

4 PROPOSING THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE CONCEPTUALIZING PROCESS

4.1 Methodological considerations in designing the conceptualizing process

For the present purpose, we opt for the field of linguistics as the target source and recipient; hence, we deal with linguistics terminology and have in mind linguists, both pre-service and in-service. The transition from an intuitive user of a foreign language system to a linguistically competent professional requires a systematic approach in building awareness of the arbitrariness of language signs as the understanding of term (even those with similar forms) can vary from language to language (comp. Ch 3). This process involves the need for linking the form with linguistically and culturally based content. If this does not take place, significant negative transfer occurs (comp. Ch 2). It points to the need to build ‘collective salience’ (i.e. identical preference for a meaning, here scholarly meaning) and awareness of a linguistics term in the users’ native language and in their studied foreign language.

The conducted experiments draw on the fact that linguistics is an empirical discipline, and therefore they make the necessary part of the so-called empirical cycle consisting of several stages. The empirical cycle of Karl Popper’s hypothetical-deductive method includes the following five stages: formulating the problem, suggesting a solution, deduction/reasoning (based on specific theories), testing the given theory through observation, and deciding to accept a specific theory/model (Čermák 2002). This method is suitable for addressing the present issue since it is based on the principle of falsification. It makes it possible to assume that the proposed model will be shunned if we have evidence that it is invalid; in other words, the proposed model of solution (in this case conceptualization accounting for intersemiotic compatibility, or content correspondence) will be considered acceptable if we have evidence of its validity.

Strictly speaking, in our case, the stages can be expressed as follows:

1. formulating the problem:

The present experiments call attention to the lack of collective salience (experiment in Ch 2), a possible reason of which (apart from other reasons) may be the

inconspicuous diversion of the meaning despite seemingly identical form related to the shared origin (experiment in Ch 3).

2. *suggesting a solution:*

The problem so formulated can be approached by combining philosophical and psychological approaches with linguistic and translation analyses. The linguistic analysis includes intrasemiotic semantic analysis of the target terms, definition, and explication (within a particular language level) in order to identify the current tendencies in their usage. The translation analysis includes intersemiotic classification (based on the similarities and differences of semantic senses of the studied terms) and the analysis of content equivalence in translation counterparts.

3. *deduction/reasoning (based on specific theories):*

A language system is in a way specific for every language community, yet it necessarily contains concepts existing across languages (e.g. consonant, word, idiom, sentence, style, and the like). Our assumption is that though being core concepts of any language, by virtue of various factors these terms can now show a differing level of the content equivalence or intersemiotic (in)compatibility. This assumption is tested by means of defining the conceptualization of the target terms, specifying their content and scope, and pointing to (non)parallel concepts.

The conceptualizing process has to take place both within a language and between languages. Intrasemiotically, it is necessary to delimit the content of lexemes within each language, classify lexemes with the specific content into the appropriate language level, verify the content of the lexeme through contextualization/exemplification, and define each form separately in the case of homonymous lexemes. Intersemiotically, it is necessary to compare the propositional content of individual lexemes and their counterparts in the two languages, identify the degree of content equivalence, and ultimately reveal possible symmetries and asymmetries, identify or establish the most appropriate content equivalent, and verify the interlinkage between the content and the form of the lexemes-terms.

The methodology applied to proposing a translation equivalent draws on cognitive semantics of the mental framework and the function of the linguistic term in the source language, and corresponds with functional equivalence suggested by Nord (2016: 131). Nord (ibid) understands a translation based on this type of equivalence as “function-preserving translation”. When choosing strategies, we use Pym’s (2016: 220) typology of “... translation solution types for many languages.” The aim is to achieve the highest degree of consistency between the semantic, pragmatic, and stylistic components of the term in the source language and the proposed translation solution, i.e. between the conceptualization of the term in the source language and the proposed equivalent.

4. *testing the given theory through observation*

The outcome of testing the mere composition of the conceptualizing process is so-called “cognitive profile” of the term (on the term, see Kianbakht, 2016). It is determined on the basis of the corresponding mental framework, explanation of the term content, identification of its dominant components, and thus activated conceptualization. The cognitive profile so created serves as a measure of the adequacy of the translation solution.

5. *deciding to accept a specific theory/model*: it will be stated if the proposed conceptualizing scheme can satisfactorily identify discrepancies.

Our focal material is selected metalanguage of the core language levels, obtained through excerpting terms from available lexicographic, encyclopedic, or scholarly works. In our understanding, a term represents a certain concept from a specific linguistics field, irrespective of the number of constituents (i.e. either a one-word or multi-word unit in accord with language conventions). A term can be monosemantic and polysemantic; we understand the term as monosemantic if it is affiliated to a single linguistics branch (e.g. ‘verb’ – morphology), as polysemantic if affiliated to more than one linguistics branch (e.g. ‘verb’ – morphology and syntax). We understand the notion of the term as an idea subject to abstraction of any contextualization, while the content of the term entails lexical meaning in terms of denotation and connotation, stylistics, and pragmatics.

4.2 The proposed scheme of conceptualizing

With regard to the process of conceptualizing (for now linguistics terminology), our claim is that it is necessary to regard: a/ a human as a language animal within which the concept of pre-understanding has a major role; b/ the target meaning as an interplay of individual and collective salience; c/ conceptualization as a culture/language-specific determinant of meaning formation and creating a cognitive frame. On the whole, a term will not be treated in isolation, rather as a textual unit. This includes looking into the identity of the target percipient and context (as proposed by Cabré 1999). Defining a term should reflect the cooperation and/or linkage of the concepts of hermeneutics, salience, and conceptualization, we dare venture. It follows that mere translating or mere defining do not provide for a comprehensive treatment. This could be taken care of by the following procedure in conceptualizing a lexeme-term:

1. the linguistics field that the term belongs to
2. explanation of what the concept of the term stands for in the language of origin
3. contextualized example
4. suggested translation

In doing so, the conceptualizing process will embody four concepts. Identifying the linguistics field that the term belongs to will make available the established frame. Through the explanation of what the concept stands for in the language of origin, pre-understanding is supported. Providing an example will help to build salience. The translation equivalent of the term will enable configuration of the code and help avoid misinterpretation of the term. This is to say, the four-point design provides for the following framework:

1. Frame establishment
2. Encoding/Pre-understanding
3. Salience
4. Code configuration

The idea behind this design is to provide a model enhancing the deep structure rather than surface structure of an expression. The suggested “four-dimensional” pattern should guarantee that the actual conceptualization has taken place; since it is only when the conceptualization is adopted that the term can be appropriately approached and used

with confidence. Conceptualization is necessarily about the proper assigning of meanings to the whole texts as well as to their elements.

4.3 The preliminary justification of the proposed scheme

From the perspective of Frame Semantics, in order to achieve conceptualization, it is necessary to employ a cognitive structuring device, an organizer of human experience (Fillmore 1985). Within this paradigm, meaning stems from experience-based schematizations of the language user's environment, i.e. frames. Hence, the whole lexicon is typified by frame-based organization; the conceptual underpinnings for associated senses of a single word and those for semantically related words derive from the frames (Fillmore 1978, 165 In: Petruck online). Thus, frames are utilized as tools for description and explanation of terms and are eventually supposed to operate as tools for understanding their meanings (*cf* Fillmore 1985, 232). From this perspective, a language user refers to a frame trying to make sense of a term, and grasps its meaning by "situating its content in a pattern that is known independently of the text" (Fillmore 1985, 232).

The process of acquiring metalanguage should involve hermeneutic pre-understanding (Ricoeur 2000). It is to be approached as a precondition and an initial assumption of any cognitive and hermeneutic process. In our case, this role is played by pre-conceptual knowledge of cultural and linguistic structural systems and codes of a percipient's mother tongue and foreign language concerned. This builds on the theory of a human as a language animal (Taylor 1985) articulating human experience and axiological conceptosphere (cultural and moral codes) in a language. The articulation of the experience is the process of meaning configuration in language and its signification. The conceptualization of meaning in a target language can be understood as a process of code creation aimed at the concept denotation, which the percipient is not familiar with due to the diversity of structures and semantic relations. Since English and Slovak languages are characterized by diverse structures and semantic relations, the conceptualization of some terms may be different. Thus the information intended as that representing hermeneutic pre-understanding—the second point in the proposed

scheme—should capture the essence of the term in either of the languages, and oversee disambiguation (if necessary) or culturally-specific treatment.

Salient meanings are generally understood as such meanings that are favored over other meanings especially because of being encoded in the user's mind as conventional, or prototypical (Giora 1997, 2003). Based on the user's prior experience and the mere communicative situation and/or mental frame, they are processed automatically. Salience is a matter of involvement of one's experience. It is built upon prior knowledge: an experience is once one of many (one within the hierarchy of possible meanings) and gradually becomes the most frequent for the mental frame concerned. It becomes stored and static information automatically retrieved whenever necessary. Any meaning of an expression or of a communicative situation that has become salient, basically, has undergone consolidation and has been coded into the mental lexicon. Consequently, the more often we come across the encoded meaning, the more familiar that usage becomes, and the more automatically this meaning is filtered out for the mental frame concerned. In the proposed structure, the third point is represented by a contextualized example so that linguistically salient meaning is foregrounded, and the understanding of the term is endorsed.

The structuring of the process of conceptualizing has to be such that treats the given concept as natural preference and, in the end, can be weaved into one's general linguistic/s knowledge. Only then can one reach terminological literacy and routinize direct access to understanding an expression. Essentially, we deal with two situations: 1) the two forms display orthographical or phonological semblance, yet the conceptual base is different; 2) the forms are different, but the concept behind the different form is the same. Meaning is structured in the configuration process, i.e. in the formulation of definitions, in the explanation of the concept or term in a foreign language, while the term must necessarily be explained in the mother tongue, though in the mother tongue, an absolute equivalent may not necessarily be present. As it were, the same is true vice versa. For this reason, in the proposed scheme, the fourth point is represented by a translated equivalent. To arrive at an appropriate translation equivalent, the mere translation process has to involve the preceding three points: frame establishment, content definition, exemplification of the prospective conceptualization of L1 term.

The proposed scheme reflects a socio-cognitive approach. The cognitive side is represented by the frame establishment and pre-understanding; the social side is epitomized through contextualization and translation (and pointing out the culturally preferred way of expressing ideas). The socio-cognitive approach claims that there is bidirectional influence between linguistic and perceptual salience (Kecskes 2014). Keeping this approach in mind, our ultimate goal is to build collective salience regarding linguistics terminology. Collective salience embodies sharing common ground with other members of the speech community. Building collective salience, however, implies effort on both sides: addresser and addressee. The addressees' input has to demonstrate endeavor to develop (linguistically orientated) preference in accessing the encoded meaning representing the conceptual base of the term.

This socio-cognitive approach goes hand in hand with our awareness of Peirce's sign theory (Atkin 2013), within which he operates with a triadic structure: a sign, an object, and an interpretant. The interpretant is for Peirce the most important element in this structure. For Peirce (*ibid*, n.p.),

signification is not a simple dyadic relationship between sign and object: a sign signifies only in being interpreted. This makes the interpretant central to the content of the sign, in that, the meaning of a sign is manifested in the interpretation that it generates in sign users.

We see a certain level of interlinkage between Peirce's theory and Halliday's approach in that the core concept for Halliday is choice, in that "choice in the language system is choice between meanings rather than structures" (Language as Social Semiotic, online, n.p.).

We agree with Halliday that a language can be viewed generically as a semiotic system and specifically as text (*ibid*). The former represents "the full meaning potential available to speakers (i.e. the full set of semantic options available to a speaker, what he or she can mean in contrast to what he or she can't mean)"; the latter represents "a socially constructed instance of the system (this simply means that 'text' is the result of the meanings that were actually selected, it is the output of the semiotic system) (*ibid*). From what has been said, it follows that if 'conceptualization' is to be accounted for comprehensively and concisely, it needs to build upon Halliday's treatment of a language as social semiotic.