

Conceptual Metaphors and Translation: A Comparative Study of Metaphors in English and Spanish Financial Reports

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ABSTRACT

In recent times the number of studies on conceptual metaphor and business English has proliferated considerably (Brône & Feyaerts, 2005; Herrera-Soler et al., 2006; Koller, 2002; White & Herrera-Soler, 2003). However, the world of finance still remains relatively unexplored from a linguistic point of view. In the era of globalization and economic changes, the language of finance is subject to constant changes and innovations. The breakneck speed of the Stock Market and the rapid evolution of banking and financial institutions favour linguistic changes and provide the language of finance with a unique flexibility and colloquial character. The colloquial character of financial language and the force of its images have also been favoured by *The Economist*, a publication that for more than 150 years has been influencing the world of economy and finance. All these characteristics make financial English especially attractive, but pose numerous problems for translators who have to deal with a rich imagery that is not always easy to render into a different language.

In this paper we aim to carry out a comparative study of conceptual metaphors in English and Spanish financial language. In order to fence in the vast and complex world of finance, the present study has been focused on a central topic of finance reporting: market movements and fluctuations. Following the current trend of corpus approaches to metaphor analysis (Charteris-Black, 2003; Deignan, 2005; Stefanowitsch and Gries, 2006), we base our study on a corpus of authentic English and Spanish financial articles. In English, the articles have been selected from those published during 2007 in *The Economist*. The Spanish articles have been compiled from those available in the newspaper *El Economista* on the same year. We first analyze and compare the conceptual metaphors found in our corpus of financial articles in English and Spanish. We attempt to identify possible similarities and differences between both languages in terms of the underlying conceptual metaphors and their linguistic or lexical expression.

In general terms, our findings support previous work on the topic (cf. Charteris-Black & Ennis, 2001; Herrera-Soler et al., 2006; Villacañas Palomo et al., 2006): the analysis of our corpus reveals great similarity between the conceptual metaphors and their linguistic expressions in both languages. However, some interesting and novel differences in the frequency of use of particular linguistic metaphors are also identified. Another innovative aspect of our work is the discussion of the implications this type of comparative analysis may have for the practice and teaching of translation. When dealing with the translation of financial reports, translators will undoubtedly benefit from the knowledge of similarities and differences between conceptual metaphors in English and Spanish financial language.

Key words: conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics, finance, financial language, translation

1. Introduction

From the publication of the legendary Lakoff and Johnson's book *Metaphors We Live By*, the study of conceptual metaphor has undoubtedly been one of the major topics in the cognitive linguistics research program. Conceptual metaphors can be generally defined as mental mappings from a concrete domain (known as source domain) onto an abstract domain (known as target domain). A typical example of this type of conceptual metaphor is the general metaphorical concept TIME IS MONEY. When analyzing

metaphor, it is important to bear in mind the distinction between the metaphorical concept or conceptual metaphor and its linguistic realizations. In this way, a conceptual metaphor like TIME IS MONEY can be instantiated by different metaphorical expressions. We include here four examples quoted in Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 7–8):

Exs. 1–4

You're *wasting* my time
You're *running out* of time
He's living on *borrowed* time
You don't use your time *profitably*

So far, the conceptual theory of metaphor does not seem so different from more traditional theories which also differentiate between the conceptual and the linguistic nature of metaphor (cf. Black, 1992 or Weinrich, 1976). However, the novelty of the conceptual theory of metaphor lies not so much on the linguistic formulation of the unveiled metaphors, but on their status as a phenomenon of an essentially cognitive nature. Conceptual metaphors are no longer a matter of language, but 'a matter of thought and action' whose function is mainly that of providing a 'partial understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another kind of experience' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 153–4).

Since its inception, the conceptual theory of metaphor has provided us with hundreds of examples which have demonstrated at length the power of a cognitive construct which pervades every aspect of experience. Rivers of ink have been expended on a phenomenon which has stirred up the world of linguistics and extended to numerous areas such as discourse analysis, language teaching, contrastive analysis or translation. In this paper, we focus on two of these areas, namely those of English for specific purposes and translation. More specifically, we explore the role of conceptual metaphor on financial language and survey its implications for the practice and teaching of specialized translation. To carry out this aim, we analyze and compare the conceptual metaphors found in a corpus of English and Spanish financial articles. We attempt to identify possible similarities and differences between both languages in terms of the underlying conceptual metaphors and their linguistic or lexical expression.

2. Metaphor and Specialized languages

Specialized languages have proven particularly fruitful for the application of the conceptual theory of metaphor. Even if our first intuition about the specific lingo of experts is that of plain unexciting language, most analyses of professional jargon have revealed a rich language that abounds in metaphors.¹ But specialized languages have not only been alluring for advocates of the conceptual theory of metaphor as a prolific source of examples. They have also helped cognitive linguists to verify their hypotheses by providing them with a testing field completely different from that of literary language. While traditional theories of metaphor have primarily identified metaphorical language with literary or poetic registers, the conceptual theory of metaphor has been interested in demonstrating the pervasive nature of metaphor as a phenomenon which is

¹ See for instance the works by Walter (1996) or Johnson (2006) on computer science, Tercedor Sánchez (1999/2000) and ??cap de la enci on medicine, and Henderson (1982) on economics.

part of our basic cognitive abilities and that impregnates language in all its different manifestations and facets: from written to oral, from more to less formal, from literary to specialized, from the jargon of an information technology expert to the slang of a teenage computer freak. In this way, the number of studies which have demonstrated the ubiquity of metaphor and its usefulness as a cognitive tool to understand abstract concepts by way of more concrete ones has proliferated in specialized fields, such as those of economics and finance (Charteris-Black and Mussolf, 2003; White, 2003), medicine (Tercedor Sánchez, 1999/2000), or computing and Internet (??).

In this paper we focus on conceptual metaphor in one of the most influencing specialized fields nowadays, namely, that of financial language. In the age of globalization, business growth and economic fluctuations, financial issues are a burning topic of international interest. But economists are not the only ones under the sway of the financial world. Linguists have also succumbed to the magnetism of a language with a unique imagery and flexibility. As a result, in recent years we have witnessed a proliferation of studies on the language of economy and finance, with a special focus on the use of metaphor in economic texts (e.g. White, 1997, 2003, 2004; Smith, 1995; Boers, 2000; Charteris-Black, 2000). The aim of most of the current studies on metaphor from a cognitive linguistics perspective is not to achieve a characterization of the language of finance *per se*, but rather to profile the underlying contextual and ideological motivations that give rise to its linguistic features.

From this point of view, the comparison of the same conceptual metaphor in different languages proves to be a useful methodology to uncover similarities and differences in the conceptualization of economic and financial issues in different societies. For instance, Boers and Demecheleer (1997) compare three conventional metaphorical models (PATH, HEALTH, WAR) in economic newspaper articles in English, French and Dutch. Their results reveal that the models are very frequent in the three languages, although some specific metaphors are more recurrent in some languages (e.g. sailing metaphors in English). Charteris-Black and Musolff (2003) compare English and German financial reports on the Euro crisis in November 2000. The authors relate some of the differences in the metaphors used in each language to differences in the way the currency is conceptualized in each country. Two works of special interest for the purposes of our study are those by Gómez Parra *et al.* (1999) and by Charteris-Black and Ennis (2001). They also use a corpus of financial articles and their working languages are English and Spanish. Gómez Parra *et al.* (1999) compare the metaphor THE STOCK EXCHANGE IS AN OBJECT IN MOTION in English and Spanish newspaper articles. They conclude that, in this type of texts, the mechanisms that give rise to metaphors in each language are almost identical, with the only difference that English is more expressive than Spanish. Charteris-Black and Ennis (2001) contrast a corpus of financial reports in the same languages during the Stock Exchange crisis of October 1997. Once again, the conceptual metaphors are very similar, although there are some differences in the frequency of use of some specific metaphors. For example, while Spanish favours metaphors based on psychological states, English prefers sailing metaphors. The authors explain such differences in terms of the influence of religion on Spanish and of sailing on English.

The present work is in keeping with this contrastive methodology, but it differs from the papers previously mentioned in adopting a translation perspective. As in some of the literature here reviewed, our aim is to compare the conceptual metaphors found in a corpus of financial articles in English and Spanish in order to unveil possible similarities and differences not only in their linguistic formulation but also in the construal or conceptualization of the financial events described. We argue that this type

of methodology can be extremely useful for translators when dealing with metaphorical language in specialized texts. Unfortunately, as detailed in the following section, this type of empirical studies on metaphor and specialized languages is still scarce in the field of translation.

3. Metaphor and Specialized Translation

Due to its pervasive nature, the translation of metaphor is one of the major problems translators face in their daily task. It is also one of the topical issues in most of the works on translation. In the translation studies literature, it is also possible to distinguish two different approaches to the translation of metaphor. The more traditional and prescriptive approach envisages metaphor as a purely linguistic or rhetorical device. It includes mainly long-established works of a purely linguistic and contrastive nature (e.g. Nida and Taber, 1969; Vázquez Ayora, 1977; Newmark, 1982). The other approach displays a more descriptive methodology which seems to acknowledge the role of conceptual metaphor as a cognitive tool that contributes to structure the way we think and express ourselves linguistically (Snell-Hornby, 1988; Rabadán Álvarez, 1991; Fuertes Olivera and Samaniego Fernández, 1998; Kurth, 1999).

But despite the relevance of metaphor as a crucial topic in translation, the translation of metaphor in specialized texts is still a relatively unexplored subject. This shortage of studies on the translation of metaphor in specialized fields is probably the result of the type of research carried out in translation studies. For a long time, the key to sort out the problem of metaphor has been considered to lie principally in the identification of the different translation possibilities (Newmark??; Samaniego??). While the field and other text variables have remained in the background, scholars have concentrated in classifying the main strategies which can be generally used in the translation of metaphor. Regardless of slight variations, the different translation possibilities can be reduced to three wide-ranging strategies: a) to use a metaphor which is equivalent in form and meaning, b) to use a metaphor with a different form but similar meaning, and c) to paraphrase the meaning.²

The initial lack of studies on metaphor and specialized translation has been somehow palliated by the impact on translation studies of the emergent interest of applied linguists in conceptual metaphor and specialized languages. In the field of economy, there are two works on conceptual metaphor and translation which are worthy of note here for the purposes of the present paper. The first is the paper by Fuertes Olivera (1998) on the translation into Spanish of four English conceptual metaphors relating to inflation: INFLATION IS AN ORGANISM, INFLATION IS A HORSE, INFLATION IS A DISEASE and INFLATION IS AN ENEMY. He analyzes the different translations of these metaphors identified in chapter 12 of Samuelson and Nordhaus (??) textbook *Economics* and its Spanish translation. His results reveal that the translator mainly resorted to a literal translation of the source text (ST) metaphor even if the resulting target text (TT) metaphor was unintelligible for Spanish readers. These results support the claim that textbooks should be translated by professional translators who can contribute to improve the standard of translations.

A similar work is that by Serón Ordóñez (??)³ on the translation of financial texts. By using a parallel corpus of financial articles from the multilingual website of Morgan Stanley's Variable Capital Investment Society (VCIS) ??, she analyzes the

² See Dobrzyńska (1995) for a review of the different possibilities to deal with the translation of metaphor.

³ This work is available on the website: ??????

strategies used to translate 114 metaphorical expressions relating finance to ten basic conceptual domains: human beings, health, war, mechanisms, sailing, fluids, plant, weather, sports and animals. As in Fuertes Olivera's (1998) work, her objective is not only to use the results of her investigation to identify the techniques employed to translate metaphors and report on the quality of the translation. She also aims at reflecting on the standard of professional translation and providing data on the translation of financial texts that can be of use for translation students.

In the study we report in the following section, we also have a double aim. As stated above, we attempt to detect the similarities and differences in financial metaphors in English and Spanish. But we also aim to use our results as data which can help improve the quality of the financial translator's job and be used in translation classes to widen the students' understanding and knowledge of financial texts and enhance their translation skills.

4. Our Study: a Comparison of Metaphorical language in English and Spanish Financial Reports

4.1. Our Corpus and its contextualization: the Global Systemic Crisis in 2007.

The LEAP/E20204[1] was able to anticipate, at the end of 2006, the four main sectors at the centre of the global systemic crisis in the year 2007, namely international trade, exchange rate, financial sector and energy. Regarding finance, our focus of linguistic analysis, it has estimated that at least one large US financial institution (banks, insurance, investment funds) will file for bankruptcy before February 2008, sparking off bankruptcies among a series of other financial institutions and banks in Europe (in the UK especially), in Asia and in various emerging countries.

Since the market upsets of the 80s and 90s, the phenomenon of financial risk has been viewed as commodity, a tool of the trade, instead of a hazard to be avoided. As a consequence, phenomena such as "hedge funds" (slackly regulated investment funds that characteristically take high risks to earn high returns), "private equity" and "venture capital" operations (forms of financing used to buy stock, not freely tradable and not listed on an exchange), as well as *subprime* lending (very controversial loans, risky for both lenders and borrowers due to the combination of high interest rates, poor credit history, and adverse financial situations usually associated with their applicants), are about to thrust the world's financial sector into a process of deep crisis: depreciation of US dollar-denominated assets and recession of the US economy, fast degradation of US banks' and of some EU banks' balance-sheets, low level of banks' reserves, fast depreciation of housing loans and a deep mistrust towards financial institutions.

According to LEAP/E2020, transformations fuelling the current global systemic crisis within the global system also apply to the European Union, an emerging power. This shock is already shaping up and it is coming from Spain: the Spanish economy is following the US lead with a housing bubble beginning to burst since the beginning of this year, entailing a collapse of the financial bubble and a vast balance of payments deficit, even if Spain's Central Bank keeps repeating that there is nothing in common between the Spanish and the American housing situations.

^{4[1]} The *Laboratoire européen d'Anticipation Politique Europe 2020*, LEAP/E2020, is a website dedicated to European political anticipation, developed in partnership with many different organisations including think-tanks, research centres and individual researchers.

These announcements echo the woeful predictions that *The Economist* has been voicing over the last two years, while the world press kept maintaining that the Western world was living an unprecedented era of wealth: new markets emerging; companies disappearing to re-appear in the form of conglomerates and orthodox banking becoming outdated as new, virtual, intangible financial products were devised. The prestigious financial periodical has covered these and other increasingly complex phenomena in ten years of bi-monthly periodicals, publishing more than a thousand articles on the looming dire panorama, when hedge funds and private equity phenomena were virtually unknown to both specialist and laymen in Spain. As far as the Spanish situation is concerned, *The Economist* has, for some time now, highlighted an unbalanced economy and low domestic productivity, as well as an imminent property crash⁵[2]. In the meantime, the Spanish economic press, on the verge of imminent elections, state that the country will be much more resilient to the crisis than the countries in the Eurozone, and that in worldwide terms it will not suffer the crisis as much as many other countries.

In view of the fascinating informative *tour de force*, we aimed at studying, paralelly, the financial newspapers *The Economist* and *El Economista*. To this purpose, we analyzed 10 articles from each publication on the basis of their similarity of extension and content. Both corpora contain quick weekly snapshots of the state of investment funds, raw materials and financial institutions, in Spain, America, and the world at large, over the period of the months of June to November 2007, when the notions of the global crisis in the media outside our country were being already voiced and weakly insinuated within our frontiers. Incidentally, monographic economic articles are usually longer in *The Economist* than in *El Economista*, but we chose to select a specific type of shorter news-item, within the so-called *Market.view* section in the foreign paper, as it adjusted perfectly to our needs of illustration and coherence with the version in Spanish.

With our corpus in hand, we attempted the task of analyzing and comparing the conceptual metaphors found in the said financial articles in English and Spanish, then undertaking to identify possible similarities and differences between both languages in terms of the underlying conceptual metaphors, and their linguistic or lexical expression within the fascinating economic scenario of the Global Systemic crisis.

4.2. Method

Up to date, the analyses of conceptual metaphors in different types of discourse have mainly focused on two different aspects, namely, the study of the metaphors underlying the specific discourse under analysis and the use of metaphoric language as a medium to justify certain actions (e.g. Lakoff, 1991; Chilton and Schäffner, 2000). In our work, these two aspects converge somehow, since we study the metaphors which underlie financial discourse with the intention to demonstrate how the use of such metaphoric language serves a political and economic purpose.

We have carried out both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of our data. On the one hand, a quantitative analysis gives us the chance to establish a direct comparison between the English and the Spanish corpora. On the other, a qualitative analysis allows us to carry out a deeper and more detailed conceptual analysis of the corpus, contributing to disclose similarities and differences between the metaphorical expressions of the two corpora.

⁵[2] View, for example, the two articles on the subject in *The Economist* 3rd on May edition: “Conquistadors on the beach”, and “Spain’s economy. Plain sailing no longer”.

We have taken as starting point the classification of metaphors proposed by Moreno Lara (2008). Although her study takes place in the field of politics, she offers one of the most exhaustive and up-to-date models for the analysis of conceptual metaphor. Furthermore, the field of politics and that of economy share many conceptual features that make them particularly likely to be described by similar metaphors. For example, both politics and economy often involve an element of contest and rivalry that allow them to be conceptualized as a COMPETITION GAME or as a BATTLE: a political campaign or a financial operation can be envisioned as a sports event or a competition, and a politician and a company can be conceived of as warriors in a battle.

Our analysis has been organized into three main stages:

First, we have isolated all the specific metaphors found in the English and Spanish articles. We have gathered a total of 245 specific metaphors: 109 in Spanish and 136 in English. Every metaphorical expression has been individually analyzed taking into account the nature of the source domain, the type of motivation and the mappings established across the domains, and has been subsequently classified into a specific metaphor. For instance, the Spanish metaphorical expression ‘*España se queda con la pole en fondos variables*’ has been analyzed as an instantiation of the specific metaphor ECONOMY IS A HORSE RACE.

Every specific metaphor has then been assigned to one of three types based on the taxonomy by Moreno Lara (2008: 108): a) Metaphors based on the Great Chain of Being, b) Metaphors based on image-schemas and c) Generic metaphors based on the metaphor ACTIONS ARE EVENTS. In the case of the specific metaphor ECONOMY IS A HORSE RACE, this metaphor has been grouped within the higher-level metaphor ECONOMY IS A COMPETITION GAME, which in turn has been classified within the generic metaphor ACTIONS ARE EVENTS.

Finally, we have compared the English and the Spanish articles in terms of the number and types of metaphors classified in each category in order to detect possible similarities and differences in the metaphorical conceptualization of the financial crisis in America and in Spain. We have also analyzed which of these metaphors are used in a positive, negative or neutral sense in each language in order to reveal possible differences in the use of metaphorical language to serve a certain political or economic interest.

4.3. Results

The first type of metaphor analyzed is based on what Lakoff and Turner (1989: 170) called the Great Chain of Being, which is a cultural model that establishes the attributes and behaviour of natural beings. In this model, natural beings are organized into the following hierarchy: humans, animals, plants and complex and natural objects.

In our corpus, the metaphors based on the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING have been the most numerous: 122 (82 in English and 40 in Spanish). Out of the 82 metaphors found in the English corpus, 65 were used in a negative sense, 8 were positive and 9 were neutral. In Spanish, 24 out of 40 were positive, 10 were negative and 6 were neutral. The specific metaphors found in our corpus were the following:

	English	Spanish
COMPANIES/MARKETS/BANKS ARE PEOPLE	36	34
ECONOMY/THE MARKET IS AN ANIMAL	4	2
THE MARKET IS THE JUNGLE	2	0
ECONOMY/FUNDS/ PRODUCTION/ RAW MATERIALS	26	3

ARE MACHINES		
ECONOMY IS AN OBJECT	2	0
THE MARKET/RAW MATERIALS ARE HOUSES	2	1
ECONOMY IS A RUBBISH DUMP	2	0
ECONOMY/THE MARKET IS A BUBBLE	8	0
TOTAL	82	40

Table 1. Metaphors based on THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING

The second type of metaphor is that based on image-schemas. Financial operations can be conceived of as a series of activities carried out to achieve certain economic objectives. This conceptualization serves as the basis for the metaphor A FINANCIAL PROCESS IS A TRIP TO A DESTINATION. The source domain is given by the basic structure of the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema and other additional elements, such as the trajector, his/her intended goal the trajectory he/she describes, his/her position at a given time, his/her direction at that time and his/her final goal, which may or not coincide with the intended one, the presence of a vehicle, its speed, the difficulties it finds on its way, the forces which act favourably or unfavourably and the presence or other possible trajectors (cf. Moreno Lara, 2008: 196).

In our corpus, we have found two different types of metaphors based on image-schemas. On the one hand, there were expressions which instantiated the metaphor PATH AND THE STOCK MARKET IS A VEHICLE, based on the PATH schema and the subsidiary schema of verticality. On the other, there were expressions which instantiated the specific metaphor (ECONOMIC) DIFFICULTIES ARE OBSTACLES IN THE WAY, based on the STRUCTURE OF A TRAVEL EVENT. These expressions made reference to features of the terrain and to events which influence economy negatively and which are conceptualized as natural forces. On the whole, the expressions based on the PATH schema are used in a negative sense in both languages. In English, 29 out of 35 expressions were negative, 4 were positive and 2 were neutral. In Spanish, 22 out of 30 were used in a negative way and 8 were positive.

	English	Spanish
PATH AND THE STOCK MARKET IS A VEHICLE	2	7
VERTICALITY	28	12
DIFFICULTIES ARE OBSTACLES IN THE WAY	5	11
TOTAL	35	30

Table 2. Metaphors based on the PATH schema.

The third type of metaphor analyzed is based on the generic metaphors ACTIONS ARE EVENTS. This metaphor allows us to conceptualize financial activities as certain events. The expressions located in our corpus which instantiated this metaphor made reference to three types of events, namely, a competition game, a fight/battle and a show business. From a conceptual point of view, the metaphors of the three events share some features or elements, such as a high degree of competitiveness, a certain spirit of aggressiveness and the search for victory or fame. According to Ching (1993), the game and SHOW metaphors pervade American life, since they reflect the prototypical Western citizen. But curiously enough, our corpus contains a greater number of these metaphors in Spanish than English: 39 in Spanish vs. 19 in English. Moreover, Spanish uses them mostly in a positive way (31 were positive, 7 negative and 1 neutral) while English ones are mainly negative (11 negative, 4 positive and 4 neutral). Spanish articles make use of

the elements which activate a positive image of the events, such as the winner, the victory, the top value, etc.

	English	Spanish
ECONOMY IS A COMPETITION GAME	7	21
ECONOMY IS A FIGHT/BATTLE	9	12
ECONOMY IS A SHOW BUSINESS	3	6
TOTAL	19	39

Table 3. Metaphors based on ACTIONS ARE EVENTS

We finally offer two tables with the results in terms of total percentages of metaphors. Table 4 below displays the percentages of the different types of metaphors used in each language:

	ENGLISH	SPANISH
METAPHORS BASED ON THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING	60.29 %	36.69%
METAPHORS BASED ON THE PATH SCHEMA	25.73 %	27.52 %
METAPHORS BASED ON ACTIONS ARE EVENTS	13.97 %	35.77%

Table 4. Total percentage of types of metaphors

Table 5 offers the total percentage of metaphors used in a positive, negative and neutral sense:

	ENGLISH	SPANISH
POSITIVE	11.76 %	57.79 %
NEGATIVE	77.2 %	35.77 %
NEUTRAL	11.02 %	6.42 %

Table 5. Total percentage of positive, negative and neutral metaphors

4.4. Discussion and Conclusion.

The first finding worth noting in our study is the inordinate amount of metaphors based on the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING, as compared to the other two groups. Half of the metaphors found in the corpus overall belong to this cultural model, and within this very parameter, the numbers in English double those in Spanish. The meaning of this factor will be discussed below, when we comment the quality results of our study. In any case, at this stage it should be worth noting that in both the English and Spanish corpora within this parameter the economy, the market, companies are people: people who are born, have birthdays, develop, suffer, cheat, hate, love and get their hearts broken; but in addition, in the English corpus the economy –or some of its factors, like investment or raw material funds– is also a machine, a device that starts and stops, that disconnects, that gets stuck, that needs tightening, needs mending, lubricating. Likewise, in our collection of periodicals, at the end of 2007, the *Economist* corpus is the only one to mention the currently famous bubble: the market is about to explode, burst, wobble.

As far as image-schemas go, the most striking numbers are those of VERTICALITY, especially in the English corpus: markets dazzlingly plunge, swoop, lurch, rally, decline, collapse, dip, rebound; interest rates muddily peak, soar, jump boom, surge and stay flat. In the Spanish corpus securities (*valores*) just rise (*suben*) and climb

(*escalan*), only seldom do they decline (*bajan, caen*), or lose drive (*pierden impulso*). They both coincide in perceiving DIFFICULTIES OR OBSTACLES IN THE WAY as hurricanes, huge holes, turbulences, frosts, turmoils, draughts and streams. The Spanish corpus also uses the PATH schema to describe the Stock Market as a vehicle may be unstoppable but suddenly brakes or halts (*frena*), has punctures (*pinchazos*) and deflates (*se desinfla*).

Finally, regarding ACTIONS ARE EVENTS metaphors, for the Spanish periodical, much more than for the English one, the economic scenario is mostly that of spectacles: a bull fight with *miuras* in Wall Street, an exciting competition game (a horse race or a match where medals are awarded, records are stricken), a battle to be won by kings of venture capital. Cultural references are made to fiction (for instance, paraphrasing Delibes in “*la sombra de la crisis es alargada*”), TV series (*Aquellos maravillosos años*), pop groups (*La Década Prodigiosa*) and commercials. In the bleaker panorama of the English corpus, the battle is Armageddon and the cultural references allude to *The end of the beginning*, Winston Churchill’s words after defeating Rommel’s troops in El Alamein at the beginning of WW 2.

Qualitatively, numbers are very expressive: 77.2% of the metaphors in the English texts are negative, compared to 35.77% in the Spanish ones. Only 11.76% of the metaphors in the English periodical were positive, in contrast with the 57.79% positive ones of the Spanish one. As we mentioned above, the time in which these periodicals were gathered as a corpus was previous to the 2008 Spanish elections. We had been making previous readings both in the international press and in the national media, searching for details for our research, attempting to find different conceptualizations and translation equivalents for economic metaphors in both languages, and had been surprised and intrigued at the different tone used by the Spanish mass media and the international newspapers when dealing with the Global Systemic crisis. If we were trying to find conclusions pertinent to our Translation Studies about how two languages conceptualize a world phenomenon metaphorically, it was clear that we would have to take into account local factors such as the socio-political atmosphere in Spain (a Government that refuses to unveil to the electorate the grim state of affairs of the international economy and its national repercussions) , plus the fact that –regretfully, and simply– it seems that our national economists do no (or cannot) read the international press.

Nevertheless, if we go deeper beyond numbers and take into account the metaphorical concepts used in our parameters, namely, economy as a –mostly human– being (as favoured by the English paper), as an image (used by both publications in equal measure), or as an event (preferred by the Spanish periodical), it may be interpreted from our findings that perhaps it is easier to transfer the image of an ailing economy through the description of its convolutions as those of a troubled mankind, or those of a complex mechanism with an intricate functioning. On the opposite side, when trying to depict a more light-hearted, as yet unconcerned, economic scenario, it may also be more useful to deploy images of spectacle, of races, of playful rivalry, where the innermost feelings and workings of the participants are not to be heeded or taken into account, being unnecessary for the account of the events.

Another factor worth mentioning is that, being *The Economist* famous for its usage of rich metaphorical imaging, we hypothesized a lower occurrence of image conceptualizations in the Spanish periodical, presuming that this was a feature unique to the famous economic international *Bible*. On the contrary, not only does *El Economista*

use a fair amount of metaphors, but there is definite affluence of them, and a distinct peculiarity in their conceptualization, with cultural, literary images peculiar to the anthropological reality of Spain, even if some of them –due to the influence of English in the language of economy worldwide– are loans, inevitably adapted, sometimes even enriched, like that of the *miura*, the bravest Spanish bull, to confer the traditional economic metaphor in English of a rising, growing market.

As a conclusion, we would like to point out that a comparative study of metaphor conceptualization for translation purposes in the field of the language of Economics cannot be carried out without taking into account local, socio-political factors that affect the economy of the source or target language at a due point. Let's remember how, even in English, the different economic crises in the last century have had different ways to be conceptualized: the 1929 Crash or Crack, the 1987 Big Bang, the 1990s Wipeout. If this is true of a due source language, it may ring even truer in the attempt for its translation into a target one, because –as far as economy is concerned– not only cognitive linguistic constructions are different between languages, but the same economic reality may be very differently conceptualized at different points of time, on account of very different socio-political, historical factors. The sensitiveness to these factors on the part of the translator is to be called for, in the translation of momentous phenomena such as the Global Systemic Crisis, as well as a profound, informed view of the way in which the mass media, the political class and the think-tanks of a country, react to those.

OUR CORPUS:

THE ECONOMIST

Article one: “On the bubble” 30/9/2007

Article two: “Buckle your seatbelts” 15/7/2007

Article three: “Heavy bondage” 3/6/2007

Article four: “The end of the beginning” 26/8/2007

Article five: “A quiet crisis” 9/9/2007

Article six: “Green has the blues” 7/10/2007

Article seven: “Roller coaster” 4/11/2007

Article eight: “A spike through the heart” 12/8/2007

Article nine: “Unsinkable junk” 24/6/2007

Article ten: “Is Merrill the tip of the iceberg?” 28/10/2007

EL ECONOMISTA

Article one: “Telefónica 'tira' de la renta variable y España se queda con la 'pole' en fondos de bolsa” 23/10/07

Article two: “Décimo aniversario desinflado: los fondos de la 'quinta del 97' son menos rentables” 29/10/07

Article three: “Los fondos de materias primas se 'frotan las manos' con el crudo: suben un 21% de media en 2007”. 26/10/2007

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