

**HISTORY OF ASSOCIATIVE LINGUISTICS**

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***Abstract:*** *The study of associative linguistics focuses on the relationships between words, concepts, and meanings that are mentally connected in the human mind. The history of associative linguistics dates back to the late 19th century, where early approaches by scholars like N.V. Krushevsky and M.M. Pokrovsky laid the foundation for understanding how words and their meanings are related in a linguistic context. This paper examines the historical development of associative linguistics, from its inception to its current interdisciplinary applications, and its impact on language theory and cognitive science.*

***Keywords:*** *Associative linguistics, cognitive linguistics, semantic fields, word association, language and cognition, mental lexicon.*

**Introduction**

Associative linguistics, as a branch of linguistics, studies the relationships between words and their mental connections, i.e., associations that emerge from individual cognitive processes. The concept of association in linguistics has a long history, beginning with the earliest philosophical debates on how words relate to thoughts. While the early contributions were largely theoretical, the 20th century saw the rise of empirical methods in psycholinguistics, as scholars sought to investigate the psychological mechanisms behind word association.

In recent years, a number of research works have been carried out on the issues of field theory. This, in turn, has created a solid theoretical foundation for the conceptual associative approach in modern linguistics. Based on field theory, the systematic semantic structure of language units, their central-peripheral zones,



paradigmatic connections, and most importantly, their cognitive foundations, are studied. Furthermore, this theoretical approach has been widely developed by linguists such as Yu. S. Stepanov<sup>1</sup> and N. D. Arutyunova, who examined it in the context of the integral connection between culture, thought, and language. The field concept has made it possible to understand and model the concept of "concept" in linguistics.

B. Yo'ldoshev, in his view on field theory, states, "By the 19th century, influenced by the field theory in physics, the theoretical interpretation of the concept of 'field' emerged in linguistics, primarily appearing as a semantic field in linguistics."<sup>2</sup>

A person's psychological perception of the external world is reflected in their verbal speech in the form of specific groups. In linguistics, the mutual combination of these linguistic units based on their formal or logical-semantic features is considered an association.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a historical and analytical approach to review the key developments in associative linguistics. The research is based on a comprehensive review of the literature, including theoretical works and empirical studies by scholars in both linguistics and psychology. The primary sources include works by foundational linguists such as N.V. Krushevsky,<sup>3</sup> M.M. Pokrovsky, and other key figures in the field of associative linguistics. Secondary sources consist of recent studies in cognitive linguistics and psycholinguistics, which explore the association mechanisms in the human mind. Data is collected from both historical texts and contemporary studies to analyze the evolution of associative theories and their contributions to linguistic theory.

### **Results and discussion**

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<sup>1</sup> Степанов, Ю. С. (1997). Константы: Словар русской культуры. М.: Школа «Языки русской культуры». С. 553

<sup>2</sup> Yo'ldoshev B. Maydon nazariyasining tilshunoslikka ta'siri haqida. O'zbek filologiyasi masalalari (ilmiy maqolalar to'plami) Navoiy. 2001. - B.43,-44

<sup>3</sup> Krushevskiy, N.V. (1912). *Semantika i assotsiatsiya: Razmishleniya o lingvisticheskom ponimani*. Qozon: Kazan State University.



The analysis of the history of associative linguistics reveals that early theories were grounded in psychological and philosophical frameworks, where words and concepts were seen as intrinsically linked in the mind. N.V. Krushevsky and M.M. Pokrovsky were among the first to propose that language is structured by associative connections, which can be classified into paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships. Their work laid the groundwork for later developments in cognitive linguistics.

There are several scientific views on associations and the concept of the associative field in linguistics. According to D. E. Lutfullayeva, the object of study in associative linguistics is the associative cognitive phenomena, and its scientific-theoretical foundation is the theory of associative relationships.<sup>4</sup> The associative relationship observed in the interaction of linguistic units, in connection with human psychological perception, is one of the central concepts of this linguistic approach.

The term "association" was first introduced into scientific usage by the English philosopher, educator, and prominent representative of empiricism and liberalism, J. Locke,<sup>5</sup> in 1960. Locke, developing the views of his predecessors, Aristotle and Plato, on the process of recall, began using the term "association" to refer to the connection between psychic elements. In the 19th century, in England, the associative approach, namely associative psychology, began to emerge in the study of psychological processes.

The first to comment on linguistic associations were the famous German linguist V. Humboldt, who left a significant mark in the history of world linguistics with his research from the late 18th century to the mid-19th century. According to him, language represents the relationship between a people and the world surrounding them. Each language describes the world in a way that is specific to the people who speak it. Furthermore, Humboldt theoretically justified that language continuously evolves. The development of associative linguistics has highlighted the importance of cognitive processes in language comprehension and production. Early theories focused on the mental connections between words, but contemporary

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<sup>4</sup> Лутфуллаева Д.Э. Ассоциатив тилшунослик назарияси. – Тошкент: Мэриус, 2017.- 13

<sup>5</sup> Locke, J. (1960). *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. London: Routledge.





research has shown that these associations are not merely linguistic but also cognitive and psychological. The integration of psychological and cognitive science into the study of language has provided a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed and how words are mentally linked.

One of the key debates in modern associative linguistics revolves around the extent to which associations are universal across languages and cultures. While many associative patterns appear to be consistent, cultural differences can influence the types of associations that are formed. The application of associative theories to language teaching and learning has also opened new avenues for improving language acquisition, particularly through the use of word association tests and cognitive-based methodologies

### **Conclusion**

The history of associative linguistics is a testament to the interdisciplinary nature of language studies, where cognitive science, psychology, and linguistics intersect. From its philosophical roots to its modern-day applications in cognitive linguistics, associative linguistics has evolved into a crucial field of study for understanding how words and meanings are linked in the human mind. The continued development of this field will likely provide deeper insights into the mental processes underlying language comprehension and production. Future research could explore the practical applications of associative linguistics in education, artificial intelligence, and cognitive modeling.

### **References**

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