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**THE LINGVO-COGNITIVE STATUS  
OF THE CONCEPT “QUALITY”  
IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE  
WORLD PICTURE**  
(based on the a case study of adjectives )

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## АБСТРАКТ

The article investigates the linguo-cognitive status of concept “Quality” in the Russian National Corpus. The article is an attempt to identify the representation of the concept “Quality” with Russian adjectives in the language world picture.

**Keywords:** Adjectives; the language world picture; concept; cognitive linguistics; category ; cognitive approach.

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**ЛИНГВОКОГНИТИВНЫЙ СТАТУС  
КОНЦЕПТА «КАЧЕСТВО»  
В РУССКОЙ ЯЗЫКОВОЙ  
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## АННОТАЦИЯ

Статья посвящена исследованию лингвокогнитивного статуса концепта «Качество» в национальном корпусе русского языка. В статье была предпринята попытка выявить репрезентацию концепта «Качество» русскими адъективами в языковой картине мира.

**Ключевые слова:** адъективы; языковая картина мира; концепт; когнитивная лингвистика; категория; лингвокогнитивный подход.

**Introduction:** Reconstruction of the language world picture is one of the most challenging trends in modern linguistics.

The idea expressed by L.V. Scherba at the beginning of the last century that "a world that is given to us in our direct experience, being everywhere the same is perceived in different ways in different languages, even those used by peoples representing a certain unity from the point of culture" is still not lost its relevance [14, p.67].

One of the urgent problems of cognitive linguistics remains the problem of reflection in human consciousness of an integral conceptual world picture that is fixed in the language. The basic scientific concept here is the notion of "concept" used as a term of researchers who deal with the issues of language representation of mental structures. This issue has been consecrated in the works of Russian and foreign researchers such as N.F. Alefirenko, Y.U. Apresjan, N.D. Arutyunova, O.V. Afanasyeva, N.A. Besedina, N.N. Boldyrev, V.V. Vinogradov, I.M. Kobozeva, M.A. Krongauz, E.S. Kubryakova, J. Lakoff, R. Langakera, A. V. Polonsky, Z.D. Popova, O. N. Prokhorova, I.A. Sternin, L. Telme and others.

Despite the fact that linguoculturological research in the study of the concepts is very popular among scientists, it is impossible to recognize them entirely satisfactorily due to the lack of clear methodology and quite chaotic methods used in different sciences. The approach itself and research intentions are really quite in demand today and it seems that all the basic concepts of the Russian culture have already been described. But, alas, it does not solve the problem itself as the number of studies has not been transferred to the expected higher quality yet.

The adjectives with the meaning of quality are allocated in a certain class of lexical units of the modern Russian National Corpus due to the presence of internal and external features and links of this class. Consideration of these adjectives cannot be outside the theory of the Russian language world picture, the typology of cognitive phenomena and concepts that are the most important for modern linguistics.

**The relevance and novelty of the problem under investigation** is in the original concepts. The problem is in the very idea of the concept "Quality". What is it? A notion, a cate-

gory or a concept? The use of the concept "Quality" in science has a long but unidirectional history. More often "Quality" is recognized as a concept or a category but as a category it is allocated rather cautiously.

**The aim of our research** is to show that the concept "Quality" is an integral component of the Russian language conceptual sphere.

**Methods:** Different research methods are used in the study. We used the analytical method in the analysis of linguistic, psycholinguistic and philosophical literature on the subject of the study. The comparative method allowed us to determine the characteristics of attribute fields each lexical item. The componential analysis was also used which allowed us to establish the configuration of elementary meanings included in the value of the lexical item.

A set of scientific methods providing the quality and reliability of the research procedures findings allowed us to determine the concept "Quality" as a semantic base of an adjective.

**Main part:** The concept "Quality" took shape (along with the notion of quantity) as one of the main philosophical categories. We should note that the important detail in this definition is that the quality is not equal to the properties of the object that is the quality is more than a property of the object.

In the following definition the quality and properties of objects are also divided, it is approved that the quality is a category "expressing the relative stability of objects and phenomena" [13.p. 251-252]. Thus, a kind of "certainty" and "sustainability" of the object is thought under the quality and then there is something inherent in one subject allowing it to be just that subject. Being placed in the paradigm of linguistic science the concept "Quality" gets on greater importance that is the ability of subjects to be distinguished according to their quality. Therefore, if in philosophy the quality is something inherent in the subject, in linguistics it becomes its own object of study that is why it is "singled out" from the object and is placed out of it, next to it. As S.I. Ozhegov wrote, the quality is the presence of essential features, properties, characteristics that distinguish one object or phenomenon from the other "[7, p. 96].

The problem of expressing the concepts "Quality", "Property", "Attribute", etc. both at

the level of language semantics and at the level of morphology is still a stumbling block in an effort to bring this concept under a purely morphological category as a part of speech referred to as "the Adjective".

It is not fortuitous that in recent years in linguistics a new cognitive-discursive approach has been approved [E.S. Kubryakova, O.V. Afanaseva], in which the specificity of the parts of speech and the adjectives in particular are associated with cognitive structures that reflect "in the internal lexicon" of human concepts characteristic, quality, and those linguistic forms, objectifying these concepts.

Reviewing the problem of peculiarities of the presentation of adjectives in the Russian language world picture is of interest for us because the adjective is an important exponent of the exact object characteristics, objective reality phenomena.

An ambiguous understanding of the relation laws of the concept "Quality" and the adjective is largely explained by the fact that until the nineteenth century, that is before the advent of comparative linguistics, the category of "quality" interested mostly philosophers but not grammarians.

For the first time, the concept "Adjective" appeared in "The Universal Port-Royal grammar" where it means an object of thought presenting a property of the things that were called accidents. Accidents "were attached" to the nouns hence presumably the term *Adjective* originated.

Connection of the adjective categories of "Quality" was not considered, but it finally received its place in the paradigm of functional representations along with nouns, pronouns and articles. And despite the fact that five centuries before the publication of "The Universal grammar", realists and nominalists focused on the relation of general and specific concepts, including the concept of quality which occupied an important place. The quality was thought firstly as existing in the absolute, initially in the form of abstract concepts (as we would say today) such as: color, wisdom, good and evil, and then it was manifested as the form of a specific property "a good / evil person" (realists) or as a generalization of the specific manifestations of the properties of concrete objects.

In the Russian grammar, the adjective has always been paid great attention because it is morphologically "transparent" and it has attributive and predicative functions and in principle it has not changed its formal appearance for several centuries. Exploring the history of language as a means of forming thoughts, A. A. Potebnya gave a status of the second order part of speech to the adjective. Like the realists and nominalists on cognitive-semantic level, A.A. Potebnya could not divide the subject with its existing properties and these properties were incogitable without an object. This "uncertainty of subject" of the adjective [11, p. 104-105] is an "attribute that is given in something that has an uncertain content without the help another word". Only at the end of his reasoning A.A. Potebnya acknowledges that "the adjective refers not only to an attribute ... but also to a quality."

The greatest clarity in the problem of the relationship of the concept "Quality" and "the Adjective" as part of speech was made by the scientists of the Moscow linguistic school. They identified three main classes of adjectives: qualitative, relative and possessive, elaborated a paradigm declinations of adjectives and set their functions and etymology. In the same way we attempt to specify the methods of verbalization of the concept "Quality".

In Moscow linguistic school, the qualitative adjectives were fragmented into gradational (light, beautiful) and static (eternal, deaf, coffee), they were called "object-qualitative" and were systematized on the subject-object relations and on valuation.

Anyway the qualitative adjectives were opposed to relative although the morphology was recognized unified. Therefore as part of our study we attempted to eliminate this opposition showing features of qualitative and relative adjectives and to objectify the concept "Quality" in our minds.

For this purpose, we have catalogued adjectives of native Russian language on the basis of samples which are designated in the academic "Dictionary of Russian Language" edited by A.P. Evgenyeva [Russian Dictionary, 1999] and we have also analyzed the specifics of their characteristics inherent to any other object.

The semantics of adjectives is a reflection of a microsystem knowledge about the world.



As it was exactly noticed by A.N. Barykina and V.V.Dobrovolskaya: "Adjectives (...) give color and taste to our speech. Having mastered the art of their use, you can consider yourself a true connoisseur of the Russian language" [2, p.73].

In our study, we have specified the notion of "Quality" by classifying adjectives into several groups. Russian adjectives can be easily differentiated with the method of forming an attribute (depending on channel information) "[8, p. 135-141].

1) visual – *red, beige, pale brown, chestnut* (color), *upper and lower* (spatial location); *curve and straight, triangular, spherical, parabolic, oval, solid and liquid* (form), *bald, deaf, blind, skinny, stout* (a person's appearance);

2) auditory (acoustic) – *loud and quiet* (sound intensity);

3) haptic (tactile) – *smooth and rough* (surface quality), *hot and cold* (temperature); *heavy and light* (weight);

4) aromatic – *perfumed, fragrant, fresh, pine, fruity, acrid, musty, addle*;

5) gustatory – *spicy, sweet, salty, sour, bitter, tart* ;

6) emotional and mental (we taken this term, instead of rational, because it seems to us more appropriate, reflecting the essence of represented cognitions) – *wise, brave, arrogant, cruel, stupid, mean, jealous, happy, gloomy, sensitive*;

7) syncretic (taste + smell – *spicy*, taste + tactile sign - *a hot broth, strong coffee*, sound + color- *a flashy color, soft light of the moon*; + sound + smell+ visibility - *light / sour head / face / music*.

The concept "Quality" is reflected in the adjectives of perception. Perception of reality is done by means of the organs of senses. The intellectual comprehension of "Quality" of the sur-

rounding objective world occurs due to the work of the sensory system. Each of the sense organs is responsible for its fragment of a perceived object.

**Conclusion:** The total number of adjectives registered with the representation of the signs of quality reaches 16.5%. The overwhelming majority of adjectives (40.85%) is based on visual perception of the object; 34.93% of the total amount of adjectives denote the internal sign of a man ("mental" "emotional"); 10.05% are associated with kinesthetic (tactile sensations; 7.15% are responsible for the perception by means of the organ of hearing (ear), 3.85% convey taste, 3.16% are used for the transmission of smell; and 1.1% are of a synthetic character (adjectives comprise two values in one perception smell + taste *astringent*).

Obviously, the nature of the semantics of adjectives denoting attribute according to the method of its formation is different. It is specific and lexically developed mostly in visual, auditory, gustatory and mental adjectives.

The concept "Quality" has multiple representations in the Russian language getting its grammatical and lexical formalization. "Reading" of cultural information from a shaped base of the adjective gives a possibility to explicate that view of the world, the people who got fixation and preserved in these signs of language. The lexical units as referents of signified reflect not only the existence of the realities in the minds of speakers but also their conceivable ordering in the objective world – "the picture of the world." Language, on the one hand, and thought processes that are reflected in it, on the other hand, suggest the two sides of lexical research that are structural and cognitive constituting two directions of this research.

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