



Strategies of Metaphor Translation

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Abstract

Specialised English dictionaries offer a unique treatment of metaphors, showing how lexicalised metaphors and phrases have monosemous or polysemous metaphorical meanings. Besides them, there can be found some specific regular patterns which can help students in the cognitive mechanism of translating metaphors. This paper discusses the usefulness of Newmark's dual theory of semantic and communicative methods of translation. He proposes seven strategies of metaphor translation that are here analysed, discussed and illustrated by a corpus from classes. For Newmark, translation is a craft. A student, as a translator, acquires a technique in which the process to be followed takes into account the acts of comprehension, interpretation, formulation and recreation. My students in our translatology workshops are involved in the translation process and they both practice and gain skills in the strategies of translation of figurative language from the SL to TL and vice versa.

Key words: *strategies, translation, figurative language, Newmark's prescriptive model*

Apstrakt

Specijalizovani rečnici engleskog jezika nude jedinstven prikaz metafora time što pokazuju kako leksičke metafore i idiomi mogu biti jednoznačni ili višeznačni. Osim toga, u njima se mogu pronaći određene šeme ili 'paterni' koji mogu pomoći učenicima u kognitivnim mehanizmima prevođenja metafora. Ovaj članak obrađuje temu korisnosti Njumarkove dvojne teorije semantičkih i komunikativnih metoda prevođenja i njegovih sedam strategija za prevođenje metafora će se analizirati, razmotriti i ilustrovati korpusom primera sa časova. Za Njumarka prevod je veština. Učenik kao prevodilac stiče tehniku pri kojoj process koji treba da prati podrazumeva činove razumevanja, interpretacije, formulacije i stvaranja. Moji učenici na našim prevodilačkim radionicama su uključeni u proces prevođenja i time vežbaju i stiču veštine u okviru strategija prevođenja figurativnog jezika sa izvornog jezika na ciljani jezik i obratno.

Ključne reči: *strategije, prevod, figurativni jezik, Njumarkov preskriptivni model*

1. Introduction

Scholars of metaphor use different theoretical concepts and parameters for the purposes of identifying, describing metaphors and their translatability as well as transfer methods. Such parameters, either combined with others from within translatology or used in specialised papers

of scholar's journals, can form the basis for the research of metaphors in the process of translation. A number of translation strategies in dealing with this issue will be discussed and suggested. The paper focuses on the practical dimension of the translation process between two different languages: English

and the native language (Serbian, Montenegrin), at my translology workshops.

Metaphors are very frequent and widely used tropes in English. According to Steen et al. (2010), every seven-and-a-half lexical units in the British National Corpus is related to a metaphorical mapping structure. This means that translators should deal with them on a daily basis and attention should be paid to this. As outlined in the following paper, Newmark's typology was used to examine the kinds of metaphors in the texts. A distinction was made between lexicalised and unlexicalised expressions.

2. About Newmark's types of metaphors

For many centuries, metaphors were studied within rhetorics. Strategies of translating metaphors can be prescriptive (Newmark) and descriptive (Snell-Hornby). In this paper it was decided that prescriptive ones would be considered, since I translated the other type into Serbian with authorised rights three years ago, and on this occasion they will not be analysed.

According to Newmark (1988:106) any word can be a metaphor and to find out if it is, the primary meaning has to be matched against the linguistic and cultural contexts.

Evans and Green (2006:303) pointed out that an important idea relates to hiding and highlighting: when a target is structured in terms of a particular source, this highlights certain aspects of the target while simultaneously hiding other aspects. Invoking the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR highlights the adversarial nature of argument but hides the fact that argument often involves an ordered and organised development of a particular topic (he won the argument, I couldn't defend that point, and so on). In contrast, the metaphor AN ARGUMENT IS A JOURNEY highlights the progressive and organisational aspects of arguments while hiding the confrontational aspects. (We will proceed in a step-by-step fashion. We have covered a lot of ground.) In this way metaphors can perspectivise a concept or conceptual domain.

The most important definitions associated with metaphors, which help understanding the theme in the best way, will be mentioned since they can create difficulties in the translation process because of their vagueness and implication

In the Oxford English Dictionary (2002) a metaphor is described as a figure of speech in which a name or descriptive phrase is transferred to an object or an action different from, but analogous to, that to which it is literally applicable; 2.

A thing considered as representative of some other (usu. abstract) thing.

A metaphor is defined as an indirect comparison between two or more apparently unrelated things. The point of similarity may be physical but often it is chosen for its connotations (Newmark 1988:85). He states that the first purpose of a metaphor is to describe something comprehensively, economically and generally more forcefully than what is possible in literal language (Newmark 1988:111).

According to Newmark (1988:104), metaphor could be any figurative speech: the transferred sense of a physical word; the personification of an abstraction; the application of a word or collocation to what it does not literally denote, i.e. to describe one thing in terms of another. Note also that metaphor incidentally demonstrates a resemblance, a common semantic area between two or more or less similar things the image and the object.

On the basis of his typology of metaphors, he distinguishes six types of them (1988:108):

(1) Dead metaphors, whose images are highly unmarked (e.g. at the mouth of the river, the arm of a chair);

(2) Cliché metaphors, which refer to the use of cliché expressions in text (e.g. long time, no see; a transparent lie);

(3) Stock or standard metaphors, which he defines as an established metaphor [...] not deadened by overuse. These metaphors are frequently applied in informal language (e.g. the body of a car; he sees fear in my heart);

(4) Adapted metaphors, where the fixedness of a stock metaphor has been adapted or personalised in some way. Usually, proverbs, which reflect the relationship between language and culture, fall into this category. They are actually stock metaphors, but adapted by a translator or speaker into a new context. Newmark illustrates this type by the following (e.g. the ball is a little in their court, get them in the door); (5) Recent metaphors, where an anonymous metaphorical neologism has become generally used in the SL. Newmark categorises this metaphor as a live metaphor (e.g. groovy)

(6) Original metaphors, which are created by the writer or speaker usually to make discourse more interesting and often used to highlight particular points or as reiteration. It is created from the SL's own original thoughts and ideas (e.g. a forest of fingers).

3. Newmark's prescriptive model of metaphor translation

The word translation is defined either as a process (Meaning 1) or a product (Meaning 2) as it is described:

e.g. translation, n.

1. The act or an instance of translating.
2. A written or spoken expression of the meaning of a word, speech, book etc in another language.

It means that the translation process goes beyond the simple concept of merely replacing words in one language with words in another. Metaphor has been widely discussed within translatology, primarily in the translatability and strategies of their translation.

There are three main strategies of metaphor translation found in translatology (Bassnett, Lefevere, 1993; Snell-Hornby, 2006) and these are: 1) a metaphor into the same metaphor, named direct translation; 2) a metaphor into a different metaphor—substitution of the image in the SL by a TL metaphor with the same or a similar sense and the same or similar associations; 3) a metaphor into the sense—paraphrase, a shift to a non-figurative equivalent.

Postmodern trends in translatology have been recognised by Bassnett (1993:47), who perceived them as inaugurating a poststructuralist stage in the discipline, given that translation is now perceived as one of a range of processes of textual

manipulation, where the concept of plurality replaces dogmas of faithfulness to a source text, and where the idea of the original is being challenged from a variety of perspectives.

Newmark binds the translation strategies to the type of metaphor (standard, recent, dead, original, adapted, cliché) as well as text types.

According to Newmark's prescriptive model of metaphors translation (1988) there are strategies for transfer of their proper meaning.

While dead metaphors are not especially problematic, literal translation is often not possible.

In vocative texts, cliché metaphors should be upheld in the TT (Newmark 1988: 107). In informative texts, they should be reduced to their sense or replaced with a more credible stock metaphor.

For the translation of stock metaphors, the SL image should be legitimately reproduced in the TL, but the metonyms used may be transferred as long as the substitutes have the same connotations as the SL. However, the SL image is more commonly translated by images that are established to a similar degree. Stock metaphors may also be reduced to their sense or literal language.

Adapted metaphors should be translated using equivalent adapted metaphors or reduced to their sense.

Recent metaphors should be translated using componential analysis (ibid. 114).

In vocative texts, original metaphors should be translated literally, as they “contain the core of an important writer’s message...” (ibid. 112). If the metaphor is obscure and of little importance to the text, it should be replaced with a descriptive metaphor or reduced to its sense. In informative texts, consideration should be given to the number and variety of original metaphors in the text as a whole and a decision should be taken between literal translation, reduction to its sense or modification of the metaphor.

Newmark contributed to translatology with his seven strategies of metaphor translation that have almost always been taken up by the researchers and which are considered here.

They are:

1. Reproducing the same image in the TL. This is the best way to translate stock metaphors, most frequently, idioms.
2. Replacing the image in the SL with a standard TL image. It is used when there is no image that corresponds exactly to the one in the SL and which does not clash with the TL culture.
3. Translating metaphor by simile. This strategy modifies an emotive metaphorical expression to suit the TL if that context is not as emotive in character as the SL.
4. Translating metaphor by simile + sense.

5. Converting a metaphor to its sense. This is a strategy where the image of the SL is reduced to its sense and rewritten to suit the TL.

6. Deleting. It is used when the metaphor is redundant.

7. Combining the same metaphor with the sense.

These strategies are arranged according to preference, which means that Newmark recommends that translators opt for the replacement strategy in the first instance and only if this is not possible, due to cultural clashes, to move down the list and opt for an alternative strategy. Newmark (1988: 48-49) argues that the most translatable metaphors are dead ones, whereas the translatability of stock and original ones is proportional to the proximity of the two systems involved.

Semantically speaking, the issue of metaphor translation deals with translational equivalence which is bound to their communicative role and type, nature and function of a trope as such.

As for types of metaphors, the criterion of time, or in other words, the novelty or originality of expressions, as proposed by Newmark has been often applied. On one hand, there are unlexicalised metaphors which are absolutely or relatively novel and creative, while on the other hand, there is a whole world of lexicalised metaphors whose metaphorical nature is

still apparent, but which are already established in the language.

Here Newmark's typology of metaphors (1988:106) is considered and discussed:

1) Dead metaphors (are metaphors where you are hardly conscious of the image and describe and relate to universal terms like space and time; their figurative meaning is lost or very hard to distinguish and they are lexicalised.

2) Cliché metaphors (are ones that have temporarily outlived their usefulness like jewel in the crown of the country's education); Newmark (1981:87) distinguishes them by saying that clichés are made up of two types of fixed collocations (figurative adjective + literal noun or figurative verb + figurative noun). They are similar to dead metaphors because they have been overused and very often, their secondary, figurative meanings can be found in dictionaries. Newmark (1988:108) argues that it is the translator's choice to distinguish stock metaphors from clichés since they overlap.

3) Stock or standard metaphors (are established metaphors used in an informal context referentially pragmatically efficient like oil the wheels); they are often culturally bound, they have certain emotional warmth and are not, as opposed to most dead and cliché

metaphors, deadened by overuse (Newmark, 1988:108).

4) Adapted metaphors (are metaphors which involve an adaptation of an existing metaphor)

5) Recent metaphors (are metaphorical neologisms which spread fast in language, like skint without money); these metaphors are lexicalised ones.

6) Original metaphors are unlexicalised ones; they portray the writer's personality and comment on life (Newmark 1988:112). Newmark (1988:104) considers as metaphors those that have two purposes: the first one is to describe a mental process or state, a concept, a person, an object, a quality or an action more comprehensively and concisely than is possible in literal or physical language. The second one is that metaphors should appeal to the senses, to interest, to clarify graphically, to please, to delight. His definition can be explained as both cognitive and aesthetic, since a metaphor on its own covers these two purposes together.

4. Conclusion

Over the decades, beginning from Aristotle, metaphors have been classified in different ways by different linguists. This paper has primarily discussed Newmark's classification (1988) of metaphors into six types and his categorisation was considered easier to apply to the analysis of English metaphors, because of the practical way that the definitions were provided and the students' practical skills and explanations at translatology workshops.

In translatology, metaphors were reflected on with respect to translatability or what was lost in translating them, their originality, cultural background or TL language richness. Metaphors are also culture-specific; they cannot be transferred intact from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL). There are several strategies of metaphor transfer from SL to TL.

Newmark contributed to translatology with his seven strategies of metaphor translation that have often been taken up by other researchers. Most of the work in translatology has commented on metaphors in a more traditional view, defining a metaphor as a linguistic expression which can describe the object more comprehensively, succinctly and forcefully than is possible in literal or physical language (Newmark 1988: 95). By using Newmark's typology, it was possible to categorise different metaphors

depending on type, such as dead, cliché, stock, recent or original metaphors. His extensive research on the strategies of metaphor translation proved immensely significant in the practical translatalogical perspective.

However, since the advent of a cognitive approach, mainly initiated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), it has repeatedly been demonstrated that metaphors have not been just decorative elements of rhetoric, but rather basic resources for thought processes in human society. They are cognitive devices for forming and communicating conceptualisations of reality.

In conceptual metaphor theory, metaphors are means to understand one domain of experience, a new, unknown one, a target domain, in terms of another, a familiar one, a source domain. The source domain is mapped onto the target domain. The structural components of the base conceptual schema are transferred to the target domain, thus also allowing for knowledge-based inferences and entailments.

For Newmark (1988:84) translatology is mainly concerned with the huge purpose of metaphor which is to describe an entity, event or quality more comprehensively and concisely and in a more complex way than is possible by using literal language.

And translators, my students, decide on their translation strategies focusing on the

items such as the SL or TL, culture and style.

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