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Translating Metaphorical Expressions in Political Discourse: A Comparative Conceptual Study (English – Arabic)

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Abstract:
This paper is to analyze the conceptual metaphors underlying the metaphorical expressions in political discourse, it explores the role of conceptual metaphors on political language and the translation strategy adopted to translate. To prove this, a cognitive approach to metaphorical expressions translation in political discourse is used. The study focuses on the analysis of the conceptual mapping of the abstract concept of politics into some other source domains. The given examples are used to argue that we use existing physical concepts to conceptualize abstract concepts for easy understanding. The results obtained reveal that the set of conceptual metaphors underlying the political expressions are almost similar in both languages in terms of the source domains used as well as their collocation patterns. The paper adds a further support to the claim that metaphors are not only a rhetorical tool used by literary men but it reflects our thinking when dealing with abstract issues in terms of concrete experience. The study has pedagogical implications for media translation students. They can compile their own glossaries using the collocation patterns relevant to each metaphorical expression.

Key Words: metaphor, cognitive concepts, collocation, political, domain, mapping

1. Introduction

According to Merriam Webster's Dictionary (1999), metaphor is "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object, or idea and is used in place of another to suggest likeness or analogy between them, like drowning in money". The etymological origin of the word metaphor is from the Greek *meta* which means with and *phor* which means carry. Scholars defined metaphor in a variety of ways. For Charteris-Black (2004:21), metaphor is "a linguistic representation that results from the shift in the use of a word or phrase." Lakoff and Johnson (1980), claim that the metaphorical expressions are not mere words, but they are part and parcel of our cognitive system and the way we conceptualize things.

Literature Review:
2.1The Traditional Turn in Metaphor Studies:

In the traditional literature, metaphor is understood as a term of speech and writing. It is a style of language. In literary texts, metaphors can play the role of serving poetic imagination Lakoff& Turner (1989). Shakespeare, one of the greatest masters of metaphor, compared the world to a stage and human beings to players on the stage. As a literary device, metaphor can help the writer delight the audience or readers and persuade them to accept his argument Lakoff& Turner (1989). Later on the 1980s, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) changed the research direction when they provided readers with their cognitive theory on metaphor.

1.2 The Cognitive Turn:

In their seminal book *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) identify the major implications of metaphor in language. They argue that metaphors are not arbitrary, because though they may vary from one culture to another, they are still derived mainly from peoples' physical, social and cultural experiences. Therefore, metaphor can be defined from the cognitive perspective as the understanding of one conceptual domain in terms of another one Lakoff& Johnson (1980; Kövecses (2009). Lakoff claimed his opinion again in his book about metaphor as a way of thought from a philosophical perspective (Lakoff:1987).

In the cognitive view of metaphor, "conceptual domain" is a critical concept in cognitive theories of metaphor Kövecses (2009). We rely on our knowledge and experience on one concept in order to understand another abstract concept. Hence, one conceptual metaphor is formed by two conceptual domains (Kövecses:2009:p.17). These two domains are called target domain and source domain respectively (Lakoff &Johnson:1980; Lakoff:1992; Kövecses:2009). We try to understand the target domain by the use of the source domain. It is not possible to reverse source domain and target domain Kövecses (2009,p.29). For example, we do not talk about *journey* in terms of *life*. Cognitive linguists (Lakoff &Johnson:1980; Lakoff:1992; Kövecses:2009) pointed out that concept of systematic correspondences and the conceptual correspondences are referred as mapping.

1.3 Classification of Metaphor:

According to Lakoff (1987) and Lakoff-Johnson (1998, 2005), our conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined. Thus the way we think, what we experience and what we

do every day is often a matter of metaphor. Cognitive linguists assume that concepts such as *[love, happiness, anger, fear, time,* w*ealth, desire, etc.]* are structured on our concrete, physical experience like *{human body, buildings, machines, animals, plants,* etc.). In other words, conceptual metaphors always combine two domains: a concrete, well bounded "source domain" and an abstract, "target domain"

Lakoff and Johnson (1987) identify three major types of conceptual metaphor: Structural Metaphor, Orientational Metaphor and Ontological Metaphor. They are going to be discussed in turns. Lakoff and Johnson explained *structural metaphor* by using the example: ARGUMENT IS WAR. They talked about *argument* in terms of *war*. Sentences like *I have won the argument with him. / He shot my argument down.* From these sentences, we can find out that people can not only have an argument, but also can win or object to an argument. The person who is against my argument is considered as an enemy or an opponent. *I tried to defend my point of view when he tried to shoot me down. / I attacked his argument when I tried to win an argument*. As a matter of fact, the things we do about the *argument* can be structured in terms of the concept of *war*. In ARGUMENT IS WAR, we are trying to structure the things we do when we are in an *argument*. Arguing-as an activity, is metaphorically structured in this way. The definition of *structural metaphor* is "one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another" Lakoff &Johnson (1980,p.14).

The second type of metaphor is *Orientational Metaphor*. Instead of structuring one concept in terms of another in Structural Metaphor, orientational metaphor is about a total conceptual system. They mainly come from human body experience. Orientational Metaphor connects firmly with spatial orientation in most cases. Examples are such as up-down, in-out, and front-back. This sort of metaphor gives a spatial orientation to a concept, such as GOOD IS UP. BAD IS DOWN. Here, the concept of GOOD is oriented UP. The metaphorical linguistic expression is such as *Things are looking up* Lakoff& Johnson (1980).

The third is *Ontological Metaphor*. Container metaphor is one of the major subtypes of ontological metaphor. In a container metaphor, a human being is treated as a container, the rest of the world is divided from us by our skins. There is an in-out orientation Lakoff& Johnson (1980). There are some entities which have always been treated as containers, such as room, flat or houses. So we can say *I have moved out of his house. /Let's open it and see what is inside it.* As a matter of fact, even for something which does not have obvious boundary, we can still view it as container. We try to quantify it ourselves and impose boundaries. For example, we often say: *Are you out of your mind? / I think I have fallen in love with her*. The bounded items can be quantified much clearer. For example, we can say: *There are a lot of people in Hong Kong*. Both of the *people* and *Hong Kong* itself are regarded as containers. However, they belong to the different types. The former one is a container substance and the latter one is container object Lakoff& Johnson (1980,p.30).

Personification is another one of the major ontological metaphors. It treats physical object as a human being. In that case, the non-human substances can be understood in terms of human

activities, feeling, and characteristics and so on. We can understand something in human terms more easily Lakoff& Johnson (1980). Examples are like: *Her faith guides her through all the difficulties. /Actions speak louder than words.*

What is more, personification does not represent only one process. Different personifications choose various aspects of people. For example:

Depression has attacked me seriously.

My biggest enemy now is depression.

Depression is treated as a person, but it is not the only message it delivers here. It is more specific. The above two examples give people the information about how to think about *depression* and how to deal with it Lakoff & Johnson (1980).

2. Translating Metaphor - towards a Communicative 'transeme'
Like 'morpheme' in morphology and 'phoneme' in phonology, as the smallest structural units, 'transeme' can be the smallest unit in discourse which is communicatively transferred from one language to another regardless of the similarity in image schema El-Batal (2009) [my translation]. According to Deignan (2005,p.27), collocations, especially those with abstract nouns, evidence the frequently co-occurring lexical units with the analyzed metaphor which allows drawing inferences on the metaphorical thinking. Drawing on English collocation patterns, 'transemes' are arranged according to their frequent co-occurrence in these expressions. These metaphorical 'translation units' can come in various structural and semantic patterns. These patterns, both in English and Arabic, occur in these structures:
1. Noun +Noun [a health, energy, fuel, debt, midlife, etc. *crisis*]
2. Verb + Noun [deal with, defuse, overcome, resolve, face, deal with, forestall a *crisis*]
3. Adjective + Noun [a financial, a political, a health, acute, humanitarian, international, , etc. *crisis*]

The word **'crisis'** can collocate in different patterns. These translation units differ from the regular entries in bilingual dictionaries. Their equivalents depend communicatively on context and other collocates they come with (ibid.).[my translation]. To clarify, the word **'hunger'** which means (جوع) in the expression "**to go in a hunger strike**" has different meaning when translated in Arabic "الاكل والشرب" in the expression [**يضرب عن الطعام**]. El-Batal (2009). This means that we depend on the communicative rather than the lexical meaning of words and expressions.

Consequently, translators encounter different kinds of challenges when translating metaphorical expressions in media discourse. These challenges are mostly related to inability to find a target language equivalent and unawareness of pragmatic, formal and semantic characteristics of idiomatic expressions, unawareness of the cultural differences between English and Arabic and unawareness of idioms' categorization namely (proverbs, metaphor, similes and binomials).

For that reason, Schäffner (2004, p.126) identifies five types of metaphor translation in an investigation of translations of political texts:

(1)   a conceptual metaphor is identical in source text (ST) and target text (TT) at the macro-level without each individual manifestation having been accounted for at the micro-level; (2) structural components of the base conceptual schema in the ST are replaced in the TT by expressions that

make entailments explicit; (3) a metaphor is more elaborate in the TT; (4) ST and TT employ different metaphorical expressions which can be combined under a more abstract conceptual metaphor; (5) the expression in the TT reflects a different aspect of the conceptual metaphor as in the example (to go on a hunger strike - يضرب عن الطعام).

Methodology and Data Collection:
The corpus is collected from mono- and bi-lingual dictionaries [*Longman Collocation Dictionary and Thesaurus, The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English, A Dictionary of Transemes in Contemporary Arab Media, A Dictionary of Modern Political Idioms*]. These patterns, both in English and Arabic are used to analyze the data:
1. Noun +Noun [a health, energy, fuel, debt, midlife, etc. *crisis*]
2. Verb + Noun [deal with, defuse, overcome, resolve, face, deal with, forestall a *crisis*]
3. Adjective + Noun [a financial, a political, a health, acute, humanitarian, international, etc. *crisis*]

3.1Discussion and Conclusion:
Drawing on the framework of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the target domain politics has been mapped out into a number of source targets in the press corpus. These are selected because as the most dominant source metaphors in the Anglo-American English (Semino:2008,p.92). They include PATH/ JOURNEY, CONTAINERS, SPORTS, WAR AND PEOPLE.

3.1.1 Politics is war/ conflict, struggle

English Metaphors	Arabic Metaphors
A period of political upheaval	فترة من التوتر السياسي
A heavyweight country	دولة ذات ثقل سياسي
A political row	شقاق سياسي
All warring sides of political spectrum	كل الاتجاهات السياسية المتناحرة
Political reforms	اصلاحات سياسية
Political standoff stalement	وضع سياسي متأزم
A settling of political scores	تسوية حسابات سياسية

All the metaphorical expressions follow the (Adj.+N.) collocation pattern. Like other target domains of our experience, politics is rife with metaphors. It is mapped into a set of war/ conflict source domains (political **row**, political **crisis**, etc.) to make it effective and easy to grasp. For example, during the election campaigns, politicians use a variety of metaphors to persuade the audience to vote for them. They use a lot of rhetoric and metaphors as a persuasive weapon to win the hearts and minds of their voters and make their message easy and accessible for their audience. Hence, they go in '**row'** with their rivals especially during presidential debates. Their discourse come up loaded with figurative language. It can noticed that there are correspondent equivalents between English and Arabic metaphors.

3.1.2 Politics is personification

English Metaphors	Arabic Metaphors
Political suicide	انتحار سياسي
Bloated bureaucracy	جهاز اداري متضخم
A state of political détente	حالة من الاسترخاء السياسي
Economic stimulus package	خطة لانعاش الاقتصاد
To scurry for a safe haven	يلهث وراء ملاذ امن
Security awareness	وعي امني

The second type of metaphor analyzed is based on the generic metaphor POLITICS is PEOPLE. This metaphor allows us to conceptualize political activities as humans. The same collocation co-occurrences can be detected in English metaphorical expressions and their Arabic counterparts.

3.1.3 Politics is Sport

English Metaphors	Arabic Metaphors
Arms race	سباق التسلح
With all the razzmatazz of a funfair	في جو من الاثارة
To thwart UN efforts	يعرقل جهود الامم المتحدة
To face a formidable foe	يواجه خصما عنيدا
Hectic bids for the empowerment of women	محاولات مضنية لتعزيز دور المرأة ومنحها سلطات أوسع
In a race against the clock	في سباق مع الزمن
A soft target	هدف سهل

The third type of metaphor is that based on SPORTS image-schemas. These metaphorical expressions have the same collocations patterns. Sports can be conceived of as a series of activities carried out to achieve certain objectives. They can be used as a rich source domain to understand politics. People feel enthusiastic during sports competitions. Therefore, politicians draw heavily on this source domain and borrow metaphors to persuade the voters to vote for them. When they talk about their election program, politicians or their parties can *play a role* to bring peace and prosperity to the nation, they can in bringing achievements for the people. They *compete to win* the election, etc.

3.1.4 Politics is Health and Ills:

English Metaphors	Arabic Metaphors
To heal divisions among rebel groups	يخفف من حدة الشقاق بين الجماهير المتناحرة
To curb the spread of	يحد من انتشار
To recover from decades of battle wounds	يبرأ من جراح خلفتها عقود من الحرب
Post-war trauma	جراح والام ما بعد الحرب
To chafe under curfew	يعاني الامرين من حظر التجول
To strike a deep core of discontent…	يؤلب المواجع ...
To impeach the testimony	يجرح شهادة ...

The fourth metaphor is Human Body. The collocation pattern (V.+N.) occurs in all of the metaphorical expressions. It is easier to transfer the image schema of an 'ailing political situation' through the description of its convolutions and its intricacies as those of a troubled mankind. Therefore, the health and ills source domains can help us understand when politics is in appropriate/ inappropriate conditions just like the human body. People can '*suffer*' a defeat or the '*post – war trauma'*. Here the political situation under which people live can become *unhealthy* as the human body. They suffer from unjust treatment or lack of services.

4.3 Politics is Buildings and Constructions:

English Metaphors	Arabic Metaphors
To reach a deadlock; to reach an impasse	يصل الى طريق مسدود
To formalize a split in ranks	يحث انشقاقا في الصفوف
To lay the foundation stone	يضع حجر الاساس
Groundless allegations	مزاعم لا اساس لها
To engage in constructive dialogue	يشترك في حوار بناء
To lay the groundwork for …to set the stage for …	يمهد الطريق ل ...
To cement ties	يقوي أواصر العلاقات

When we think of buildings and construction, we often have the image schema of bricks and other construction material and teamwork. People set up houses, *build* bridges that *connec*t isolated places, *lay* roads that bring them closer. These elements of the source domains can be metaphorically used in politics. Politicians promise their voters that they will *cement* and *build* stronger bilateral relations with other countries and *hold constructive dialogues* when they review their election program. They draw on these source domains to persuade voters to vote for them.

Conclusion:
Following the Theory of Conceptual Metaphor (CMT), this paper has presented a comparative study of metaphors in a sample of Arabic and English expressions. The focus was on the expressions used in political discourse. Politics domain has been understood in a number of source domains. Moreover, drawing on collocation patterns, these expressions were selected according to the regularities they form with other nouns, verbs and adjectives. Instead of adopting a conventional method to understand metaphors, this paper opts for a conceptual approach to analyze the underlying metaphors.. As a conclusion, we would like to point out that a comparative study of metaphor conceptualization for translation purposes in the field of political discourse cannot be carried out without taking into account local, cultural, socio-political factors that affect the politics of the source or target language at a due point. Therefore, when it comes to translating a metaphor from one language into another, translators should take these factors into consideration.

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