

Metaphors and Translation Strategies

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Submitted: 23 September 2025 Accepted: 30 September 2025 Published: 10 October 2025

 <https://doi.org/10.63620/MKJDMECA.2025.1002>

Citation: Ibraimi, A. (2025). *Metaphors and Translation Strategies*. *J of Digit Mark E-Comm Consum Anal* 1(1), 01-03.

Abstract

Metaphorical expressions are abundant in culture-bound concepts so much that they are closely related to particular cultural community. Metaphor translation has been subject to study recently and it presents challenges of approaching the text culturally, linguistically or even conceptually. Therefore, translating metaphors does in fact involve a number of factors and not only restricted to the provision of linguistic equivalences of the texts in question. This paper attempts to elaborate types of metaphor and the possible approaches of their translation from English into Albanian. The distinction between metaphor and simile has been attempted to be pointed out. It has also been elaborated why a metaphor should not be translated into a simile in Albanian or Macedonian language when translating metaphors. A great amount of attention has been paid to the definition of conceptual metaphors, according to which our concepts root in our experience and culture.

Keywords: Image, Culture, Metaphor, Simile, Conceptual Metaphor.

Introduction

Metaphor, as a distinctive feature of human communication, has been considered a rhetorical device usually present in literary works or language. Latter studies have revealed that metaphor has permeated other fields of language such as a journalism, politics, law, philosophy, advertisements, and even science and technology. Metaphor does not confine only to language, but it stretches to thought and action: "our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" [1].

Metaphor helps in making our speech more meaningful and more specific, in extending the meaning of our speech, in making what is abstract more concrete and vice versa. Metaphors are of paramount importance whenever there are strong emotions to be expressed. Based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory on the definition of metaphor, we may say that metaphor can be defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. A conceptual metaphor consists of two conceptual domains, in which one domain is understood in terms of another: "A conceptual domain is any coherent organization of experience". The source domain, the domain we draw metaphorical expressions from, to understand another conceptual domain, consists of a set of literal entities, attributes, process-

es and relationships, linked semantically and apparently stored together in the mind.

These are expressed in language through related words and expressions, which can be seen as organized in groups resembling those, sometimes described as lexical sets or lexical fields by linguists." (2009: 16). Put it differently, metaphor is used to understand or experience one thing in terms of another. The source domain is more familiar to the speaker and that is why we use it to understand the target domain. Metaphor shapes the way we understand reality and it does convey emotional connotations, evokes and carries feelings and attitudes against the phenomenon referred to [2]. However, when it comes to the "image" of metaphor in translation, cross-cultural studies have proved that SL image cannot always be retained.

Types of Metaphors

Having in mind that metaphor has been featured as an omnipresent feature of human communication, "our language is so riddled with metaphors that we can hardly say a sentence without one" Metaphors have widespread in all social activities such as journalism, law, politics, advertisement and even in science and technology [3]. Of paramount importance is to note that their presence is not confined to the domain of language only, but

also extends to the domain of thought and action. Metaphors permeate our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we think and act [1].

This figure of speech makes speech more meaningful and more specific, it produces images and extends the significance of what we say, they link different domains, different concepts both linguistically and mentally, but they are based speaker's/listener's knowledge and experience about these concepts or domains. We are bound to use metaphors whenever there are strong feelings to be expressed. There several types of metaphors according to and understanding what type of metaphor we are dealing with is important as different types impose different translation strategies [4].

Dead metaphors – are those metaphors that are so engrossed in our language and in our thinking that we do not take them to be metaphors anymore – those relating to universal terms of space and time, parts of the body, general ecological features and main human activities. These metaphors do not pose any challenge for the translator. Ex. – give a hand – zgjat dor dorën dikuj (ndihmon) – да пружиш рака (помага). Because of its frequent use, dead metaphor has ceased to surprise or conjure an image in their minds. Example of dead metaphors is deadline, stick in mud, and hang up the phone.

Cliché metaphors – metaphors which we still encounter in spite of their cliché usage. Translators should avoid clichés when translating an informative text. Cliché metaphors usually are found in two structures: figurative adjective + literal noun (e.g. filthy language) and figurative verb = literal noun (e.g. explore all avenues, leave no stone unturned, stick out a mile). believed that cliché metaphors replace a clear and obvious emotional thought. So, they should be upheld in vocative texts while in the informative texts such as public announcements, instructions and propogations the translator can get rid of them. The main obligation of the translators when facing cliché metaphors is to replace it with its cultural equivalent in the TL. But these metaphors may be replaced by a simile or even a dead metaphor when it has no suitable cultural equivalent. Stock or standard metaphors – metaphors that have an emotional value and not outlived by overuse. These metaphors are encountered in informal context (ex. Body of the car, he sees fear in my heart).

Regarding translation of these metaphors, suggest naturalness. For these metaphors, three strategies are recommended:

- reproducing the same image in TL;
- replacing the SL image with another established TL image;
- reducing sense or literal language.

Standard or stock metaphors - are very close to cliché metaphors so that one finds it very difficult to discern the difference between them. Perhaps the only noticeable difference between these two types of metaphors is the style of the text within which they are applied. Standard metaphors are usually used in the informal texts as a way of expressing a mental or physical situation in brief. For example: He is on the eve of getting married, Keep the pot boiling. The most common way of translating standard metaphors is to produce the SL image in the TL. However, other ways of rendering this type of metaphor to the TL such as reducing it to sense (which will result in the addition or the omission

of some parts and will consequently influence the emotive force of the metaphor) or translating it to simile.

Adapted metaphors - include proverbs. The translators usually strive to translate these metaphors to the best of one's ability due to its magnificent cultural role in the TL. Recent metaphors - include the newly-made words or phrases which use to refer to the things and entities that have already had a name (e.g. 'pissed' meaning 'drunk' and 'Greenback' meaning 'dollar bill') Original metaphor -is the one which is invented by the writer. Literal translation is the best choice for the translation of original metaphors because: original metaphors present the important attitudes of the writer and reflect his personality and worldview; original metaphors are considered as good choices to enrich the TL.

Translation Strategies

When translation of metaphors comes into play, research has shown that source language image (the image that a particular metaphor creates in the source language) cannot always be retained in the target language. Due to this image retention inability, several translation proposals have put forward:

Retention of the Same SL Metaphorical Image in TL

We use this procedure to translate the SL metaphor into TL metaphor with the same meaning and image. This applies with universal metaphors, which readers can completely understand the metaphor as the SL reader does. This usually happens when we deal with one-word metaphor. On the other hand, complex metaphors or idioms depend on cultural overlap. Animal metaphors can be quite universal as different cultures share similar concepts about the majority of animal traits. For example, swine is a symbol of filth and dirt everywhere, especially for Muslim community, for whom its meat is not allowed to be eaten.

Replacing the Image in the SL with a Standard TL Image

This is used with culturally compatible metaphors in TL. Stereotyped metaphors, according to Newmark, should be converted to sense whether they exist or not TL or not because is usually culturally bound. Euphemisms have to be replaced with cultural equivalents. An example of this strategy is - you are history which will be the same in Albanian – jeni histori, and in Macedonia it will be- ти си минато. In Macedonian, we replace history with “the past”.

Translation of Metaphor by Simile, Retaining the Image

This procedure converts metaphors into a simile but retaining the image. This procedure modifies the shock of metaphor as simile is more restrained and explicit. One such an example is the expression: He was a magnet for women- can be translated with a simile Ai i tërhiqte femrat si magnet/ Ги повлекуваше жените како магнет.

Conversion of Metaphor to Sense

This procedure may be applied to every text, especially when the SL to TL image replacement is extra broad. Earsplitting scream of air-raid sirens can be translated by conferting into a sense – buçimi maramendës i sirenave të sulmeve ajrore.

Deletion

If the metaphor is redundant or serves no practical purpose, there

is a case for its deletion, together with its sense component

Translation of Metaphor 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. For instance, “the tongue is a fire” is added with “a fire ruins things; what we say also ruin things” Dagut (1976, p. 32) believed that there is no simplistic general way to translate metaphors and the translatability of a metaphor in the SL is contingent upon two critical points: a) the particular cultural experiences and semantic associations exploited by it, b) the extent to which these can, or cannot, be produced non-anomalously into the TL, depending on the degree of overlap in each particular case.

On the basis of the cognitive approach, Mandelblit (1995) presented his ‘Cognitive Translation Hypothesis’ and considered two schemes for the translation of metaphors: Similar mapping conditions Different mapping conditions According to Mandelblit (1995), the translation of a metaphor with a similar mapping condition in the SL and TL is less time-consuming and simple. On the other hand, the translation of the SL metaphor with a different mapping condition can be reproduced in the TL while the translator can choose from among the following strategies to render the SL metaphor into the TL: rendering the metaphor to simile, a paraphrase, a footnote, an explanation and -in the last resort- omission.

Metaphor and Simile

Regarding the difference between metaphor and simile, we can say that a metaphor compares two seemingly unrelated subjects. Metaphor is not merely a comparison, more than that it creates an implied analogy which the speaker identifies one object with another and ascribes to the first object one or more of the qualities of the second object. This analogy also gives us the opportunity to ascribe to the first (object) the emotions or imaginative qualities we are aware of the second object. An example of such analogy is when we refer to somebody’s character: “That colleague of mine is a fox”, what we ascribe or attach to that man in this phrase is the attributes of cunningness and craftiness, for which fox is known in our culture (both in Macedonian/Albanian and English culture). If the animal (metaphor) fox was not known in our culture for the same attributes, then translation of this metaphor (fox) would pose a challenge for the translator. In this case, the translator may have to replace the ‘image’ of fox with another one established in TL [5].

Simile encompasses the same analogy - the perception of likeness between two objects. There is a difference between these two figures of speech that makes their interchangeability, at times, especially in translation, impossible. Metaphor identifies one object with another implicitly, while simile does the same explicitly with words such ‘like’, ‘as’, ‘then’, etc. So, if the above-mentioned example should be turned into a simile, it would be: ‘That colleague of mine as crafty as a fox’. When translating a metaphor, at times translators, when faced with lin-

guistic, cultural restrictions, recurs to replacing a metaphor with a simile in TL translation. The replacement of these figures of speech with each other in TL may prove to be counterproductive. Metaphor has an implied comparison, it has a wider range of comparison: ‘That colleague of mine is a fox (fox – craftiness, cunningness, etc.)’, while simile centers on a particular explicit feature: ‘That colleague of mine as crafty as a fox’ (crafty as a fox). What the simile in this case suggests is that the man is crafty, not suggesting or ignoring the other attributes the fox is known to have in a particular culture like cunningness. Translating a metaphor into a simile would result in translation loss due to limitation of the simile and loss of ambiguity.

Conclusion

As can be seen in the text above, metaphors are more than just linguistic means. Metaphor helps in making our speech more meaningful and more specific, in extending the meaning of our speech in making what is abstract more concrete and vice versa. Metaphors are of paramount importance whenever there are strong emotions to be expressed. Based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory on the definition of metaphor, we may say that metaphor can be defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. Put it differently, metaphor is used to understand or experience one thing in terms of another. Metaphor shapes the way we understand reality and it does convey emotional connotations, evokes and carries feelings and attitudes against the phenomenon referred. There are several types of metaphors such as dead metaphors, cliché, standard metaphors, stock metaphors, adapted metaphors, recent metaphors and originale metaphors. All these metaphors are encountered in law language and depending what kind of metaphor we are dealing with it determined what translation strategy we are going to adopt.

The last point here is the focus on simile and metaphor. Though we frequently use these to linguistic means interchangeably, still they are not the same. One main difference between these two is that metaphor is implicit while simile is explicit, or put it differently, metaphor identifies one object with another implicitly, while simile does the same explicitly with words such ‘like’, ‘as’, ‘then’, etc. Metaphor has an implied comparison; it has a wider range of comparison

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