

Translating Metaphors from Languages for Specific Purposes: Cognitive Dimensions

For decades on end, metaphor and translation have not gone together as a comfortable pair; it has rather been found that metaphor is, more often than not, a problem-generating issue in translation. The translation of metaphors from Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) raises even far more questions, and it is in bad need of a unified and systematic approach, of principled likemindedness concerning the tools, the problems, the priorities, the kinds of methods to be applied in the field (cf. Olivera and Sacristán [27]).

As there is no methodological consensus over the discipline of translation, and successive theories have changed the angle of theory and practice in the bridging source language (SL) and the target language (TL) (Cicero [2], Nida [3], Nida and Taber [4], Toury [5], Newmark [6], [7], Nord [8]), the present paper aims at advocating a cognitive approach to metaphor, and hence to translating LSP metaphors.

The cognitive linguistics assumptions underlying the metaphor framework commonly known as the *Cognitive Metaphor Theory*, as launched by Lakoff and Johnson [9], [10], pose a few constraints on how metaphor is perceived in the translation process. My cognitive linguistic premise is distinct from previous stances, for example Dagut's [11: 22] claim that 'The rehabilitation of "metaphor" in translation theory must thus, clearly, begin with the restoration to the term of its proper (and vitally significant) semantic content'.

Over and above the metaphor's semantic component, the overall cognitive role of metaphor, as asserted by cognitive semantics, needs to be preserved as a strong thesis valid for both the Source Language and the Target Language. Although very little research has been done on the cogno-cultural translation of metaphors, a few authors have made this point in theory and practice (Mandelblit [12], Al-Hasnawi [13], Cristofoli et al. [14], Schäffner [15]).

The main thread of cognitive semantics also argues for the concomitance of universality and cultural specificity in metaphors. In Kövecses's terms, 'It is simplistic to suggest that universal aspects of the body necessarily lead to universal conceptualization, and it is equally simplistic to suggest that variation in culture excludes the possibility of universal conceptualization' [16: 294]. Earlier on, Chițoran [17: 69-70] had captured a similar idea: 'the differences in environment, climate, cultural development, etc., among various communities may be extremely significant, but basically, human societies are linked by a common biological history. The objective reality in which they live is definitely not identical but it is by and large similar'.

The causes which lead both to universality and variation in metaphor include embodiment (a neural-bodily basis), social-cultural experience (context), and cognitive processes (cognitive preferences and styles). Universal embodiment points to potentially universal metaphors, but multiple aspects of embodiment can engender alternative and often congruent metaphors. Moreover, embodiment provides the purely physical experience on which metaphors are built, which is 'just as much cultural as it is physical' [16: 293]. Universal embodiment may be overridden by socio-cultural experiences or cognitive processes whose applications are not universal.

The structure of the conceptual-linguistic patterns of metaphors occurring in the LSP discourse is yet another relevant factor in the translation of metaphor. Awareness of the systematizations and comments regarding the exploitation of Topic Domains and Source Domains could provide additional clues in translation strategies. The placement of metaphor in a discourse functional perspective and the unearthing of common interplays of metaphor's elements at the linguistic level may offer a further nuanced take on metaphor's translational issues.

As for the long-lasting debate concerning the translator's role and task, one present-day sensible response insists on the semiotic and communicative dimensions of the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). To quote Hatim and Mason [18: 3-4], translation involves 'the negotiation of meaning between producers and receivers of texts. In other words, the resulted translated text is to be seen as evidence of a transaction, a means of retracing the pathways of the translator's decision-making procedures. In the same way, the ST itself is an end product and again should be treated as evidence of a writer's intended meaning rather than as the embodiment of the meaning itself'. Later on, they include translation in a social framework, and suggest that the translator is bound to maintain coherence by adopting the most balanced variant in point of efficiency and effectiveness in a particular context, for a certain readership and for a particular purpose [cf. 18].

The translator's role cannot be overlooked either. In translating, s/he operates with decisions made on the basis of objective linguistic constraints and subjective frame of thought (personal cognitive system, personal knowledge base of a linguistic, socio-cultural, situational and referential nature, and text type specifications, cf. Olivera and Sacristán [1: 79-80]). The correlations and prioritization of these subjective and objective factors may explain why some translators opt for a minimax (maximum effect for a minimum of effort, cf. Levy [19: 48]) or maximax strategy (maximum effort for maximum effect) in each particular case.

Consequently, factors that add to the difficulty of translating metaphor in LSP may be connected to impositions that derive from the metaphor's cognitive role, the structure of metaphor, its cultural specificity and the translator's processing of the task. The factors that intervene in the translation process may be far more numerous, and quite rightfully so; on analysis, Samaniego Fernández [20] suggests that a proper specialized translation model should take into account cultural references, semantic associations, communicative purpose, functional relevance, linguistic

constraints, degree of informativity, interpretation, register, text types, metaphor typology and contextual constraints (cf. Olivera and Sacristán [1: 87]).

The translatability of metaphor is the key issue in translating metaphor in LSP. Various scholars have expressed personal, sometimes opposing views concerning the translatability of metaphors. Some profess the untranslatability of metaphors (Nida [3], Vinay and Darbelnet [21]), while others firmly believe in the translatability of metaphors by a word-for-word technique (Kloepfer [22], cf. Classe [23: 942]). Peter Newmark [24] strikes a balance between the two, and proposes a number of translation procedures based on the types of metaphors he identifies, although he insists that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the two. Dobrotă [25] provides an insightful illustration of how the translation of economic metaphors into Romanian fits in Newmark's prescriptive grid. The main strategies that Newmark [24: 304-11] inserts in his overview are (a) reproducing the same image in the TL (e.g. *golden hair—goldenes Haar*); (b) replacing the image in the SL with a standard TL image which does not clash with the TL culture (e.g. *other fish to fry—d'autres chats a' fouetter*); (c) retaining the image, translating by simile, possibly modifying the shock of the metaphor (e.g. *Ces zones cryptuaire ou' s'élabore la beaute'.*—*The crypt-like areas where beauty is manufactured*); (d) translating by simile plus sense by the so-called Mozart method, avoiding comprehension problems, but often being confronted with a loss of the intended effect (e.g. *tout un vocabulaire molie'resque—a whole repertoire of medical quackery such as Molière might have used*); (e) converting metaphor to sense, a strategy recommended when the TL image is too broad in sense or not appropriate to the register (e.g. *sein Brot verdienen—to earn one's living*); (f) modifying the metaphor, if it is too bizarre or flowery (e.g. *bruciare all'altare—sacrifice*); (g) deleting the metaphor, if the metaphor is redundant or serves no practical purpose; (h) translating by the same metaphor combined with sense - the addition of a gloss or an explanation by the translator is to ensure that the metaphor will be understood (e.g. *The tongue is a fire; a fire ruins things, what we say also ruins things*).

As for a long time the translation of metaphor had been banned from translation studies, Newmark's systematic approach is commendable. Criticisms may, however, be directed at the insufficient treatment of the decision-making process, given the range of options. Dissatisfaction may arise from the secondary place occupied in this typological framework by the cultural and linguistic context in which metaphorical utterances are produced. Finally, the translation types suggested by Newmark [24] do not pay due attention to the automatic conventional metaphors that we live by.

As the present paper is committed to promoting cognitive metaphor, it pleads for a cognitive view upon metaphor translation. The reference points in the subsequent exemplification of translating economic metaphor translation are Mandelblit's *Cognitive Translation Hypothesis* for metaphor [12], on the one hand, and Hiraga's [26] and Kövecses's [16] works on *comparative culture*, on the other hand.

According to Mandelblit [12], the translator may be faced with one of two possible conceptual scenarios: Same Mapping Condition or Different Mapping Condition. Same Mapping Condition obtains if no conceptual shift takes place between languages, while a Different Mapping Condition applies a conceptual shift between the SL and the TL. It is likely that, especially between related cultures, similar mapping conditions apply to ideas shared by the two cultures ('culture universals') that may be considered as conventional reflections of human experience, often featuring philosophical insight.

Hiraga [26] and Kövecses [16] encompass comparative culture by proposing that, across two languages, four conceptual-linguistic/ cultural scenes be considered: similar metaphorical concepts and similar expressions; similar metaphorical concepts but different expressions; different metaphorical concepts but similar metaphorical expressions; different metaphorical concepts and different metaphorical expressions. The two frameworks have been integrated into a coherent hypothesis by Maalej [27]. Even though the four categories exhaust the conceptual meaning / literal meaning combinatorial possibilities, the framework omits cases when there is no metaphor in either the TL or the SL, yet there is such a pattern in the other language (cf. Iranmanesh [28]). Despite this minor aspect, the cognitive translation hypothesis is a solid one and it arguably needs to be anchored in real-world discourse environments.

In conclusion, I claim that it is time to rethink the translation of LSP metaphors by lending cognitive dimensions to the theory and practice of translation. Potential benefits may arise not only for the process and product of specialized translations, but also for the recipients of the translated message or foreign language learners.

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