

Extended Conceptual Metaphor View applied to Translation: Some Implications for the Business Sphere

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Abstract:

In the research area of metaphor translation, it is necessary to widen the scope of investigation by giving more attention to the influence of contextual factors involving metaphor. To address this need, this paper proposes a new approach for the study of metaphor in translation by combining the main foundations of the Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory with some context-oriented approaches to metaphor translation. The Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory is an extensive version of the traditional view of conceptual metaphor, which advocates for a more pragmatic approach by attaching more importance to the contextual factors in which metaphor is embedded. The application of the main foundations of the Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory to the study of translation could highlight different metaphor-related issues that have not yet received sufficient attention in this area, as in the case of Languages for Specific Purposes. In this piece of research, the focus lies especially on business translation.

Keywords: Translation Studies, Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Languages for Specific Purposes

Introduction

The traditional Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) presented by Lakoff & Johnson (1980) emphasized that metaphor is a matter of thought and reason and therefore, has a universal character. Following the main assumptions of the authors, it is cognition that plays the fundamental role within this theory while language is faded to the background. This secondary role that is given to language and the defended principle that metaphor is universal in all languages and cultures have contributed to a late integration of the conceptual metaphor in the discipline of Translation Studies. At the same time, this novel paradigm of metaphor also brought a new designation in this area. “The more traditional way of referring to this area of study, ‘the translation of metaphor’, now sounds prescriptive and somewhat old-fashioned” (Shuttleworth, 2017, p. 9). Therefore, the description “metaphor in translation” better aligns with this area because it “places the emphasis on metaphor and locates the discussion of it precisely where it should be – firmly in the broader context of general metaphor research” (Shuttleworth, 2017, p. 9).

The first works that focused on the conceptual metaphor in translation date from the mid-1990s. Especially the cognitive translation hypothesis (CTH) of Mandelblit (1995) is one of the most significant statements in the area of metaphor in translation today. The fundamental assumption of this theory is that there are two schemes for metaphor translation: similar mapping conditions and distinct mapping conditions. “Metaphorical expressions take more time and are more difficult to translate if they exploit different cognitive domains than the target language equivalent expressions” (Mandelblit, 1995, p. 493). The conceptual mapping of metaphor refers to the cognitive part of the metaphorical phenomenon, and to the reasoning that gives rise to the linguistic expression. Conceptual Mapping is a mental analogy of two realities

or two cognitive domains. One of these domains transfers qualities to another domain, which is abstract. This analogy makes the abstract domain more comprehensible and understandable. One example of mapping would be TIME IS MONEY. Following the convention of cognitive science, the conceptual mapping should be written in small capital letters and follows the scheme A IS B. In our everyday language, several expressions are derived from this specific mapping such as *invest time* or *save time*. The lexical realizations of the mapping, also called linguistic metaphors, are the linguistic part of the metaphorical phenomenon and, according to the convention, they should be written in italics. When two languages do not use the same mapping conditions, the search for another linguistic metaphor in the target language is the main reason for the delay, uncertainty, or difficulty in the translation process. To date, many studies have followed the CTH to analyze translation patterns based on the conceptual mapping and its corresponding lexical realizations in different language pairs. These studies postulate some fixed scenarios that should appear in every language pair. For example, in a work entitled *Towards a new model to metaphor translation*, Taheri-Ardali et al. (2013) postulated that there are only five possible patterns between the conceptual mapping and the lexical realizations in the target text. This methodology, focused on the correlations between the conceptual mapping and the lexical realizations in different language pairs, has been used in several studies throughout the 21st century (Kövecses, 2005; Al-Hasnawi, 2007; Hanić et al., 2017), which is why this is the prevailing methodology in this research area. However, other studies have shown that many patterns may occur when analyzing the metaphorical phenomenon in translation. In fact, translators do not necessarily opt for the corresponding equivalent lexical realization in the target language (Samaniego, 2013; Steen, 2014; Ildiko, 2014; Schäffner, 2017; Mateo, 2022). Instead, there could be many different scenarios including omissions, additions in the target text, or one metaphor being translated into a metonymy. However, these cases have not yet been sufficiently addressed in this research area. This is partly because the prevailing studies are still source-oriented and therefore, anchored in prescribing how metaphor should be translated and not in describing how metaphor is actually translated (Schäffner, 2004, p. 1256). It is thus necessary to move toward a target-oriented approach to metaphor in translation that gives crucial importance to the target text and to the social, cultural, and historical context in which metaphor is embedded. Nonetheless, the target-oriented approach to metaphor translation requires a more pragmatic view of metaphor and a deeper understanding of the contextual factors in which metaphor takes place. According to this need for improvement within the traditional CMT (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), Kövecses (2015; 2017; 2020) introduced an improved version of the traditional theory, stating that “[...] CMT itself needs to be changed in several ways. In particular, I suggest (1) that it has to be given a much more elaborate contextual component than is currently available” (Kövecses, 2020, p. 112). This contextual component would especially contribute to further improvement in the area of translation. In a work called *Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the Nature of Difficulties in Metaphor Translation*, Kövecses (2014) argued about how the lack of attention given to the pragmatic component within the CMT affects the area of metaphor in translation. Giving more attention to the situational and discourse context surrounding metaphor could contribute to advance in different metaphor-related issues that have not yet received sufficient attention in this area. This could especially contribute to the development of metaphor translation within LSP. To date, metaphor in LSP has received very little attention. Even some bottom-up developed methods for identifying linguistic metaphors in corpora do not deliberately address metaphor with specialized meaning. That is the case for the Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (MIPVU) of Steen et al. (2010). “[...] In our project we assume that metaphor is ‘metaphor from the general language user’” (Steen et al., 2010, p. 34). However, in the same way in which metaphor belongs to the general language users it also belongs to the specialized language users. Particularly in LSP, metaphor is essential to make abstract processes more

comprehensible and to give a name to new realities and situations within different areas of knowledge. For example, in economics, the metaphor *inflation* illustrates an increase in the prices of services and goods, resulting in a decrease in the value of money. In the inflation process, prices are metaphorically compared with something filled with gas or air, like a balloon. The metaphorical mechanism is essential within LSP and there is a need for more studies in this area that consider its multilingual and multicultural character.

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