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The concepts “power” and “death” as key units in the conceptual framework of the novel *The Nomads: The Charmed Sword* by Yessenberlin

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Abstract: The relevance of this study is the increased interest of modern researchers in the field of humanities in the problems of interaction between language, culture, and thinking, as well as the need to study in this aspect the interdisciplinary notion of the concept from the position of literature studies. The purpose of the study is to investigate the concepts of “power” and “death” as key units in the conceptual framework of Kazakh writer Yessenberlin’s novel *The Nomads: The Charmed Sword*, and to determine the features of their reflection in the individual author’s language picture of the world. The leading method is the method of conceptual analysis, which makes it possible to identify and comprehensively consider concepts in both individual authors and the national picture of the world of the Kazakh people. Within the research, the hierarchical structure of the conceptual framework of Yessenberlin historical novel is presented. The authors calculated associative rows of the concepts composing the novel’s conceptual framework and made conclusions concerning the relationships between the studied concepts, as well as the meaning of the central concepts “power” and “death” and the distinction between historical facts and artistic fiction. The main statements and conclusions can be used in the process of teaching philological disciplines in higher education institutions.

Keywords: conceptual analysis; language picture of the world; literature studies; associative series; fictional text

1 Introduction

In recent decades, the notion of “concept,” which emerged in cognitive linguistics, has received increased attention from researchers from other fields in the

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humanities, such as contrastive linguistics, linguocultural studies, psycholinguistics, and literature studies, as the basic unit for defining the relationship between linguistic and mental structures. It is from the perspective of literary studies that the concept is of particular interest, since currently in this field the issues of interpreting this term and determining the algorithms for its research remain open. The first definition of the concept was given by a Russian scholar in the early twentieth century, according to which it is a mental formation that substitutes a certain number of objects of the same kind in the process of thinking (Askoldov 2002). Such an interpretation can generally be used in any field of humanities knowledge, but for a more precise definition, it is necessary to take into account the specifics of the field for which the notion of the concept has become the object of research. In linguistics, proverbs/sayings, data from etymological, phraseological, and other dictionaries alone, experimentation, etc., can provide the basis for concept analysis, whereas, in literature studies, the study of the concept takes place at the level of the fictional text (Zinchenko et al. 2011). One of the characteristics inherent in the fictional text is the representation of reality through the prisms of the author's and the collective's perceptions of it. On this basis, the concept in literature studies represents a certain figurative, symbolic, emotional, and evaluative element of a fictional text, through the study of which it is possible to identify features and facts relating to culture, history, geopolitics, ethnopsychology, and so on, that are beyond the boundaries of the work (Doszhan 2022). Thus, studying concepts in literature contributes to a more diverse analysis of the fictional text, as well as the identification of real moments belonging to a particular nation.

The study of concepts and the conceptual framework of a fictional text enables the identification and analysis of both a particular fragment of the national artistic picture and the individual author's picture of the world, reflecting the writer's knowledge about reality (Shcherban et al. 2022). The comprehension of a fictional text as a complex semantic whole is carried out through exposure to such knowledge. Thus, writers are particularly significant in the creation of the conceptual framework (Askoldov 2002). In this context, the notion of the artistic concept, a complex phenomenon that contributes to the emergence of new meanings, becomes relevant, which means that it cannot be studied only within the framework of linguistics. The characteristics of the artistic concept are the association underlying it, the variety of emotive meanings, the craving for images and their adaptation, individuality, personality, fuzziness, and complexity in psychological terms (Maslova 2017). One of the most pronounced characteristics of an artistic concept is its associative aspect, which actualizes the above-mentioned components of the concept in the reader's mind (Bolotnova 2004). The

depth and breadth of the author's concepts depend on the degree of the author's mastery of his own cultural and emotional experience (Maslova 2019). Thus, the artistic concept is a mental formation of the writer's consciousness, which implements its semantic meaning in the semantic-associative context of a literary work (Vasilyeva 2012). The most important components of a concept in a literary text are the value, emotive, and associative ones, influencing the contextual understanding of artistic meaning. The linking of concepts in a literary work makes it an open system, revealing not only the author's intent but also going beyond it (Vasilyeva 2012; Villata and Tabor 2022).

The interdisciplinary meaning of the “concept” and the ambiguity of the nature of the artistic concept, as well as such associated formations as artistic text, artistic picture of the world, etc., raise new questions for modern researchers to explore. In this regard, the purpose of this study is to investigate the concepts of “power” and “death” as key units in the conceptual framework of Yessenberlin's novel *The Nomads: The Charmed Sword*, and to determine the features of their reflection in the individual author's language picture of the world. To realize the purpose set, an attempt has been made to substantiate the choice of the most appropriate methodology for studying the conceptual framework of a fictional text, to determine the place of the concepts outlined by the topic of the paper in the conceptual framework of Yessenberlin's novel, make a hierarchy of artistic concepts within the conceptual framework of this work, perform the calculation of associative series for each identified concept, and conclude their correlation and meanings, taking into account the differentiation between the historical facts and the artistic fiction in the text.

2 Materials and methods

Despite the large number of scientific publications devoted to the study of the concept, a unified methodology for its research in literature studies has not yet been developed. One of the methods for studying concepts and the conceptual framework is the method of conceptual analysis. Most researchers use the name “conceptual” (Grigorieva and Tumanova 2019), but this definition of analysis implies more study of concepts. The analysis of artistic concepts is more appropriately defined as “conceptual,” implying the study of the realization (embodiment) of a concept in a text and modelling its content, revealing the individual author's content of the concept (Gruzberg 2010). The method of conceptual analysis is a way of studying, fixing, and explaining the conceptual framework of a native speaker, which lies, on the one hand, in considering linguistic ways of expressing the concept and, on

the other hand, in reconstructing the concept and the fragments of the linguistic picture of the world behind it (Plotnikova 2012). The method of conceptual analysis is comprehensive as it includes a lexicographic research method that enables the construction of associative series, definitional analysis, contextual analysis, the study of the inner form of the word, etc. The study of artistic concepts made use of all the above-mentioned techniques of the conceptual method, which made it possible to connect the linguistic and mental semantic meanings of words, as well as to conduct a complete and objective analysis of the fictional text's concepts.

The associative field of an artistic concept is formed not only by the words nominating the concept and their derivatives but also by the lexical units connected in meaning with this concept in a particular context (Bolotnov 2010). This means that when studying a concept, it is necessary to distinguish between the nominative meaning of the concept qualifier word as presented in the explanatory dictionary and the figurative meaning based on the consciousness of a native speaker on associative links. When analyzing the concept of a fictional text, it is also necessary to take into account that the content of the concept includes not only the semantic components that are currently understood and used in communication associated with the word, but also attributes that reflect a person's general information base, and his or her encyclopedic knowledge about a subject or phenomenon; they may not be found in his or her speech, or not immediately recognized when the relevant word is presented, but are the property of personal or collective experience. An important feature of investigating an artistic concept is also the context, which, depending on the course of events described by the author, can change the attributes of the concept within the work. The need to consider a large number of factors when analyzing the concept complicates its study, but also provides theorists with a broad research field.

The continuous sampling method, which is a selection of examples to analyze and illustrate theoretical statements, was used when collecting the factual material. The descriptive method, in particular its components of observation, generalization, and interpretation, was used to describe the selected information coherently. Observation makes it possible to identify the most essential features of the object under study, which can be used to both characterize the subject and identify its differences from other subjects. The generalization of facts and the establishment of certain patterns in recurring phenomena is the main feature of the descriptive method. The interpretation of the results contributes to explaining the facts and information outlined earlier and determines their place in the system of other knowledge. There is no universal algorithm for conceptual analysis in literary studies because of the semantic variability of words in literature. The conceptual analysis of artistic concepts in the conceptual framework of Yessenberlin's novel was carried out in the following main stages.

The first stage is to find and identify the central (main) word that is the defining element of the concept in the work of fiction. In this case, the concept of “power” comes from the title and the concept of “death” is interlinked with it. The second stage is to establish vocabulary and contextual meanings of the central qualifier word, to describe the individual author’s evaluation of the word for each concept; to indicate the general cultural context of the concept; to determine and analyze associative links of the concept, and to reveal the content of the semantic and associative field of the essence of the analyzed concept and features of its representation in the given fictional text. The third stage is to characterize the links between the concepts under study and other related concepts in the author’s artistic conceptual framework (constructing a hierarchy of concepts within the work), identifying specific features of the concept in the writer’s artistic picture of the world. The analysis of artistic concepts emphasizes the “out-of-text” connections of the work, its inclusion in the communicative act, and historical, cultural, and social discourses (Hennig 2022), which is why at this stage the study is conducted at three different levels of text: thematic, plot-compositional, and motif-image. The conceptual analysis of a fictional text according to the algorithm described above made it possible to study the individual author’s picture of the world of a particular author as well as to identify the specifics of his perception of the surrounding world. The chosen algorithm allowed us to designate of the place and meaning of the studied concepts in the author’s consciousness and to trace the relationship between linguistic and cultural features in the conceptional framework of a particular nation.

3 Results and discussion

The study of concepts based on fictional literature has been one of the promising areas of concept studies since the emergence of the conceptual method (Askoldov 2002). This is due to the fact that the concept is not characterized by the stability of its imagery structure. Even within the study of an individual nation’s concept system, its conceptional framework, it is possible to note the variability in the associative images and the meanings of a particular concept. Such changes may be due to changing cultural values, historical events, milestones, etc. (Doszhan 2023). The conceptual framework, or individual concepts specific to one ethnic group, are reflected, in particular, in literary texts. The authors of literary works, as representatives of a particular nation, through the expression of their knowledge and ideas about the surrounding world, display elements of the national conceptual framework in literary texts. However, any work of literature, along with the national conceptual framework, has an author’s individual perspective, reflecting the peculiarities of the author’s thinking. Thus, the concepts that have national semantic

and associative features for a particular ethnic group, when displayed in a literary text, acquire new features, formed through the worldview of the author. When analyzing a concept in a work of fiction, one should keep in mind that if one is limited to referring only to the vocabulary meaning of a word, the meaning of the author's message encrypted in the art form will remain unclear to the reader (Likhachev 2001). This means, firstly, that the importance of studying a concept in a literary text is rather high, as it contributes to gaining new knowledge at the levels of text, author's thinking, national picture of the world, and secondly, the study of an artistic concept should be carried out from the perspective of its semantic-associative content. In a work of fiction, concepts are often embedded by the author in the title of the work, artistic images, and myths (Pimpuang and Yuttapongtada 2023). Thus, it is advisable to begin the search for central concepts by investigating the designated components of the fictional text.

One of the central concepts is already contained in the author's title in the novel *The Charmed Sword* by Kazakh writer Ilyas Yessenberlin, which is the first novel of the trilogy *The Nomads*. In the original language, the name "The Charmed Sword" has two meanings: "a sword made of a strong stone – made of diamond," and "an unshakable sword." In the first sense, as an object in its purpose, the sword is equated with the word "power." This conclusion is based on drawing an analogy with King Arthur's sword Excalibur, which is well-known in world literature. Both swords are endowed with mystical meanings and are figuratively linked to the subjects of mystery, conspiracy, power, and the people. King Arthur's sword enabled him to become a successful ruler and lead his people to prosperity (Ackroyd 2017). In Yessenberlin's novel, the people represented by the sword also help Janibek Khan to gain power. Thus, from the title of the novel *The Charmed Sword* comes the first central concept – "power." According to the explanatory dictionary, power has the following meanings: (1) the right and opportunity to rule, to dispose of someone's actions or behavior; (2) a powerful influence, irresistible force of something; (3) an instrument of maintaining a certain order in society, the state, its organization and management; a form of governing the country; (4) the right and opportunity to govern the state; political dominance; the rights and powers of public administration bodies; the rights and powers of officials (Efremova 2012). The listed meanings are nominative for the word "power," but for the concept "power" the associative meanings become determinative, with connections going beyond the dictionary-defined meanings. Thus, when investigating a concept, priority should be given to its figurative, associative side.

In the novel under study, there are five types of power, each of which affects the associative component of the concept "power" in a certain way: *territorial* (enmity between territories, enmity within a certain territory, external enemies), *khan* (internal strife, internal enemies), *family* (the problem of fathers and children,

Khans and their heirs), *power of elders* (Kazakh *aksakals*, *biys*, *zhyaurs*, and *batyrs*) and *national*. The latter type is evident in the climax of the novel and reveals the second meaning of the work's title – the unshakable sword. Someone or something unshakeable is characterized by the presence of signs of strength, reliability, and resilience. These are the characteristics inherent in the Kazakh people portrayed by the author. Drawing a parallel between the unshakable sword and the unshakable people described in the novel, one can note that the people were similarly “forged,” only, in turn, by the wars taking place around them. In the story, the nobles and the commoners pursued their affairs separately without interfering, with the negative consequences being felt by the people. After a while, the people decide to change the course of events and gain power, which prompts them to turn their arms against the enemy, only no longer to conquer new territories, as during the reign of Genghis Khan's descendants, but to defend themselves and their lands. The people make this decision at the end of the novel, where the author summarizes: “Yes, not everyone is able to use this sword. . . . But the one who wields it fairly will stand up to any enemy!” (Yessenberlin 1971). By this change in the character of the people, the author introduces additional semantic-associative connotations to the concept of “power,” which, throughout most of the work is associated with *might*, *war*, and *bloodshed*, but by the end of the work acquires associative meanings of *independence*, *people power*, *right*, *will*, etc. The study of the concept of “power” in the work as a whole makes it possible to outline its dynamics, which can be traced from the very first part of the novel. At the beginning of the first part of the work, the author describes power as understood by the Genghizides – direct descendants of Genghis Khan. According to their thinking, as described by Yessenberlin, the image of Genghis Khan is that of a true ruler to be looked up to. Notably, the Genghizides preferred Genghis Khan to their fathers as their role models. It is obvious that a strong influence on the conscience, the way of thinking of Genghizides and other people was the factor of the absence of Genghis Khan's official funeral, none of the characters described in the novel had any idea about the place of his burial, and therefore people for several centuries believed that the powerful ruler was still alive and therefore felt fear towards him: “Certainly, as centuries go by, the evil deeds of this or that ruler are sometimes erased from people's memory, but the terrible image of Genghis Khan, which frightens children in the steppe, has not disappeared from it” (Yessenberlin 1971). The concept of “power” here is characterized by the presence of associations such as *fear*, *subordination*, and *authority*, and at this stage of the work the concept is also characterized by the attribute “*patricide/fratricide*,” modelled on Genghis Khan's image by his descendants.

The first part of the novel *The Charmed Sword* describes the reign of Abulkhair Khan, an example of which also shows the dynamics of the concept of “power.” The author describes the end of his reign and the power of the Mongol Empire in

the fictional text, noting that Abulkhair Khan had ruled for forty years and was a great Khan, similar to Genghis Khan, and importantly, died a natural death – death from old age – just like Genghis Khan. Here the writer draws parallels between two rulers who are no longer alive and shows the difference in people's attitudes towards the Khans. While Genghis Khan's name had long made people fearful, out of respect for Abulkhair Khan all feuds and wars were stopped and the funeral was held properly. The concept of "power" at this stage is marked *by respect, support, a new beginning*; with the death of Abulkhair Khan the sign of bloodshed is lost. After the end of the power of the Mongol Empire, a new power emerges – that of the Kazakh khans, represented by Janibek Khan and his son Kasym. Their reign is described by Yessenberlin in the following way:

one cannot force the people... as a united strong nation we must come to Mogolistan... May the White Horde be united forever!... and while I am alive, you can afford to be noble too, God grant you such high feelings till the end of your life!... If you go, take into account that running on foot does not suit a sultan, but the horse-racing contest promises to be interesting... (Yessenberlin 1971)

Janibek and his son did not take Genghis Khan as their role model, but rather their grandfather Urus Khan, who had previously ruled the Ak Horde. Their policy of ruling was aimed at continuing the idea of their grandfather's reign – the restoration of the Ak Horde. The associative content of the concept "power" in this part of the work corresponds to the peculiarities of the reigning style of Janibek Khan and his son and is characterized by the values of *dignity, nobility, respect for the people and native land, absence of despotism, and conceit*.

As previously noted, Janibek did not rule alone, but with his son Kasym, who was co-ruler to the Khan. According to this model of government, the father is the immediate ruler, and the son is the helper, the advisor. When making important decisions, Janibek Khan sought help not only from his son but also from the khan or family council. This distinguishes him from the previous ruler, Abulkhair, who always made decisions on issues on his own, without even listening to the opinion of his vizier. Thus, *the presence of a co-ruler* can be seen as another feature that appeared in the text of the work as the events unfolded. The khan's co-ruler could be his son or younger brother. Since blood relatives could have been in power without committing murder, the concept of power loses the attribute of "patricide/fratricide." Although Janibek Khan's reign ends with his assassination, this death is not to be equated with the previous ones described in the novel, as the main difference is that the khan dies not in the course of a struggle for power among his relatives, as in the period after Genghis Khan's death and before Abulkhair Khan's rule began, but in a battle to defend his native lands. After him, Kerei Khan's eldest son Burunduk Batyr becomes the ruler, who fails in his function as a rational ruler and relinquishes

power. Next in seniority, Kasym Sultan, son of Janibek, takes over as ruler. Here the author shows how, for the first time, power in the Kazakh khanate passes from the elder to the younger *in a natural way, without murder (death)* – another feature of the concept of “power.” When depicting Kasym Khan’s coming to power, the author puts into the concept of “power” such an attribute as the possibility of becoming a ruler at any age later than thirteen. According to the story, Kasym becomes the ruler at the age of about thirty, whereas previously the heirs of the ruling khans were in power between the ages of 13 and 15. The main difference between this adoption of government is that, at Kasym Khan’s age, his worldview, his strategy of leading and governing, and the emergence of new ideas are formed. The author characterizes the reign of Kasym Khan as positive to further develop the Kazakh khanate and the national identity of the Kazakh people. Thus, all the changing attributes of the “power” concept lie in the images of Abulkhair Khan and Janibek Khan.

The second central artistic concept in Yessenberlin’s *The Charmed Sword* is “death.” This concept is determined by the subject matter of the work – the novel is historical, it reflects the period of the formation of the Kazakh Khanate (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), its artistic images, and its interconnection with the concept of “power.” The explanatory dictionary interprets death as: (1) the cessation of life, demisem and disintegration of an organism; (2) figuratively – the complete cessation of any activity; the end (Efremova 2012). At the same time, the concept of “death” is characterized by its significance not only for an individual or a particular nation, but also for all mankind (Fedoryuk 2018). Thus, the concept of death may evoke the following associations among the people of each nation: *end, fear, peace, inevitability, grief, sleep, mourning, cemetery, longing, sorrow, cross*, etc. In this regard, in Yessenberlin’s novel, this concept has both universal features, inherent to humanity as a whole at a particular historical stage, and national features of a particular ethnic group, as well as individual author’s characteristics, which are revealed within the framework of the work of fiction. In the novel, the author gives the concept “death” two semantic meanings: *ажал* and *өлім*. *Ажал* translated from Kazakh into Russian means not only ‘death’ but also ‘fate’ and ‘destiny’. This meaning of death is closely linked to the concept of “power” in the novel’s text. This connection can be traced back to the beginning of the first part of the novel:

Мөңкені хан сайларда, өздерінің күшінің жетпейтінін білген Үгедей мен Жағатайдың балалары толып жатқан сылтау тауып, ұлы құрылтайға келмей қалады. Тек бір жыл өткеннен кейін, Мөңкенің ызбарынан сескеніп, Үгедей, Жағатайдан тараған бір топ сұлтандар хан тағына құтты болсын айтқалы келеді. Хан оларды үлкен қошаметпен қарсы алады, атағат көрсетеді, бірақ түбінде менің ұрпақтарыммен хан тағына таласатын осылар болар деп, барлығын бір түнде қырғызып тастайды. (Yessenberlin 1971)

(‘Khan Mongke, knowing that they are not strong enough, the children of Ugedei and Jagatai find an excuse to not come to the great meeting. Only after a year, a group of sultans descended from Ugedei and Jagatai want to congratulate them on the throne of the Khan. They greet him with applause, curse him, but in the end, they kill all of them in one night, thinking that these are the ones who will compete with my descendants for the throne of the Khan.’)

This example describes how the descendants of Genghis Khan’s second and third sons avoided meeting with the descendants of other sons in order to save their lives, but after a year of Munke Khan’s reign, they decided to attend a general assembly of Khans and Sultans – the kurultai – where they were killed by the acting Khan so that they would not fight for the throne with his descendants. Thus, in the first part of the novel, Yessenberlin shows that the fate of every Chingisid lies in death as he ascends the throne or in the event of an opportunity to become a potential ruler. Anyone who becomes khan is subsequently killed by his relatives. Here one can observe the emergence of a new individual-author feature of the concept of “death” – *death as the curse of Genghis Khan’s descendants*.

The relationship between the concepts “power” and “death” can also be seen in the second part of the novel:

And Janibek Khan, contrary to the opinion of many in his entourage, decided to return to Turkestan and continue his struggle. He led not only troops but also many auls there with him. He understood that Northern Turkestan would be fully Kazakh only after the whole tribal unions would settle in his lands... Even wise Asan-Kaigy reproached Janibek Khan for leaving such placid places. (Yessenberlin 1976)

From this passage, it can be noted that Janibek Khan, who always respected the wise elders among the Kazakh tribes and listened to their opinion, did not take into account even the opinion of a sage and led an unprepared army to another war. Given the fact that Janibek’s image in the work characterizes him as a shrewd and cautious man, an excellent military leader and strategist who was in the habit of convening the khan’s or the family council before making an important decision, and in this situation, he acted relying only on his opinion, it seems possible to conclude that the author thus demonstrated the role of fate, which, as in the first case, was to die soon. The death of Janibek Khan in the second part of the novel, as well as the deaths of the second and third sons of Genghis Khan, is his fate, but the difference is that his death comes not at the hands of a relative in a struggle for power but in a battle to defend his lands. Thus, the second part of the novel marks new associative links between the concept of “death” and the dynamics of its interrelation with the “power” concept. Here the concept of “death” acquires associative meanings of *suffering, eternity, loss, protection, memory, honor*, and epithets such as *brave (death), valiant, heroic, dignified, courageous*, etc., become relevant. The concept “death” in its second Kazakh meaning (*өлiм*) means death, which has the characteristics of a

weapon, a way of ruling the people, instilling fear under the threat of death. In the novel, the form *өлім* exists separately from the concept of “power.”

The historical novel as a genre is built on a historical plot, which reproduces in the artistic form an epoch, a particular period of history (historical fact) combined with fiction, real historical figures – with fictional figures, with fiction placed within the limits of the epoch depicted; the entire narrative in the historical novel is set against the background of historical events (Eagleton 2010). Fiction is reflected in the imagery of a literary work. Thus, through the author’s application of fiction to a particular concept, it acquires new attributes – individual-author ones. In Yessenberlin’s novel, one such sign of the concepts “power” and “death” is the expression *бауыздап өлтіру*. This attribute is revealed through the author’s substitution of historical fact, a part of it, for fiction. Any Genghizide is known to follow the laws of Genghis Khan. One of these laws is the transfer of the throne from father to eldest son only after the father’s death. The assassination of a ruler has been presented as an outwardly natural death, such as an accident during a hunt or a sudden incurable illness. In reality, however, the assassinations were contracted (breaking the neck/spine, poisoning), as the main principle was “not to shed the blood of the noble.” In his novel, the writer modifies this fact: “*Таққа отырғанына екі жыл өтер-өтпестен, қастасқан туыстары оның өзін бауыздап өлтірді*” (‘Less than two years after his accession to the throne he was murdered by his enemies.’). The central phrase in the translation of the passage from the novel is *бауыздап өлтіру*, which in the Kazakh language is used with reference to cattle or poultry and means literally ‘in order to preserve the purity of meat, to slaughter cattle or poultry by cutting in the neck area from ear to ear and thus let out all the blood’ and figuratively ‘to kill, to destroy completely’ (Kaliev 2014). Such fiction from the author demonstrates the particular ferocity of the struggle for power among the Genghizides and also fills the central concepts of the work with appropriate meanings.

The analysis of the central concepts of the work, marking their features, finding related concepts, investigating their relationship, as well as calculating the associative series for each concept makes it possible to systematize the conceptual framework of the novel *The Charmed Sword* and to depict it schematically. The conceptual framework diagram in the form of a hierarchy with semantic-associative links is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows the rows of concepts in the novel in decreasing order of the number of associative rows for each concept. Next to each concept in the diagram, there is a figure corresponding to the number of associative series for that concept, taking into account its interaction with other concepts in the conceptual framework. Each row has its own color, with blue for the top row, orange for the middle row, and dark blue for the bottom row. The top row contains the concepts with the highest number of associative rows, while the bottom row contains the lowest

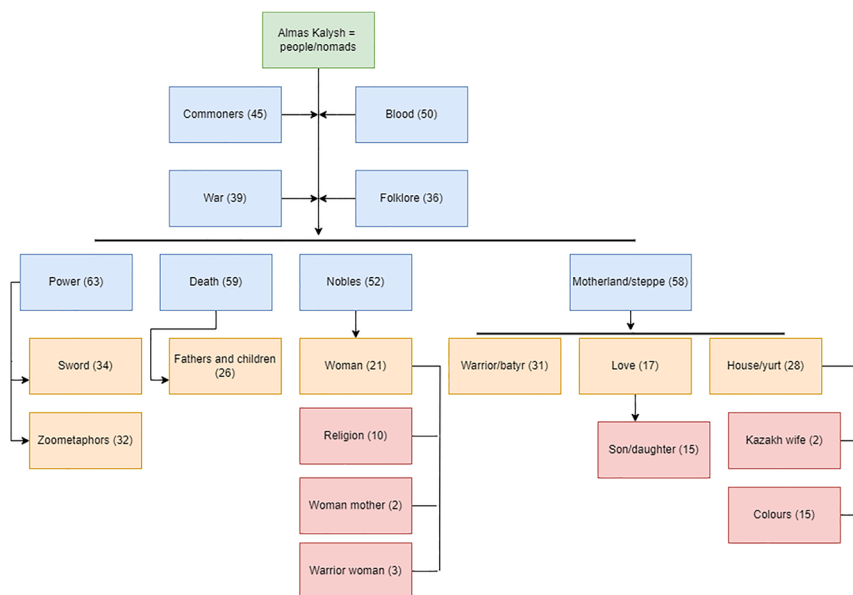


Figure 1: The conceptual framework of Yessenberlin's novel *The Nomads: The Charmed Sword*.

number. The construction of the hierarchy of the novel's concepts makes it evident that the concepts "power" and "death" are the key ones in the conceptual framework of Yessenberlin's novel. Thus, it is advisable to begin the study of an artistic concept with a qualifier word. The authors often introduce a qualifier word into the title of a work, images, subject matter, and other basic elements of a literary text. In Yessenberlin's novel, key concepts are included primarily in the title and images, conditioned by the thematic focus of the work, as well as the interrelationship with each other. It is reasonable to conduct a calculation of the associative series for each concept of a particular literary text, which allows, firstly, to identify the central concepts (to confirm/not to confirm the results of the previous analysis of the text's main elements), and secondly, to establish the relationship between all the concepts of the work's conceptual framework.

In the novel, "power" and "death" are defined as the key concepts, both of which are closely linked and revealed through the images of Abulkhair and Janibek Khans and their heirs. In the story of the work, the concept of "power" is described by well-known facts, such as the presence of territory, capital, domestic and foreign policy, money, and people. However, as the events unfold, the author gives the concept of "power" additional connotations and associative meanings. The concept of "death" originally has two meanings in the original language: *ажал* and *өлім*.

Throughout the novel, the concept of “death” also acquires new semantic connections. Both central concepts are characterized by the presence of individual-author attributes that are evident in the author’s use of fiction. The predominant part of scientific works devoted to the study of the artistic concept in the field of literary studies is characterized by the coverage of the concept theory (notion, attributes, research methodology, etc.). A considerably smaller proportion of studies are devoted to the analysis of specific artistic concepts within the framework of a single literary work.

Among the works of Ukrainian, Kazakh, and Russian researchers, one should note the tendency to study such universal concepts as “life,” “death,” and “fate” in the material of sayings, proverbs, phraseological units, etc., the concept “power” – in the examples of public speeches and texts. However, the study of concepts within a single work of fiction has so far received little attention from literary scholars. This may be due to the lack of a single, universal algorithm for investigating a concept in a fictional text. As has been established in the course of this study, an artistic concept acquires new attributes and meanings under the influence of fiction. This gradation makes the concept dynamic, which, in the absence of a single, developed methodology may cause certain difficulties for the researcher. When analyzing the concepts “power” and “death” as key units in the conceptual framework of the novel, the conceptual method was used, which allows us to comprehensively assess the signs of the indicated concepts as well as their relationship with other concepts that constitute the work’s conceptual framework. At the same time, for this particular work, the toolkit of the conceptual method was selected, which made it possible to identify and describe the significant characteristics of the studied concepts to the greatest extent, trace their dynamics, as well as to identify the features of the individual-author and national picture of the world, taking into account the peculiarities of the historical novel genre.

4 Conclusions

The study conducted has shown that in Yessenberlin’s novel *The Nomads: The Charmed Sword*, artistic concepts can contain in their structure the meanings and attributes of such nature: universal, national, and individual-author ones. The presence of individual-author attributes in the structure of an artistic concept depends directly on the writer’s inclusion of fiction in the text, which, in one way or another, has an impact on the concept under study. The analysis of the conceptual framework of the novel led to the conclusion that all the concepts in the literary work are directly interconnected. There are possible variants when one concept comes from another (for example, the concepts “woman” – “woman-mother”) or is an

independent concept (the concepts “power,” “blood,” etc.) on the same line of the hierarchy of the conceptional framework by the number or meaning of associative rows. The analysis of the concepts “power” and “death” has revealed their dynamic nature: as events unfold in the work, both concepts can both acquire new semantic-associative links and meanings, as well as lose previously acquired attributes. The dynamics of the concepts present a certain difficulty when studying them, but make it possible to identify a comparatively larger possible number of associative links for each concept, which is of particular interest from the perspective of literary theory, as well as to assess to a greater extent the specificity of the national and individual-author world pictures reflected in the work.

In order to investigate concepts in a fictional text, the most appropriate method is conceptual analysis, namely, lexicographic research, definitional analysis and contextual analysis. The method of conceptual analysis is comprehensive and provides the researcher with a choice of the most effective ways of studying artistic concepts. From the perspective of literary studies, the conceptual method allows the construction of associative series for each concept in a fictional text, as well as the tracing of semantic-associative changes in the structure of concepts. When studying concepts in a historical novel, it is necessary to conduct a calculation of the associative series of each of the concepts in the fictional text in order to build a system/hierarchy of concepts, allowing us to indicate the links between them, as well as to assess the specificity of the conceptual framework. The study of artistic concepts in the historical novel has its own characteristics. Since the works of this genre are based on real events, the researcher has the opportunity to compare real historical data with that described in the literary text. Thus, by distinguishing between historical facts and fiction, it can be stated that the historical facts presented in the text indicate that the concept has a universal meaning established in the world and reflects the existing world picture, while fiction determines the appearance of new features of the concept and creates, through the prism of the individual author’s perception, a new picture of the world.

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