

Challenges in Translating Metaphorical Expressions

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Annotation: *Metaphorical expressions are ubiquitous in the language and play a crucial role in shaping thought and communication. However, the translation of metaphors poses significant challenges due to their cultural specificity, cognitive complexity, and structural diversity. This paper explores the theoretical and practical issues in translating metaphorical expressions across languages and cultures. Drawing from Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), cognitive linguistics, and translation studies, the article analyzes different types of metaphors, identifies common translation strategies, and discusses the implications of metaphor translation for intercultural understanding. The findings suggest that successful translation of metaphor requires not only linguistic equivalence but also cognitive and cultural alignment. Metaphorical expressions are abundant in culture-bound concepts so much that they are closely and intricately linked with each other embodying associations related to a particular cultural community. Metaphor translation poses the challenges of approaching the text culturally, linguistically or even conceptually. Therefore, translating metaphors do in fact involve a number of factors and not only restricted to the provision of linguistic equivalences of the texts in question. The translator should be crafty enough to identify aspects related to concepts and culture.*

Keywords: *metaphor, translation, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, cultural equivalence, metaphorical expression, translation strategies, cross-cultural communication.*

Трудности перевода метафорических выражений

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Аннотация: *Метафорические выражения повсеместно присутствуют в языке и играют важнейшую роль в формировании мышления и коммуникации. Однако их перевод представляет значительные трудности из-за культурной специфики, когнитивной сложности и структурного разнообразия. В данной статье рассматриваются теоретические и практические аспекты перевода метафорических выражений между разными языками и культурами. Основываясь на теории концептуальной метафоры (СМТ), когнитивной лингвистике и переводоведении, статья анализирует различные типы метафор, выделяет распространённые стратегии перевода и обсуждает значение перевода метафор для межкультурного понимания. Полученные результаты показывают, что успешный перевод метафоры требует не только языкового эквивалента, но и когнитивного и культурного соответствия. Метафорические выражения изобилуют культурно обусловленными концептами и тесно связаны друг с другом, воплощая ассоциации, характерные для определённого культурного сообщества. Перевод метафоры требует подхода не только с языковой точки зрения, но и с культурной и концептуальной. Таким образом, перевод метафор включает множество факторов и не ограничивается лишь лингвистическими соответствиями. Переводчик должен обладать творческим мышлением и способностью распознавать концептуальные и культурные аспекты.*

Ключевые слова: метафора, перевод, когнитивная лингвистика, теория концептуальной метафоры, культурный эквивалент, метафорическое выражение, стратегии перевода, межкультурная коммуникация

Metaforik ifodalarni tarjima qilishdagi qiyinchiliklar

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Annotatsiya: Metaforik ifodalar tilda keng qo‘llaniladi va tafakkur hamda muloqotni shakllantirishda muhim rol o‘ynaydi. Biroq, metaforalarni tarjima qilish jarayoni ularning madaniy xosligi, kognitiv murakkabligi va tuzilma xilma-xilligi sababli jiddiy muammolarni yuzaga keltiradi. Ushbu maqola metaforik ifodalarni turli tillar va madaniyatlar doirasida tarjima qilishda yuzaga keladigan nazariy va amaliy masalalarni tahlil qiladi. Konseptual metafora nazariyasi (CMT), kognitiv lingvistika va tarjimashunoslik asosida maqolada turli metafora turlari ko‘rib chiqiladi, keng tarqalgan tarjima strategiyalari aniqlanadi va madaniyatlararo tushunuv uchun metaforalarni tarjima qilishning ahamiyati muhokama qilinadi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, metaforalarni muvaffaqiyatli tarjima qilish faqat tilshunoslik darajasidagi tenglikni emas, balki kognitiv va madaniy moslashuvni ham talab etadi. Metaforik ifodalar madaniyatga xos tushunchalarda juda ko‘p uchraydi va ular bir-biriga yaqin va murakkab bog‘langan bo‘lib, ma‘lum bir madaniy jamoaga tegishli assotsiatsiyalarni ifodalaydi. Metafora tarjimasi matnga madaniy, tilshunoslik yoki hatto konseptual yondashuvni talab qiladi. Shu sababli, metaforalarni tarjima qilish faqatgina lingvistik tenglamalarni topish bilan cheklanmaydi. Tarjimon konseptual va madaniy jihatlarni aniqlay oladigan darajada ijodkor bo‘lishi kerak.

Kalit so‘zlar: metafora, tarjima, kognitiv lingvistika, konseptual metafora nazariyasi, madaniy tenglik, metaforik ifoda, tarjima strategiyalari, madaniyatlararo muloqot.

1. Introduction

Metaphors are not merely decorative elements of language but are integral to how people conceptualize and communicate complex ideas. As posited by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), conceptual metaphors structure thought by mapping abstract domains onto more concrete experiences. Consequently, metaphorical expressions present a unique challenge in translation, as they are often deeply embedded in cultural knowledge and conceptual systems. This paper aims to examine the main types of metaphors and the challenges inherent in translating metaphorical language, particularly within the context of cognitive linguistics and cultural relativity. It also evaluates the effectiveness of various translation strategies and provides illustrative examples from literary, journalistic, and conversational texts.

2. Metaphorical expressions historical review and literature review

Metaphor has been used and appreciated since olden times. Aristotle himself once commented that “the greatest thing, by far, is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt; and it is also a sign of genius...” (as cited in Kittay, 1989, p. 1). Moreover, metaphors found in passages from the celebrated Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh to the Greek plays of Sophocles and Euripides also attest to the long and distinguished history of this trope (Wikipedia). The use of metaphor has been studied as well as celebrated. In their book, *More Than Cool Reason* (1989), George Lakoff and Mark Turner examined the significant role of metaphor in poetry, noting the omnipresence and the potent impact of metaphor in poetry and rhetoric. However, Lakoff and Turner’s treatment represents a departure from the idea that metaphor is specific to the realm of

literature; several studies have indicated that metaphor is a central property of everyday language as well (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Metaphor translation, on the whole, should be performed on semantic level for all figurative language is typically rich with aesthetic and expressive values. The translator has to work against lots of odds. These are manifest in linguistic, literary, aesthetic, and socio-cultural problems. The linguistic problems include the collocation and obscured syntactic structures. The aesthetic and literary problems are related with the metaphor typical diction, poetic structures and sounds. While the sociocultural problems arise from the translator's attempt to deal with expressions containing the four major cultural categories: ideas, ecology, behavior, and products. It is self-evident that dealing with literary texts involve much more complexity than handling other types of work. This fact is attributable to the dichotomous nature of the literary genre which involves aesthetic and expressive values. The aesthetic dimension sheds light on the beauty of the figurative language whereas the expressive levels the writer's modes of artistic and appreciative thinking. Apart from all types of figurative language, metaphorical expressions call for specific treatment in translating or the whole outcome will turn out to be a heap of trash. The difficult job that ever faces the translator is the adequate transmission of these artistic values from the source language into the target one. Metaphorical expressions, compared to other types of expressions stand quite distinctly as enjoying artistic merits of which other genres are bereft. They are greatly culture-bound; the thing which makes their rendering greatly tough. A larger part of them is directly entrenched into the nation's legacy with direct connection with history. So the translator has to contrive against immense socio-cultural and historic powers. Therefore, it is more than a translation as such.

In consideration of translation problems that translators have to exercise patience over, Newmark (1982) finds that in linguistic, literary, aesthetic and socio-cultural problems forms the central part of the intricacy. To have a better grasp of the operation involved in translating metaphorical expression, let's consider each element in isolation. The field of metaphor translation has been significantly influenced by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which views metaphors as systematic mappings between source and target domains. According to CMT, metaphors like "TIME IS MONEY" or "LIFE IS A JOURNEY" are not arbitrary but reflect underlying cognitive structures. Scholars such as Toury (1995), Newmark (1988), and Schäffner (2004) have explored how metaphorical meaning may be retained, adapted, or lost in translation. Linguistic relativity further complicates metaphor translation. Languages often encode different conceptual metaphors for the same phenomena. For instance, English speakers say "falling in love," while Chinese may conceptualize love through other metaphors, such as "entering love." These variations necessitate a nuanced understanding of both the source and target cultures.

3. The purpose of Metaphors

One of the most widely implemented devices of literature are metaphors. Metaphors are used to reference an interpretation or projection attributed to a subject or person by using other words. During the use of a metaphor, the subject is changed and replaced by another. The reason for this is to compare their similarities and shared traits between them (Gentzler, 2016). The focus of the sentence is the first subject which is compared with the second subject in order to attribute a characteristic to the first subject. The reason metaphors are used is for better understanding the first subject through the second subject (Ciocioi, 2019).

Example:

"Henry was a lion on the battlefield"

In this phrase, it is suggested that Henry was a valiant and brave fighter that personified some or all of the characteristics and traits that are conveyed by the noble and violent animal. This phrase suggests right away that Henry was a brave and valiant fighter, just like the king of the jungle (Chita & Stavrou, 2020). Just like other types of comparisons, metaphors help to supplement the contents of writings. By adding in details that stimulate the senses in the vein of metaphors, so that words become more intriguing and real, helping to stimulate the mind of the readers to imagine or even feel the

presence of a character or scene (Prandi, 2017). A metaphor, if used properly can exercise the imagination of the reader by helping them see familiar ideas in a new light, or shed light on a complicated topic (Roche & Suñer, 2016). One of the most useful tools in an artist's toolbox is the use of metaphors. This is because metaphors are useful regardless of the genre that is being written; poetry, non-fiction, blog or even fiction (Tobing & et al, 2016). Because of how common metaphors are, a writer will find that there are various uses for them. This is why metaphors are so useful, the same metaphor can have different meanings depending on the context. When someone tells that they have a broken heart they most likely don't mean it literally (Roche & Suñer, 2016).

4. Types of metaphors

As indicated by Newmark (1988) there are six types of classifications, which will be explored below with suitable sub-types and examples.

7. Dead Metaphors

These metaphors are those that often relate to terms that are universally connected to all people regardless of culture. They relate to time, space, human activities and general features of nature (Aloairdhi & Kahlaoui, 2020). Due to their extensive use and their inherent nature of being generally relatable to everyone, they have evolved into a literal part of language because the readers are not able to distinguish them as metaphors, so the images they invoke are lost (Grosu, 2020). Other phrases such as idioms when they start to be accepted as technical terms, transform into dead metaphors. There are three types of dead; the first type is when image and feelings are maintained in a second language. The second type is when thousands of words denote objects, such as metonyms. And the third and final type is when non-technical words have physical and figurative meaning at the same time, for example 'foot of a hill' (Aloairdhi & Kahlaoui, 2020).

An example of a Dead metaphor:

"Time is running out"

8. Stock Metaphors

As indicated by Newmark (1988) this type of metaphor is a traditional metaphor, which means that in a casual context, it is an effective and to the point method of relating to physical and emotional states both pragmatically and referentially. It is possible that they are culturally distanced with the topic of conversation or overlap with it. They could be used internationally or at the very least in widely throughout, it is possible that they may have aspects which can be considered subjective. It is important to note that there is most likely no such thing as a universal metaphor, but it is the hopes of scholars that societies would someday reach a stage of wellbeing and physical health that there would be some basic metaphors which everyone would relate to (Craig, 2018).

An example of a Stock metaphor:

"Words cut deeper than a knife"

Words don't actually cut into flesh, so for the writer to go so far as to say that someone's words have cut even deeper than a knife implies that hurtful words were exchanged. This is a very basic metaphor that almost everyone in the world can understand. The understanding of this metaphor is not linked to a single culture but to many.

9. Cliché metaphors

These metaphors are placed between stock and dead metaphors. This is because they are implemented to replace clear thoughts, often forcefully, but short of conforming to the specifics of the matter (Grimwood, 2020). These metaphors often comprise of two types of comparisons: literal nouns and figurative adjectives such as, 'filthy lucre' or figurative nouns and figurative verbs such as, 'explore all avenues' (Craig, 2018).

An example of a Cliché metaphor:

"The calm before the storm"

This phrase is often used when the writer is trying to convey that things are about to happen at an accelerated rate compared to the calmness that is currently present. Most of the time this metaphor is used, there is no actual storm that is coming, however the storm does represent danger that is about

to arrive to disturb the calm. This cliché metaphor has been used so much that it is no longer unique. We can simply categorize it as a metaphor that is not original.

10. Recent Metaphors

Newmark (1988) shows that these metaphors are a metaphorical buzzword, often coined anonymously, and then spread rapidly in the source language. Scholars often categorize them as slangs.

An example of a Recent metaphor:

“There is no need to boil the ocean to reach the end”

This is an example of a recent metaphor that is used when the writer wants to indicate that a task can be accomplished without resorting to extreme measures. Boiling the ocean in this instance refers to using extreme tactics, and reaching the end refers to accomplishing a task.

11. Original Metaphors

They are metaphors which are established or coined by the source language writer. They hold the principle idea of the writer’s message, his or her characteristics as well as his or her ideas on life. As a result, these metaphors are complex as well as having double meanings. It is also possible that they hold personal or new strange element relating to the imagination (Videla, 2017).

An example of an Original Metaphor:

“Envy is a deep pit that if left unchecked will consume you”

This metaphor is an original metaphor describing envy. In this metaphor “consume” refers to being overtaken by envy, and “deep pit” represents dark emotions that causes people to focus on the success of others instead of trying to improve themselves

5. Handling of metaphors during translation

The act of translation can be defined as the process or the instance of transferring ideas which are either written or spoken. Translation transfers the intension of what the words in a speech or book mean in a different language (Roche & Suñer, 2016). The basic meaning of this is that the process of translation reaches beyond the framework of simply substituting words from one language with different words in another. One topic of great discussion within translatology is that of metaphors, in regards to their translatability and which strategies are best suited for their translation (Roche & Suñer, 2016). Basically, there are three primary strategies for the translation of metaphor per translatology.

As indicated by Newmark (1988) these strategies are:

i. The literal translation of a metaphor. Thus, creating an identical metaphor, termed direct translation.

ii. The translation of a metaphor into an altered metaphor by replacing the image present in the source language to that of a metaphor that has the same or a close sense in the target language, therefore taking into consideration the culture of the target language.

iii. Translating the sense of the metaphor – paraphrasing, which is the process of restating a metaphor during the process of translation.

Chaudhuri (2020) recognized the postmodern developments in translatology by perceiving them as a new or establishing stage in the discipline. This is because translation is now viewed as one of the tools in a range of methods of the manipulation of original texts, where the ideas of intention substitutes that of literal faithfulness to the source text, and where the notion of the source material is faced by a variety of different perspectives (Chaudhuri, 2020).

6. Maintaining the proper meaning of metaphors during translation

Generally, translation is a very difficult practice that while initially seems simple in its concept, during closer inspection it proves to be very complex. The reason for this is that translators are always confronted with a universal problem, when to translate literally and when to translate the intention of the source text (Pedersen, 2017). This problem is made bigger with metaphors, which are often inherently tied to the source culture and might make no sense when translated to the target language (Pedersen, 2017). In the case of dead metaphors, while they are not particularly problematic, their

literal translation is often not probable (Aloairdhi & Kahlaoui, 2020). In texts which are vocative, cliché metaphors must be maintained in the target text (Newmark, 1988).

In texts which are informative, they must be condensed to their most basic information or substituted with a sounder stock metaphor. In the case of stock metaphor translation, the source language image must be accurately replicated in the target language. However, the metonyms that would be used should be transferred so long as the replacements retain the same undertones as the source language. None the less, the source image is more often translated using images which are shown to be of a similar degree. It is also possible for stock metaphors to be condensed to their literal sense in the language (Craig, 2018).

During translation, adapted metaphors must be translated with the use of corresponding adapted metaphors or condensed to their basic sense (Pedersen, 2017). With the translation of recent metaphors, they must be translated with the use of componential analysis. In texts which are vocative, the original metaphors must be translated in their literal sense, because they hold the importance of core message of the writer (Newmark, 1988). However, if the metaphor in question is vague or of small importance to the overall text, it is possible for it to be substituted with a descriptive metaphor or condensed to its basic sense (Videla, 2017). In texts which are informative, the translator should consider the number and adaptability of the original metaphor in the overall writing and to make a decision on whether the text should be translated literally, reduced to its basic sense or should he modify the metaphor to better suit the target language (Videla, 2017).

7. Conclusion

Metaphors can be seen everywhere, helping to make the text have the intended impact on the reader. Metaphors are also ingrained in the source language culture, which causes difficulties during the process of translation. Overall, it is possible to state that metaphors can be translated from one language to another while retaining the intended impact that was present in the source language. However, certain things have to be taken into consideration during the process of the translation in order for it to be successful. Factors such as differences in culture between the source and target language as well as the grammatical structure of the languages themselves provide challenges that the translator must analyze in order to determine how literally or figuratively the translator can transfer the metaphor between the languages. Due to the various different types of metaphors there are, it is not possible to establish a standard theoretical framework for translating all metaphors. However, it is possible to establish a standard framework for how each of the different types of metaphors can be translated properly while retaining. Translating metaphorical expressions is a complex but essential aspect of cross-cultural communication. It requires deep linguistic competence, cultural awareness, and cognitive insight. This study affirms that metaphors are not only expressive tools but also conceptual bridges. As global communication increases, the need for refined metaphor translation strategies grows ever more pressing.

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