| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

The Translatability of Sports Metaphors in Political News

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| **ABSTRACT**

The present study investigates the difficulties and problems in deciphering the figurative meaning of English sports metaphors that appear in political news and, more specifically, in US presidential campaigns and their Arabic equivalents when they are under the detailed scrutiny of translation. In order to highlight the problem under discussion, the study explores the translation of some sports metaphors in their original context of use. Several English sports metaphors from different sports fields are collected randomly from British and US online newspapers with their possible equivalents in Arabic that are used in comparable texts that report the same topic. This comparative study focuses on the different strategies that are followed in rendering English sports metaphors in Arabic online newspapers. The researcher employed an empirical, descriptive and analytical approach where sports metaphors are described and classified. Their translations on online Arabic newspapers are also discussed and examined. The analysis will be based on the conceptual metaphor framework proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1984). Thus, it will be important to assess the conceptualized experiences across different cultures, particularly between English and Arabic, in this study. The findings reveal that English sports metaphors pose a metaphorical and cultural threat to the Arab translator, who might be tempted to translate them literally in case s/he fails to understand their hidden meaning. Producing accurate translation equivalents for these items cannot be achieved without knowing their metaphorical senses and the ability to provide natural and acceptable equivalents in the target language. The aim is to create a similar impact on the target language audience.

1. Introduction

Translation of journalistic articles has always been a vital practice in many news agencies. Even though journalistic articles are deemed to be straightforward in reporting news clearly without some aesthetic aspects, they include some lexical and stylistic features that are part of other domains. Thus, they are not free from some literary features that are sometimes employed deliberately to shape the readers' perceptions of reality.

Besides metaphors' main use in literary texts, they are also commonplace in journalistic articles. In general, metaphor can create "an imaginative shock due to the juxtaposition of unrelated domains which may express a subjective experience peculiar to a particular culture" (Obeidat 1997, p. 209).

Yet, when it comes to translating metaphor, it seems problematic as the interpretation and use of a metaphor might be different from one language or culture to that of another. The problem far exceeds that level due to the fact that there are tremendous linguistic and cultural dissimilarities between English and Arabic. Thus, metaphorical expressions might cause problems for translators who work in this language pair.

Metaphors derived from sports could be regarded as a type of metaphors that fall under the type of structural metaphors introduced by Lackoff and Johnson (1980). Sports metaphors that are taken from different sports, such as baseball and basketball, appear in political news and, more specifically, in US presidential campaigns. This study will investigate difficulties and problems encountered in translating sports metaphors into Arabic. The analysis will be done with the objective of identifying the possible problems Arab translators may encounter in the process of translation.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. *Journalistic translation:*

Translation has a pivotal role in the dissemination and circulation of news. Many news agencies rely on translation to circulate their news and maximize their prospective audience in different countries. This proves true as we see that many media outlets have at least two versions in two languages. This trend is, to a certain extent, de facto grounded as we nowadays live in a globalized world in which the predominant newspapers, press agencies, and satellite channels strive to reach the maximum number of audiences. Thus, the work of translation has proved to have a pivotal role in journalism. Vybiralova (2012:4) suggests that translation is "essential to many dominant countries when trying to expand their journalistic activities to foreign markets." In this regard, it has become common to see famous newspapers and magazines providing their content in different languages, especially on their online websites. Many online newspapers increasingly started to launch their Arabic version, perhaps to maximize their audience across the Arab world or to shape the Arab's opinion on controversial issues.

Yet, when I visited some online news websites, I was surprised by the length of the texts and the way they are translated. This is, of course, due to many constraints that are involved in news translation. These constraints, as Darwish (2009:166) suggests, range from lexical, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic to functional and semiotic levels, which affect the "desired quality of translation" (Darwish, 2009:91). This holds true as the translator is supposed to deal with a different language and culture that are different from his/her own. In the analysis of Darwish (2009:166) of translations at Aljazeera and other Arabic news providers, he states that it discloses "horrifying quality standards" (2009:166); this is because they provide an absolutely literal translation, which causes the original message to be distorted, and the target language to be obscured at the lexical, idiomatic and metaphorical levels(Darwish, 2009:166).

2.2. *The theoretical framework on conceptual metaphors*

Lackoff and Johnson provide many examples that reflect the conceptual systems of speakers, and they conclude that "structural metaphors are grounded in systematic correlations within our experiences" (1980:62). To clarify more structural metaphors, Hang (2016:13) points out that this type of metaphor occurs when an abstract concept or the target domain is conceptualized by a more specific concept or the source domain. This means that a term from a source domain is used to talk about a target domain.

2.3. *Sports metaphor in news and politics*

Sports metaphors have become constantly commonplace in politics and news items. Many politicians and journalists draw on sports terminology to describe what is going on, particularly in election time in the US. Bryant (2012), a journalist in BBC magazine, writes, "Sporting metaphors overrun the language of politics in the English-speaking world -and perhaps most of all in the US". Kovecses (2010, cited by Hang, 2016:13) also states that "sport" is one of the most popular source domains to refer to the structural metaphor, with politics being the target domain. The use of metaphors in politics could meant to make politics more interesting and to make it seems as a game of "winning'' and "losing" (Vieth, 2015:2), like in sport competitions.

2.4. *Translation of metaphor*

Translation of metaphors poses a problem to translators as they are culturally bound, and translators do not necessarily share the same cultural background as the author of the original text.

The problem is that these terms that are not translated properly are diffused and circulated through the mass media and become accepted by the receivers without second thought.

This goes in line with what Darwish points out, as he sees that "the baffling thing about the process of translation-mediated news at Aljazeera and other Arabic television channels is that expressions, concepts and metaphors that defy the logic of language are being used by journalists throughout the Arab media and accepted by viewers"(2009:108).

Sports terms and expressions are an important part of the US and British culture, and their translation into Arabic requires the translator to know the rules and origin of a given game so as to provide a translation that reproduces the original message.

In terms of translation procedures used to translate metaphors, Newmark (1985: 304-311, cited in Binaoui (2017:8-9), suggests a list of procedures:

1. Reproducing the same image in TL, "provided the image has comparable frequency and currency in the appropriate register."
2. Replacing the image in SL "with a standard TL image which does not clash with the TL culture."

3. Conversion of the metaphor to sense
4. Modification of the metaphor
5. Deletion

3. Data collection method

The procedure adopted for collecting data consists of different steps. Firstly, the random selection of data will cover sports metaphors used in news articles from some US and British online newspapers. These news articles cover mainly US election events. Secondly, the selection of data will extend to cover the possible equivalents of sports metaphors in Arabic, which are used in comparable texts that report the same topic.
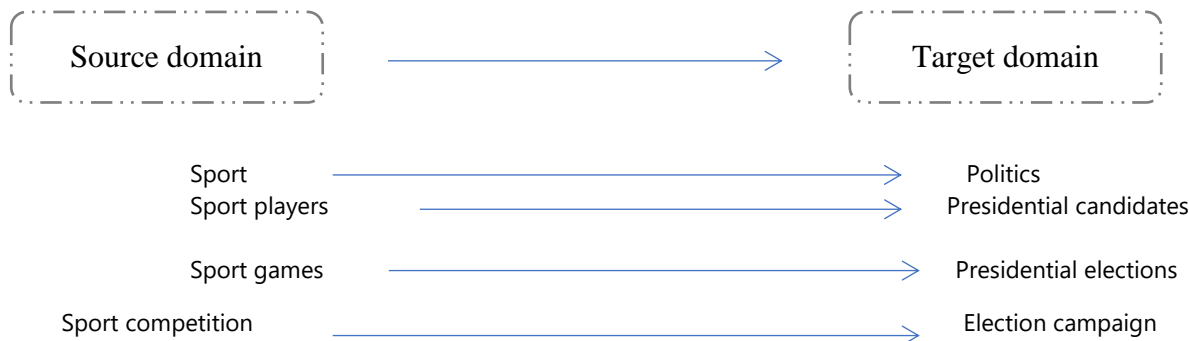
Thirdly, all the sports metaphors collected will be classified into specific structural metaphors whose source domains belong to different kinds of sports.

4. Data analysis methods

This part deals with the corpus of metaphors to be analysed in the study and their translations. Data analysis will be mainly empirical and corpus-based. The study will be conducted on the original metaphors and their possible translations in Arabic newspapers. The study will seek to describe and classify the types of sports metaphors used, discuss and examine their translations in online Arabic newspapers, and ultimately address metaphor translation problems and translation techniques.

5. Findings

Before initiating the analysis, it is worth explaining the mapping mechanism between any source domain or any kind of sport and the target domain –Politics. This could be done by relying on a model suggested by Hang (2016), which describes equivalent factors in the mapping of structural metaphor POLITICS IS SPORT.

| Source domain | → | Target domain |

Sport	→	Politics
Sport players	→	Presidential candidates
Sport games	→	Presidential elections
Sport competition	→	Election campaign

The sports metaphors that reflect presidential issues are to be found with their equivalents in Arabic in comparable texts:

Sports metaphors	Equivalents in Arabic in parallel texts
-Clinton vs. Trump Leaves 6 in 10 Unhappy; ***Contest Tightens*** as Conventions Loom (POLL) (ABC News) - Clinton ***opponents*** face 'gut-check' time at 3rd debate (US Today) - Clinton ***outscores*** Trump (Chicago Tribune)	ـ*التنافس* بين هيلاري و ترامب *يزداد احتداما* (*Alqabas*) - نتائج متقاربة بين المرشـــحة الديمقراطية و **منافســـها** الجمهوري دونالد ترامب (Aljazeera) بدا واضـــحا*تفوق* و علو كعب المرشـــحة كلينتون. (Blog Aljazeera)

Table 1. Sample of English Sports metaphors and their Arabic equivalents

The meaning and image of the English metaphors are delivered in the translation since it could be said that they have the same effect as the original metaphors. Similarly, the translated metaphors have a stable metaphorical meaning because their meanings are fixed, and they also permeate in the language of politics of the target language. For example, the word *التنافس* or المنافسة are used permanently in Arab's political discourse. Also, the word انتصار or فوز are used in politics. The translation procedure used in this sample is the reproduction of the same image in TL, which is one of the procedures proposed by Newmark (1985).

The translation of these metaphors probably does not pose problems, as English and Arabic have the same conceptual systems in this context. Thus, it could be said that the translation of these metaphors is undertaken through a 'similar mapping condition' approach (Al-Hasnaouis: 2007). This means that these metaphors have similar meanings in both English and Arabic cultures.

Sports metaphors	Equivalents in Arabic in parallel texts
1- Here's Hillary's Debate ***Knockout Punch***- Will She use it? (The Daily Beast)	1-ثم بعد نهاية الجولة الأخيرة، جاءت *الضربة القاضية* المتعلقة بالتمييز بين الجنسين والقدرة على التحمل. (Almanassa)
	2-في المناظرة الثالثة..*الضربة القاضية*
2- Trump was aggressive against Clinton but failed to land the ***knockout punch*** he needed (Quartz news)	3-م تأب كلينتون لأي من الاتهامات التي انهالت عليها من جانب ترامب...*واختتمت هجومها* على المنافس بذكر تجاوزاته وتصريحاته التي انقلبت ضده (Blog Aljazeera)
3- - But within minutes, she ***went on the attack against*** the Republican nominee and continued to press the case that his policies would be a disaster. (The **Washington Post**)	4-كلينتون كانت حاضرة وجاهزة *للرد و استهداف* ترامب بشكل شخصي. (Blog Aljazeera)
4- The former secretary of state ***unleashed a blistering attack*** on Trump on Thursday in a "national security "speech in California. (ABC news)	5-في حين حاول ترامب المراوغة ولجأ في كثير من الأحيان *للضرب تحت الحزام* واستهداف منافسته بشكل شخصي؟ (Blog Aljazeera)
5- - Trump *Hits Below the Belt* to attack Hillary Clinton (Foreign Policy)	

Table 2. Sample of English sports metaphors derived from boxing and their Arabic equivalents.

The above table represents a sport metaphor borrowed from boxing. In the structural metaphor- POLITCS IS BOXING, a presidential election is likened to a boxing match in which boxers land punches in each one's face. For example, both candidates keep attacking, hitting, punching and striking back at each other. This often occurs in face-to-face presidential debates where candidates try to convince voters by answering the moderator's questions.

As the table above illustrates, the term- ***Knockout punch*** is used in many news articles. This implies that it has significance in the culture of American people, namely in boxing, and this meaning is extended to the field of politics. In boxing, boxers are left in a sports arena to fight each other through different rounds until one of them might be completely knocked out on the floor. In boxing, **knockout punch** means hitting the other opponent with a hard punch so that they fall to the ground and be unable to get up again (Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary). This image is then transferred to politics to refer to a strong statement over a certain issue that a candidate makes to defeat his/her opponent, and which leaves him/her "motionless" and unable to strike back. This, as I have mentioned, usually happens in presidential debates.

The translation of this metaphor is acceptable as it delivers the image appropriately. **"*القاضية الضربة*"** term could be seen as a perfect equivalent for *knockout punch* since they both have a close meaning and the same metaphorical sense. Generally, *القاضية* means in Arabic : (*المعجم الغني*) *المميتة أو أوالفاصلة* (*المعجم الوسيط*) *أو القاتلة*, Similarly, it has its specific use in sports, as in English. Thus, it explained in Raaid dictionary as: *"الضربة القاضية"* **في الملاكمة أو المصارعة: الضربة التي يوجهها أحد اللاعبين إلى خصمه فتطرحه أرضا فاقد الوعي أو عاجزا عن النهوض لمدة معينة.** This image is translated via "reproducing the same image of the TL" in the first and second examples in Arabic, as Newmark (1985: 304-311) describes it.

The images in these examples correspond to Hillary's attempt to score points on Trump by disclosing his weak points. This metaphor is stable, and its metaphorical sense is lexicalised, i.e. its meaning is given in dictionaries.

The translation of this metaphor is successful as the Arabic term conveys the same meaning. The term *هجوم* is used in different contexts, including in politics, to describe the candidates' exchange of argument on top issues. The procedure of the translation in this metaphor is the reproduction of the same image of the TL.

The next metaphor ***strike back*** is used once in this sample. In presidential debates, when a candidate makes an attack on his opponent, the latter is expected to *strike back*. This statement depicts the image of a boxer who receives a hard punch and then tries to fight back or strike back to score a point. In a similar way, candidates try to seize every opportunity to ***strike back*** on any issue in different ways so as to make his/her point.

In Arabic, the meaning of this metaphor varies according to the context. For example, it could be said: *رد على اتصـــال، رد على.* Here in the Arabic example : *كلينتون كانت حاضرة و جاهزة للرد* is an implicit metaphor. It can be inferred that it refers to the metaphor *رد على هجوم* *هجوم، رد على انتقاد* belongs to the source domain of sport and war and its Similarly, in Arabic, the metaphor *ردت على هجوم* target domain- Politics is also used in Arabic news articles.

The last metaphor, **"*hit below the belt*",** is realized in one news article. This expression comes from boxing, in which it is illegal to hit an opponent below the belt (Urban dictionary). It is also used to say something to another person that is often too personal, usually irrelevant, and always unfair (Urban dictionary). In this regard, this metaphor involves a stable metaphorical meaning. Consequently, it could be said that it is lexicalised as its meaning is given in the dictionary. The last example in the source text shows that Trump is notorious for insulting and being unfair. This image fits into the pattern of the English metaphor.

However, a literal translation of this metaphor into Arabic will not adequately convey the intended figurative. Expressing an unfair statement towards someone with this image is not very common in the target language, but it could have recently permeated into Arabic due to journalistic translation. This expression "*الضرب تحت الحزام*" is not familiar in the Arabic culture; it does not exist in the conceptual system of the Arabs. It is transferred through literal translation without taking into account its setting and context. Therefore, this metaphor does not fit into this example.

The study has proved that the translators seek to remain close to source language and culture metaphors and their functions. However, the translation of all of these metaphors under study was not an easy task as the translators faced some problems in rendering these metaphors, such as lexical gaps and lack of some equivalents. Thus, the translators opted for some techniques to deliver the message clearly. For example, the study has shown that translators resorted to some techniques for translating metaphors suggested by Newmark. These techniques include reproducing the same image in TL, replacing the image in SL, and converting the metaphor into sense, which are frequently used, as has been revealed in the study.

6. Conclusion

The present paper aimed primarily at examining the difficulties and problems in deciphering the figurative meaning of English sports metaphors that appear in political news and, more specifically, in US presidential campaigns and their Arabic translations. In an attempt to reach solid conclusions, data was collected from authentic British and US online newspapers with their possible Arabic equivalents that are used in comparable texts that report the same topic.

The collection of data was simplified to include only sports metaphors relevant to this study. The analysis of collected data was conducted based on classifications that were used in previous research. Apart from comparison, the analysis attempted to explore the common strategies employed in the rendition of sports metaphors.

The analysis of data yielded several conclusions. The study reaffirmed the logical relationship which exists between the source domain-Sport and the target domain-Politics, which is reflected in the conceptual system of the ST audience. Thus, the readers in the source culture could work out the meaning of these metaphors. As for the translation of sports metaphors into Arabic, the translators need to figure out the meanings of these metaphors and be knowledgeable about the context in which they are used before translating them.

The analysis also demonstrated that sports metaphors sometimes cannot be approached in the same way as in the ST to convey their metaphorical senses. This is due to the fact that the conceptual systems in English and Arabic may be different in some contexts, and the mapping conditions might not be similar. In this regard, the study has revealed that translators opted for different techniques to deliver the meaning underlying these metaphors, such as conversion of metaphor to sense, addition and reproducing the same image in TL.

The study could be considered as original of its own given that studies on the translation of sports metaphors are not carried out and that studies related conducted on the use of sports metaphors in politics in general are not initiated. This study tried to unravel problems that translators face in translating English news articles in the field of politics, which are related to translating metaphor. This study, then, could bring new insights into problems encountered in translating journalistic articles and reinforce studies on the topic of translating metaphor from English into Arabic in news articles.

The analysis did not cover the pragmatic function and the effect of sports metaphors on the readers, but it aimed to analyze and evaluate the translation of sports metaphors into Arabic.

The research findings are reliable. However, it should be noted that further future studies need to be carried out to put these findings to the test. Future research would be much more useful if it explored other types of metaphors from other source domains, such as movement, physical force, nature, journeys, etc., which are used by politicians. Thus, it could be interesting to investigate them and assess their implications in translation.

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