
Basic Concepts of the Theory of Lacuna, Classifications of Gaps

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Abstract: The article provides definitions of the concept of lacunae. The comments made were responded to. Types of lacunae are highlighted.

Keywords: linguoculturology, gap theories, cultural gap, linguistic gap.

The problems that arise during the ICC led researchers to create the so-called “lacuna theory”, representatives of which are Yu.A. Sorokin, I.Yu. Markovina, I.A. Sternin, G.V. Bykov and others.

The following assumption is basic in the theory of gaps:

- Yu.A. Sorokin believes that the process of intercultural / intercultural communication (both at the interpersonal and textual levels) is a *conflict process* due to differences in the volume and structuring of personal and ethnic experiences, verbal and non-verbal;
- the process of intercultural communication can be viewed as a dialogue (polylogue) in the highest degree of opposition - a dialogue of consciousness's;
- in the course of the dialogue, other people's cognitive-cognitive and emotive-axiological positions and attitudes are contested, one's own "points of view" are defended, and attempts are made to combine and harmonize the alien and one's own, based on the underestimation of the alien and the overestimation of one's own;
- in dialogue, acceptance and understanding alternate with rejection and misunderstanding, underestimation with overestimation [Sorokin, 1998: 3.].

When interacting with *an in cultural text* (and the text is understood as a sign production, which is a system of visual / audio signals interpreted by the recipient and forming a system of ideas (meanings) for him), the recipient often encounters a situation where some fragments seem strange and incomprehensible to him. text, and sometimes the entire text. Such *basic elements of the national specifics of a linguocultural community that exist in texts and make it difficult for representatives of another culture to understand them*, Yu.A. Sorokin and I.Yu. Markovin is called *lacunae*. The process of adapting fragments of the value experience of one linguocultural community when perceived by the carriers of some other culture, in essence, comes down to the process of eliminating such gaps in the translation text. Yu.A. Sorokin identifies 2 ways to *eliminate gaps* in the text:

- 1) Filling is the process of revealing the meaning of a certain concept (word) belonging to a culture unfamiliar to the recipient.
- 2) Compensation - to facilitate understanding of a fragment of a foreign culture, a specific component of the recipient's culture is introduced into the text.

At the same time, elements of another culture appear in the text of a certain culture - similar or close to the elements of the original culture, but not coinciding with them. As a result of compensation, the understanding of the text by a foreign cultural recipient is facilitated, but the national and cultural specificity of the original culture is lost. Thus, compensation for gaps entails the loss of the national specificity of the original culture and necessarily introduces new elements into the text that belong to the culture of the recipient.

Researchers distinguish different *types of compensation*. For example, an indication of a reality familiar to the reader (when describing a tree unfamiliar to the Russian reader: "It has a dense crown, *like our bird cherry*"), replacing a specific name with a more general one (a game of gin is a game of cards).

Thus, *gaps* are the *result of incompleteness and / or redundancy of the experience of a linguocultural community*. The method of establishing gaps is a method of comparing the conceptual, linguistic and emotive categories of two cultures. This method is as follows: perceiving the text, the recipient uses a set of rules that are unique to his language and culture. The rules of some other language proposed to him, implemented in some text, refer to another, not his own language, and to another, not his own culture, and are recognized as incomprehensible and / or erroneous.

Yu.A. Sorokin and I.Yu. Markovin developed a detailed classification of lacunae.

First of all, lacunae are divided into linguistic and cultural lacunae .

Cultural gaps include:

1. ethnographic (lack of realities);
2. associative (for example, the absence of associations to any proper name);
3. intercultural gaps (for example, mismatch of color symbols);
4. activity-communicative - reflect the specifics of various activities characteristic of a particular ethnic group (for example, riddles, gestures);
5. gaps in cultural space (landscape);
6. Emotive - exclamation marks, dots for expressing emotions appear in the translated text, although these signs are absent in the original text).

Linguistic gaps include:

1. stylistic;
2. grammatical;
3. Lexical.

In addition, textual lacunae (allusions) and a play on words stand out. The transfer of some fragment of experience from one culture to another is carried out, as a rule, under the influence of *two main factors*:

1. Determination of the purpose of the transfer of certain elements of one culture to another. On the one hand, the goal may be the maximum transfer of the national specifics of a particular linguistic and cultural community (texts on linguistic and regional studies). On the other hand, the goal may be to bring the described culture as close as possible to the recipient culture.

The desire to most fully transfer the specifics of one culture to another without appropriate comments and explanations makes it extremely difficult for the recipient to understand

fragments of a foreign culture, while ensuring an understanding of the elements of the experience of an unfamiliar culture presupposes the elimination, to one degree or another, of its national specifics.

2. The level (degree) of significance of fragments of experience to be transferred from one culture to another.

The value or significance of fragments of experience to be translated can be determined by the size of the cultural distance between communicant cultures, the tasks of communication, and the nature of the text in which these fragments are recorded.

Depending on these two factors (the purpose of the intercultural translation of the elements of experience and their significance), *an adaptation strategy is chosen* - filling or compensation.

According to Yu.A. Sorokina, "the main property of lacunae is their ambivalence: on the one hand, they are attractive - like everything that is evaluated as incomprehensible, strange or exotic, erroneous (of course, such an assessment requires the recipient to have an appropriate reflexive and cultural sophistication), and, on the other hand, , destructive, because they are the causes of misunderstanding [Sorokin, 1998: 4].

Among the developers of the theory of gaps, I.A. Sternin and G.V. Bykov, who study the problem of the relationship between gaps and the *concept sphere of an individual people*.

The authors distinguish 2 main *types of lacunae*: "intralinguistic (absence of a word in a language, revealed against the background of the presence of words close in semantics within a particular lexical paradigm) and interlingual lacunae (absence of a lexical unit in one of the languages when it is present in another)" [Sternin , Bykova, 1998: 55]. At the same time, the question of conceptual lacunae in connection with lexical lacunae, according to the authors, arises in relation to lacunae of both types.

In each language, there are a large number of intralinguistic lacunae, that is, "empty", not filled places in the lexical and phraseological system of the language, although lexemes that are close in meaning may be present. However, such a lack of a unit in the language system indicates, according to the authors, not the absence of a concept, but the absence of a communicative need for its expression [Sternin, Bykova, and 1998: 63]. In our opinion, it is difficult to agree with this statement. Rather, on the contrary, the absence of a name just indicates the absence of a concept. The body of the sign is an integrative component of the parts of the concept. It is the linguistic sign that excites the process of meaning generation when interpreting the message. The absence of a linguistic expression means the absence of a concept in the individual's conceptual system.

As a result, I.A. Sternin and G.V. Bykova come to the conclusion that "the national specificity of thinking is determined not by the national language, but by national reality. The absence of a lexical unit (intralingual or interlingual lacuna) does not at all mean the absence of a corresponding concept in the minds of the people, with the exception of cases of motivated linguistic lacunae, reflecting the absence of specific objects or phenomena among the people" [Sternin, Bykova, 1998: 66].

One cannot agree with this conclusion. The national specificity of thinking is largely determined by the national language. In our opinion, *the meaning of a word as a cognitive structure determines the way the message is interpreted*. And in different languages, there are different cognitive structures behind the words. In addition, each linguistic phenomenon, each category of language has its own mental correlate in the individual's conceptual system. For a correct understanding of any linguistic facts of a foreign language for the recipient, it is necessary to form these new for individual mental correlates (cognitive models and structures

represented by a foreign language). Such education most often takes place when learning a foreign language at school, university, etc. Perfect knowledge of a foreign language, then, implies the appropriation of the entire "cognitive stock" of native speakers of a foreign language and, in addition, the possession of these new models and structures at the operational level. However, in reality, the appropriation of the entire "cognitive stock" of someone else takes quite a long time. That is why even people who have studied a foreign language for a long time often face problems in translation. The failure of intercultural communication arises precisely as a result of cognitive lacunarity (we are not talking about the case of ignorance of the meaning of a word or ignorance of the grammatical and other rules of a foreign language), namely, due to the *discrepancy between the cognitive models of representatives of different cultures or the individual's lack of a cognitive model represented by a foreign language text*. Then *the elimination of the gap is the most adequate transfer of someone else's cognitive model / structure, presented in a foreign language text, by means of another language*. Based on the traditional definition of a gap in the interlingual plan as the absence of exact correspondences of sounds, words, word forms or syntactic models, a gap can be defined from the standpoint of cognitive linguistics as the *absence of an exact correspondence of cognitive models*. But since cognitive linguistics does not yet have its own research methods, we use the structure of meaning in our work. Only by examining individual linguistic units of different languages, fixing cognitive differences, can we reach the cognitive level.

However, the theories of gaps by Yu.A. Sorokin and I.Yu. Markovina, I.A. Sternin and G.V. Bykova, for all their advantages, in our opinion, they also have disadvantages.

Consider the definition of gaps. Yu.A. Sorokin and I.Yu. Markovin define lacunae as the *basic elements of the national specifics of a linguocultural community that exist in texts and make it difficult to understand them*. However, this definition does not reflect the essential features of the gap. Lacuna is the basic element. But an element of what? language? culture? Consciousness? The definition of a lacuna, given from a linguoculturological standpoint, is clearly not enough to understand the essence of a lacuna, as well as to develop ways to fill gaps and to build an analysis structure. It is also not explained why these basic elements make it difficult for foreign recipients to understand the text. Obviously, the definition of a lacuna is given within the framework of the traditional paradigm, although the object of analysis itself, the lacuna, is unconventional. The above typology of lacunae also raises questions, which is also cult urological in nature, and not linguistic.

Methodological techniques for studying intercultural differences began to be developed at the beginning of the 20th century. The main efforts were aimed at finding *methods free from cultural dominants*. Later it became clear that the search for such methods was doomed to failure, and the main task was to find a universal intercultural methodological basis. "The development of modern technologies and mass media increasingly unifies human behavior and *expands zones that are less and less dependent on ethnocultural accessories*. Therefore, in addition to highlighting unique and specific features in different cultures, one can single out not only universal human structures, but also universal psychological zones that have arisen under the influence of the products of modern human civilization. Universal formations, in turn, being refracted through the prism of each culture, also become culturally specific, but nevertheless these formations themselves and the laws of their refraction, apparently, still have a common nature" [German, Pishchalnikova, 1999: 74].

"... more relevant is the study of not even the specifics in the semantics of languages, but *the nature of the discovery of the national specifics of the meanings of a speech work in the process of understanding*" [German, Pishchalnikova, 1999: 74].

It seems that a more precise definition and explanation of the phenomenon of lacunization can be given from the standpoint of cognitive science.

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