WAYS OF RENDERING CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN TRANSLATION

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Abstract: Conceptual metaphors constitute a fundamental mechanism through which human cognition structures abstract concepts in terms of more concrete and experiential domains. Their translation, however, presents a considerable challenge due to differences in linguistic systems, cultural frameworks, and cognitive patterns across languages. This paper aims to explore the major strategies for rendering conceptual metaphors in translation, including literal translation, metaphorical substitution, paraphrasing, adaptation, and omission. The study also examines the factors influencing the translator's choice of strategy, such as text type, communicative purpose, and cultural compatibility. Through theoretical discussion and illustrative examples, the paper argues that effective metaphor translation requires a dynamic balance between semantic accuracy and cultural appropriateness.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, translation strategies, equivalence, cognitive linguistics, intercultural communication

Introduction. The study of metaphor has undergone a significant transformation with the development of cognitive linguistics. Traditionally regarded as a rhetorical or stylistic device, metaphor is now widely understood as a fundamental aspect of human thought and conceptualization. Conceptual metaphors enable individuals to comprehend abstract phenomena by relating them to more concrete experiences, thereby shaping not only language but also perception and reasoning. The choice of translation strategy is influenced by several factors. One of the most important is the purpose of the translation [1]. In academic and technical texts, clarity and precision are often prioritized, leading to the use of paraphrasing or literal translation (Newmark, 1988; Nida, 1964). In contrast, literary texts require greater attention to stylistic and emotional effects, making adaptation and substitution more appropriate (Baker, 2018). Translators are no longer dealing solely with words and grammatical structures; rather,

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they must engage with underlying conceptual systems that may differ significantly across languages and cultures. As a result, the translation of conceptual metaphors represents a complex and multifaceted challenge. The difficulty arises primarily from the fact that conceptual metaphors are often culture-specific. A metaphor that is natural and meaningful in one language may not have an equivalent in another, or it may evoke entirely different associations. Therefore, translators must employ a range of strategies to ensure that the intended meaning is conveyed effectively while maintaining the integrity of the original text.

This paper aims to analyze the main ways of rendering conceptual metaphors in translation and to provide a comprehensive discussion of the factors that influence the translator's decisions. It also seeks to highlight the importance of cultural and cognitive awareness in achieving successful translation outcomes.

Theoretical background. Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), developed within the framework of cognitive linguistics, posits that metaphor is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a cognitive process that structures human thought. According to this theory, abstract concepts are systematically understood in terms of more concrete source domains. For instance, the metaphor "time is money" reflects the conceptualization of time as a valuable and limited resource. One of the key contributions of CMT is the identification of systematic correspondences, or mappings, between source and target domains [2]. These mappings are reflected in everyday language and are deeply embedded in cultural experience. As a result, metaphor is not arbitrary but structured and meaningful. In translation studies, the concept of equivalence has traditionally been central. However, achieving equivalence in metaphor translation is particularly challenging. Formal equivalence, which focuses on preserving the linguistic form, is often insufficient when dealing with conceptual metaphors. Instead, functional or dynamic equivalence, which emphasizes the effect on the target audience, is more appropriate. Another important consideration is the distinction between universal and culture-specific metaphors. While some metaphors are grounded in shared human experiences and may be found across languages, others are deeply rooted in specific cultural contexts [3]. This distinction has significant implications for translation strategies.

Classification of conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphors can be broadly categorized into three main types, each of which has distinct characteristics and implications for translation:

1. Structural metaphors. Structural metaphors involve the organization of one concept in terms of another. For example, the metaphor "argument is war" structures the concept of argument using the framework of war, resulting in expressions such as "defend a position" or "attack an idea." These metaphors are often systematic and highly productive.

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2. *Orientational metaphors*. Orientational metaphors are based on spatial orientation and physical experience. Examples include “happy is up” and “sad is down.” These metaphors are grounded in bodily experience and may vary across cultures depending on how spatial relationships are conceptualized.

3. *Ontological metaphors.* Ontological metaphors involve treating abstract concepts as entities, substances, or containers. For instance, expressions like “inflation is rising” or “he is full of anger” reflect the conceptualization of abstract phenomena as tangible objects. Understanding these types is essential for translators, as each type may require a different approach to translation [4].

Ways of rendering conceptual metaphors in translation.

1. Literal translation (Direct transfer). Literal translation involves preserving both the form and meaning of the original metaphor. This strategy is most effective when the same conceptual metaphor exists in both the source and target languages. However, its applicability is limited. When cultural or cognitive differences are significant, literal translation may result in unnatural or incomprehensible expressions.

2. Metaphorical substitution. Metaphorical substitution involves replacing the source metaphor with a different metaphor that conveys a similar meaning in the target language. This strategy prioritizes communicative effectiveness and cultural appropriateness. While substitution allows the translator to maintain the figurative nature of the expression, it may involve a shift in imagery or conceptual structure.

3. Paraphrasing (Explication). Paraphrasing involves translating the meaning of the metaphor without preserving its metaphorical form. This approach is commonly used in academic and technical texts where clarity and precision are essential. Although paraphrasing ensures comprehension, it often results in the loss of stylistic and expressive qualities.

4. Adaptation. Adaptation requires modifying the metaphor to better fit the cultural context of the target language. This may involve changing the imagery, references, or conceptual associations. Adaptation is particularly important in literary translation, where the emotional and cultural impact of the text must be preserved [5].

5. Omission. Omission is used when a metaphor cannot be effectively translated or when it is not crucial to the overall meaning of the text. While this strategy may improve readability, it can lead to a loss of nuance and stylistic richness.

Discussion. The translation of conceptual metaphors is a complex process that involves the interaction of linguistic, cognitive, and cultural factors. One of the central issues is the extent to which metaphors are universal or culture-specific. The concept of loss and gain is also central to metaphor translation. While some strategies may result in the loss of metaphorical imagery, they may also enhance clarity and accessibility (Nida, 1964). Conversely, preserving the original metaphor may retain stylistic richness but reduce comprehensibility (Newmark, 1988). While some

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metaphors are based on shared human experiences and may be easily translated, others are deeply embedded in cultural contexts and require more creative solutions.

The choice of translation strategy is influenced by several factors. One of the most important is the purpose of the translation. In academic and technical texts, clarity and precision are often prioritized, leading to the use of paraphrasing or literal translation. In contrast, literary texts require greater attention to stylistic and emotional effects, making adaptation and substitution more appropriate.

Another key factor is the target audience. Translators must consider the cultural background and expectations of the audience in order to ensure effective communication. A metaphor that is unfamiliar or culturally inappropriate may hinder understanding and reduce the impact of the text. The concept of loss and gain is also central to metaphor translation. While some strategies may result in the loss of metaphorical imagery, they may also enhance clarity and accessibility. Conversely, preserving the original metaphor may retain stylistic richness but reduce comprehensibility. Furthermore, the translator's competence plays a crucial role. Effective metaphor translation requires not only linguistic proficiency but also a deep understanding of cultural and cognitive frameworks. Translators must be able to identify underlying conceptual mappings and evaluate their relevance in the target context.

Finally, it is important to recognize that translation is not a process of direct transfer but one of interpretation and reconstruction. Translators act as mediators between cultures, negotiating meaning and adapting it to new contexts (Toury, 1995; Venuti, 1995).

Conclusion. This study has examined the main strategies for rendering conceptual metaphors in translation and highlighted the factors influencing their use. It has demonstrated that metaphor translation is a complex and dynamic process that requires a balance between fidelity to the source text and adaptation to the target culture. No single strategy can be applied universally. Instead, translators must adopt a flexible and context-sensitive approach, taking into account linguistic, cultural, and communicative factors. The findings underscore the importance of intercultural competence and cognitive awareness in achieving successful translation. Future research may focus on empirical studies and corpus-based analysis to further explore the translation of conceptual metaphors across different languages.

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