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THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TRANSFORMATIVE STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS ACROSS CULTURES: A COGNITIVE-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Summary. The article examines the cross-cultural conceptualization of transformative states of consciousness from a cognitive-linguistic perspective. The study focuses on five concepts ENLIGHTENMENT, AWAKENING, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA selected for their relevance to philosophical and religious discourse. The research material comprises lexicographic sources, philosophical and religious texts, and academic literature. The methodology combines conceptual analysis, comparative linguistic analysis, etymological investigation, and cognitive-linguistic modeling. The study reconstructs the notional structures and conceptual domains of the five concepts. The findings show that the analyzed concepts are not totally synonymous lexical units but partially overlapping conceptual models of transformative experience. Their semantic structures converge around liberation, awakening, wisdom, transformation, and ultimate realization, while culture-specific components reflect different doctrinal traditions. ENLIGHTENMENT integrates cognitive, spiritual, and historical-philosophical dimensions, whereas AWAKENING combines physiological, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual domains. By contrast, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA are organized within the SPIRITUAL DOMAIN and retain semantic stability as specialized doctrinal concepts. The comparative analysis reveals two patterns of conceptual development: semantic diversification in culturally widespread lexemes and semantic specialization in tradition-specific terms. The study concludes that the five concepts form an interconnected conceptual network representing the transition from ordinary human experience to higher levels of consciousness, knowledge, liberation, and spiritual realization. The findings confirm the potential of cognitive-linguistic methodology for investigating culturally significant concepts and provide a framework for further cross-cultural research into the linguistic conceptualization of transformative experience.

Key words: awareness, cognitive linguistics, concept, consciousness, lexical meaning.

Problem statement and review of recent research and publications. More than two millennia after the appearance of Plato's *Republic*, the boundary between what seems real and what actually constitutes reality remains difficult to recognize [1]. Contemporary forms of perception may even intensify this problem by making constructed representations appear self-evident and unquestionable. Plato illustrates a similar epistemological condition through the allegory of the cave [1]. The people imagined by Socrates possess no direct experience of the world beyond their confined environment. Their knowledge is restricted to moving images projected onto a wall by the light of a fire and objects passing outside their field of vision [1]. Since these images constitute the entire range of their experience, the prisoners have no initial basis for recognizing them as mere representations. The illusion is therefore sustained not simply by physical confinement but by the limits of habitual perception. Any suggestion that reality extends beyond the visible shadows challenges the only conceptual framework available to them. Plato's allegory thus demonstrates how familiarity can stabilize an incomplete image of the world and make the possibility of an alternative reality difficult to acknowledge [1].

Questions about human nature, reality, and the meaning of existence have been approached from many different perspectives throughout history. Philosophy has examined these issues through theories of being, knowledge, mind, and human experience [2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10], while religious traditions have developed their own models of human existence and ultimate reality [11; 12; 13]. More recently, cognitive science, embodied cognition, and linguistics have explored the relationship between the mind, the body, and human experience [14; 15; 16; 17]. Related questions have also been addressed within the natural sciences, the humanities, and quantum theory [18; 19; 20; 21]. Although these disciplines differ considerably in their methods and theoretical assumptions, they

all contribute to the broader human attempt to understand ourselves and the reality in which we exist.

The limitations of human perception are also illustrated by the parable of the blind men and the elephant, associated with Jain epistemology and the doctrine of *anekāntavāda* [22; 23]. In the story, each man touches a different part of the elephant and describes the whole animal according to his own experience. As a result, their descriptions differ, although each of them reflects a particular aspect of the same object [22; 23]. The parable suggests that a limited perspective may provide only a partial understanding of a more complex reality. In this sense, the parable can also illustrate differences in the ways reality is perceived and interpreted. Different descriptions do not necessarily refer to different realities; they may represent different perspectives on the same phenomenon [22; 23]. Thus, no single perspective can fully describe «ultimate reality».

Throughout history, people have tried to understand the nature of human existence and find answers to fundamental existential questions. Different philosophical and religious traditions have offered their own interpretations of *consciousness*, *knowledge*, and *the ultimate possibilities of human experience*. Within these traditions, *enlightenment* has emerged as an important concept, although its names and interpretations vary according to particular historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts [12; 13; 24; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29]. Despite considerable differences between these traditions, their views of *enlightenment* share several recurring ideas. These include the *search for truth*, the *overcoming of ordinary perceptual limitations*, *changes in consciousness*, and a *deeper understanding of reality*. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, such concepts can be examined as culturally shaped models through which different traditions organize and interpret human experience [24; 30; 31; 32; 33; 34; 35; 36; 37].

The present study focuses on the ways in which the experience generally described as *enlightenment* is expressed and conceptualized across different linguistic and cultural traditions. A wide range of terms is used to represent related experiences, states, and processes, including *enlightenment*, *awakening*, *bodhi*, *nirvāṇa*, *moksha*, *mukti*, *kaivalya*, *jīvanmukti*, *kevala-jñāna*, *samyaksambodhi*, *kenshō*, *satori*, *wu* (悟), *mingxin jianxing*, *gnosis*, *theosis*, *deification*, *salvation*, *union with God*, *beatific vision*, *fanā*, *baqā*, *ma'rifa*, *insān al-kāmil*, *devekut*, *ein sof realization*, *sahaja*, *turīya*, *samādhi*, *ātma-jñāna*, and *brahma-jñāna* [38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 43; 44; 45; 46] (see Table 1).

The terms presented in Table 2 should not be treated as direct synonyms. They belong to different cultural and religious traditions and describe related ideas of *enlightenment*, *liberation*, *self-realization*, and *union with ultimate reality*. Their meanings and philosophical interpretations differ considerably and therefore require analysis within their specific contexts.

Five concepts were selected for further analysis: ENLIGHTENMENT, AWAKENING, BODHI, NIRVĀṆA, and MOKSHA. The selection was guided by three main criteria. First, these concepts are widely discussed in philosophy, religious studies, and cognitive science. *Enlightenment* and *awakening* often function as broader interpretive terms, whereas *bodhi*, *nirvāṇa*, and *moksha* represent major concepts within Buddhist and Hindu traditions. Second, the selected concepts are regularly described in authoritative dictionaries, philosophical sources, and encyclopedic reference works [12; 13; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26; 30; 50; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57]. This provides a sufficient terminological basis for comparative analysis. Third, these concepts allow cross-cultural comparison while retaining their individual semantic and doctrinal characteristics. Table 2 summarizes the principles used to select the five concepts and presents their evidential basis, disciplinary distribution, and role in academic discourse. Since there is no universal vocabulary for *enlightenment* across philosophical and religious traditions, the table provides a clear framework for comparison. It also explains why the selected concepts form the primary analytical corpus of the study and provides a basis for the subsequent cross-cultural and cognitive-linguistic analysis (see Table 2).

Methodology and research methods. The *purpose* of the present study is to examine how transformative states of consciousness are linguistically represented and conceptually structured across different philosophical, religious, and cognitive traditions. The research compares culturally and historically diverse lexicalizations of experiences associated with *enlightenment*, *awakening*, and other forms of epistemic or existential transformation. The *object* of the study is the cross-cultural conceptualization of enlightenment-related states of consciousness in philosophical, religious, and cognitive-scientific discourse. The *subject* of the research includes the lexical, semantic, and conceptual characteristics of the selected terms *enlightenment*, *awakening*, *bodhi*, *nirvāṇa*, and *moksha* as well as their representation in textual and lexicographic sources. The *relevance* of the study is linked to the growing interdisciplinary interest in how human experience, particularly non-ordinary and trans-

Table 1

Cross-Cultural Terms Associated with the Concept of ENLIGHTENMENT

Tradition	Terms Associated with ENLIGHTENMENT
General English	enlightenment, awakening, illumination, realization, self-realization, liberation, transcendence
Buddhism	bodhi, nirvāṇa, samyaksambodhi, anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, kenshō, satori, wu (悟), hongaku
Hindu Traditions	moksha, mukti, jīvanmukti, kaivalya, turīya, samādhi, sahaja samādhi, ātma-jñāna, brahma-jñāna, aparokṣānubhūti
Jainism	kevala-jñāna, kevalin
Daoism	zhenren, de, mingxin jianxing, wu (悟)
Christianity	theosis, deification, divinization, union with God, beatific vision
Sufism	fanā', baqā', ma'rifa, ḥaqīqa, insān al-kāmil
Judaism and Kabbalah	devekut, devekut ba-Elohim, devekut, union with Ein Sof
Sikhism	mukti, sach khand, anand
Mystical Traditions in General	illumination, mystical union, unitive consciousness, nondual awareness, pure consciousness, ultimate realization

Table 2

Evidence Mapping of the Concepts ENLIGHTENMENT, AWAKENING, BODHI, NIRVĀṆA, and MOKSHA

Term	Evidence Type	Core sources	Disciplinary spread
ENLIGHTENMENT	Umbrella meta-category; high-frequency interpretive term in comparative studies	Eliade (1959) [48]; James (1902) [49]; Bowker (1997) [41]; King (1999) [12]	Philosophy of religion; comparative religion; cognitive science of religion; popular philosophy
AWAKENING	Translational and phenomenological descriptor of transformative cognition	Gethin (1998) [33]; Harvey (2013) [34]; Varela et al. (1991) [16]; Analayo (2003) [35]	Buddhist studies; phenomenology; cognitive science; contemplative studies
BODHI	Canonical doctrinal term anchored in primary Buddhist texts	Bodhi (trans., Samyutta Nikāya) [31]; Nāṇamoli & Bodhi (1995) [32]; Buswell & Lopez (2014) [39]	Buddhist philology; early Buddhism studies; religious studies
NIRVĀṆA	Core soteriological concept with extensive philosophical and comparative commentary	Harvey (2013) [34]; Gethin (1998) [33]; Buswell & Lopez (2014) [39]; King (1999) [12]	Buddhist studies; philosophy of religion; comparative mysticism
MOKSHA	System-wide Hindu liberation concept used across Vedānta, Yoga, and Darśana systems	Radhakrishnan (1953) [26]; Flood (1996) [37]; Eliade (1958) [48]; Bowker (1997) [41]	Indology; Hindu philosophy; comparative religion

formative states of consciousness, is conceptualized, expressed through language, and organized within different fields of knowledge. These issues are increasingly addressed in the philosophy of mind, religious studies, cognitive linguistics, and contemplative science. The *material* of the study includes lexicographic sources, canonical philosophical and religious texts, and secondary academic literature selected through continuous sampling from scholarly databases and electronic resources. The analyzed data comprise dictionary entries, doctrinal texts, and fragments of interpretive discourse representing both individual traditions and comparative academic approaches. The *methodology* of the study combines conceptual analysis, semantic interpretation, comparative linguistic analysis, and cognitive-linguistic modeling. Particular attention is paid to: 1) the etymological and semantic analysis of the key lexical units *enlightenment*, *awakening*, *bodhi*, *nirvāṇa*, and *moksha*; 2) the examination of their definitions in authoritative reference works; 3) the identification of shared and distinctive conceptual features; and 4) the delineation of the conceptual domains in which these terms function. The study also applies a cross-cultural comparative approach to explore how related experiential domains are encoded in different linguistic systems and interpreted within distinct doctrinal traditions. Within this framework, the study differentiates between a broad range of culturally specific lexicalizations of enlightenment-related concepts and a narrower analytical corpus consisting of the core terms *enlightenment*, *awakening*, *bodhi*, *nirvāṇa*, and *moksha*. These terms were selected because of their cross-traditional circulation in academic discourse, relative terminological stability in major reference works, and considerable potential for comparative conceptual analysis (see Table 2).

Presentation of findings.

The concept of ENLIGHTENMENT. The etymological analysis of the lexeme *enlightenment* as the name of the concept ENLIGHTENMENT. The etymological analysis of the lexeme *enlightenment*, which names the concept ENLIGHTENMENT, begins with the verb *enlighten*. The verb combines the prefix *en-* (Old French *en-*, ultimately from Latin *in-* «in, into, cause to be in») and the noun *light*. The latter derives from Old English *lēoht*, *liht* and Proto-Germanic *leuhtq* «light, brightness» and is ultimately related to the Proto-Indo-European root *lewk-* «to shine, be bright, give light» [51]. Across Indo-European languages, this root is widely represented in words associated with visibility, perception, and clarity [51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58]. Attested from the 14th century, *enlighten* initially referred to physical illumination. Its meaning soon expanded into religious and cognitive domains,

where it came to express spiritual illumination, the removal of ignorance, and the acquisition of understanding. By the 15th–17th centuries, meanings such as «to instruct», «to inform» and «to make intellectually aware» had become increasingly prominent, reflecting a semantic movement from sensory perception to cognition [51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58]. The abstract noun *enlightenment*, recorded from the 17th century, denoted both the process of becoming enlightened and the resulting state of intellectual or spiritual clarity. In Christian theological discourse, partly influenced by Latin *illuminatio*, the term was also associated with divine illumination of the soul and understanding [51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58]. In the 18th century, Enlightenment acquired a more established philosophical and historical meaning in relation to the European intellectual movement known as German Aufklärung and French les Lumières. The term became associated with reason, scientific inquiry, criticism of established authority, and the advancement of knowledge [51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58]. The semantic history of *enlightenment* thus reflects a conceptual shift from physical illumination to cognitive and spiritual clarity. In contemporary usage, the term generally refers to a transition from ignorance or limited perception to a clearer and more fundamental understanding of reality, whether intellectual, cultural, or spiritual [51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58].

The notional components of the concept ENLIGHTENMENT. Conceptual domains and meaning realizations of ENLIGHTENMENT. A comparative analysis of major English dictionaries, including Oxford, Cambridge, Merriam-Webster, Collins, Longman, American Heritage, and other relevant lexicographic sources [52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58], shows that the lexeme *enlightenment*, which names the concept ENLIGHTENMENT, has a relatively stable semantic core, although individual dictionaries highlight different aspects of its meanings. Since no single dictionary covers the complete range of meanings, a more comprehensive notional structure can be established by combining lexicographic data from several sources (see Table 3). The main notional components of ENLIGHTENMENT identified through this analysis are presented below.

The identified notional components fall into three main conceptual domains. The COGNITIVE DOMAIN covers «knowledge», «understanding», «awareness», «insight», «wisdom», «intellectual development», «reason», «education/instruction» and «mental illumination». Within this domain, enlightenment is understood in terms of acquiring and applying knowledge, developing understanding, and expanding cognitive and intellectual capacities. The

Table 3

Notional Components of the Concept ENLIGHTENMENT and Their Semantic and Illustrative Realizations

N	Notional component	Explanation	Quotation
1	«knowledge»	possession or acquisition of knowledge	«The <i>enlightenment</i> is under threat. So is reason. So is truth. So is science, especially in the schools of America» [59]
2	«understanding»	deep or clear understanding of something /self	« <i>Enlightenment</i> is ego's ultimate disappointment» [62]
3	«awareness»	increased awareness of reality / the self	«Knowing others is wisdom, knowing yourself is <i>enlightenment</i> » [60]
4	«insight»	sudden or profound understanding	«...you are not the mind, that you are the witness, a watcher. [...] That's the moment of <i>enlightenment</i> » [62]
5	«wisdom»	higher level of understanding leading to wise judgment	« <i>Enlightenment</i> is not the process of learning 'new' information. It is the process of 'reminding' ourselves that the answers are already 'within our consciousness'. All knowledge, all energy, all information is within us, not outside of us» [60]
6	«intellectual development / reason» / «education / instruction»	growth through education or learning / being educated or informed	«The road to <i>enlightenment</i> is long and difficult, and you should try not to forget snacks and magazines» [62]
7	«mental illumination»	intellectual illumination or clarification	«People will do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing their own souls. One does not become <i>enlightened</i> by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious» [62]
8	«spiritual illumination / religious awakening»	divine or spiritual enlightenment / spiritual awakening or realization	«Many think <i>enlightenment</i> comes only through meditation or philosophical inquiry. But Lord Krishna reveals another way – pure devotion» [63]
9	«liberation»	freedom from ignorance, suffering, or illusion (especially Eastern religions)	«To know yourself as the Being underneath the thinker, the stillness underneath the mental noise, the love and joy underneath the pain, is freedom, salvation, <i>enlightenment</i> » [61]
10	«self-realization»	realization of one's true nature or identity	«The word <i>enlightenment</i> conjures up the idea of some superhuman accomplishment, and the ego likes to keep it that way, but it is simply your natural state of felt oneness with Being» [60]
11	«transformation of consciousness»	change in one's mode of awareness	«According to Vedanta, there are only two symptoms of <i>enlightenment</i> , just two indications that a transformation is taking place within you toward a higher consciousness. The first symptom is that you stop worrying. Things don't bother you anymore. You become light-hearted and full of joy. The second symptom is that you encounter more and more meaningful coincidences in your life, more and more synchronicities. And this accelerates to the point where you actually experience the miraculous» [62]
12	«illumination»	the Enlightenment (the Age of Reason)	«The Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, is seen as the beginning of modern depravity» [59]

SPIRITUAL DOMAIN includes «spiritual illumination», «religious awakening», «liberation», «self-realization» and «transformation of consciousness». These components present enlightenment as a process of inner change associated with spiritual freedom, the discovery of one's true self, and the transition to a higher state of consciousness. The HISTORICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL DOMAIN is represented by «the Enlightenment (the Age of Reason)» and refers to the eighteenth-century intellectual movement connected with rational inquiry, scientific progress, and the development of human knowledge. Taken together, these domains show that the concept ENLIGHTENMENT combines cognitive, spiritual, and historical-philosophical dimensions. In contemporary English, the COGNITIVE and SPIRITUAL DOMAINS constitute its central conceptual areas, while the HISTORICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL DOMAIN reflects a more specialized historical meaning. Such a structure accounts for the conceptual flexibility of ENLIGHTENMENT and its cross-cultural use in relation to knowledge, consciousness, liberation, and intellectual development.

The concept of AWAKENING. The etymological analysis of the lexeme *awakening* as the name of the concept AWAKENING. The etymological analysis of the lexeme *awakening* as the name of the concept AWAKENING begins with the verb *awaken*. The word consists of the prefix *a-*, the verbal base *wake* and the suffix *-ing*, which indicates an action, process or resulting state [51]. The prefix *a-* developed from Old English *on-* «on, in, into» and underwent phonetic reduction in Middle English. It later

became productive in verbs expressing a transition into a particular state. The verbal base *wake* goes back to Old English *wacan* «to arise from sleep, to become awake» and the related *wacian* «to remain awake, to keep watch, to be vigilant». These verbs derive from Proto-Germanic *wakaną* «to wake, become awake» and *wakōną* «to remain awake, keep watch». Their meanings reflect a distinction between entering a state of wakefulness and remaining in that state [51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58]. At an earlier historical stage, these Germanic forms are related to the Proto-Indo-European root *weg-* «to be awake, to be active, to be strong, to arouse». The root belongs to a semantic field associated with wakefulness, vigilance, vitality and conscious activity. Related forms occur in several Indo-European languages, including Old High German *wahhēn*, German *wachen*, Dutch *waken*, Old Norse *vakna*, Swedish *vakna*, Danish *vågne*, Latin *vigil* and *vigilia*, and Ancient Greek *ἐγείρω* (*egeirō*), all of which retain meanings connected with waking or vigilance [51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58]. The noun *awakening* developed in Middle English as a deverbal formation referring to the act or process of waking from sleep. Its morphological and etymological structure therefore reflects the basic meaning «the act or process of becoming awake» [51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58].

The notional components of the concept AWAKENING. Conceptual domains and meaning realizations of AWAKENING. The semantic structure of AWAKENING differs from that of ENLIGHTENMENT. While ENLIGHTENMENT encompasses cognitive, spiritual, and historical meanings, AWAKENING

remains centered on the basic idea of a transition from unconsciousness to consciousness [52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58]. The analysis of authoritative lexicographic sources shows that the original physiological meaning of waking has gradually extended to cognitive, psychological, and spiritual contexts [52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58]. As a result, AWAKENING has developed a multidimensional semantic structure while preserving the idea of transition as its conceptual core. The identified notional components are presented in Table 4.

The notional components of AWAKENING can be grouped into four major conceptual domains. The PHYSIOLOGICAL DOMAIN comprises «wakefulness» and «consciousness» and represents the transition from sleep or inactivity to a conscious state. The COGNITIVE DOMAIN includes «awareness» and «realization», referring to perception, understanding, and insight into reality. The PSYCHOLOGICAL DOMAIN is formed by «self-awareness» and «transformation» and reflects self-recognition and profound changes in one's inner experience. The SPIRITUAL DOMAIN includes «spiritual awakening» and refers to the realization of spiritual truth, ultimate reality, or transcendent knowledge. The physiological experience of waking provides the conceptual basis for the development of cognitive, psychological, and spiritual meanings. Through semantic extension, the transition from sleep to wakefulness becomes a model for broader changes in awareness, understanding, and consciousness. Thus, the semantic structure of AWAKENING is organized around a common conceptual pattern: the transition from a state of limited or absent awareness to a state of heightened awareness.

The concept of BODHI. The etymological analysis of the lexeme *bodhi* as the name of the concept BODHI. The lexeme *bodhi* (Sanskrit: बोधि; Pāli: *bodhi*) derives from the Sanskrit verbal root $\sqrt{budh}$ (बुध्), meaning «to wake», «to awaken», «to become aware», «to perceive», «to understand», or «to know» [24; 30; 38; 51; 66; 67; 68; 69; 70]. The addition of the nominal suffix *-i* forms the abstract noun *bodhi*, literally meaning «awakening» or «awareness». The root $\sqrt{budh}$ belongs to the oldest layer of Indo-Aryan vocabulary and is attested in Vedic Sanskrit. Its semantic development reflects a gradual extension from physical awakening and becoming conscious to more abstract meanings of awareness,

understanding, wisdom, and spiritual realization [24; 30; 38; 51; 66; 67; 68; 69; 70]. Historically, $\sqrt{budh}$ is traced to the Proto-Indo-European root *b^hewd^h-* / *b^heu^{dh}-*, associated with wakefulness, awareness, perception, and understanding. Related Sanskrit forms include *Buddha* («the Awakened One»), *buddhi* («intellect», «understanding», «discernment»), *sambodhi* («complete awakening»), and *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* («unsurpassed complete and perfect awakening») [24; 30; 38; 51; 66; 67; 68; 69; 70]. In Buddhist texts, *bodhi* acquired the specialized meaning of spiritual awakening and the realization of ultimate truth. Although the term is frequently translated into English as *enlightenment*, *awakening* more directly reflects the meaning of the underlying root $\sqrt{budh}$. Thus, the semantic development of *bodhi* proceeds from physical wakefulness through cognitive awareness to spiritual realization.

The notional components of the concept BODHI. Conceptual domains and meaning realizations of BODHI. Unlike *enlightenment* and *awakening*, *bodhi* is a specialized Buddhist term and therefore receives limited treatment in general English dictionaries. Its semantic structure can be more fully reconstructed through Buddhist encyclopedias, Sanskrit and Pāli dictionaries, and authoritative reference works on Buddhism [38; 66; 67; 68; 69; 70]. The conceptual structure of BODHI comprises several interconnected notional components: «awakening» represents the central process; «wisdom» (*prajñā*) refers to the understanding attained through awakening; «liberation» (*vimukti*) denotes freedom from ignorance, suffering, and cyclic existence; «transformation» reflects the profound change of mind and consciousness; and «Buddhahood» represents the ultimate culmination of the process [38; 66; 67; 68; 69; 70]. Despite differences in source type and doctrinal emphasis, «awakening» remains the central notional component of BODHI: «the state of enlightenment attained by a Buddhist who has practiced the Eightfold Path and achieved salvation» [52]. The identified meanings are organized within a single major conceptual domain – the SPIRITUAL DOMAIN. They represent complementary aspects of Buddhist spiritual realization and form a unified conceptual structure centered on «awakening».

The concept of NIRVANA. The etymological analysis of the lexeme *nirvana* as the name of the concept NIRVANA. The

Table 4

Notional Components of the Concept AWAKENING and Their Semantic and Illustrative Realizations

N	Notional component	Explanation	Quotation
1	«wakefulness»	the transition from sleep or inactivity to wakefulness and conscious activity	«Beauty awakens the soul to act» [64]
2	«consciousness»	entering or attaining a conscious state	«No single event can awaken within us a stranger totally unknown to us. To live is to be slowly born. It would be a bit too easy if we could go about borrowing ready-made souls» [64]
3	«awareness»	increased awareness, perception, or attentiveness	«Water is to me, I confess, a phenomenon which continually awakens new feelings of wonder as often as I view it» [64]
4	«realisation»	recognition, understanding, or insight into an important truth or reality	«Your life, all of your life, is your path to awakening. By resisting or not dealing with its challenges, you stay asleep to Reality. Pay attention to what life is trying to reveal to you. Say yes to its fierce, ruthless, and loving grace» [65]
5	«self-awareness»	recognition and understanding of one's own identity, nature, or inner state	«Religion is meant to teach us true spiritual human character. It is meant for self-transformation. It is meant to transform anxiety into peace, arrogance into humility, envy into compassion, to awaken the pure soul in man and his love for the Source, which is God» [64]
6	«transformation»	profound personal, intellectual, psychological, emotional, social, or spiritual change	«Life and death are of supreme importance. Time swiftly passes by and opportunity is lost. Each of us should strive to awaken. Awaken. Take heed, do not squander your life» [65]
7	«spiritual awakening»	awakening to spiritual truth, ultimate reality, or transcendent knowledge	«To realize that you are not your thoughts is when you begin to awaken spiritually» [64]

lexeme *nirvāṇa* (Sanskrit: निर्वाण; Pāli: *nibbāna*) is traditionally associated with the Sanskrit prefix *nir-*, meaning «out», «away», or «free from», and the verbal root *√vā* (वा), meaning «to blow» or «to move as the wind». The term is generally interpreted etymologically as «blowing out», «extinction», or the state of being extinguished, particularly in reference to a flame [38; 39; 40; 69; 70; 71; 72]. The root *√vā* is attested in Vedic Sanskrit and is traced to the Proto-Indo-European root *h₂weh₁- / weh₁-*, associated with air, wind, and blowing. The Pāli form *nibbāna* represents the Middle Indo-Aryan development of Sanskrit *nirvāṇa* and preserves the same underlying semantic basis [38; 39; 40; 69; 70; 71; 72]. Within Buddhist thought, the literal image of extinguishing gradually acquired an abstract spiritual meaning. *Nirvāṇa* came to denote the cessation of craving, ignorance, suffering, and the cycle of rebirth (*samsāra*). Buddhist traditions also associate the concept with the extinguishing of the three fires of greed (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa/dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) [38; 39; 40; 69; 70; 71; 72]. Thus, the semantic development of *nirvāṇa* reflects a transition from the concrete physical image of an extinguished flame to the Buddhist concept of ultimate spiritual cessation and liberation.

The notional components of the concept NIRVANA. Conceptual domains and meaning realizations of NIRVANA. The lexeme *nirvana* functions both as a specialized Buddhist term and as part of general English vocabulary. General English dictionaries primarily associate it with «perfect happiness», «peace», or «an ideal state», while also preserving the Buddhist meaning of liberation from suffering and the cycle of rebirth [52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58]. Specialized sources provide a more detailed interpretation of *nirvāṇa* as the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice, associated with the cessation of suffering, craving, and ignorance, liberation from *samsāra*, and the attainment of the unconditioned state [38; 39; 40; 69; 70]. Despite differences in emphasis, the analyzed lexicographic and encyclopedic sources reveal several stable notional components in the semantic structure of NIRVANA (see Table 5).

The semantic analysis of the lexeme *nirvana* demonstrates that its conceptual structure is organized around a single major conceptual domain. The SPIRITUAL DOMAIN comprises the meanings «cessation», «liberation», «enlightenment», and «ultimate state», conceptualizing NIRVANA as the cessation of suffering, craving, and ignorance; liberation from *samsāra* and rebirth; spiritual realization of ultimate or unconditioned reality; and the attainment of the highest state of peace and spiritual fulfillment. These meanings represent complementary aspects of the same religious and philosophical ideal. Thus, NIRVANA constitutes a unified spiritual cognitive construct in which all identified notional com-

ponents converge on the conceptualization of ultimate spiritual liberation.

The concept of MOKSHA. The etymological analysis of the lexeme moksha as the name of the concept MOKSHA. The lexeme *mokṣa* (Sanskrit: मोक्ष) derives from the Sanskrit verbal root *√muc* (मुच्), meaning «to release», «to free», «to let go», or «to liberate». The formation of the abstract noun *mokṣa* expresses the result or state of liberation [36; 68; 69; 71; 72; 73]. The root *√muc* belongs to the oldest layer of the Indo-Aryan lexicon and is attested in Vedic Sanskrit, where it originally referred to physical acts of releasing or loosening. Its semantic scope gradually expanded from concrete release to more abstract meanings associated with freedom from suffering, attachment, ignorance, and karmic bondage [36; 68; 69; 71; 72; 73]. The root is generally traced to the Proto-Indo-European *mewk- / mewg-*, preserving the central semantic idea of release or freedom. In later Vedic and Upaniṣadic literature [25; 26; 58], *mokṣa* acquired the specialized meaning of ultimate liberation from *samsāra*, the cycle of birth and rebirth. Thus, the semantic development of *mokṣa* reflects a transition from physical release to the Hindu concept of ultimate spiritual liberation [36; 68; 69; 71; 72; 73].

The notional components of the concept MOKSHA. Conceptual domains and meaning realizations of MOKSHA. As a specialized term originating in Hindu philosophy, *mokṣa* receives relatively limited treatment in general English dictionaries. It is commonly defined as «liberation» or «release from the cycle of rebirth», and is also associated with «spiritual freedom» and the «ultimate goal» of human existence [52; 53; 54]. Specialized sources provide a broader semantic description of *mokṣa* as liberation from ignorance, karmic bondage, and *samsāra*, as well as the realization of the true Self (*Ātman*) and its relationship to ultimate reality (*Brahman*) [36; 40; 50; 58; 69]. Despite differences in terminology and doctrinal emphasis, the analyzed sources reveal several stable notional components in the semantic structure of MOKSHA (see Table 6).

The semantic analysis of the lexeme *mokṣa* demonstrates that its conceptual structure is organized around a single major conceptual domain. The SPIRITUAL DOMAIN comprises the meanings «liberation», «self-realization», and «ultimate state», conceptualizing MOKSHA as freedom from *samsāra*, karma, ignorance, and suffering; realization of the true Self (*Ātman*); and the attainment of the highest state of spiritual fulfillment. These meanings represent complementary aspects of the same process of spiritual emancipation. Thus, MOKSHA constitutes a unified spiritual cognitive construct in which all identified notional

Table 5

Notional Components of the Concept NIRVANA and Their Semantic and Illustrative Realizations

N	Notional component	Explanation	Quotation
1	«cessation»	the cessation of suffering, craving, ignorance, and conditioned existence	« <i>Nirvana</i> is not the blowing out of the candle. It is the extinguishing of the flame because day is come» [74]
2	«liberation»	complete freedom from <i>samsāra</i> , karma, rebirth, and all forms of bondage	«He who gives away shall have real gain. He who subdues himself shall be free; he shall cease to be a slave of passions. The righteous man casts off evil, and by rooting out lust, bitterness, and illusion do we reach <i>Nirvana</i> » [74]
3	«enlightenment»	complete spiritual awakening and realization of ultimate or unconditioned reality	«He who walks in the eightfold noble path with unswerving determination is sure to reach <i>Nirvana</i> » [74]
4	«ultimate state»	the highest state of existence, characterized by perfect peace, bliss, and the culmination of the Buddhist path	«I haven't had a single thought for 26 years. I have only understanding... You're in a state of total peace of mind. A kind of <i>nirvana</i> » [74]

Table 6

Notional Components of the Concept MOKSHA and Their Semantic and Illustrative Realizations

N	Notional component	Explanation	Quotation
1	«liberation»	complete release from <i>samsāra</i> , karma, ignorance, suffering, and all forms of bondage	«The cycle of birth and death is repetitive. The ones who liberates from this, attain <i>Moksha</i> » [75]
2	«self-realization»	realization of the true Self (<i>Ātman</i>) and, in some traditions, its unity with <i>Brahman</i>	«He who wants to go to <i>moksha</i> , he will have to realize his own self. Otherwise no matter how much of anything else he does, he will not attain <i>moksha</i> » [75]
3	«ultimate state»	the highest state of spiritual fulfillment and the final goal of human existence, attained through liberation and self-realization	«What happens after <i>Moksha</i> ? <i>Moksha</i> means free from Time. So, there is no after or before» [75]

components converge on the conceptualization of ultimate spiritual liberation within the Hindu tradition.

Cross-conceptual semantic analysis of ENLIGHTENMENT, AWAKENING, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA. The comparative analysis of the semantic structures of the five concepts (see Table 7) demonstrates both a substantial degree of conceptual overlap and a number of distinctive semantic features. Although each concept originates within a particular philosophical or religious tradition and reflects its own doctrinal framework, their semantic structures reveal several shared notional components that form a common conceptual core.

The most widely distributed notional component is «liberation», which occurs in ENLIGHTENMENT, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA. Despite differences in doctrinal interpretation, all four concepts associate «liberation» with freedom from ignorance, suffering, illusion, karmic bondage, or the cycle of rebirth. This indicates that «liberation» functions as one of the principal cross-cultural conceptual features associated with transformative states of consciousness.

While AWAKENING explicitly lexicalizes the process itself and BODHI identifies «awakening» as its central notional component, NIRVANA includes «enlightenment» as one of its semantic realizations, thereby demonstrating a close conceptual

relationship among these concepts. Similarly, the component «wisdom» is shared by ENLIGHTENMENT and BODHI, reflecting the traditional association between awakening and higher knowledge.

The concepts also intersect in their representation of profound personal or existential change. The component «transformation» is shared by AWAKENING and BODHI, emphasizing that awakening is not merely a cognitive event but also a fundamental transformation of mind and consciousness. Likewise, «self-realization» occurs in both ENLIGHTENMENT and MOKSHA, although within different philosophical frameworks: in the former, it generally denotes the realization of one's true nature, whereas in the latter, it specifically refers to the realization of *Ātman* and, in many Hindu traditions, its relationship to *Brahman*.

Several semantic components remain unique to individual concepts and therefore distinguish their conceptual profiles. ENLIGHTENMENT alone encompasses epistemic meanings such as «knowledge», «understanding», «insight», «mental illumination», and «intellectual development / reason / education / instruction», as well as the historical meaning referring to the «Age of Enlightenment». AWAKENING uniquely preserves the embodied meanings «wakefulness» and «consciousness», reflecting its semantic origin in the physical experience of waking from sleep. BODHI alone

Table 7

Comparative semantic structure of the concepts ENLIGHTENMENT, AWAKENING, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA

Notional component	ENLIGHTENMENT	AWAKENING	BODHI	NIRVANA	MOKSHA
«knowledge»	+	–	–	–	–
«understanding»	+	–	–	–	–
«awareness»	+	+	–	–	–
«insight»	+	–	–	–	–
«wisdom»	+	–	+	–	–
«intellectual development / reason / education / instruction»	+	–	–	–	–
«mental illumination»	+	–	–	–	–
«spiritual illumination / religious awakening»	+	–	–	–	–
«wakefulness»	–	+	–	–	–
«consciousness»	–	+	–	–	–
«realisation»	–	+	–	–	–
«self-awareness»	–	+	–	–	–
«transformation»	–	+	+	–	–
«spiritual awakening»	–	+	–	–	–
«awakening»	–	+	+	–	–
«liberation»	+	–	+	+	+
«Buddhahood»	–	–	+	–	–
«cessation»	–	–	–	+	–
«enlightenment»	+	–	–	+	–
«ultimate state»	–	–	–	+	+
«self-realization»	+	–	–	–	+

includes «Buddhahood», emphasizing the attainment of the state of a Buddha as the culmination of awakening. NIRVANA is uniquely characterized by «cessation», highlighting the extinction of suffering, craving, and conditioned existence. Finally, although both NIRVANA and MOKSHA share the component «ultimate state», this meaning reflects different doctrinal traditions while expressing a similar notion of the highest attainable spiritual condition.

Overall, the comparison demonstrates that the five concepts do not constitute synonymous lexical units but rather partially overlapping conceptual models. Their semantic structures converge around several shared notions, particularly «liberation», «awakening», «wisdom», «transformation», and «ultimate state», while simultaneously preserving distinctive meanings that reflect the philosophical and religious traditions from which they originate. Consequently, these concepts may be regarded as members of the same broader conceptual network describing transformative states of consciousness, each emphasizing a particular aspect of the transition from ordinary human existence to an ideal state of cognitive, psychological, or spiritual realization.

Comparative analysis of the conceptual domains of ENLIGHTENMENT, AWAKENING, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA. A comparison of the conceptual domains of the five concepts reveals differences in their semantic complexity and internal organization. Although all of them refer to transformative states of consciousness, the ways in which these experiences are conceptualized vary considerably in terms of the number and structure of the domains involved (see Table 8).

Among the analyzed concepts, ENLIGHTENMENT demonstrates the broadest semantic structure. Its conceptual organization includes the COGNITIVE, SPIRITUAL, and HISTORICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL domains, which reflects the extensive semantic development of the lexeme within English. Alongside meanings related to intellectual and spiritual transformation, the concept also refers to a specific historical and cultural movement. Thus, ENLIGHTENMENT is the only concept whose semantic structure extends beyond individual experience and includes a wider socio-cultural dimension.

AWAKENING also has a multidomain structure, although its semantic development follows a different path. Its conceptual organization includes the PHYSIOLOGICAL, COGNITIVE, PSYCHOLOGICAL, and SPIRITUAL domains, demonstrating a gradual movement from the concrete experience of waking from sleep to more abstract meanings connected with cognition, personal change, and spiritual realization. Unlike ENLIGHTENMENT, however, AWAKENING does not acquire a historical-philosophical dimension, and its semantic structure remains closely related to the process of becoming awake.

In comparison, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA demonstrate a higher degree of semantic unity. Their meanings are not distributed across several conceptual domains but are concentrated within a single SPIRITUAL DOMAIN, where individual semantic components represent different aspects of a shared religious and philosophical framework. Although these concepts differ in their doctrinal emphasis: BODHI being associated with awakening, NIRVANA with cessation and liberation, and MOKSHA with liberation through self-realization, their conceptual structures remain internally coherent.

The comparison therefore demonstrates a continuum of conceptual complexity. ENLIGHTENMENT and AWAKENING represent multidomain structures that have developed through semantic expansion within English and intercultural discourse. In contrast, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA preserve more stable conceptual organizations centered on the SPIRITUAL DOMAIN, reflecting their status as specialized terms originating within Buddhist and Hindu philosophical traditions.

Overall, the analysis suggests that the complexity of a concept's semantic structure is connected with the extent of its lexical integration and cultural circulation. Concepts that become widely used in general language tend to develop additional conceptual domains through metaphorical extension and semantic broadening. By contrast, concepts that remain closely associated with specific religious traditions maintain a more concentrated domain structure. This distinction reflects two major directions of conceptual development: semantic diversification of culturally widespread concepts and semantic specialization of doctrinal concepts.

Conclusions. The present study has shown that the lexicalization of transformative states of consciousness in English and cross-cultural discourse reflects a complex interaction between linguistic meaning, philosophical thought, and religious tradition. By combining methods of cognitive linguistics, conceptual analysis, lexicographic comparison, and etymological investigation, the research has reconstructed the semantic structures of five key concepts ENLIGHTENMENT, AWAKENING, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA and identified both their shared conceptual foundations and culture-specific semantic features.

The etymological analysis demonstrates that the historical development of these lexemes has significantly shaped their contemporary conceptual structures. While *enlightenment* and *awakening* have undergone extensive semantic expansion within English, acquiring cognitive, psychological, spiritual, and historical meanings, *bodhi*, *nirvana*, and *moksha* have retained a higher degree of semantic stability due to their status as specialized philosophical and religious terms originating from Buddhist and Hindu traditions. This distinction reflects two different patterns

Table 8

Comparative Mapping of Conceptual Domains in the Concepts ENLIGHTENMENT, AWAKENING, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA

Concept	PHYSIOLOGICAL DOMAIN	COGNITIVE DOMAIN	PSYCHOLOGICAL DOMAIN	SPIRITUAL DOMAIN	HISTORICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL DOMAIN
ENLIGHTENMENT	–	+	–	+	+
AWAKENING	+	+	+	+	–
BODHI	–	–	–	+	–
NIRVANA	–	–	–	+	–
MOKSHA	–	–	–	+	–

of conceptual evolution: semantic diversification in widely used vocabulary and semantic preservation in specialized terminology.

The analysis of notional components indicates that the five concepts cannot be regarded as totally synonymous lexical units. Rather, they represent partially overlapping conceptual models that highlight different aspects of transformative experience. Their semantic comparison reveals a shared conceptual core associated with «liberation», «awakening», «wisdom», «transformation», and «ultimate realization», while each concept preserves distinctive semantic features determined by its philosophical and cultural background. Therefore, the relationship among these concepts is better described as conceptual convergence rather than lexical equivalence.

The comparison of conceptual domains further supports this conclusion. Although the analyzed concepts differ in the complexity of their semantic structures, all of them demonstrate a connection with the SPIRITUAL DOMAIN, which functions as the central framework for representing transformative consciousness. At the same time, ENLIGHTENMENT and AWAKENING extend beyond this shared spiritual basis by incorporating additional domains. ENLIGHTENMENT integrates cognitive, spiritual, and historical-philosophical dimensions, whereas AWAKENING combines physiological, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. In contrast, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA remain primarily concentrated within a unified SPIRITUAL DOMAIN, reflecting their status as specialized religious concepts closely connected with their original doctrinal traditions.

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, the findings suggest that these concepts form an interconnected conceptual network representing *the transition from ordinary human experience to higher levels of consciousness, knowledge, and spiritual realization*. Rather than functioning as isolated lexical meanings, they operate as related conceptual models whose similarities are based on shared experiential patterns, while their differences reflect distinct philosophical interpretations of human transformation. The semantic overlap observed in the analysis points to universal tendencies in the linguistic representation of spiritual experience, whereas culture-specific features demonstrate the influence of particular intellectual and religious traditions on conceptualization.

Overall, the study confirms that the concepts ENLIGHTENMENT, AWAKENING, BODHI, NIRVANA, and MOKSHA constitute a multidimensional system of interconnected conceptual structures rather than a set of interchangeable terms. Their comparative analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of how language organizes and represents transformative states of consciousness and demonstrates the explanatory potential of cognitive-linguistic methodology for studying philosophically and culturally significant concepts. The proposed comparative model may serve as a basis for further cross-cultural research into religious, philosophical, and psychological concepts within cognitive linguistics and conceptual semantics.

A further direction for research may involve the analysis of the concepts GNOSIS and THEOSIS, which represent important models of transformative experience within Western religious and philosophical traditions. Their inclusion would expand the current comparative framework beyond Buddhist and Hindu perspectives by incorporating Gnostic and Christian conceptual systems. GNOSIS focuses on direct spiritual knowledge, inner recognition, and the discovery of ultimate truth, whereas THEOSIS

conceptualizes transformation as participation in the divine nature and union with God. Their further investigation within a cognitive-linguistic framework could provide additional insights into universal and culture-specific patterns in the conceptualization of spiritual transformation.

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Концептуалізація трансформаційних станів свідомості в різних культурах: когнітивно-лінгвістичний аспект

Анотація. У статті досліджено крос-культурну концептуалізацію трансформаційних станів свідомості з позицій когнітивної лінгвістики. Дослідження зосереджено на п'яти концептах: ENLIGHTENMENT, AWAKENING, BODHI, NIRVANA та MOKSHA, обраних з огляду на їхню значущість для філософського й релігійного дискурсу. Матеріал дослідження охоплює лексикографічні джерела, філософські та релігійні тексти й академічну літературу. Методологія поєднує концептуальний аналіз, порівняльний лінгвістичний аналіз, етимологічне дослідження та когнітивно-лінгвістичне моделювання. У роботі реконструйовано поняттєві структури та концептуальні домени п'яти концептів. Результати засвідчують, що концепти не є повністю синонімічними лексичними одиницями, а становлять частково перехресні концептуальні моделі трансформаційного досвіду. Їхні семантичні структури зближуються навколо понять звільнення, пробудження, мудрості, трансформації та найвищої реалізації, тоді як культурно специфічні компоненти відображають відмінності доктринальних традицій. ENLIGHTENMENT інтегрує когнітивний, духовний та історико-філософський виміри, тоді як AWAKENING поєднує фізіологічний, когнітивний, психологічний і духовний виміри. Натомість BODHI, NIRVANA та MOKSHA організовані в межах ДУХОВНОГО ДОМЕНУ й зберігають семантичну стабільність як спеціалізовані доктринальні концепти. Порівняльний аналіз виявив дві моделі концептуального розвитку: семантичну диверсифікацію культурно поширених лексем і семантичну спеціалізацію термінів, пов'язаних із конкретними традиціями. Зроблено висновок, що п'ять концептів утворюють взаємопов'язану концептуальну мережу, яка репрезентує перехід від звичайного людського досвіду до вищих рівнів свідомості, знання, звільнення та духовної реалізації. Отримані результати підтверджують потенціал когнітивно-лінгвістичної методології для дослідження культурно значущих концептів і формують підґрунтя для подальших крос-культурних студій лінгвістичної концептуалізації трансформаційного досвіду.

Ключові слова: когнітивна лінгвістика, концепт, лексичне значення, свідомість, усвідомлення.

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