendant of a renowned family, a member of a royal dynasty; *blue to principles* – principal, loyal to his ideals, firm; *blue coat* – a police officer, warrior, sailor (depending on the colour of clothes); *the blues* – sorrow, for example, *to have the blues* – mourn, be bored; *Blues* – a blues-style melody that originated in the USA in the 19th century and creates a melancholic mood; *blue-sky ideas* – senseless and insignificant ideas, a golden dream; *Blue beard* – a nickname of femicides from the British folklore; *blue moon* – extremely rare, for instance, *in a blue moon* – be really hard to find; *to cry the blues* – helplessness, to act like meek (AmE), for example, *dad often cries the blues*; *to look blue* – to hang down one's head, feel depressed, for instance, *he looked blue when it was raining*; *Blue blood* –a noble family. The expression blue blood is used to describe noble families. It has a French (le sang bleu) and Spanish (la sangre azul) analogues. The noblemen of Spanish Catalonia were the first to call themselves using this phraseological unit. The thing is, their ancestors never married the Moors and other black people. Due to this set expression a belief arose that blue blood ran through the veins of white people, while black people had the blood of other colour. *Blue book* – an official document of the British government that represents information on the chosen topic; in the USA it is a list of state employees. *Dark Blue and Light Blue* – teams of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, the first prize and the first quality – *blue ribbon (reband)* (BrE/AmE).

Blue is the colour of the Tory party (conservative), and it is often associated with honesty and certainty. In the USA cruelty and Puritanism are called *blue to principles*, which means that people should cling to their beliefs; *to vote blue* – to vote for the conservative party; *by all that is blue* – to swear; *blue rinse* – an old woman who is a Puritan to the bone (perhaps it is originated from a peculiar habit of old women to dye their hair blue). Blue also stands for the colour of a sea and the sky, therefore military men use it in their slang: *Blue Peter* – the British maritime flag with a white square in the centre that is hauled up when a ship departs; *blue alert* – danger from the sky. On the one hand, the expression *blue collars* is used to describe people engaged in manual labour; *blue coat* – a warrior, sailor, police officer. On the other hand, similar expressions denote well-educated, intelligent and committed to science women, for example, *bluestocking* – a well-educated woman who is concerned with vital scientific matters. According to J. Goethe, blue stands for ponderability, humbleness, sadness, and can cause sorrow and depression. It is the colour of doubt, disappointment, melancholy and grief, for instance, *the blues* – grief and loss of something dear; *blue devils* – to hang one's head, feel depressed; *to have (a fit of) the blues* – to feel sad, mourn; *it gives me the blues* – it makes me sad; *to be in the blues* – to lose one's way, take the wrong road, fail; until/till you are blue in face – to be on the edge of one's physical and emotional strength. These phraseological units partially explain the formation of a new musical genre on the south of the USA in the 19th century, which was called *Blues* and conveyed a

melancholic feeling. In the English culture blue also means something rude, mocking and wrong, for instance, *blue jokes* – a rude joke; *blue movie* – a NC-17 rated film; *blue-sky ideas* – a cherished dream, small and unfavourable projects. The next set expressions reveal rather negative connotations: *to talk a blue streak* – to rattle, *to scream/shout blue murder* – to cry, wail.

The following set expressions are connected with some sudden and unknown phenomena: *blue moon* – for a long time; *once in a blue moon* – extremely rarely, from time to time; *out of the blue* – all of a sudden (the last phraseological unit can be directly connected with the ever-changing British weather when the sky is clear and blue and in 10 minutes it is raining cats and dogs).

The colour blue is often associated with left-wing forces: *Blue beard* – a nickname of femicides from the British folklore; *to burn blue* – a bad omen.

Three colours combined, namely *the Red, White and Blue* denote the British fleet and army.

In the English culture it is typical that the term "blue" is connected with severity, obedience and conservatism (*to cry the blues* – meekness; *blue devils* – to feel sad; *blue study* – to have grey thoughts).

Blue-ship – a) relating to one's property; b) supreme, high-class, established; *blue-eyed boy* iron. – a naughty child, mischiveous; *blue films* – films with pornographic content; *blue milk* – fragmentary milk; *blue riband/ribbon* – a) leading, award, the first prize; b) an order's band; *dark blue and light blue* – the colour of athletic teams in Oxford (dark blue) and Cambridge (light blue); *I am blue* – to be in a sulk; *like blue murder* – very fast, without a backward glance; *to look blue* – to look sad; *to make/to turn/ the air blue* – to curse, foul; *once in a blue moon* – extremely rarely, from time to time; *out of the blue* – all of a sudden, unannounced; *to scream /to shout/to cry blue murder* – to scream, shout; *to tell blue stories* – to tell obscenities; *things look blue* – one's number goes up; *till all is blue* – to the bitter end; *true blue* – real loyalty and honesty; *black and blue* – to be covered in bruises, etc.

The English language is rich in phraseological units with the colour component "blue" that stand for a foul mood, sorrow and grief. For example, *the blues* – melancholy, frustration; *to give somebody blue* – to make someone sad; *dark/navy blue* – to be afraid, feel sad, hang one's head; *get/have the blues* – to feel sad, hang one's head; *to be in the blues* – to be in a bad mood, feel depressed; *blue study* – to have grey thoughts; *blue devils* – печалиться, etc.

Blue also denotes the colour of a sea: *blue water* – an open stormy sea; *blueway* – water paths like rivers or seas.

The phraseological unit *bluebird* symbolises happiness, and a beautiful but unreachable dream. This set expression originated from M. Maeterlinck's play "The Blue Bird" where children are searching for this bird. The one who catches the bird will become all-seeing and all-knowing. However the children fail to find this mystical animal, and it turns out to be a beautiful fairy-tale about happiness.

It is worth mentioning that the words dark blue and light blue in the Kazakh language correspond with the English word "blue". *Blue Peter* is an old flag that has been internationally recognised since the beginning of the 18th century. It gives an order to all crew members to embark their ships.

According to some legends, imps, demons and ghosts are often seen wearing blue. There is also a bad omen connected with a woman in a blue apron. If one meets her, there will be some disaster. Houses and their windows were never painted blue. It was prohibited to put something blue on the bed of a married couple as they would not conceive a child. Married Kazakh women did not wear blue headcloth.

There is a tradition to present blue flowers to draftees who are leaving their homes for military service. Sailors wear blue uniforms and are often called *blue jacked*.

The associative semantic field of the concept "blue" in the English and Kazakh languages is different. For instance, blue in the English culture stands for sadness and sorrow, while in the Kazakh mindset it can be revealed in the following associative chains: Көк – дурак, безмозглый (Kok – idiot, stupid), Көк – весна (Kok – spring), Көк – отец (Kok – father), Көк – Всевышний (Kok – God), Көк – кашля (Kok – cough), Көк – неспелый (Kok – unripe) and Көк – борода (Kok – beard). The English phrase *blue day* means a mournful day in the Kazakh language.

Conclusion

The combination of language patterns that denote the peculiarities of ethnos, a cognitive notion, consciousness, a cognitive field, nature and being, namely ethnic, cultural and cognitive reality, should be analysed as "a dominant idea possessing a conceptual meaning".

The basic category of cognitive linguistics (a concept) is a linguistic phenomenon arising from the combination of logical models that systematise, regulate and classify the cluster-organized knowledge of some ethnos, and show the integrity of language patterns in synonymous, associative, binary and other relations. A concept is the main object of cognitive linguistics.

The conceptual space of any given language defines the purview, view of life and consciousness of the corresponding ethnos and its distinctive members. Therefore, a semasiological category should be considered from a theoretical-cognitive viewpoint. The study of a concept enriches the range of meanings and provides an opportunity to analyse this phenomenon from an anthropocentric point of view. Anthropocentric approach in linguistics displays the category of meaning in a new perspective.

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Notes on contributors

Kunimzhan Sadirkyzy Abdikalyk holds a PhD in science education and now is a professor at Kazakh State Women's Training Teacher University, Almaty city, Kazakhstan.

Zhanar Altynbekovna Abitzhanova holds a PhD in science education and now is a professor at Kazakh State Women's Training Teacher University, Almaty city, Kazakhstan.

Zhamilya Kerimbaevna Otarbekova holds a PhD in science education and now is a professor at Kazakh State Women's Training Teacher University, Almaty city, Kazakhstan.

Gulyaim Kablakatovna Kaidarova holds a PhD in science education and now is a professor at Kazakh State Women's Training Teacher University, Almaty city, Kazakhstan.

Gulzhan Abutalipovna Seidullayeva holds a PhD in science education and now is a professor at KazGASA, Almaty city, Kazakhstan.

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