The Jordan International Conference on Translation (JICOT)
(30 November – 2 December 2010)
Amman, Jordan

The translation of metaphors in science and popular science articles

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Metaphor has in the past often seen as an ornament of literary texts and hence irrelevant in scientific writing. However, cognitive linguistics has demonstrated the central role of metaphor in both language and thought (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1993) and its relevance in scientific texts as it allows scientists not only to name new entities but also to contribute to the creation of knowledge (Boyd, 1993; Semino, 2008). Science plays a central role in the development of modern societies. Scientific institutions exert a great deal of effort in disseminating science not only through popularizing publications and broadcasting but also through translation, which plays a key role in knowledge transfer. However, the role of metaphor in scientific and popular science texts is still under-investigated from a translation perspective. There are few cross-cultural and cross-linguistic studies investigating metaphor in popular science among which Williams Camus (2009) and Papadoudi (2010). This study aims to explore metaphor translation paradigms and contribute to both metaphor studies and translation studies by investigating the conceptual metaphors in popular science articles of astronomy and astrophysics and their realization at the linguistic level (metaphorical linguistic expressions) in English original texts and Arabic translated texts. We assume that the cultural gap between the Western world and the Arab world is likely to incur very culturally-specific ideological metaphors that will give rise to difficulties in the translation process. This study aims also to investigate some implications of a cognitive linguistic approach for the development of translation studies, notably the development of metaphor translation approaches and models. For the purposes of this study, a multilingual and comparable electronic corpus has been compiled, comprising 39 original American English articles from Scientific American magazine and their translations into Arabic Majallat AL Oloom and French Pour la Science. The size of the corpus is about 103,000 words.
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References


