

Reconstruction of Concepts in Literary Translation

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Abstract. *The problems of studying the concepts occupy an important cognitive niche in modern linguistics. The realization of conceptual integrity of a literary text mostly depends on correct interpretation of the concept itself and its links in a literary text. The questions related to the representation of the concept in a literary text written in a foreign language influence the process of representation an adequate world picture in the target text by the means of reconstruction of conceptual meanings involved in the conceptual sphere of the concept. The research demonstrates that conceptual links, as well as the zones of periphery, can be interpreted individually under the influence of author's world picture. Therefore, in the process of preparation of the text to the translation it is recommended to conduct a conceptual analysis revealing individual-author's connotations that influence the formation of implicit meanings realized through some certain knowledge structures.*

Key words: *concept, cognitive linguistics, literary text, literary translation, knowledge structures, conceptual sphere, conceptualization.*

Introduction

The analysis of modern approaches to the definition of “units of thinking” is in constant search for the linguistic and extralinguistic factors influencing the perception of objective reality. With the development of cognitive linguistics, the range of research methods contributed to the understanding of knowledge representation, which are both conscious and unconscious and depend on previous cognitive experience of a human being. “The area of study known as cognitive semantics is concerned with investigating the relationship between experience, the conceptual system and the semantic structure encoded by language. In specific terms, scholars working in cognitive semantics investigate conceptual structure (knowledge representation) and conceptualisation (meaning construction)”. [1; 26] In other words, the process of conceptualisation is rather a complicated phenomenon and depend on individual and collective experience influenced by cultural factors as well.

On the other hand, literature is an important part of human cognitive experience reflected in the text. In any literary text we can find the features of linguocultural information referring to understanding of a national picture of the world and, therefore, the revelation of such features and their reconstruction in translation provide the adequacy of the target text.

The problem of adequate translation is a topical question in modern Translation Studies, moreover, in the Republic of Uzbekistan such issues are under the meticulous attention of the government as well. According to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, nowadays life requires an increase in the role and responsibility of the literary word in order to unite all people with good thoughts to jointly solve the extremely complex problems of our time, overcome the global challenges and threats facing humanity today, educate young people, based on the ideas of humanism [2]; and the role of literary translation is very important in this process.

Therefore, to represent the conceptual structure of a source text and achieve the high degree of adequacy, the translator need to carefully analyze the conceptual links within the text and reveal all connotative meanings of the concept by reconstruction of its conceptual sphere. Moreover, the concept is always represented as an image, but, having appeared in the consciousness of a person, this image is able to move up the stages of abstraction and, with an increase in the number of attributes fixed by the concept, with an increase in the level of abstraction, the concept gradually turns from a sensory image into a mental one, and the totality of its linguistic realizations allows consideration of the concept, taking into account its linguo-cognitive status, as a unit of individual perception of the world, which has a complicated structure and is realized in a literary text as a literary concept.

Literature review

The key role in the formation of the conceptual structure of a literary text is played by the concept, the definition of which has numerous interpretations at the moment. In particular, according to E.S. Kubryakova, a concept is a term that serves to explain the units of mental or psychic resources of our consciousness and the information structure that reflects the knowledge and experience of a person; operational content unit of memory, mental vocabulary, conceptual system and language of the brain (*lingua mentalis*), the whole picture of the world, reflected in the human psyche. [3; 89-90] The term “concept” corresponds to the idea of those meanings that a person operates in the processes of thinking and which reflects the content of experience and knowledge, the content of the results of all human activity and the processes of cognition of the world in the form of some “quanta” of knowledge. Studies of the structure of the concept led E.S. Kubryakova to the conclusion that the concept is an umbrella term that involves different types of mental phenomena, which function is the structuring of knowledge in the human mind. V.A. Maslova also notes that a concept is a multidimensional formation, which includes not only conceptual and definitional, but also connotative, figurative, evaluative, associative characteristics, and all of them should be taken into account when describing the concept. [4; 46] A distinctive feature of the linguocultural concept, according to D.U. Ashurova, is that it can be verbalized in the language with the help of various linguistic means related to different levels of the language, namely, derivational, lexical, phraseological, syntactic, etc. [5; 130] However, according to the scientist, complete reconstruction, actualization and decoding of the semantic and cultural structure of the concept is achieved only at the level of the text. In the text, the concept is represented by various linguistic means, the conceptual analysis of which makes it possible to reveal the meaning of the entire text. In this regard, the following questions are of great interest: a) the role of stylistic means in the interpretation of the concept; b) analysis of conceptually significant features of the concept; c) the cognitive mechanism of stylistic categories, such as emotiveness, imagery, evaluativeness, implicitness, intertextuality; d) activation of knowledge inherent in the structure of the concept. [6; 107] According to V.Evans, a concept is “...the fundamental unit of knowledge central to categorisation and conceptualisation. ... This process gives rise to the most rudimentary of concepts known as an image schema. Concepts can be encoded in a language-specific format known as the lexical concept. While concepts are relatively stable cognitive entities they are modified by ongoing episodic and recurrent experiences”. [1; 31] For literary translation it is extremely important to reveal that image schemata, which is usually represented in an implicit way through cognitive markers and models. In their turn, “cognitive models relate to coherent bodies of knowledge of any kind, being multi-modal conceptual entities, which can be used as a basis for perceptual simulation”. [1; 23] According to many linguists, conceptual structure refers to the knowledge representation through knowledge structures fixed in human memory. “Cognitive linguists have modelled conceptual structure in terms of relatively stable knowledge structures such as a domain, a cognitive model, a semantic frame, an idealised cognitive model and different kinds of conceptual projection including cross-domain mappings such as metaphor. Conceptual structure has also been modelled in terms of mental space formation, the establishment of a mental spaces lattice and the formation of a conceptual integration network. [1; 36] Therefore, we can conclude that mapping of a conceptual spheres of a concept verbalized in a literary text plays a vital role in the process of understanding of implicit author’s ideas (at the stage of interpretation) and helps to reconstruct the conceptual integrity of the source text in translation through the accurate word-choice.

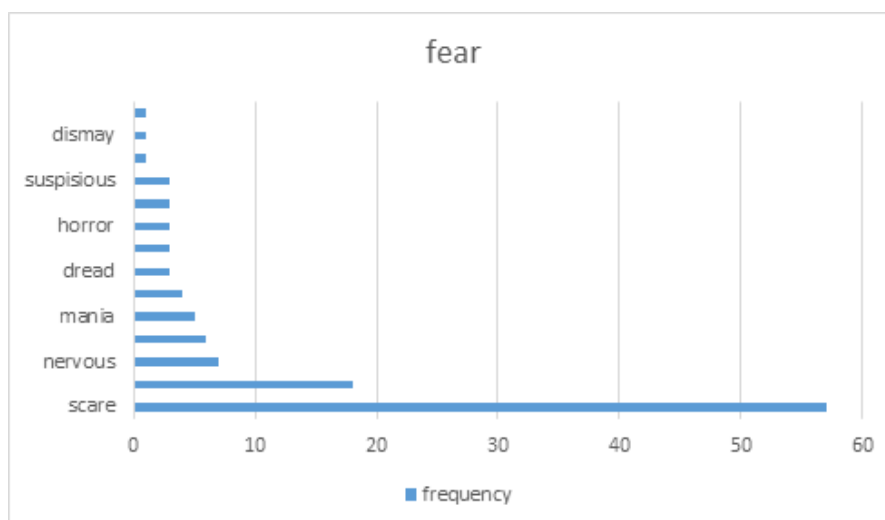
Methods

The methodology of the present research is based on the conceptual analysis aiming at reconstructing the conceptual sphere of the concept “fear” in the original text by K.Keasy “One flew over cuckoo’s nest” [7] and its representation in two variants of translation done by O.Krutilina [8] and V.Golishev [9]. The comparative analysis of two variants of translation was involved into the study in order to illustrate the translator’s different perception as a result of individual cognitive experience as “it is recognized that concepts do not simply float around randomly in the mind. First, there are the relations between words and their corresponding concepts described by structural semantics. But there has been a strong feeling that concepts are organized in another way as well. [10; 7] Therefore, the revelation of contrastive features between translations as well may contribute to the objectifying the research results as well.

The process of reconstruction of a conceptual sphere of the analyzed concept includes two main stages: 1) the definition of a nuclear sphere (which are all nominations that can be used to define that concept) and 2) the revelation of periphery (which assembles the associative row of the lexemes related to this concept and verbalizing it together). The first stage assumed working with lexicographic sources and distinguishing the lexemes characterizing this concept. Totally, 34 lexemes were selected, which refer to this meaning. However, in the analyzed text only 14 were represented. The second stage of the experiment dealt with the selection of other lexemes (words, phrases, collocations, sentences) related to the characterizing the degree of intensity of this feeling or having strong associations with it. The following stage of the experiment referred to 1) the comparative analysis between source text and two variants of the target text, and 2) the contrastive analysis between two variants of translation, emphasizing the different features of perception by the translators. This methodology seems to be justified for the conducted research as “many lexical contrasts contain semantic asymmetries that cannot be captured by features (except in an ad hoc fashion), but lend themselves easily to a frame semantic account. [11; 71] Totally, more than 500 pages of the textual material were analyzed.

Discussion

The nominative field of the analyzed concept can be represented by the following lexemes: *anxiety, perturbation, concern, disquietude, scare, solicitude, foreboding, fright, pusillanimity, suspicion, alarm, apprehension, consternation, dismay, discomposure, dread, fright, horror, terror, awe, reverence, veneration, agitation, uneasiness, apprehension, nervousness, timidity, unrest, doubt, consternation, nightmare, neurosis, complex, mania*. It can be noted that the nominative sphere of this concept is varied, which is conditioned by individual perception, on the one hand, and differentiation of the environment supporting it, on the other. However, it can be also noted that the analyzed text contains only the following nominations that are used with different frequency: *scare* (57), *fear* (18), *nervous* (7), *alarm* (6), *mania* (5), *fright* (4), *dread* (3), *nightmare* (3), *horror* (3), *timid* (3), *suspicious* (3), *terror* (1), *dismay* (1), *awe* (1). Schematically, this frequency can be illustrated in the following figure:



Therefore, it can be concluded that the general modality of the text is strongly negative as the word “scare” refers to “a sudden attack of fright; a general feeling of anxiety or alarm about something” [12] and the word “fear” means “an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat” [12]. In other words, it can be generalized that the nominative field of this concept, represented in the analyzed text is negatively connoted as the words from this field, like awe, reverence, veneration, timidity, which do not have a strong negative connotation are used rarely. To support our opinion, let’s analyze the following examples:

But like always when I try to place my thoughts in the past and hide there, the fear close at hand seeps in through the memory. I can feel that least black boy out there coming up the hall, smelling out for my fear. He opens out his nostrils like black funnels, his oversized head bobbing this way and that as he sniffs, and he sucks in fear from all over the ward. He’s smelling me now, I can hear him snort. He don’t know where I’m hid, but he’s smelling and he’s hunting around. I try to keep still. [7; 3]

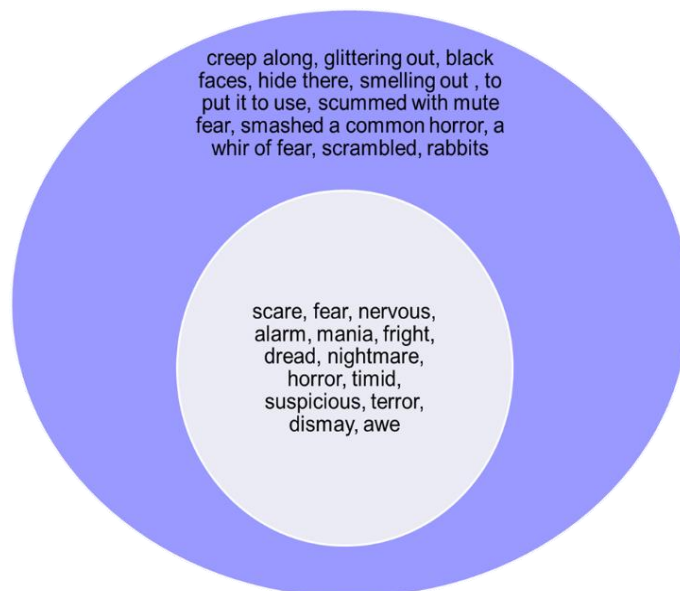
[1] *Но всегда, когда пытаюсь уйти мыслями в прошлое и спрятаться там, страх на дрожащих ногах прокрадывается, прорывается сквозь воспоминания. Я чувствую, как самый младший из черных парней идет через холл, он идет по нюху, он чует мой страх. Он открывает ноздри, словно черные воронки, его безразмерная голова подпрыгивает на шее, когда он шмыгает носом, и он всасывает страх, разлившийся по всему отделению. Вот теперь он учуял меня, я слышу, как он фыркает. Он не знает, где я спрятался, но он чует запах и вышел на охоту. Я стараюсь стоять спокойно... [8; 3]*

[2] *Но всякий раз, когда стараюсь загнать мысли в прошлое, укрыться там, близкий страх все равно просачивается сквозь воспоминания. Чувствую, что идет по коридору маленький черный санитар, приплюхиваясь к моему страху. Он раздувает ноздри черными воронками, вертит башкой туда и сюда, нюхает, втягивает страх со всего отделения. Почуял меня, слышу его сопение. Не знает, где я спрятался, но чует, нюхом ищет. Замираю ... [9; 9]*

Both variants adequately represent the protagonist’s inner state and his perception of fear as they preserved the predicative structures, which are subject-centered (*I try to place ... hide there ... feel ... my fear ...*). However, O.Krutilina’s variant (example 1) we can observe unjustified strengthening of separate lexemes, characterizing the concept: instead of “просачивается” [to seep – flow or leak slowly through porous material or small holes [12]], adding of the word “разлившийся” (*fear from all over the ward*), “фыркание” instead of “сопение”. Despite the fact that the verb “to snort” has such a variant («фыркать (выражая недовольство, пренебрежение и т.п.)»), a deep context in this passage gives the prompt that it refers to another situation («втягивание воздуха, с целью учуять что-либо»). Therefore, the connotation «тяжело дышать» (*сопеть*) seems more appropriate in this context.

Where the cognivist will see a mind acquiring a particular conceptual system, the social constructionist sees a powerful social organization exerting its power over an individual in the process of gaining a new adherent to the “common sense” ways of that social organization. Both perspectives on the relation are legitimate. [13; 25] Selection and grounding, then, are seen as interactive processes; the particular conceptual tools accessed depend on the nature of the information needed to construct the image that the speaker/writer intends to convey. [13; 26] As for the reader, s/he experiences the text in his/her own way, s/he has his/her own range of interpretation. The circle of the author and the circle of the reader may be distant, may have an insignificant area of intersection, may coincide (but complete coincidence is impossible, because, at least they grew up in different families/countries/time and therefore, they have their own individual cognitive experience. How distant or how far the circles of the author and the reader coincide depends on the generality of the context of interpretation, in other words, on the similarity of the experience. The very same literary creation meets the author’s need for self-expression (without taking into account the reader’s reaction).

Regarding the analyzed concept, we can suggest the following structure of it, where the inner circle represents the nominative field (sphere) and the outer circle refers to the zone of periphery:



By comparing the representation of those lexemes in target text we can state that most of them have regular equivalents in Russian and in general were rendered adequately, however, one lexeme attracted our attention: *rabbit*. Taking into consideration that this word refers not only to the nominal meaning “type of animal”, but verbalizes the concept “*fear*” as well, it can be recommended to select the word nominating the same associations in Russian (for example, the word “*заяц*” referring to the same perception as the English word):

He’s a frightened, desperate, ineffectual little rabbit, totally incapable of running this ward without our Miss Ratched’s help, and he knows it. [7; 28]

[1] *Он – напуганный, отчаявшийся, маленький кролик, совершенно incapable руководить этим отделением без помощи мисс Рэтчед, и он это знает. [8; 33]*

[2] *Это испуганный, отчаявшийся, беспомощный кролик, он совершенно не способен руководить отделением без помощи нашей мисс Гнуссен и понимает это. [9; 45]*

Therefore, we should emphasize that in a literary text words have not only denominative function, but they also refer to a certain knowledge structure, which can reveal reader’s individual perception and understanding of deeper meanings.

Conclusion

An equally important aspect in solving problems related to the study of cognitive processes has recently been considered the problem of knowledge representation. Different types of knowledge, as it was found, correlate with language in different ways: practical knowledge is directly related to it, spiritual and practical knowledge is formalized not only with the help of language. According to the opinions of many linguists, its presence is also due to the functioning of specific cognitive structures, which are formed without the participation of language and do not always require language when using them. [14] Moreover, the representation of author’s personality is, although hidden, revealed through a specific details [15], which should be decoded for their further representation in the target text.

And one more most important distinctive features of the concept, is that concepts never exist in isolation, their most important quality is holographic multidimensional integration into the experience system. Therefore, the study and reconstruction of the conceptual sphere of concepts in a literary text is an important stage in the process of translational analysis of the text that can be named as interpretation of the implicit information and revelation of the means verbalizing it.

The cognitive status of the concept is multidimensional and can be realized differently. However, regarding the analysis of the concepts represented in a literary text, it should be added that author’s individual perception and his/her individual world picture must be obligatory taken into consideration as it may influence the adequacy of representation of conceptual integrity of the source text in the process of translation.

Following the opinion of many linguists, we need to define that the main components of the concept are the imaginative perceptual component, the conceptual (informational) component and the value component (assessment and behavioral norms). Therefore, the revelation of these elements at the stage of interpretation contributes to the adequate reconstruction of the conceptual integrity in the target text.

Therefore, we can conclude that the concept is a complex and multi-level phenomenon, reflecting not only the factual information contained in the name of an object or phenomenon, but also representing the socio-cultural experience of the people through the individual author's (in relation to the literary text) perception. In this regard, the study of the conceptual structure of the text and, in particular, the analysis of individual concepts that perform, among other things, a meaning-forming role, seems to be a paramount task in the analysis of a literary text.

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