Tracing nominalisation through the phases of English-German translation:
A case study of grammatical metaphor

Mario Bisiada
Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Department of Translation & Language Sciences

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- 2. Methodology & corpus
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Nominal style

- German is a ‘high informational density’ language (Fabricius-Hansen 1999:203; Hansen-Schirra et al. 2009:112)
- Translation adapted to meet norms of TL: ‘normalisation’ (Baker 1996) / ‘covert translation’ (House 2015)
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- Translation into German turns nominal constructions into verbal ones → explicitation (Konšalová 2007)
- Literal translation of verbal structures (Hansen-Schirra 2011:147) / shining-through (Teich 2003)
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Hybridisation (Hansen-Schirra 2011:136)
Challenging the boundary between source and target text

- Can the hybridisation paradox be addressed by differentiating editors’ and translators’ actions?
Introduction

Project background: Research aims

Project background

Challenging the boundary between source and target text

- Can the hybridisation paradox be addressed by differentiating editors’ and translators’ actions?
- Explicitation, shining-through, normalisation... → translated language or edited language?
Challenging the boundary between source and target text

- Can the hybridisation paradox be addressed by differentiating editors’ and translators’ actions?
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- Can the hybridisation paradox be addressed by differentiating editors’ and translators’ actions?
- Explicitation, shining-through, normalisation... → translated language or edited language?
- Several understandings of ‘translation process’
  - ‘the period commencing from the moment the client contacts the translator and ending when the translation reaches the addressee, or when the translator is paid’ (Muñoz Martín 2010:179)
Research questions

Research questions for the current study

In German translations of English business articles,
- is there a tendency towards metaphorisation of nominal or verbal forms?
- do translators and editors act differently in this regard?
Ideational grammatical metaphor

Definition by Halliday & Matthiessen (2004:637)

Instances ‘where processes and qualities are construed as if they were entities’
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Nominalisation of processes (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004:656)

- normal (‘congruent’) realisation → verb (Process in clause)
- metaphorical realisation → noun (Thing in nominal group)
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- normal (‘congruent’) realisation → verb (Process in clause)
- metaphorical realisation → noun (Thing in nominal group)

It is expensive to maintain a house.
The maintenance of a house is expensive.
Maintaining a house is expensive.
The maintaining of a house is expensive.
Grammatical metaphor in translation

Grammatical metaphor and translation

Congruency & logogenisis (Halliday & Matthiessen 1999:18)

congruent something that ‘comes earlier in [...] the unfolding of the act of meaning’ (Halliday & Matthiessen 1999:18).

logogenesis process of semohistory, by which meanings are continually created, transmitted, recreated, extended and changed’
Grammatical metaphor and translation

Congruency & logogenesis (Halliday & Matthiessen 1999:18)

- **congruent**: something that ‘comes earlier in [...] the unfolding of the act of meaning’ (Halliday & Matthiessen 1999:18).
- **logogenesis**: process of *semohistory*, by which meanings are continually created, transmitted, recreated, extended and changed.

Congruent forms: primary in a logogenetic sense (Steiner 2004:159)

→ source text primary ⇒ concept applicable to translation
Grammatical metaphor and translation

Translation as de-metaphorisation (Steiner 2001)

- understanding meaning – recreating the understood meaning
  
  ↠ necessarily involves de-metaphorisation.
Grammatical metaphor and translation

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  ➔ ‘here the process of re-metaphorisation is cut short below the degree to which it might otherwise go’ (Steiner 2001:15)
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degree to which it might otherwise go’ (Steiner 2001:15)

⇒ lower frequency of metaphorisation in translations (2001:11)
The textual metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004:642ff)

Metaphorical realisation (as a nominal group) allows

- drawing on ‘Given/New’ organisation of the information unit
- treating a proposition textually as a discourse referent
Effects of grammatical metaphor: interpersonal

The textual metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004:642ff)

Metaphorical realisation (as a nominal group) allows
- drawing on ‘Given/New’ organisation of the information unit
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The interpersonal metafunction (2004:645)

Metaphorical realisation (as a nominal group)
- no interpersonal status of proposition or proposal → utterance made ‘inarguable’ or presented as established
- cannot be modalised, doubted or argued
People may even shun the development of new resources in order to preserve existing values and retain power. (HBR 7/10, 102)

Bisweilen sind die Motive gegen die Entwicklung neuer Ressourcen auch in der Bewahrung vorhandener Werte oder in der Wahrung von Macht zu suchen. (man22)

‘Sometimes the motives against the development of new resources are to be sought also in the preservation of existing values or in the retention of power.’

Häufig wollen Mitarbeiter vorhandene Werte bewahren oder ihre Macht sichern. (HBM 2/11, 84)

‘Staff often want to preserve existing values or secure their power.’
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Types of metaphorisation in the corpus

**ST** Increasing brand equity is best seen as a means to an end, one way to build customer equity.

**man** Die Steigerung des Werts einer Marke wird bestenfalls als eine Methode zur Erreichung des wichtigeren Ziels, der Steigerung des Werts der Kunden, betrachtet.

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VNV, NNV, VNN
Method of investigation for this paper

Quantitative analysis of selected items

- Deverbal nominalisations
  - steigern (‘increase’) > die Steigerung
  - studieren (‘study’) > das Studieren

- Denominal verbalisations
  - Information > informieren

Observe metaphorisation patterns in the text at several stages in the translation process
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Qualitative analysis

- Process types of metaphorised verbs
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Corpus architecture

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Preliminary findings

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Publication stage: 296 N 274 V – 31% assumed literal
Manuscript stage: 536 N 34 V – 80% of nominal forms metaphorised
⇒ Translators nominalise – editors verbalise
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Preliminary findings

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→ Mental processes: VNN > VNV ($\chi^2 = 6.11$ (df=2), $p=0.047$)
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~~> German prof. discourse is usually ‘content-oriented’ (Becher et al. 2009:138)
### Preliminary findings

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<td>HBR 7/08,50</td>
<td>At Cummins, for example, Solso had to find a way to shift the culture from a “best-efforts company,” where people felt that it was good enough to be smart and work hard and do the best they could, to “believing that they actually had to deliver on their performance commitments.”</td>
<td>Tim Solso von Cummins beispielsweise musste einen Weg zur Änderung der Unternehmenskultur finden, weg von der ursprünglichen “Best-Efforts-Mentalität”, bei der es nach Ansicht der Mitarbeiter genügte, intelligent zu sein, hart zu arbeiten und ihr Bestes zu geben, und hin zu der “Überzeugung, dass sie ihre Leistungsziele auch tatsächlich erreichen müssen”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>man7 8/08,20</td>
<td>Tim Solso von Cummins beispielsweise musste die gesamte Unternehmenskultur ändern—weg von der ursprünglichen “Best-Efforts-Mentalität”, bei der es nach Ansicht der Mitarbeiter genügte, intelligent zu sein, hart zu arbeiten und ihr Bestes zu geben, und hin zu der “Überzeugung, dass sie ihre Leistungsziele auch tatsächlich erreichen müssen”.</td>
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Reassessment of features of ‘translated language’

- translators follow German tendency to nominalise
Conclusion

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  ⇒ phenomena of translated language: better explained by using manuscript corpora to differentiate the translation process
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