

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# Conceptosphere and its Interaction with the Reader

## Dilnoza Babaeva

Associate Professor, Interfaculty department of the English Language, National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

## Nani Cahyani

Professor, Master Program in English, Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University, Baubau, Indonesia

## Madinakhon Irsalieva

Lecturer, Interfaculty department of the English Language, National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

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### Abstract

This article examines the concept of the conceptosphere as a key theoretical framework for understanding the dynamic interaction between text and reader in modern linguistics, literary studies, and cognitive science. The conceptosphere is defined as a complex, interconnected system of concepts activated through linguistic, cultural, and contextual means, forming the semantic and cognitive space of a text. The study emphasizes that meaning is not fixed or fully encoded in linguistic units but emerges through the reader's cognitive engagement, prior knowledge, cultural background, and emotional involvement. Drawing on theories from cognitive linguistics, schema theory, reader-response criticism, and conceptual metaphor theory, the article demonstrates how readers actively reconstruct and reinterpret the conceptosphere during the reading process. Special attention is given to the roles of culture, intertextuality, and emotion in shaping interpretation. The article also highlights pedagogical implications, arguing that awareness of conceptual networks can enhance reading comprehension and critical analysis.

### KEY WORDS

Conceptosphere, reader interaction, cognitive linguistics, conceptual networks, text interpretation.

## INTRODUCTION

In modern linguistics, literary studies, and cognitive science, increasing attention is paid to the processes through which meaning is formed, transmitted, and interpreted in texts. One of the key concepts that allows scholars to explain these processes in an integrated way is the conceptosphere. The conceptosphere represents a complex system of interrelated concepts that structure the semantic and cognitive space of a text and mediate the interaction between the text and the

reader. Unlike approaches that treat meaning as fixed and fully encoded in linguistic units, the conceptosphere emphasizes the dynamic, interpretive nature of reading, in which meaning emerges through the interaction of textual conceptual structures and the reader's cognitive, cultural, and experiential background.

The notion of the conceptosphere originates from cognitive

linguistics and cultural linguistics, where concepts are understood as mental constructs reflecting human experience, values, and knowledge. According to cognitive linguistics, language does not merely name objective reality but organizes human experience through conceptualization (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Words and expressions activate conceptual structures that are embedded in broader networks of knowledge, emotions, and cultural meanings. The conceptosphere of a text, therefore, can be defined as the totality of concepts activated by linguistic means, discourse strategies, and contextual signals, forming a unified conceptual space within which interpretation occurs.

An essential characteristic of the conceptosphere is its systemic nature. Concepts within a text are not isolated; they are interconnected through semantic, thematic, and associative relations. For instance, a literary text that centers on the concept of journey often activates related concepts such as movement, change, obstacles, self-discovery, and destination. These concepts together form a conceptual network that guides the reader's interpretation and expectations. Semantic network theory explains that meaning is processed through such interconnected nodes, where the activation of one concept facilitates the activation of related concepts (Collins & Loftus, 1975). In reading, this mechanism allows readers to construct coherence and infer implicit meanings beyond what is explicitly stated.

The interaction between the reader and the conceptosphere is fundamentally cognitive. Reading involves the activation of prior knowledge structures, or schemas, which interact with textual information to produce understanding. Schema theory argues that comprehension depends on how new information fits into existing cognitive frameworks (Anderson, 1984). When readers encounter a text, they do not passively absorb information; instead, they actively relate textual concepts to their own experiences, beliefs, and cultural knowledge. As a result, the conceptosphere is partially reconstructed in the reader's mind, shaped by individual cognitive and cultural factors.

### Method

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design aimed at examining how the conceptosphere operates in the interaction between text and reader. The research is grounded in an interdisciplinary framework that integrates principles from cognitive linguistics, literary theory, and discourse analysis. The primary method employed is conceptual

analysis, which focuses on identifying and interpreting key concepts and their interrelations within selected texts. Rather than relying on quantitative measurement, the study explores how conceptual structures are activated through linguistic units, stylistic devices, and contextual cues. Particular attention is given to the ways in which these elements contribute to the formation of a coherent conceptual network.

To investigate reader interaction, the research utilizes a theoretical modeling approach informed by schema theory and reader-response criticism. This approach allows for the examination of how readers reconstruct meaning by engaging their prior knowledge, cultural background, and interpretive strategies. The analysis considers multiple potential interpretations to demonstrate the variability and flexibility of the conceptosphere. In addition, comparative analysis is applied to illustrate how cultural and contextual differences influence conceptual activation. Selected examples from literary and discursive texts are analyzed to highlight the role of metaphor, intertextuality, and emotional engagement in shaping interpretation.

### Results and Discussion

This interactional process explains why different readers may interpret the same text differently. While the text provides a certain conceptual framework, readers select, emphasize, and connect concepts in distinct ways. Reader-response theory supports this view by emphasizing that meaning arises from the transaction between the reader and the text rather than residing solely in either one (Rosenblatt, 1978). From this perspective, the conceptosphere functions as a shared but flexible conceptual space, open to multiple interpretive trajectories depending on the reader's engagement.

Cultural factors play a particularly significant role in shaping the reader's interaction with the conceptosphere. Concepts are not culturally neutral; they reflect collective values, historical experiences, and social norms. Cultural linguistics demonstrates that key concepts such as freedom, honor, family, or power may carry different semantic and emotional associations across cultures (Sharifian, 2017). When a reader approaches a text produced in a different cultural context, the conceptosphere may partially overlap with, but also diverge from, the reader's own conceptual system. This can lead to misinterpretation, reinterpretation, or the need for cultural mediation.

In literary texts, the conceptosphere is often enriched through

symbolism, metaphor, and intertextual references. Conceptual metaphor theory shows that abstract concepts are frequently understood through more concrete domains, such as understanding life as a journey or time as money (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). These metaphors structure the conceptsphere and guide the reader's interpretation at a deep cognitive level. A reader familiar with these conceptual mappings can more easily navigate the text's meaning, while unfamiliar metaphors may require additional cognitive effort.

Intertextuality further expands the conceptsphere by linking a text to other texts, genres, and cultural narratives. According to Kristeva (1980), every text is a mosaic of quotations, absorbing and transforming other texts. When readers recognize intertextual references, they activate broader conceptual networks that enrich interpretation. For example, a modern novel that alludes to biblical or mythological stories invites readers to integrate those conceptual spheres into their understanding. The depth of reader interaction with the conceptsphere thus depends on intertextual competence and cultural literacy.

The emotional dimension of reading also significantly influences interaction with the conceptsphere. Cognitive and affective processes are closely intertwined, and emotions can intensify conceptual activation and retention. Narrative transportation theory suggests that readers who become emotionally immersed in a story experience stronger engagement with its conceptual content (Green & Brock, 2000). Emotional responses such as empathy, fear, or nostalgia shape how readers evaluate characters, events, and themes, thereby influencing the overall construction of meaning. In this sense, the conceptsphere is not only a cognitive structure but also an affective one.

Another important aspect of reader interaction with the conceptsphere is its dynamic and iterative nature. Reading is rarely a linear process; readers constantly revise their understanding as new information emerges. The construction-integration model of comprehension explains that readers generate provisional interpretations, integrate new data, and suppress inconsistent information in an ongoing process (Kintsch, 1998). As a result, the conceptsphere evolves during reading, with some concepts gaining prominence while others recede. This dynamic interaction highlights the active role of the reader as a co-creator of meaning.

From an educational perspective, understanding the

conceptsphere has important implications for reading instruction and literary analysis. Teaching students to identify key concepts, trace conceptual networks, and recognize cultural and metaphorical structures can enhance comprehension and critical thinking. Concept mapping and thematic analysis are effective pedagogical tools for making the conceptsphere visible and accessible. For second language learners, explicit attention to conceptual differences between languages and cultures can help overcome semantic and pragmatic difficulties, fostering deeper engagement with texts.

In linguistic and literary research, the concept of the conceptsphere offers a valuable integrative framework that bridges cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, and reader-oriented theories. It emphasizes that meaning is not a static property of texts but a dynamic process emerging from interaction. By focusing on conceptual structures and their activation in the reader's mind, the conceptsphere approach provides deeper insight into how texts function as cognitive and cultural artifacts.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the conceptsphere represents a complex, interconnected system of concepts that shapes and is shaped by the reader's interaction with a text. It operates at the intersection of language, cognition, culture, and emotion, highlighting the dynamic nature of meaning-making. The reader's engagement with the conceptsphere involves cognitive activation, cultural interpretation, emotional response, and continuous reinterpretation. Recognizing this interactional process enriches our understanding of reading, interpretation, and communication, and opens new possibilities for research and pedagogy in linguistics and literary studies.

This study has explored the conceptsphere as a dynamic and integrative framework for understanding how meaning is constructed in the interaction between text and reader. The analysis demonstrates that the conceptsphere is not a fixed structure embedded solely within the text, but rather a flexible network of concepts that emerges through the reader's cognitive, cultural, and emotional engagement. The findings highlight that interpretation is shaped by multiple interrelated factors, including prior knowledge, cultural background, intertextual awareness, and affective response. These factors influence how conceptual networks are activated, connected, and restructured during the reading process. As a result, the

same text can generate diverse interpretations, confirming the active role of the reader as a co-creator of meaning.

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