Metaphor in Translation

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Introduction

Translation plays a significant role in our global world, assuring communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries. In these processes, information initially produced in one language (the source language) is transferred into a new language (the target language) for a new audience in a different culture. Although translation is much more complex, it is this element of transfer from a source to a target which is also often central to characterising metaphor (see Chapter 1). The two concepts, metaphor and translation, are etymological cognates. ‘Metaphor’ originates from Greek, with ‘meta-’ indicating a change (e.g. of place) and ‘pherein’ a process of carrying. ‘Translate’ originates from the Latin ‘transferre’, with ‘trans-’ meaning across, and ‘ferre’ meaning to bear, or to carry (see also e.g. Guldin 2010: 161–191; Shuttleworth 2014b: 53–65).

In addition to the idea of transfer, the notion of similarity has been used for the characterisation of both concepts. In the traditional understanding of metaphor, similarities and/or analogies are supposed to hold between the image and the object.1 For translation, the key word for the relationship between source text and target text is ‘equivalence’, although variously described as, e.g. equivalence of meaning, of communicative function, of effect, if not even totally rejected as the defining criterion (e.g. Halverson 1997).

It is now generally recognised in Translation Studies that translation is not a simple replacement of linguistic signs of the source language by equivalent signs of the target language, but a far more complex process. In addition to the change in language, the audience and the purpose for which the text is to be produced are to be taken into consideration, alongside the socio-cultural, ideological, and institutional factors that play a significant role in the production, dissemination, and reception of translations. These developments within Translation Studies are reflected in its different definitions, from the more traditional view of translation as meaning transfer to more recent views of translation as a purposeful activity (Vermeer 1996), as norm-governed behaviour (Toury 1995), as a socio-cultural practice (Venuti 1995), or as socially regulated behaviour (Wolf 2002).

Whatever the definition of translation, metaphor is a phenomenon which has regularly attracted the interest of Translation Studies scholars. A search in the online Benjamins
Translation Studies Bibliography (https://benjamins.com/online/tsb/) showed many more results for ‘metaphor and translation’ than for ‘metaphor and interpreting’, signalling that more attention has been given to the phenomenon of metaphor in the context of translation (even if this Bibliography is not exhaustive). This chapter will therefore focus only on translation. After a brief illustration of metaphors which have been used to conceptualise translation, the chapter will give an overview of relevant research conducted to date, comment on critical issues, illustrate some current research, and suggest future directions.

Relevant research to date: questions and methods

Metaphors of translation

The discourse about translation is itself characterised by metaphorical reflection. Translation has been conceptualised as transfer, as a mirror imitation, as deception (cf. the well-known adage of the translator as a traitor: traduttore traditore), as refraction, as action, and so on (for more details see the chapters in St André 2010). Metaphors which are linked to the aspect of faithfulness indicate the dominant status awarded to the source text, from which translations are derived as secondary objects. This is also the case in the metaphorical reflections of a gender-biased nature, in particular the tradition of the belles infidèles which compares translations to women and argues that beautiful women are not faithful (on criticism of such views see e.g. Chamberlain 2000: 314–329; Godayol i Nogué 2013).

Transfer metaphors conceptualise movement to a different place and thus give attention both to the source text and to the target culture. A famous metaphor in the tradition of German Translation Studies is Jakob Grimm’s comparison of translating to ferrying across the sea, exploiting the polysemy of the German word ‘übersetzen’ (Störig 1963: 111). The translator is perceived as a navigator who transports the word-freight safely from one shore to the other.

Translation has also often been conceived of as a bridge which connects cultures, or as bridge-building for communication. The bridge links two different cultures and linguistic communities, thus enabling the free exchange of texts and ideas. Constructing the bridge is a complicated and time-consuming endeavour, but once it has been erected, no user needs to think about its construction and the material used. As Hönig (1997) argues, a translator as a bridge-builder needs to have a sound knowledge of the material, i.e. language, and also needs to feel responsible for constructing a bridge which is appropriate for its intended purpose.

The traditional assumption of the translator as a non-involved conduit has been challenged by more recent reflections of their active role as mediators, ‘go-betweens’, or ‘gatekeepers’ (e.g. Heimburger 2012: 21–34). Research informed by postcolonial theories and Cultural Studies in particular has shown that translation is never neutral or innocent, that translators can also deliberately misinform or pursue specific agendas (e.g. feminism). Translators are situated within socio-cultural contexts, which has implications for their work. This social situatedness of the production and reception of translation makes spatial metaphors such as ‘the third space’ or ‘in-betweenness’, used in postcolonial theories, problematic (see Tymoczko 2003: 181–201; Medendorp 2013).

The metaphors used to conceptualise translation illustrated above are not universal, and not even shared among European languages and cultures. Guldin (2010: 180), for example, comments that the Hungarian word ‘fordítás’ reflects the notion of a turning, rotating movement. Tymoczko (2010: 109–143) provides examples of words for ‘translation’ and their metaphorical potential from non-European languages. For example, the Arabic word
‘tarjama’ has ‘biography’ as an early meaning, and the most common Chinese term ‘fanyi’ literally means ‘turning over’. Tymoczko (2010) argues that the Western metaphorical view of translation as carrying across is entangled with the history of Christianity and Western colonisation. Such culturally different traditions in the conceptualisation of translation thus highlight the constructed nature of prevailing concepts and provide rich material for exploring the history of Translation Studies.

In addition to framing the discourse on translation, metaphors themselves have often been the object of scholarly research within Translation Studies. The next section will present some of the main issues that have been addressed. It will illustrate that both the theoretical approach to translation and the respective definition of metaphor used by scholars have influenced their research questions, methods of analysis, and interpretation of results.

Overview of how metaphor has been addressed in Translation Studies

In the literature on metaphor and translation, two major threads can be identified: (1) the translatability of metaphor, and (2) methods of metaphor translation. The discussion on whether and how metaphor can be translated was predominantly informed by the more traditional definition of metaphor as a figure of speech. Conceptual theories of metaphor (mainly the theoretical framework first proposed by Lakoff and Johnson 1980; see Chapter 1), which describe metaphors as basic resources for thought processes in human society and not just as decorative elements in a text, entered Translation Studies only in the 1990s.

Translatability of metaphor

The translatability of metaphor concerns questions such as: Can metaphor be translated? Can it be transferred into another language without any loss? Metaphor as a translation problem was articulated particularly in equivalence-based approaches to translation and linked to both the traditional view of metaphor as a purely linguistic phenomenon and a narrow definition of translation as meaning transfer. The underlying assumption was that a metaphor, once identified, should ideally be transferred intact from source language (SL) to target language (TL). Such an intact transfer was perceived as problematic because of the inherent differences between languages and cultures.

A key paper in respect of translatability is Dagut (1976). For Dagut, metaphor is an individual flash of imaginative insight whose main function is to provide a shocking effect for its readers. Since metaphors are viewed as the products of the creative violation of the semantic rules of a linguistic system, they are highly culture-specific. Dagut argues that the shocking effect is to be retained in a translation, and if linguistic and cultural factors hinder this, the metaphor cannot be translated. Reflecting on translatability in such terms of yes or no, however, has not been the main focus in Translation Studies. Since linguistic and cultural differences always play a role in translation, and an ‘intact’ transfer is thus impossible anyway, other scholars have devoted their attention to the exploration of such cultural differences and suggested translation procedures.

Translation procedures for metaphor

There is a significant body of literature that presents categories of translation procedures, alternatively labelled as translation methods, or strategies, derived either on the basis of comparisons of isolated linguistic units of languages (and thus more of a speculative nature)
or on the basis of authentic translations. Some of these typologies are of a didactic nature (how metaphor could, or even should, be translated) meant to help translators and students of translation. Most of these typologies are based on the identification of metaphor in the source text as a problem for which a solution has to be found. The most frequently suggested procedures can be summarised as follows:

(i) metaphor into same metaphor – direct translation;
(ii) metaphor into different metaphor – substitution of the image in the SL text by a TL metaphor with the same or similar sense;
(iii) metaphor into sense – paraphrase, shift to a non-figurative equivalent.

Newmark (1981) defines five types of metaphors (dead, cliché, stock, recent, original) and reflects on the most appropriate translation method for each type. In his discussion of stock metaphors, he develops seven translation procedures which have frequently been taken up in the literature to date (e.g. Oliynyk 2014). Newmark arranges these procedures in order of preference of use, with the examples given (reproduced below) not extracted from authentic translations (Newmark 1981: 87–91):

1. reproducing the same image in the TL, e.g. ‘golden hair – goldenes Haar’;
2. replace 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 à fouetter [literal translation: other cats to whip]’;
3. translation of metaphor by simile, retaining the image, e.g. ‘Ces zones cryptuaire où s’élabora la beauté – the crypt-like areas where beauty is manufactured’;
4. translation of metaphor (or simile) by simile plus sense (or occasionally a metaphor plus sense), e.g. ‘tout un vocabulaire moliéresque – a whole repertoire of medical quackery such as Molière might have used’;
5. conversion of metaphor to sense, e.g. ‘sein Brot verdienen [literal translation: to earn one’s bread] – to earn one’s living’;
6. deletion, if the metaphor is redundant;
7. same metaphor combined with sense, in order to strengthen the image.

Newmark also argues that the function of a metaphor in a text (i.e. its cognitive and/or emotive function) should be the basis for the translator’s decision. For example, the fourth procedure could be used as a compromise solution in order to avoid comprehension problems, although it results in the loss of the intended effect. The fifth procedure is recommended when the TL image is not appropriate to the register, although the emotive effect may get lost. A deletion, however, should only be used, according to Newmark, if the text is not authoritative or expressive.

Toury (1995: 81ff) points out that translation procedures like those suggested by Newmark typically start from a metaphor (i.e. a metaphorical expression) as identified in the source text (ST) which is treated as a unit of translation. Toury contrasts this retrospective view with his own prospective view. Starting from the target text (TT), he identifies two additional cases: the use of a metaphor in the TT for a non-metaphorical expression in the ST (metaphor for non-metaphor), and the addition of a metaphor in the TT without any linguistic motivation in the ST (metaphor for zero).

Toury’s comments reflect the perspective of Descriptive Translation Studies, with its interest in the actual form of translations. The question thus becomes ‘How is metaphor
translated?”, with actual procedures identified on the basis of a descriptive comparative analysis of source texts and their authentic translations. Strategies identified in that way, however, also apply to metaphorical expressions and thus to the micro-level. Some research has been conducted to explore the function of metaphors within and throughout a specific text. For example, based on the interaction theory of metaphor (Black 1962: 218–235; see also Goatly 1997: 117ff) and on scenes-and-frames semantics, Kurth (1995) illustrates how several metaphors interact in the construction of a macro-scene. He shows which TL frames had been chosen for an SL scene in German translations of Charles Dickens’ early work and comments on the consequences for the effect of the text. He derives nine basic types of translational behaviour for metaphors: deletion, compression, levelling of the image, weakening of the image, image shift, image preservation, enhancement of the image, new metaphorisation, and elaboration of the metaphor (Kurth 1995: 187).

In the last two decades, the conceptual theory of metaphor (see Chapter 1) has become more widely used in Translation Studies research, and the methodology is predominantly a descriptive comparative analysis of source texts and their authentic translations. Among the first studies is the work by Stienstra (1993) who analysed several Bible translations into English and Dutch, with a particular focus on the conceptual metaphor YHWH IS THE HUSBAND OF HIS PEOPLE. She illustrates that this central metaphor of the Old Testament was preserved in the translations at the macro-level, even if specific textual manifestations were changed or not accounted for in each individual occurrence. She differentiates between universal, culture-overlapping, and culture-specific metaphors and argues that it is not the conceptual metaphor that is culture-dependent, but its linguistic realisation.

Some studies that take a conceptual metaphor perspective have also presented lists of translation procedures, which are significantly different from those previously produced on the basis of more traditional metaphor theories. For example, based on the analysis of English translations of Arabic political speeches, Al-Harrasi (2001) suggested a very extensive list which includes procedures such as Instantiating the Same Conceptual Metaphor (with sub-procedures such as Concretising an Image Schematic Metaphor, or Same Mapping but a Different Perspective), Using a Different Conceptual Metaphor, and Deletion of the Expression of the Metaphor (Al-Harrasi 2001: 277–88). The cognitive approach to metaphor has thus already contributed new insights to translation, and investigating authentic translations can also contribute to a better understanding of metaphor as a phenomenon. In the next section, some critical issues and debates will be addressed.

Critical issues and debates

Definition of metaphor and evaluation of metaphor translation

Although the conceptual theory of metaphor has become more widely used in Translation Studies, this is not the case for every analysis. There are still publications in which a more traditional definition of metaphor is used, or which aim to combine linguistic and conceptual metaphors. The main reason for this is that translators encounter the linguistic realisations of conceptual mappings in the texts they are dealing with, and not the mappings as such.

There are only relatively few publications of general reflections on metaphor theories, definitions, and classifications that discuss their consequences for translation (e.g. Prandi 2010), in contrast to the large body of research investigating how metaphors – i.e. metaphorical expressions – have been translated. These studies are often combined with an evaluative element, that is, scholars comment on the accuracy, appropriateness, or effectiveness of the
translational choices. This is sometimes done in a didactic or prescriptive way, aiming at suggestions for translating metaphors. Examples of such studies are El-Zeiny (2011) and Zahid (2009), who both investigated metaphors in the Qur’an. El-Zeiny (2011) compared six different approaches to the translation of Qur’anic metaphors to arrive at principled criteria to recommend for their translation, and Zahid (2009) uses data from translations of the Qur’an into English to build up a comprehensive model for metaphor translation. Similarly, Tan’s description of strategies for metaphor translation in different translations of Chinese novels into English has the aim of finding out ‘how best metaphors are handled in translation’ (Tan 2004: 219).

**Culture-specific or universal metaphors and consequences for translation**

Cultural factors have been addressed quite frequently in Translation Studies, with cultural differences being identified as obstacles to the semantic transfer of metaphors. Already back in 1976, Dagut had argued that ‘what determines the translatability of an SL metaphor is not its “boldness” or “originality”, but rather the extent to which the cultural experience and semantic associations on which it draws are shared by speakers of the particular TL’ (Dagut 1976: 28). It is therefore no surprise that culture as a major problem has remained at the centre of attention. Moreover, it has predominantly been addressed in research involving non-European languages, such as Arabic (with a specific focus on the Qur’an) or Chinese. For example, Fagong (2009) identified image losses in Chinese–English metaphor translation and recommends a literal translation of the vehicle in combination with an indication of its cultural implications. Al-Kharabsheh (2011) investigates the conceptualisation and translation of euphemistic metaphorical expressions for death in obituaries in Jordanian newspapers, identifying conflicting cultural models of agency in Arabic and English as the main hurdles to translation. Although these studies make reference to conceptual metaphor theory, they evaluate the results of their analysis in terms of loss, i.e. loss in meaning, and/or in cultural implications, and/or in effect, thus reflecting a traditional view of translation as meaning transfer.

In investigating cultural differences, Translation Studies scholars also build on Metaphor Studies research into the ways conceptual metaphors are expressed linguistically in different languages. For example, based on a comparison of the linguistic expressions of particular conceptual metaphors in English and Hungarian, Kövecses (2005) identified four possible patterns:

(i) metaphors of similar mapping conditions and similar lexical implementations;
(ii) metaphors of similar mapping conditions but different lexical implementations;
(iii) metaphors of different mapping conditions but similar lexical implementations;
(iv) metaphors of different mapping conditions and different lexical implementations.

These patterns were tested by Al-Hasnawi (2007) with authentic examples from English and Arabic and their translations, and he found examples for each one of them. However, even metaphorical linguistic expressions which have been identified as being similar across two languages cannot be treated as ready-made translation equivalents, since a variety of factors impact translation production. Further evidence that translators do not necessarily opt for similar metaphorical expressions, even if they exist, has been provided by research which makes use of corpus analysis software and is thus based on extensive data. Researchers often
extend the metaphor identification procedure proposed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007; see Chapter 5) by a stage in which source text and target text segments are aligned in order to see how the metaphorical expression has been translated. They then proceed to establish whether the translation is metaphorical, and, if so, they infer the underlying conceptual metaphor. An example of such an approach is the study by Rodríguez Márquez (2010), who used an extensive bidirectional corpus of US-English and Mexican-Spanish annual business reports to investigate how the linguistic metaphors identified in the source texts were translated in the target texts. She refers to the patterns identified by Deignan et al. (1997), which are similar to the ones by Kövecses above. Rodríguez Márquez did find evidence for a pattern of ‘same conceptual metaphors and same/similar linguistic metaphors’ in her corpus, but no examples of the other three patterns. Instead, she discovered two new patterns: (i) the translation of the source linguistic metaphor is not metaphorical and, thus, no conceptual metaphor is instantiated in the target text, and (ii) the source linguistic metaphor is not translated at all in the target text. She argues that ‘none of the cases where the translation is not considered to be metaphorical indicates that culture is the reason for the lack of metaphoricity of the translation and, in turn, the absence of a conceptual metaphor’ (Rodríguez Márquez 2010: 131). Rather, she explains such differences in source text and target text with additional changes translators made to the syntactic structure of a sentence, or their choice of established terminology in the specialised domain of business.

Descriptive analysis of translations and wider implications

Despite the limitations of a text-based analysis, a description of translation procedures used by translators provides interesting results for both Translation Studies and metaphor research. Differences in the metaphorical expressions in source texts and target texts can reflect cultural differences, but they can also be the result of genre conventions (as found by Rodríguez Márquez 2010), time constraints, institutional arrangements, or other factors. Lindquist’s study (2014: 167–180) is interesting in this respect. She analysed a corpus of cookery books and their translations from English into Swedish, focusing on grammatical metaphors. Grammatical metaphor is used in Halliday’s (1994) sense as a departure from the unmarked, congruent structures and wordings. Lindquist discovered examples of both congruent translation (e.g. ‘my interest in cooking’ – ‘mitt interest för matlagning’) and non-congruent translation (e.g. ‘the various book signings I have done’ – ‘när jag var ute och signerade böcker’ [literal translation: when I was out signing books]). She explains the lower frequency of grammatical metaphors in the Swedish target texts with reference to the language planning initiatives of the Swedish government. These initiatives resulted in guidelines which, among others, state preferences for finite clauses (Lindquist 2014: 178). Grammatical metaphors, however, are less frequently analysed from a translation perspective compared to lexical metaphors.

The identification of translation procedures can thus lead a researcher to formulate new research questions, or to use additional research methods, or to resort to different theoretical frameworks for exploration and/or explanation. Such a process of question generation is illustrated in Carter (2014) with her analysis of the English translation of the novel Utu by the French crime fiction writer Caryl Férey. In a first step, she conducted a quantitative analysis of the linguistic metaphors, discovering that the translation contains 31 per cent fewer metaphors than the source text, and that, for example, a large number of the stock metaphors had been converted to sense in the target text (e.g. ‘Il suivait les cours du bout des neurones’
[literal translation: He followed the class by the tips of his neurons] rendered as ‘He paid little attention in class’). Comparing this translation to two other translated novels by Férey, she noticed the same reduction in metaphors in the English target texts. She then moves on to reflect on the potential reasons for such quantitative differences, mainly by putting forward hypotheses. One hypothesis is linked to genre conventions and target culture norms, suggesting that translators of crime fiction into English might reduce metaphors in order to meet the perceived expectations of their readers. With reference to research in cognitive literary studies and cognitive narratology, she moves on to ask whether reading popular genres which employ familiar repertoires requires less cognitive effort. The final considerations concern the low status of crime fiction as a genre and the working conditions of translators. Although her hypotheses are not tested further, her main argument is that translators should be encouraged to retain metaphors in crime fiction because metaphors influence readers’ emotional engagement with the texts.

**Examples of current research: multilingual translation**

Current research into metaphor in translation is of a diverse nature, but most prominently it is based on empirical analyses of authentic texts. Most of the work does make reference to cognitive metaphor theories, most frequently to Lakoff and Johnson (1980). In this section, only one area of current research will be illustrated since it has added new methods and new perspectives to investigating metaphor in translation: the analysis of multilingual translations. Analysing how one source text has been translated into several languages can bring insights in respect of culture specificity and contexts of translation production.

Shuttleworth (2011, 2014a), for example, uses a multilingual corpus to study the translation of metaphor in popular-scientific texts. His data come from the official published translations into French, Italian, German, Russian, and Polish of articles in the magazine *Scientific American*. He explores how metaphorical expressions have been dealt with both at the micro-level (translation procedures for individual metaphorical expressions) and at the macro-level (clusters of mappings). Shuttleworth notices both similarities and differences in how translators dealt with individual metaphorical expressions across the five target languages analysed. Retention of the metaphorical expression was identified as the default procedure across all languages, whereas modification was used only rarely. In respect of differences, he notices, for example, that the translations into Polish display the greatest number of modifications, and that the translations into German show the largest number of omissions and removals of metaphorical expressions, but also the largest number of newly added metaphorical expressions. Comparing the metaphorical expressions to the mappings they represent, he concludes that what is ‘lost’ in translation are individual metaphorical expressions rather than entire mappings. The main advantage of such multilingual studies is the richness of data they produce, which can allow researchers to draw conclusions based on results that go beyond a single translation context, and also identify tendencies that appear to be common to translators’ behaviour regardless of the target language and the subject domain.

Translators’ behaviour, however, is also determined by the context in which they operate, as illustrated by Tcaciuc (2012, 2014: 99–112) with financial documents translated within the European Central Bank (ECB). She noticed, for example, more similarity in the French and Spanish translations of the English source texts compared to the translations into Romanian, as illustrated below with a phrase from a text in the *Monthly Bulletin* of June 2008:

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English: The ongoing “health check” of the EU common agricultural policy
French: «bilan de santé» en cours de la politique agricole commune de l’UE
Spanish: el «chequeo» al que está siendo sometida la política agrícola común de la UE
Romanian: evaluarea politicii agricole comune a UE.

This excerpt reflects the conceptual metaphors POLICY IS A PERSON OR HEALTHY IS GOOD. Although the four versions are nearly identical to each other, the Romanian translation is the only one which uses an explicitation and thus demetaphorises the expression (‘evaluarea’ corresponds to ‘evaluation’). Tcaciuc noticed that translators into Romanian generally tend to demetaphorise the English economic metaphors or add explanations, especially in cases of novelty (e.g. ‘helicopter money’ rendered as ‘bani-cadou’ [literal translation: money gift]). Tcaciuc comments that the institutional translation process at the ECB requires translators to work with translation memory tools, to use databases, glossaries, and previous documents in order to ensure consistency across the texts. Since Romania joined the European Union at a later stage, the Romanian translators do not yet have the same large body of reference material at their disposal. Moreover, due to the ‘newness’ of Romanian as a working language in the European Union, the revision of the translations is often done by the translators of the Romanian national bank, who tend to avoid metaphorical expressions, considering figurative language to be inappropriate for such official documents.

In my own research on political texts, I also identified differences in the various language versions of the same document (Schäffner 2004). For example, the English, French, and German versions of the Manifesto of the European People’s Party (EPP) for the 1999 Elections to the European Parliament employ expressions that are realisations of a movement metaphor (POLITICS IS MOVEMENT TOWARDS A DESTINATION: ‘taken a step forward’ corresponds to ‘Schritt nach vorn getan’, ‘faire un pas’). However, in the subsequent sentence, the beginning of a new project is conceptualised as the start of a construction process in the English text (‘foundation stone’), whereas the French text continues the movement metaphor (‘une étape sur la voie’ [literal translation: a stage on the path]), and the German text uses a more general expression (‘Beginn’ [literal translation: beginning]). Otherwise the three language versions are identical.

English: We have already taken a great step forward towards European integration by introducing the Single Currency. But the euro is . . . the foundation stone of what we intend to be a new era,
French: Nous venons de faire un grand pas vers l’intégration européenne avec l’instauration de la monnaie unique. Mais l’euro . . . est une étape sur la voie d’une union politique, . . .
German: Mit der Einführung des EURO haben wir einen großen Schritt nach vorn getan. Der EURO . . . Die EVP sieht darin den Beginn eines neuen Projektes, . . .

This analysis, however, was based purely on the texts. In recent studies, I have tried to go beyond the text by investigating the contexts and conditions in which the translations were produced. For example, translations of speeches by the German Chancellor and the Federal President are produced by the translation service of the German Foreign Office. Comparing the English and French versions of a speech by the German Federal President Joachim
Gauck, delivered on 22 February 2013, and of an interview that the Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel gave to several European newspapers on 25 January 2012, I noticed more liberty in English in using metaphors (e.g. ‘enter unchartered territory’ for the more neutral formulation ‘Neues’ [literal translation: something new]), more verbal style (e.g. ‘move forward’ for the noun ‘Weg’ [literal translation: path]), and often more literal renderings into French compared to the English translations, as illustrated in the extracts below. In the second example, the French translation is identical to the original German [but above all we must agree on one common path in Europe].


English: we are pausing to reflect so that we can equip ourselves both intellectually and emotionally for the next step, which will require us to enter unchartered territory (http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Reden/2013/02/130222-Europe-englisch.pdf?__blob=publicationFile).


German: aber vor allem müssen wir uns in Europa auf einen gemeinsamen Weg verstündigen (http://www.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/DE/Archiv17/Interview/2012/01/2012-01-26-merkel-sueddeutsche-zeitung.html).

English: but the main thing we need to be doing in the EU is finding consensus on how we are going to move forward together (http://www.london.diplo.de/Vertretung/london/en/03/__Political__News/01/Merkel__Interview.html).


By doing fieldwork in the offices of the translation service and interviewing translators and other staff members, more information could be gathered about translation practices and institutional procedures. Translators reported that their overall translation method is a reader-oriented approach and their guiding principle is comprehensibility. They also make systematic use of previously translated texts and are supported by a terminology section. A very thorough system of checking and revision is in operation to ensure quality. However, if one text is to be translated into several languages (as was the case with the Merkel interview which was translated into English, French, Spanish, Italian, and Polish), there is normally no time to have regular joint meetings of all translators involved or for close cooperation since the sheer volume of work does not allow for this. This also means that translators would not normally consult each other in how to deal with metaphors. Combining text analysis with ethnographic fieldwork in the actual institutional contexts can thus result in a better understanding of the complexity of translation, also in respect of dealing with metaphorical expressions and conceptual metaphors (see also Schäffner, Tcaciuc and Tesseur 2014).
Future directions

Future research can be most productive if it involves empirical research and combines methods, genres, languages, and contexts. In this final section, this will be briefly illustrated for (i) translation process studies, (ii) multilingual data, and (iii) professional practices, although these three aspects can be combined.

Translation process studies

On the basis of comparing authentic source and target texts, we can see how metaphorical expressions were handled, but we cannot retrace the actual pathways of the translator’s decision-making procedures. Investigations into translation processes conducted so far have tried to fill this gap in our knowledge. Methods used in order to get insights into actual cognitive processes include think-aloud protocol studies, keystroke logging, and eye-tracking, sometimes in combination. However, only very few of such process studies were exclusively devoted to investigating metaphor in translation, and there is thus scope for future research.

Think-aloud studies are experimental procedures in which translators are asked to think aloud as they are performing their translation task. These oral comments are audio-recorded (sometimes combined with video recordings) and transcribed by the researcher, resulting in a think-aloud protocol (TAP). TAP-based research has been employed, for example, to test the Cognitive Translation Hypothesis, which states that ‘metaphorical expressions take more time and are more difficult to translate if they exploit a different cognitive domain than the target language equivalent expression’ (Tirkkonen-Condit 2001: 11). Martikainen (1999) and Tirkkonen-Condit (2001, 2002) measured the time and the length of TAP segments, counted the lines of target text produced, and asked the translators to comment on their own satisfaction with their translations. They found that metaphorical expressions with different domains took longer to translate and resulted in more verbalisation and more potential translation solutions. They interpreted their findings as evidence of concept mediation and thus confirmation of the Cognitive Translation Hypothesis.

Keystroke logging records (or logs) every key which is struck by a translator when translating a text using a computer, thus providing detailed information about duration, timing, and position of pauses and corrections. Using the keystroke logging software TRANSLOG, Jakobsen et al. (2007: 217–249) measured processing time and noticed that idiomatic expressions (which are often metaphorical) slow down the translation process, which also lends support to the Cognitive Translation Hypothesis.

Eye-tracking is the most recent addition to translation process research. Translators work in front of a computer screen, with an eye-tracker device recording the translator’s eye movements, fixation durations, number of fixations, and pupil dilation. This research is based on the assumption that there is a correlation between the time readers fixate on a word and the amount of processing that takes place. Of particular interest for metaphor in translation are the experiments conducted by Sjørup (2008: 53–77, 2011: 197–214) who discovered that there was indeed a longer fixation time for metaphors compared to non-metaphorical language. Her studies also led her to conclude that the choice of paraphrase as a translation strategy is linked to a higher cognitive load compared to the use of a direct metaphorical equivalent or the use of another metaphorical phrase as alternative strategies, since paraphrase involves two shifts: a shift from one domain to another, and a shift from metaphorical expressions to literal ones.
Process research has revealed that the translation of metaphors does indeed seem to be linked to greater cognitive load, evident in longer pauses, total length of task completion, and more uncertainty (verbalised in TAPs and/or noticeable in TRANSLOG reports). However, a number of questions remain. For example, although Sjørup (2008) identified longer fixation times for metaphorical expressions, she still concedes that it is impossible to determine how this greater cognitive processing load is distributed between metaphor interpretation and the choice of a translation strategy and a target text formulation.

In respect of the question of whether translators actually access the conceptual level, the data gathered from process studies are not conclusive either. TAPs do reflect that thought processes are happening at conceptual levels, but they also indicate that these processes are often triggered by linguistic expressions. TAPs and keystroke logging reports also show that translators initially attempt to provide a target language equivalent for a linguistic metaphor. This seems to lend support to literal translation as the default strategy. However, both TAPs and retrospective interviews provide evidence that translators’ decisions are also informed by considering the purpose of the translation, intra-textual coherence and stylistic considerations, etc., thus confirming that the factors that influence the decisions for dealing with metaphors are manifold.

In Schäffner and Shuttleworth (2013), we argued that data gathered through various process methods could be scrutinised more systematically to get deeper insights into translation procedures, and we made some suggestions for experimental studies. Our main argument was that a combination of methods and datasets, i.e. triangulation, would lend more weight to hypotheses and explanations.

**Multilingual data**

Metaphor researchers have often been interested in detecting cross-cultural similarity and variation in metaphor, reflected, for example, in different linguistic expressions for the same conceptual metaphor (Kövecses 2005). A comparative analysis of authentic texts in several languages is a good method to achieve such an aim. However, an analysis of translations will not necessarily lead to the same results as the analysis of authentic texts in several languages. Metaphor in translation is a matter of discourse and social context, which means that translation strategies are not only determined by the availability of a corresponding conceptual metaphor and/or a metaphorical expression in the target language. Purely product-oriented analyses of multilingual translations would thus also need to consider the text production conditions. Moreover, even for translated magazine articles (such as the different language versions of popular scientific magazines such as *Scientific American* or *National Geographic*), the final structure of the texts is the result of translation followed by additional processes (especially editing) in their respective socio-cultural and institutional contexts.

Process studies could identify differences in the way translators take decisions. In Schäffner and Shuttleworth (2013), we suggested that experiments could be set up to produce multilingual texts in identical conditions. For example, a number of translators could be asked to translate the same source text into several target languages, with all translators working at the same time in the same setting, and researchers ideally combining methods (e.g. keystroke logging and/or eye tracking and/or TAPs and/or retrospective interviews). Analysing the data gained in this way should not only give us more insights into cross-cultural variation in metaphors and metaphorical expressions, but also reveal whether translators operate at the lexical or the cognitive level, whether they are conscious of their
decisions, how the cognitive load is distributed between comprehension and formulation, and which subjective variables (e.g. background, training and habitus) impact their decisions.

**Researching professional practices**

Future research could also focus on investigating the professional practices in various environments. Research could be conducted, for example, to see whether institutional procedures and requirements lead to specific ways of dealing with metaphors in translation. There could be studies into the potential effects of working with translation memory systems and machine translation, or analyses of specific documents such as institutional style guides to see whether they explicitly refer to metaphors. In my own work on political and journalistic texts, I discovered, for example, that translations done by the translation department of the German government showed more consistency as compared to more variability in translations done by media institutions (Schäffner 2014: 69–84). For example, the German Spiegel International opted for ‘bailout fund’, ‘rescue fund’, or ‘backstop fund’ for the metaphorical expression ‘Rettungsschirm’ (literal translation: rescue umbrella), whereas translations produced by the government’s translation department use ‘rescue package’ consistently. These differences in the texts reflect differences in institutional practices. As said above, the translation department of the German government operates a very thorough checking system. Translation processes for mass media, however, are governed by the values of journalism, that favours, above all, speed, newsworthiness, and understandability for a broad international audience. For this reason, journalists as translators survey the press in their respective target cultures to follow their usage in the translations they produce.

Similar research into professional contexts could investigate whether proof-reading and revision processes affect metaphors – whether, for example, proof-readers and/or revisers change, add, or omit metaphorical expressions in the translations. Finally, longitudinal studies could be conducted to see whether translators change the way/s they deal with metaphor in translation in the course of their professional career and if so, why. Such studies could combine product and process studies, and would also benefit from ethnographic fieldwork.

**Notes**

1. In the literature on metaphor research, various terms have been used, such as ‘image’ or ‘vehicle’ for the source referent, ‘object’ or ‘topic’ for the target referent, and ‘sense’, ‘grounds’, or ‘tenor’ for the relationship between the two (see e.g. Goatly 1997 for such terminology in metaphor definitions). Translation Studies scholars too have used these various labels in line with the respective metaphor theory they subscribe to.

2. YHWH is God’s name in original Hebrew.

**Further reading**


References


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