

Differentiating the translation process: A corpus analysis of editorial influence on English-to-German business article translations

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Research tenets

Conflicting tendencies

German – high information density¹

↔ nominal style

Translation into German turns nominal constructions into verbal ones – explicitation (Konšalová 2007) / literal translation of verbal structures (Hansen-Schirra 2011:147)

↔ verbal style

¹(Nord 1997:60; Fabricius-Hansen 1999:203; Schäffner & Wiesemann 2001:94; Hansen-Schirra et al. 2009:112)

The notion of 'translated language'

Hybridisation

Hybridisation ← two conflicting phenomena of translation
(Hansen-Schirra 2011:136)

- 1 shining-through (Teich 2003) of English structural conventions
- 2 translation adapted to meet norms of TL: 'normalisation'
(Baker 1996) / 'covert translation' (House 1997)

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'Translated language'

normalisation, shining-through, explicitation, hybridisation, ...



attributed to translator

Editing in the translation process

Editing translations

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Editing translations

- editing/revision by others is part of the daily life of translators (Künzli 2005; Mossop 2007b; Ko 2011)
 - large amount of literature on editing translations (Mossop 2007a; Mossop 2007b; Robert & Waes 2014)
- largely ignored by translation and contrastive studies (but see Utko 2004; Munday 2012:110ff; Bisiada 2014)

Aims of the research

Research question

Do German translations of English business articles

- exhibit a tendency towards (de-)metaphorisation of nominal or verbal forms and
- do translators and editors act differently in this regard?

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Contributions of the project

- study of the influence of editors on the translation product
- systematic study of (de-)metaphorisation and grammatical metaphor

Ideational grammatical metaphor

Definition by Halliday & Matthiessen (2004:637)

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Nominalisation (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004:656)

Nominalisation: processes, which are congruently expressed as verbs, are expressed metaphorically as nouns and function as Thing in the nominal group rather than functioning as Process in the clause.

Quality → Entity → Process

- (1) If the organization obliges, the units that don't receive such treatment may become **resentful**. (HBR 9/09,90)
- a. *Wenn das Unternehmen den Wünschen der Einheit*
 If the company the wishes of-the unit
stattgibt, macht sich bei den anderen Einheiten
 permits spreads REFL among the other units
Verärgerung breit. (draft16)
 resentment wide
- b. *Gibt aber das Unternehmen den Wünschen einer*
 Gives however the company to-the wishes of-a
Einheit statt, so reagieren die anderen Einheiten, die
 unit in then react the other units that
leer ausgehen, verärgert. (HBM 12/09,78)
 left-without are resentfully

Effects of grammatical metaphor

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

Metaphorical realisation (as a nominal group) allows

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The interpersonal metafunction (2004:645)

Metaphorical realisation (as a nominal group)

- does not receive the interpersonal status of proposition or proposal → utterance made 'inarguable' or presented as established.
- cannot be modalised, doubted or argued

Process → Metaphorisation → De-metaphorisation

- (2) People may even shun the development of new resources in order **to preserve** existing values and **retain** power. (HBR 7/10,102)
- a. *Bisweilen sind die Motive gegen die Entwicklung neuer Ressourcen auch in der **Bewahrung** vorhandener Werte*
 Sometimes are the motives against the development of-new
 resources even in the preservation of-existing values
*oder in der **Wahrung** von Macht zu suchen.* (dr22)
 or in the retainment of power to-be sought
- b. *Häufig wollen Mitarbeiter vorhandene Werte **bewahren** oder*
 often want staff existing values preserve or
*ihre Macht **sichern**.* (HBM 2/11,84)
 their power secure

Metaphorisation effect: loss of modality

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Grammatical metaphor and translation

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Translators understand and recreate the understood meaning. That process of understanding necessarily involves de-metaphorisation.

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This claim may be challenged if translated texts can be shown to exhibit a high frequency of grammatical metaphor (nominalisations)

Types of metaphorisation in the corpus

HBR 1/10,94	Increasing brand equity is best seen as a means to an end, one way to build customer equity.
----------------	--

draft18	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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Size of the corpus in words

	2006–11
English source texts	104,678
Draft German translations	106,829
Published German translations	104,448
Total size	315,955

Method of investigation

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- ↳ observe relationships between originals and translation
- Process types of metaphorised forms noted
- ↳ allows qualitative analysis later on

Preliminary findings

Abbr.	ST form	Translator's action	Editor's action	Instances
VNN	verbal	nominalisation	—	123
VgNN	gerund	nominalisation	—	13
VNV	verbal	nominalisation	re-verbalisation	84
NNV	nominal	—	verbalisation	43
NVV	nominal	verbalisation	—	5
Total				268

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Direction of metaphorisation

- **Final product:** equal – 136 N 132 V (84 V assumed literal)

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Direction of metaphorisation

- Final product: equal – 136 N 132 V (84 V assumed literal)
 - Pre-editing stage: nominal – N V (220 N metaphorised)
- ↔ Translators nominalise – editors verbalise

Research outlook

Possible hypotheses & obstacles

- Translators follow German tendency to nominalise, but editors change structures to make the text more readable? → appearance of explicitation in translation or 'literal translation' misleading

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Possible hypotheses & obstacles

- Translators follow German tendency to nominalise, but editors change structures to make the text more readable? → appearance of explicitation in translation or 'literal translation' misleading
- Editors are conscious of the reputation of German as preferring the nominal style and its 'clunkyness'
- Importance placed on style, not on correctness or faithfulness of translation (NNV examples, also -NV examples, and), but there are also cases where the editor may have consulted it (VNV)

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Obstacles & drawbacks

- Do editors consult STs? (VNV suggests so, translation workflow and modalisation example above suggest otherwise)

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- analysis of process types might shed light on this
- Only metaphorised forms surface – corpus annotation to count unmetaphorised forms?

Thank you for your attention






Contact

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