The Kazakh Concept of Soul in Abai Kunanbaev's *Book of Words*

Saule S. Zhabayeva[1]
A. Baitursynov Kostanay Regional University, Kazakhstan

Abstract

This study explores conceptualisations of *жан* ([jan] soul) in the Kazakh language from the perspective of cultural linguistics and its literary representation in the English translation of *Book of Words* by Abai Kunanbaev, a prominent Kazakh philosopher and writer. The concept of *жан* (jan) was analysed from the viewpoint of philosophical and image features and their roles in the formation of the national worldview. A comparative study showed discrepancies in its realisation by Abai Kunanbaev and the English translation even though some variations in the translation cannot be complete equivalents. There is a lack of semantic and cultural identity, and the results indicate that the literal English translation of *жан* (jan) does not transmit its whole cultural implications. The article also focuses on determining how different methods of translation reproduce the semantics of the analysed concept. The analysis concludes with the necessity of using structural and semantic shifts to better represent the target concept and culture.

Keywords

Introduction

The concept of the soul is important in all cultures. Linguists from different cultures have studied the conceptualisation of soul in the language. The spiritual issues in texts, including conceptual metaphoric representation, have been under the investigation of translators and linguists (Rajandran 163; Silvestre-Lopez 35). They have studied metaphoric representation involving the conceptualisation of religious discourse and cultural experiences. Chan, who has researched the translation of *spirit* and *soul* in the Mandarin Bible Union Version, asserts that there are significant differences between these concepts. According to her research, the trichotomous view in Modern Chinese suggests a

---

[1] **Saule Zhabayeva** is Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Philology at A. Baitursynov Kostanay Regional University. Her areas of interest include translation studies, cognitive semantics, and lingua cultural studies. She was involved in ERASMUS projects in computational linguistics, informational literacy; ERASMUS academic mobility in Germany, University of Hohenheim. Email: zhabayeva_ss@mail.ru

differentiation between the concepts of spirit, body, and soul (Chan 87-98). Ostanina-Olszewska and Despot (2017) studied metaphorical conceptions of the "soul" in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, and its translations into Polish, Croatian, and English, and found emotional distinctions in the meaning of the concept of the "soul" between Slavic languages and English that should be represented in translation. Analysing the Russian word *dusha* "soul," Wierzbicka points out that direct translation may lead to a misunderstanding by the TT readers, because the Russian concept implies a wide semantic area (e.g., non-equivalent *bezdusie*: lit. "lack of *dusha*" which means a "vicious person"). She suggests using partial equivalents e.g.: *heart, mind, spirit*, or eliminating references to the key concept (Wierzbicka 31-35). Comparing English "soul" and Russian "душа" (dusha), Wierzbicka asserts that it is uncommon for Anglo-Saxon culture to talk much about *souls* (31). Above-mentioned studies prove that the concept *soul* is unique in terms of its cultural identity and therefore, English "soul" is not always an equivalent of the Kazakh *жан* (jan).

The text under investigation is the Kazakh writer Abai Kunanbaev's *Book of Words*. Its translation into English was done by Richard McKane. Kunanbaev lived in the 19th century and is considered a founder of new Kazakh written literature. He is an author of a number of poems and prose works. In his poetry, Abai wrote about the life of nomads, the beauty of nature, human vices, love, and other subjects. Ideological content of his works was of great importance for Kunanbaev and this contributed to him achieving spiritual perfection. The genius of Abai manifested in his great contribution to Kazakh and Turkic speaking literature. Written in the last years of Abai Kunanbaev, between 1890 and 1898, *The Book of Words* consists of 45 words in the style of edifications. In the original the name of the literary work by Abai Kunanbaev is *"Қара сөздер"* (Qara sözder) or black words, as *қара* (qara) in Kazakh (lit. black) metaphorically implies *wisdom, edification* which is translated as *Book of Words*. All his life, Kunanbaev realised the shortcomings of the Kazakhs and was frustrated that he could not resolve them in any way; finally, he decided to write about them in his usual style. Abai Kunanbaev uses the behavioural vices of the Kazakhs of that time (after which the author implies human vices in general) only as background to find answers to other more essential philosophical questions. The soul of any person, whether he or she realises it or not, is oppressed by the injustice of the world order. Therefore, each individual person, as well as all humankind as a whole, needs a reasonable, appropriate spiritual search and religious conviction, and clarification of this issue. Naturally, such a task is assigned primarily to true humanitarian educators, among whom Abai Kunanbaev occupies a special place.

Theoretical framework
Translating culture-bound concepts presents problems for translators in every

language, as it requires an anthropocentric approach to language learning and, thus, a deep semantic analysis of a text. Language is the 'mirror' of culture, reflecting public mentality, national character, way of life, traditions and customs, and worldview. The interrelation of language and culture have been investigated by linguists in different periods, such as, Hall (1976), Lakoff & Johnson (2003), Venuti (1994), and Byram (1989). These linguists have explored the mechanisms of linguistic and cultural aspects in various directions. As Whorf observes that "every language is a vast pattern-system" (252). According to Whorf, these patterns help the personality not only to communicate but, finally, "build the house of consciousness" (252). Speaking about different approaches to cultural studies, Katan states: "The cognitive approach emphasises the context and boundaries. It suggests that cultures model reality in different ways" (30). The key notion of lingua-cultural studies is the notion of a "concept" which is understood as a mental unit aimed at a comprehensive study of language and culture. Wierzbicka states that the concept is an object from the ideal world and reflects people's cultural understanding of the real world (Wierzbicka 1992). In this study, concept is interpreted as a unit, which represents the values of an individual and the entire language community. Baker stresses that "the source language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture" (21). And the author names them as "culture specific" (Baker 21).

Mental concepts must serve as mediators between words and the extralinguistic world, organising cultural frames and serving as "points of reference dispositions and practices of their own habitus, lest those concepts interfere with their ability to perceive and represent other cultures effectively in translation" (Tymoczko 240–241). Nida stresses the equality of the source-language text and target text in terms of linguistic and cultural differences for translation purposes, stating that "differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure" (130). Translation difficulties arise when similar concepts (denoting similar or the same denotata) cannot be found between given languages (or between speakers within a language) or when they are ambiguous.

It is also necessary to discuss the so-called "cultural turn" in translation studies. Wolf describes the concept of "cultural turn" rooted in the conception of culture "not as a stable unit, but as a dynamic process which implies difference and incompleteness" (186). He adds that "translation is not only a matter of transfer 'between cultures' but that it is also a place where cultures merge and create new spaces" (186). Buden et al. also argue for the notion of "cultural translation", and say that "cultural" dimension has already been included in concepts of translation that emerged from general reflections on language or linguistics" (203).

Ivanova and Chanysheva propose two translation strategies. In the

alienating strategy, the translator seeks to transmit the cultural and linguistic identity of the original text, while in the *domesticating* strategy, the translator aims for cultural and linguistic neutralisation of the original as well as in the target language. Choice of strategy then determines the translator's further actions (Ivanova and Chanysheva 337). Tymoczko notes new translation terminology related to the increased importance of cultural mediation. For instance, *localisation* "points to the centrality of culture in the activity of translation: it signifies a concept of translation in which there is an effacement of the cultural differences between the culture of the producer of a product and the culture of the consumer" (245) and helps preserve cultural singularity, protecting one culture from the impositions of another.

Similarly, Newmark discusses two translation procedures: *transference* "offers local colour and atmosphere, blocks comprehension ... [and] emphasises the culture and excludes the message," and *componential analysis* "includes a component common to the SL and TL and excludes the culture and highlights the message" (96). According to Newmark, "synonymy is only appropriate where literal translation is not possible and because the word is not important enough for componential analysis" (84). Tukhtarova explored culture bound concepts within the framework of lingua-cognitive approach and stressed the necessity for the translator to take into account cultural implicit information (Tukhtarova et al 189). Edo and Manapbayeva studied the method of in-text additions for translating cultural realia, stating that the use of this technique depends on pragmatic presuppositions (109). Leese explored Qur'an untranslatability issues and the "interlinear" style of translation was proposed for presenting symbolic hierarchies between Arabic and target text language (242). Murtisari argues about the method of explicitation in translation studies in contrast to implicitation (64).

Thus, problems arising with "cultural" words when translating texts concern not only the choice of lexical equivalents but also extralinguistic factors, such as cultural, social, political, and economic concerns. Literary texts may abound in lexemes with connotative meaning which readers of translations may miss. Readers may therefore struggle to understand such texts. It is the task of the translator to decide what can best explicitate cultural implications and fill in missing information. Different translation strategies can be exploited, and this depends on the context and proposed tasks.

Methodology
Based on the theoretical and literature review above, this study used descriptive and comparative methods to conduct semantic and translation analysis of the concept of *жан* (jan) in the Kazakh language and culture. The conceptual analysis is based on the comprehension of the philosophic ideas of *жан* (jan) which help to represent deep semantic interpretation of the concept. In order

to explore the place of the concept in the Kazakh language picture of the world it was necessary to isolate the typical meaningful features reflected in phraseological units, which function as micro text with cultural and semantic peculiarities. Lexicographical sources were used for categorising and revealing conceptual features of the word. The given methods of analysis are based on the methodology of cognitive linguistics by V. Maslova (2008). According to this approach the concepts are considered as the elements of national culture, that is in the direction from language to culture. Since dictionaries give only the general idea of the concept meaning, the conceptual analysis should involve the analysis of literary texts aimed at revealing the means of conceptualisation.

Literary representation of concepts has its own specifics and so *Book of Words* by Abai Kunanbaev was analyzed in terms of individual author's world view and the comprehension of *жан* (jan) in particular. The analysis of the literary text by A. Kunanbaev added to the comprehensive representation of the concept. One of the main ideas, highlighted by A. Kunanbaev in *Book of Words* is the value of the spiritual culture for the Kazakh nation and its significance for understanding the philosophy of Kazakh people. The author reflects on the concept of jan in   *Book of Words* and so this formed the practical basis for the conceptual analysis. Conceptual specifics of the language are very urgent for the translation studies since they are connected with culture specific issues and problems of translation equivalence. The translation analysis is based on the comparative study of the original text and the translation into English, done by Richard McKane. The focus of research is how jan is conceptualised by Abai Kunanbaev, what techniques were used by the translator to transfer the conceptual meanings and analyze the effectiveness of these techniques.   All illustrative micro contexts, which represent the analyzed concept, were studied and categorised according to the methods used by the translator with the analysis of the effects on conceptual features of jan across languages.

Results and discussion
Philosophical meaning of жан (soul)
For deep understanding of the concept *жан* (jan), it is necessary to study the roots of the mentality, which are reflected in Kazakh philosophy. We use "Kazakh culture" to encompass concepts fundamental to the *Turkic Universe.* Before the adopton of Islam Kazakhs preached Tengrianism, which was also the religion of ancient Turks. The process of Islamisation took a long period of time on the territory of Kazakhstan, beginning from the 10th century. Tengrianism and Islam closely interacted and were integral from the point of view of spiritual influence. Islam for Kazakhs had the Turkic modification on the basis of the succession of cultural and spiritual traditions of Tengrianism, its specifics of the worldview by a man. The idea of the soul is very important, as it is rooted in Tengrianism with its unique character, unlike the Islamic attitude

to soul. As a result, it created a new interpretation of life and death, involving the concept of soul. One of the most important concepts is *Жан* (jan)*,* which contains a deeply sacred meaning that should be expressed in translation. There are many concepts with deep semiotic meaning in the Kazakh language that fundamentally reflect the plurality of the human soul. Usually, it is said that there are about seven souls, each with a certain name, for example, "soul-breath", "soul-human life power," or "soul-spectre". These "souls" are differentiated by their locations in the human body.

According to the Protokazakhs, the cosmos is structured in hierarchical levels; the highest is the sky, the abode of the sky god, Tengri, and good, bright spirits; the middle is the human world; and the lowest is Tartarus, the kingdom of evil spirits, the dead, and darkness. The Greek-influenced "cosmocentric" pre-philosophy of the Protokazakhs was derived from their nomadic way of life and interaction with nature—leading to a special poetic worldview of proximity to and unity with the cosmos. This, in turn, led to the sacralisation of nature and its endowment with a universal soul—manifesting in the sphere of human existence as different individual qualities, each endowed with character and will. In Kazakh philosophy, the universe consists of two worlds: *фани* (fani) 'liable to decay" and *бақи* (baqi)"eternity". Upon death, a person's soul transforms from the former to the latter, turning into light. Thus, *жан* (jan) is eternal, and the universe encompasses all qualities possessed by humans, which is one reason why *жан* (jan) is also used to denote *адам* (adam) "man" or its synonym *кісі* (kisi) "an individual," someone possessing individual features. Thus, *жан* (jan) entails a person with a specific inner world, spiritual values, and abilities.

Жан (jan) in Kazakh philosophy is an organ of deeper, purer, and more morally and spiritually coloured feelings than the 'heart'—an internal spiritual area where inanimate things cannot exist. The hidden nature of feelings is linked with their deeper spiritual nature; *жан* (jan) has an inner life and can think, know, feel, see, sense, and believe. It should be protected because it is sacred and needs care, but it can be sacrificed when necessary. *Жан* (jan) is a symbol of pricelessness, destined to leave the body and be united with God. Such religious connotations of *жан* (jan) are common in literary texts.

Semantics and conceptual representation of жан (soul)
It should be noted that when studying concepts, researchers proceed from the fact that various units of a language objectify the concept. The concept is "scattered" in the content of lexical units, corpus of phraseology and system of stable comparisons. Thus, the concept is most often studied through the meanings of various language units representing the concept, their vocabulary interpretations, and speech contexts. Before the analysis of the conceptual representation in the literary work the imagery basis of *жан* (jan) should be presented. Phraseological units are the means of reality conceptualisation and

they reveal the following characteristics of the concept *жан* (jan). The literal translation from Kazakh into English of phraseological units is presented in order to show the semantics and deep metaphorical basis of the concept in Kazakh culture. The deep imagery representation of some units is based on metaphoric and metonymic structure and there are no equal English counterparts: *жанды жегідей жеу* (jandy zhegidei zheu, lit. to eat soul like a worm) means "to feel nagging anxiety;" *жанды суырып ала жаздау* (jandy suyryp ala jazdau, lit. to take somebody's soul out)" to kill smb". *Жан* (jan) is characterised as a sacred organ, which is alive and has inner structure: *адамның жан дүниесі* (adamnyn jan duniesi, lit. a man's world) means "spiritual life of a man". One more specific feature is that *жан* (jan) is the centre of emotions and feelings: *жан аямау* (jan ayamau, not to spare the soul) means "to spare no pains to do something". *Жан* (jan) is the source of life and energy: *жан тапсыру* (jan tapsyru, lit. to give somebody soul) means "to die." The analysis of units showed that for the Kazakh nation *жан* (jan) is associated with a powerful organ and underlines the degree of emotions: *жұмысқа жанымен берілу* (jumysqa janymen berilu lit. to work with a soul) means "to work very hard." On the other hand, for the Kazakh *жан* [jan] is a sensitive organ and this feature is metaphorically implied in the units: *жанды жер* (jandy jer, lit. sensitive point) means "weak point" (Zhanuzakov 263). These examples illustrate that the concept *жан* (jan) is culturally marked and is based on particular metaphoric patterns with ethnic specifics. Thus, *жан* (jan) is a complex concept, which is associated with a sacred organ that is alive and can act like a living being, feel, love, and be the source of energy and life.

The role of Abai Kunanbaev's *Book of Words* in Kazakh literature and philosophy is great because this work is contemplations of the author about the life values and the philosophy of life of Kazakh people. Ideas about spiritual life take an important place in this work. Abai Kunanbaev reflects on the essence and importance of *жан* (jan) for man. The analysis revealed special means of conceptualising *жан* (jan) which stress the unique linguacultural specifics and national mentality. The interpretation of *Book of Words* allowed to describe the author's individual attitude to the concept: *жан* (jan) is an organ that perceives the surrounding world and is more important than the mind; *Жан* (jan) is an organ that rules the person, leads them, and dictates how to behave; it can be subjugated; *Жан* (jan) conceptually replaces the notion of 'Man'—it personifies man with all his values, virtues, and vices; it has its own space; it can suffer, be ill, sympathise, experience fear and love, and enjoy itself; it implies the creative power that gives inner warmth and strength; itpossesses ethically ideal qualities and is careful; it can be used to emphasise a degree of emotion. For Abai Kunanbaev *жан* (jan) is also associated with flames; it connects a man with a spiritual origin and, thus, it becomes valuable and can be given to Allah. It is compared to a vessel that needs nourishment; it must be pure, innocent, and

not strive for carnal joy; it is compared to the gusts of wind; it is sensitive and is used to characterise very close and beloved people; and one can sacrifice it. Thus, we can conclude that the religious spirituality was the highest form of the spirituality for Abai as a religious philosopher and man's spiritual state is postulated by him as a special reality, illuminated by the values of the human community.

Reproducing the concept 'жан' in translation
Lexical transformations
According to Newmark, descriptive translation or descriptive equivalent is one of the procedures used for rendering culture-bound terms (Newmark 83). To analyse cultural translation, we should identify logical levels of culture to understand the functioning of communication, individual learning, and change. While translating a core value, "the mediator will be concerned with compensating for the lack of connection in the minds of target culture readers" (Katan 85); thus, on an identity level, *the range of meaning is wider and deeper.* David Katan proposes the use of *chunking* as a kind of local translating. This term is taken from computing and implies two points: "A unit can be made bigger (chunking up) which means that as more comes into view, so we move from the specific to the general, or from the part to the whole. Moving in the other direction, we chunk down from the general to the specific or from the whole to the parts" (199). Here, *chunking up* means moving up to a more generic meaning, and *chunking down*, to a more specific meaning. The logic of this method relates to the idea that languages categorise reality in different ways, and that the process of modelling is common for different languages; therefore, translators can effectively use generalisation and specification to reach default or more productive levels of signification. Katan asserts that "cultural interpreters need to be able to chunk up and down to establish the wider and narrower frames of reference of the source text" (200).

Chunking up was used in translating the following examples from *The Book of Words*: *жан адам* (jan adam, lit. a man with soul) was generalised as "the spiritual life of a person*."* In the following examples, the translator chooses variants that reveal the inner structure of the conceptual meaning and imply the connection of the soul with spiritual values, an idea that is also familiar to the TT reader. But there is a certain loss in the translation of the idea, expressed by Abai, with the purpose to intensify the meaning and importance of soul as an integral part of a human being. The repetition of *жан* (jan) also makes a certain stress and attracts reader's attention to an implied idea:

(1) Оны білмеген соң, ол *жан адам жаны болмай*, хайуан *жаны* болады [Ony bılmegen soŋ, ol jan adam jany bolmai, haiuan jany bolady] (Kunanbaev 21). Otherwise, *the spiritual life of a person* will not differ from the existence of any other living creature. (Abai

91)

In the next example "*жаньın қорҒалатьıп*" (janyn qorgalatyp, lit. 'to protect the soul') is generalised as "fleeing for his life." Here, *жан* (jan) is related to a deeper cultural value and should be retained in the translation. Abai stresses that it is *жан* (jan), which is sacred and should be protected. The translator employs the lexical substitute and generalises the implied idea to create a deeper stylistic effect, which is based on the association of the concept of *жан* (jan) with a man's life. The replacement leads to the lack of semantic equivalence and does not transfer the idea of the holiness of soul for the Kazakh nation:

> (2) *Жаньın қорҒалатьıп*, жаудан қашьıп, қорқақ атаньıп, еңбек кьıлудан, қызмет қьıлудан кашьıп, еріншек атаньıп, дүниеде әлгі айтьıлҒан ырысқа дұспан болады [Janyn qorğalatyp, jaudan qaşyp, qorqaq atanyp, eŋbek kyludan, qyzmet qyludan kaşyp, erınşek atanyp, düniede älgı aitylğan yrysqa dūspan bolady] (Kunanbaev 19). *Fleeing for his life* from the foe, he will be known as a coward; shirking work, he will pass for a ne'er-do-well, he will become an enemy of the good. (Abai 90)

As noted, *chunking down* means moving from the general to the specific. Newmark describes chunking down as cultural componential analysis. According to Newmark, componential analysis aims to emphasise the message rather than cultural specifics; the goal is to provide pragmatic and situational equivalence (Newmark 90). In the following examples, the concept *жан* (jan) implies the meaning of 'soul' as the indicator of a living being, both human and animal: *жансьıздарды* (jansyzdardy, lit. "*people without soul*") is translated as "inanimate bodies," but the conceptual meaning of *жан иесі* (jan iesi, lit. "lord of the soul") is not transmitted. Thus, componential analysis led to the situational equivalence but the semantic equivalence is limited:

> (3) Хайуандарды асьıрайтұҒын *жансьıздарды* еті ауырмайтын қьıлып, ***жан иесі*** хайуандарды ақьıл иесі адам баласы асьıрайтьıн қьıлып, hәм олардан Махшарда сұрау бермейтұҒын кьıльıп бұлардьıң hәммасынан пайда аларльıқ ақьıл иесі қьıльıп жаратқан. [Haiuandardy asyraitūğyn jansyzdardy etı auyrmaityn qylyp, jan iesı haiuandardy aqyl iesı adam balasy asyraityn qylyp, häm olardan Mahşarda sūrau bermeitūğyn kylyp būlardyŋ hämmasynan paida alarlyq aqyl iesı qylyp jaratqan] (Kunanbaev 87).
> *Inanimate bodies* feel no pain and serve as food for animate creatures; animals sustain the life of intelligent beings, humankind; the beasts are exempt from the Last Judgement, while man is endowed with reason and has dominion over everything upon the earth. (Abai 155).

In the next example, the expression *жан беру* (jan beru, lit. 'to give soul') is

translated as "before the judgement of death," which is functionally and semantically close to it. In this example, the concept *жан* implies the idea of a living organ, which can die, which is figuratively expressed in the translation:

> (4) енді ол кісі *жанын берсе*, ахиретті дүниеге сатқаным жоқ деп, нануга бола ма? [endı ol kısı janyn berse, ahirettı düniege satqanym joq dep, nanuga bola ma?] (Kunanbaev 74).
>
> *Before the judgement of death,* however, this man will swear that he has never exchanged worldly pleasures for the joys of life eternal. (Abai 144)

Lateral chunking is stepping sideways or laterally to change the cultural frame. Here, the translator is looking for alternatives that can easily access source cultural frames, which might be functional equivalents, using culture-neutral words. Newmark proposes this approach for translating culture-specific concepts to bring them closer to the TT readers. In *Book of Words*, the translator used the following variants of lateral chunking in replacing *жан* with culture-neutral words and word combinations "*names*," "*man*," "*living creatures*," "*life*," "*heart*," and "*some people*". As noted, in the Kazakh language, one of the semantic meanings of *жан* (jan) is "man," and, according to the ancient Kazakh philosophical idea, *жан* (jan) implies the concept of "a man" with a specific inner world, spiritual values, and individualism. Abai considered a man to possess the highest spiritual values, thus, bringing the concepts *man* and *жан* (jan) closer, speaking about free personality. A man should be beautiful and harmoniously perfect, as well as his body, mind and feelings that is why for Kazakh people the concept *жан* (jan) in the meaning of a "man" is very important. Thus, the concept *жан* (jan) has a *distinctive feature* – the personification of man in all its manifestations. In the following translated examples, we cannot say about the conceptual equality of the source and target texts. The use of culture-neutral words in the translation ("other great names;" "some of the Kazakhs") neutralised the concept, which has national specifics and reflects certain cultural world view:

> (5) ...болған *жандарды* айтты. [bolğan jandardy aitty] (Kunanbaev 56).
> "Here Aristodemos cited several *other great names* (Abai 129).
>
> (6) Ләкин осы күнде орыс ғылымын баласына үйреткен *жандар* соның қаруымен
>
> тағы қазақты аңдысам екен дейлі [Läkin osy künde orys ğylymyn balasyna üiretken jandar sonyŋ qaruymen tağy qazaqty aŋdysam eken deidı] (Kunanbaev 52).
> *Some of the Kazakhs* who have their children taught in Russian schools will do so just so they can use their children's literacy as a proof of their own superiority when quarrelling with their kinsfolk (Abai 125).

This method of chunking is closely connected with the idea of preserving the

cultural values of the source text. Nevertheless, no matter what kind of chunking is used, the TT readers will always interpret the text according to their own hidden value system.

Mediation through addition or explicitation may be used to reveal the context of a source culture in the form of a target-culture frame. Explicitation has been thoroughly investigated by many scholars and was first introduced by Vinay and Darbelnet as "the process of introducing information into the target language which is present only implicitly in the source language, but which can be derived from the context or the situation" (342). Blum-Kulka points out shifts of cohesion and coherence in translation, and stresses that "shifts in the meaning of a text cause the explicit and implicit meaning potential of the source text to change (differently) through (different) translations" (299). By seeking an appropriate target-culture analogy, the source culture concept or usage may be fully understood.

The following examples illustrate how explicitation and holistic transformation were exploited for the representation of the concept. The conceptualisation of *жан* in the next example is aimed at contrasting the opposites: "a soulless – a soulful." Abai postulates the importance of the religious spirituality and the highest value of universe. The author conceptualises *жан* (jan) as a *substance*. The translator managed to capture the main idea of the sentence, which resulted in using a descriptive method. However, the important opposition was not expressed. The translation also illustrates a structural change, resulting in two sentences instead of one:

(7) *Жансыз жараткандарынан* пайда алатұғын жан иесі хайуандарды жаратып, *жанды хайуандардан* пайдаланатұғын ғакылды инсанды жаратыпты. [Jansyz jaratqandarynan paida alatūǧyn jan iesı haiuandardy jaratyp, jandy haiuandardan paidalanatūǧyn ǧaqyldy insandy jaratypty] (Kunanbaev 87).

The logic of my reasoning is likewise confirmed by the wondrous harmony of the created universe. Indeed, everything is designed for mutual benefit (Abai 155).

In the next example, Abai Kunanbaev underlines the idea that a man tries to save his own life, that he is afraid of death, and that the concept of *жан* (jan) denotes the essence of a man's existence and a thing that a man protects. The translator uses a saying "*to keep body and soul together*" which does not transfer these ideas, but the English saying contains the word "soul" and, thus, the functional balance was achieved:

(8) Ол осы *жан* кеудеден шыкпағандық па?" [Ol osy jan keudeden şyqpaǧandyq pa?] (Kunanbaev 19).

Just existing in order **to** *keep body and soul together*? (Abai 90).

Omission is a simplification method that aims to make the translated text easier for the reader to understand. Baker advises translators "to use this strategy only

as a last resort, when the advantages of producing a smooth, readable translation clearly outweigh the value of rendering a particular meaning accurately in a given context" (42). In *Book of Words*, it is stressed that it is also typical for animals to possess *souls: Хайуан жаны* [haiuan jany] (lit. 'soul of animals'); however, in the translation variant "beast" this idea is neutralised. In Kazakh culture, it is important to stress that animals have souls: totemism, the belief in the sacred animals that gave life to the ancient ancestors, was the basis of the ancient Turks' religion. According to this concept, animals are the mediators between the so-called *Upper World* and the world of people:

> (9) Әзелде Құдай Тағала *хайуанның жанынан адамның жанын* ірі жаратқан, сол әсерін көрсетіп жаратқаны [Äzelde Qūdai Tağala haiuannyŋ janynan adamnyŋ janyn ırı jaratqan, sol äserın körsetıp jaratqany] (Kunanbaev 21).
>
> From the very beginning God separated *man* from *beast* by breathing *the soul* into him. (Abai 92).

Formal equivalence

Newmark proposes the use of cultural equivalents in translation, which means replacing a cultural word in the SL with one from the TL whose role is comparable. He notes, "they are not accurate" (83). According to Nida "formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content" (159). Functional equivalence is targeted towards the equivalent effect and on staying close to the source language message; thus, when we seek a functional equivalent, we mean the use of the closest natural equivalent to the ST message.

In the following examples, *жан* implies the meaning of the soul as the inner spiritual world of the individual and in this sense, it is a universal concept. The phrase "*бұл жанның тамағы еді*" (bul jannyn tamagy edi, lit. it is the food of the soul*)* conceptualises *жан* (jan) as a spiritual organ which needs *"nutrition"* for perfection. It is translated metaphorically by the English functional equivalent "nourishes our souls*"*:

> (10) Сол өрістетіп, өрісімізді ұзартып, құмарланып жиған қазынамызды көбейтсек керек, *бұл жанның тамағы еді.* [Sol örıstetıp, örısımızdı ūzartyp, qūmarlanyp jiğan qazynamyzdy köbeitsek kerek, bül jannyŋ tamağy edı] (Kunanbaev 22).
>
> It behooves us to strive to broaden our interests and increase the wisdom that *nourishes our souls.* (Abai 92).

Metaphorical translation

Metaphors enhance the communicative effect of a message; they assert the resemblance between two objects or processes and may be based on the same or different images. Metaphors serve as basic notion and a key in exploring the conceptual system and ethnic world view. Conceptual metaphors have creative

potential (Hayrutdinova, Wang, Zhang, 2021). Translating conceptual metaphors presents a significant problem for mediators, as this issue relates to a language's cognitive, semiotic, and semantic layers. The problem of translatability and the strategies for transferring metaphors arise when we encounter culture-specific concepts or conceptual metaphors. Each culture conceptualises its experiences in different ways, built on the base of cultural norms and conventions. Metaphors involving body parts and spiritual values are reflected in cultural models, and their conceptualisation plays a large role in cognitive linguistics and semiotics.

The problem of approaches to metaphorical translation has been the object of much research: Bassnett, (39-44); Catford, (101); Newmark (106); Nida & Taber (91-99). A text-based approach seems to be relevant in terms of remembering that the communicative purpose must be the priority. The emphasis is on the overall meaning, genre, and function of the text, and equivalence is determined based on situational and cultural values. English and Kazakh cultures are distant with metaphors and symbols being differently culturally rooted and conceptualised. The communicative task of the translator is to reproduce the metaphor as closely as possible in content and structure, trying to preserve the figurative imagery of a culturally bound metaphor. The absence of similar imagery is one reason for lexical transformations in the translation process. As for the methods of translation, Newmark proposes various methods to translate metaphorical expressions depending on the type of metaphor: *replacing* for cliché metaphors, *translating literally* for original metaphors, *replacing the image* for stock metaphors "within a correspondingly acceptable and established collocation" (109).

In the analysed book, Abai Kunanbaev conceptualises *жан* (jan) in the figurative way, stressing the importance of the spiritual values in Kazakh culture and its personification. But the translated metaphors do not fully preserve the cultural value of the concept *жан*.

The following example illustrates a case of de-metaphorisation, where the metaphorical expression *жан жарығы* (jan jarygy, lit. 'light of soul') is neutralised by using the word "*reality*" in the translation that leads to the loss of the imagery of the concept. Abai Kunanbaev postulated that a man should strive for the purity of soul and its perfection and in the example, Abai metaphorically expresses that soul is the locus of purity:

> (11) *Жанның жарығын* бәрімізге де бірдей ұғарлық қылып беріп пе? [Jannyŋ jarğyn bärımisge de bırdei ūğarlyq qylyp berıp pe?] (Kunanbaev 56).
> Do we perceive *reality* in the same way? (Abai 131)

The interrelation of soul and spirit was also the subject of the author's reflections. The spirituality for Abai manifests itself in religion, morality, love, and faith. The human soul must be ready for radiance, light perception and this,

according to the author, indicates the ethical content of spirituality. Thus, the above example with the metaphor *жан жарығы* (jan jarygy) conceptualises spirituality and needs proper interpretation for the target audience.

In the following examples *жан* (jan) metaphorically embodies the semantic characteristics of a living organ which is able to suffer and feel. The metaphorical expression *жаныңды қинап* (janyndy qinap) with the literal meaning "sufferings of the soul" was not preserved in the translation and was transmitted by the descriptive method of translation. The author's idea was to make a certain stress on the metaphor "*жаныңды қинап*" (janyndy qinap) with the purpose of achieving a strong emphasis on the soul as a locus of emotionality:

(12) Егер онысы жалға жүргеніңде *жаныңды қинап* еңбекпенен мал тап деген сөз болса, — ол ар кететұғын іс емес. [Eger onysy jalğa jürgenıŋde janyŋdy qinap eŋbekpenen mal tap degen söz bolsa, — ol ar ketetūğyn ıs emes] (Kunanbaev 63).

But if the proverb counsels one *not to shun any hard work,* however lowly, there is nothing shameful in such work (Abai 134).

The Kazakh metaphor *жансыз* (jansyz) (lit. *heartless*) which implies connotations of a not kind-hearted and indifferent person was translated like 'a lifeless image of man'. The replacement by "lifeless image" lacks the full connotation of the concept *жан* (jan), because in this context it does not transfer the implied meaning of *жан* (jan) as a container of good or bad qualities. The metaphor in the below example with the concept *жан* – *жан иесі* (jan iesi) which literally means "lord of the soul" was translated as 'living soul' and this changes the impression of the original utterance in the TL. Abai made an emphasis on the idea, that it is a man who is the "owner" of the soul and is responsible for human virtues. According to him, a man should keep his soul vigilant, striving for moral endeavor and this is the essence of жансыз (jansyz)*, жан иесі* (jan iesi) in the following example:

(13) Олай болса, кім артықша ғажайыблануға лайықты, *жансыз,* ақылсыз, құр пішінді жасайтұғын суретші ме, *я жан иесі*, ақыл иесі адамды жаратушы ма?— дейді. [Olai bolsa, kım artqşa ğajaiyblanuğa laiyqty, jansyz, aqylsyz, qūr pışındı jasaitūğyn suretşı me, ä jan iesı, aqyl iesı adamdy jaratuşy ma?— deidı]. (Kunanbaev 56). Who, do you think, is more worthy of admiration: one who creates *a lifeless image of man*, or the Most High, who created man endowed with reason and *a living soul*? (Abai, 129).

Thus, it is hardly possible to find full equivalence for culturally bound metaphors, and literal translation may lead to misinterpretation. The examples provided above illustrate that the translator conveys the meaning and imagery of metaphors used in certain transformations, but we observe certain losses of

the conceptual features.

Conclusion

The complex analysis shows that the concept *жан* (jan) is a key concept for the Kazakh mentality with a deep semantic structure, which is conceptualised on different levels of the language. The translation of cultural concepts presents certain problems, as 'cultural words' are associated with extra-contextual components. Linguistic concepts can only be decoded in the target culture if their meaning is effectively inscribed in its cultural values and traditions. The translator, in this case, is a mediator with the ability to interpret the source-culture text and represent a text that can present comparable frames to be accessed by the TT reader.

The present theoretical survey and analysis of the material have presented several reasons why the conceptual linguistic model of the world, historically rooted in the consciousness of the given language community and reflected in its language, should be considered in the translation process. We can conclude that translating culture successfully is both possible and impossible. If the goal of the translation is to convey a practical effect, then everything is possible; the purpose of the translation determines the choice of translation strategies. To preserve cultural connotations, certain additions or changes should be made; direct translations may not always be justified. Kunanbaev's book is a philosophical tome of meditations about people's virtues, vices, and attitudes towards life. As one of the basic concepts of Kazakh culture, *жан* (jan) is a complex idea with many cultural and semantic characteristics that should be considered in the process of translation. One of its basic peculiarities is that Kazakh culture personifies *жан* (jan) and provides it with characteristics and features typical of human beings and we do not find such conceptualisation in English language and culture, resulting in the loss of semantics in translation.

The adequate transmission of the concept was often achieved by using lexical transformations, formal equivalence, and metaphorical translation, which may replace a "cultural" word. The problem that then arises is that the functional equivalent may not transmit the specific inner structure of the concept. Explicitation arises for purposes of disambiguation or of making the TT more natural for the ST readers. Metaphors are very productive for figurative meaning creation and cross-cultural representation of language concepts. Examples with metaphorical representation revealed that de-metaphorisation occurs due to the absence in the SL of metaphors that might be culturally and semantically equivalent. Katan's model of chunking illustrates cases of generalising or narrowing of meaning and of analogic selection among possible situational variants. Chunking up, chunking down, and lateral chunking were used within the available cultural frame to adapt the formal informative

characteristics of the ST or localisation. Omission refers to dropping discrepancies that distinguish the ST from the TT; in the analysed text, omission was used with the purpose of adjusting to the content of the ST, making structural changes, and achieving pragmatic equivalence.

However, there remains a gap in conceptual representation and, thus, the loss of the cultural connotation. Addressing this, the idea of the conceptualisation of the cultural space suggests including basic concepts of the language associated with that space, which reflect national cultural specifics of the language, the mentality of those who use this language, and their worldview. The analysed concept of *жан* (jan) is very important in Kazakh culture; complex and versatile, it reflects philosophical, cultural, and spiritual elements. These factors should be considered in the process of translation. The findings of this study corroborate the ideas of linguists on the necessity of employing cognitive, philosophical, and cultural approaches when considering the translation of culture-bound concepts. The illustrated examples from the translation of *Book of Words* by Abai Kunanbaev showed inadequacy in the representation of the deep inner structure of the concept *жан* (jan) in terms of preserving its philosophic, religious, and sacred contents.

Since cultural frames and anthropological problems are boundless and diverse, the issue of translating across cultures needs further investigation. Literary texts provide vast material for investigation of the nuances of culturally specific concepts and their interaction with the author's personal worldview and artistic embodiment of cultural keywords, as in the case of the literary text by Abai Kunanbaev considered here.

References

Abai. *Book of Words.* Abai International Club, 2005.

Baker, Mona. *In other words: A coursebook in translation*. Routledge, 1992.

Bassnett, Susan. *Translation studies* (4th ed.). Routledge, 2013.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana. "Shifts of cohesion and coherence in translation." In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader*. Routledge, 2000.

Buden, Boris., Nowotny, S., Simon, S., Bery, A., & Cronin, M. "Cultural translation: An introduction to the problem, and responses." *Translation Studies, 2*(2), (2009): 196–219.

Byram, Michael. *Cultural studies in foreign language education*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1989.

Catford, John. C. *A linguistic theory of translation*. Oxford University Press, 1965.

Chan, C. H. "The translation of 'spirit' and 'soul' in the Mandarin Bible Union Version." *The* International *Journal of Translation and Interpreting Research, 9*(2), (2017): 87–99.

Edo, Miquel and Manapbayeva, Zhanna. "Pragmatic factors in the use of in-text additions as a technique for translating realia in literary translation".

SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation, Volume 14, No 1, (2021):109-127.

Hall, Edward. T. *Beyond culture*. New York: Anchor Books, 1976.

Hayrutdinova, G.A., Wang, X., Zhang, X. "The conceptual metaphors formed by culture in the functioning of the autumn word in the works of Russian poetry." *International Journal of Society, Culture and Language,* 9(3), (2021): 91-100.

Ivanova, Svetlana., & Chanysheva, Zulfira. 2010. *Lingua cultural studies: Problems, quests, solutions. Rit: BashGu,* 2010.

Katan, David. *Translating cultures: An introduction for translators, interpreters and* mediators. Routledge, 2004.

Khoshsaligheh, M., Kafi,M., Ameri, S. "Fiction translation expectancy norms in Iran: a quantitative study of reception" *Translation and Interpreting. International Journal of Translation and Interpreting Research,* Volume 12, No 1, (2020):74-89.

Kunanbaev, Abai. *Kara söz: Poemalar*. EL, 1993.

Lakoff, George., & Johnson, M. *Metaphors we live by (2nd ed.)*. University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Leese, Simon. "Arabic utterances in a multilingual world: Shah Wali-Allah and Qur'anic translatability in North India". *Translation Studies*. Volume 14, Issue 2, (2021): 242-261.

Maslova, Valentina. *Cognitive linguistics*. Mn:TetraSystems, 2008.

Murtisari, Elisabet Titik. "Explicitation in Translation Studies: The journey of an elusive concept". *The International Journal for Translation and Interpreting Research,* 8(2), (2016): 64-81.

Newmark, Paul. *A textbook of translation*. Prentice-Hall International, 1988.

Nida, Eugene. A. *Towards a science of translating*. E. J. Bril, 1964.

Nida, Eugene. A., & Taber, C. R. *The theory and practice of translation*. Brill, 1969.

Ostanina-Olszewska, J., & Despot, K. "When soul is lost in translation: metaphorical

conceptions of soul in Dostoevsky's original Братья Карамазовы (*The Brothers Karamazov*) and its translations into Polish, Croatian and English." *Cognitive Studies*, 17, (2017), https://ispan.waw.pl/journals/index.php/cs-ec/article/view/cs.1319,2021.

Rajandran, K. "From Matter to Spirit: Metaphors of Enlightenment in Bhagavad-gita." *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*. 17(2), (2017): 163-176.

Silvestre-Lopez A. "Conceptual Metaphor in Meditation Discourse: An Analysis of the Spiritual Perspective." *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*. 20(1), (2020): 35-53.

Tukhtarova, A. S., Issakova. S.S., Toxanbayeva T. Zh., Aitbayeva, N.K., Albekova

A.Sh. "Linguocultural deviations in Russian translation of the novel "Twilight" by S. Meyer." *International journal of Society, Culture and Language.* 9 (2,), (2021): 189-202.

Tymoczko, Maria. . *Enlarging translation, empowering translators.* Routledge, 2007.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility.* London: Routledge, 1994.

Vinay, Jean.-Paul., & Darbelnet, J. *Comparative stylistics of French and English: A methodology for translation.* John Benjamins Company, 1995.

Whorf, Benjamin. L. *Language, thought and reality: Selected writings.* J. B. Carroll (Ed.). The MIT Press, 1957.

Wierzbicka, Anna. *Semantics, culture, and cognition: Universal human concepts in culture specific configurations.* Oxford University Press, 1992.

Wolf, Michaela. "Culture as translation and beyond: Ethnographic models of representation in translation studies." In T. Hermans (Ed.), *Crosscultural transgressions: Research models in translation studies II. Historical and Ideological Issues.* Routledge. (2014), https://doi.org.10.4324/9781315759944

Zhanuzakov, Telkhozha.,. *Dictionary of the Kazakh language.* Dyke-Press, 2008.