

# A CONCEPT RESEARCH FROM A TRANSLATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

*Kovalenko Anna*

---

## **Abstract**

This article highlights the results of the investigation of the concept of research and its basic characteristics from a translational point of view. The case study is the review of the accent of a language as a culture bearer. A brief review of theoretical reconnaissance in the field of the study of the concept, their analysis, and synthesis in the aspect of translation science was also undertaken. In conclusion, the article presents the possibility of application of the knowledge of concept in the process of translation.

---

**Keywords:** Concept, translation, linguistic, ethnic, mentality, culture

## **Introduction**

In the modern scientific dimension, the process of translation is considered to be a complex and multilevel act of inter-lingual communication, which includes certain number of participants and phases. The description of the process is based on the detailed analysis of the source text (ST), target text (TT), strategies, and the tactics (means) used by an interpreter. Meanwhile, ST with TT and any other message is a product of the mental process. However, this is formed on the sense level of the original message of author`s and interpreter`s consciousness, which can be marked as an intermediary between ST and TT. The source of any text can lay far beyond the certain act of inter-lingual communication. Thus, ignoring of this source can lead to a pre-translation lingual study of the ST which is not profound enough for the correct translation. The other aspect to be pointed out is the recipient whose expectations, personality, and habits also affected the creation of the information unit. Any participant of the inter-lingual communication act in any of its phase is influenced by his surrounding, scripts, traditions etc. In any language, all of these factors are represented by concept.

## **Literature review**

Prof. Vardzlashvili J. A. (2004) points out that *language and speech are the spheres in which the concept is objectified. As far as mental*

*categories are implemented and at the same time determined by the lingual categories* (Vardzelashvili, 2004). Prof. Vardzelashvili also indicates the bilateral connection between language and mental structures. Meanwhile, Prof. Stepanov J. S. (2004) defines concept as a *cultural bunch in the personal consciousness*. Furthermore, he emphasizes the role of a concept in relation between culture and certain person: any person not only involves in specific culture, but also adjusts and modulates it. In such a way, the study of the notion of concept and its basic characteristics can be useful in the process of the description of a certain culture, especially if such a description is made in the aspect of humanity sciences and linguistics in particular. Research in the domain of translation as a linguistic subject, which is rather close to the everyday human practice of communication, is almost impossible without a strict understanding of the peculiarities of cultures inherent to the bearers of SL and TL. However, this is because totally linguistic approach cannot illustrate a number of extra-lingual factors. This factors influence some of the decisions made by a translator; and at the same time, determines the translation strategies and the final result of translation.

Furthermore, the definition of the notion of a concept was offered by a number of researchers in the domain of philology, cognitive science, and linguistics. For the first time in the post-Soviet countries, it was elaborated by S.A. Askoldov-Alekseiev (1997), who determined this notion as *mental formation, which in the process of thinking replaces certain resembling objects, acts, and mental functions*. In further study of the subject, several approaches to the definition of the notion have appeared. Consequently, S.G. Vorkachev for example understands concept as *a culturally-marked verbalized sense, represented in the plane of expression by the set of lingual realizations, which forms an appropriate lexical-semantic paradigm, a collective knowledge unit, heaving lingual representation, and ethnic and cultural specific character* (Popova & Sterin, 2002). At the same time, A.P. Martyniuk determines concept as *a collective knowledge, reflected through the personal and emotionally-evaluative experience by material product of the social institute's activity, such as culture, arts, literature, and mass-media* (Popova & Sterin, 2002). In both definitions, concept is understood as a reflection of a culture in language. However, on the other hand, Prof. Vardzelashvili attributes concept to mental units, that is to say, he notes it as a projection of consciousness in language. G.A. Kriukova (2008) supports this point of view, and states that concept is a *mental unit of representation of knowledge about the whole world, and so is its fragment*. In addition, other researchers identify concept with the notion of "spiritual value", that is to say they concentrate on the evaluative aspects. Thus, this point of view was held by J.S. Steepsnov and V.I. Karasik.

Prof Prihodko A.N. (2013) in his monograph offers the definition of the notion "concept" as a *phenomenon of a complex structure, the sense source of which after being evaluated on the ethnopsychological level, fundamentally combines with linguistic and cultural source* . This statement opens up a way to study a concept from different points of view and to mark out its complementary parts.

Furthermore, Prof. Prihodko identifies three main components of the concept structure. The first one and the main among them is the sense substance (substratus), after the definition of Prof. Prihodko. This complementary part represents the connection of the concept with the denotatum, or the phenomena of the logical overnational nature. However, this component reflects the informational part, which is deprived of ethnocultural, stylistic, evaluative, or other characteristics.

The other component is adstratus or superstructure<sup>1</sup>. This part introduces perceptive and figurative knowledge, images, or associations, which are usually developed in the persons` consciousness in connection with a certain denotatum. The basis of an adstratus is some kind of an extended image, which incorporates personal experience and the same as collective knowledge. This component is not neutral as the first one. Hence, from the point of view of translation theory, it is the third component which is the most interesting for the researcher. This component was named by Prof. Prihodko as epistratus or superstructure<sup>2</sup>. However, the author defines it as an evaluative or voluntary one and identifies it with the ethnopsycholinguistic value of the concept. It includes knowledge, images, and associations produced as a result of the appurtenance of a person to a certain society. In addition, the author denotes that an epistratus embody linguistic and cultural value. Thus, this signifies that images and associations are accumulated on the notion as a result of the language symbolic code.

The scheme suggested by Prof. Prihodko in the theory of translation can be a kind of tool that helps to understand, which of the concept structure details were trans-coded by a translator precisely. Also, it helps to understand which of them were interpreted, adapted, or neglected. On the other hand, this model reveals strategies used by a translator and helps to understand the consequences of this usage for the TT. As an example, modulation of epistratus or adstratus of the concept, which are denoted by the author as inconstant elements, can lead to the loss of authenticity of the concept image. At the same time, substance (substratus) alteration, or a constant of the concept after A.N. Prihodko, can cause correction of the whole concept or its total substitution by another concept. Thus, the sum of these factors leads to the necessity of a strictly defined core of a concept. This includes all the information, including ethnocultural knowledge and evaluative characteristics of the concept, mass. For the modeling of a

concept, Prof. Prihodko applied a structural approach. For instance, he uses conceptual analysis in order to differentiate substance, adstratus, and epistartus of a concept.

On the other hand, J.S. Stepanov (2004) offers ethnological approach, which helps to divide a concept in different layers. The first of them is the basic one or topical feature, *in which the concept is up-to-date for all the language-speakers*. On this level, a concept is incorporated into the *speech structures and the mental categorizations related to communication* [ibid.]. The second layer includes secondary or "passive" features, not being up-to-date for the present day (the sense of the feature for the current language bearer is not totally clear). The author called it "historical". On this level, the concept is not perspicuous, but for certain social groups. In turn, in the third or inner layer, ethnological feature is comprehensible only for the man of science. Passive and ethnological features exist for the average language speaker as a basis for a concept. As a rule, the bearer of a language and the culture apprehends it, but does not realize its inner sense.

For the researcher in the sphere of the translation theory, this approach can help to interpret a message sense and understand the motive for the original text author to use one or another concept or image. Based on the origin of the message being understood, a translator can take a decision on the necessity of the text adaptation purposely to emphasize the ethnology features. In a specified group of texts, such as belles-lettres, speeches, texts, belonging to the mass-media discourse, there are ethnology features which reveal certain associations and images, bearing pragmatic sense. At the same time, pragmatics in such kind of texts can be the principal component.

Subsequently, G. A. Krjukova adhered to another standpoint and asserts that the structure of the concept is composed of three components which include: notional (or factual), evaluative, and figurative (Krjukova, 2008). Therefore, this approach is close to the model offered by A.N. Prihodko. However, the conclusions of G.A. Krjukova appeal certain interest. Among other factors, the researcher claims that the first component i.e. the notional one, is kept in the human conscious in a verbal form. Similarly, the other two factors are nonverbal; thus they can be interpreted or portrayed. At the same time, Z.D. Popova and I. O. Sterina in their scientific works depict the theory of the nominative field, which they define as *the sum of linguistic means which reveal (verbalize, represent) a concept in a certain period of society development* (Popova & Sterin, 2002). However, Z.D. Popova and I.O. Sterinna have determined three types of nominative fields:

1. The concept, most relevant to the social communication, which has easily identified nominative fields, incorporating big amount of features. It allows the use of a wide range of system means for a concept representation.

2. The concept, comprehensive for the less broad circle of people or those which represent strictly specified mental substances. This type of concept has more narrow communication field and less-definite nominative field.

3. The third group of concept is called *partially relevant* and for their indication nonce words or situational nominations are usually used. The authors assert that these concepts are deprived of a system nominative field. Hence, the concept does not have a name at all.

The research in the domain of the nomination of a concept is of a huge interest especially in the sphere of the translation theory. This is because a translator in a practical experience ought to work with a text frequently isolated from the context. However, based on the linguistic characteristics of a text, a specialist can come to the conclusion about the reasons for the verbal means' choice and make a decision on their interpretation and retranslation by means of another language, speaking about concepts, and about another lingual culture. In order to choose the correct linguistic means and translation mode or strategy in the case of the text with the cultural aspect being principal, or those aimed at the mass reader, a translator has to realize how much certain language unit is close to the core of the concept, how definite the concept is in the language especially in the text, and how common or otherwise situational or partially the author are, in the case of the nomination of a mental phenomenon. This statement is particularly topical, taking into consideration the statement of Prof. Vardzelashvili, who based his findings on the research of A. Vezhbítska and N.D. Artunova. Thus, they assert that *a concept is a unit more discrete and wide, than a word*. On the other hand, the researcher denotes that it is a word, which usually represents a concept in speech and gets a status of the concept name; thus, this refers to a *verbal unit, conveying the common sense of a concept in the most specific, concentrate, and adequate way* (Vardzelashvili, 2004).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, a concept represents mental substance and the result of the collective thinking, which reflects in a person`s conscious achievements of a certain lingual culture to which the person belongs. A concept is an image of a culture which is a kind of its construction and modeling tool. In fact, a concept has a verbal form. However, such a verbal presentation introduces only the superficial layer of a concept and its nomination. Further, a concept may have several of such nominations, which are included into its nominative field. Some of them are rather close to the core of a concept, while some resides on its periphery and do not reveal all of the characteristics of the concept.

At the same time, any language unit can represent several concepts and in such a case, the intersection of nominative fields is possible. Meanwhile, a language bearer sometimes deliberately, but more often, thoughtlessly associates the unit with a certain phenomenon. Therefore, the modes and the reasons for the appearance of such associative lines in the conscious of a message address are of a huge interest for a translator. This is because as an interpreter of a sense, he is to recode in a correct way the nominations by means of another language. It allows to convey in another lingual culture and situation of communication processes and modes. In such a way, it reveals the consciousness of the associative lines, which the message author meant to use. In order to implement this intention, it is necessary first of all to find the kind of conceptual bonds. However, this is to say text fragments, separate sentences, and linguistic units, is being provided with the most profound conceptual and sense significance. Among them, three main components as stated by A.N. Prihodko, should be distinguished: substance (substratus), adstratus, and epistratus. In other words, they are unique for both cultures elements and those which are to be corrected and transformed.

For such a selective kind of work, Prof. Prihodko offers to use conceptual method of research. After this work is being done, an interpreter has a possibility to perceive, which means were used in ST in order to mark a concept, for what reason and how to transfer these means in TT. In this aspect, it is interesting to mention the *culture historian method*, offered by J.S. Stepanov. This method includes the methods of a historian, an ethnographer, and a sociologist, which allows us to examine all of the three layers as determined by J.S. Stepanov.

Nevertheless, both of these methods permits conceiving the pre-translation phase of working on the source of a concept. In such a way, it studies different aspects of its pragmatic and evaluative sense, and the transcoding of which demands not only reproductive, but frequently adaptive translation strategies.

The prospect of this research is to work out the scheme, which can be used by an interpreter for the detailed description of a concept in ST and to select translation strategies, tactics, and techniques, needed for the transformations of these concept into TT. It is especially topical for the texts, aimed for the mass reader, fiction texts, and those in which a pragmatic elements needs to be principal.

### **References:**

Ascoldov S.A. A concept and a word. *Russkaya slovesnost. Antologia.* (1997). Moscow: Academia, 271 p.

- Vardzelashvili J.O. A concept as a linguistic category. (2004) *Tbilisi state university. Philology faculty. Collection of scientific proceedings.*:Tbilisi, p.39-45
- Krukov. G.O. A notion content volume definition. (2008) *Proceedings of the Russian state pedagogic university. №59*, p. 128 – 135
- Popova Z.D., Sterin I.A. Language and a national worldview. (2002): Voronzh: «Istiki», 318 p.
- Prihodko A.M. Concepts and concept systems. (2013): Dnepropetrovsk: Belaya E. A., 307 p.
- Stepanov J.S. Constants: thesaurus of the Russian culture (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) (2004): Moscow, Akademicheskij proeky, p. 42-67
- Fatcullina F.G., Suleymanova A.K., Gibadulina L.Z. Concept as a basic category of lingvocognitive science and linvoculture science. Reviewed from: <http://www.sworld.com.ua/index.php/ru/modern-control-technology-c112/11886-c112-148>