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Metaphoric Expressions as a Core Challenge in Teaching Economic Translation

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ABSTRACT: Translating economic texts represents a major type of translation as it deals with specialized issues that have to do with finance, commerce, banking, business and the like. It is important to draw a line between formal economic writings on the one hand and journalistic economic writings on the other. Formal language is the type of language we use publicly for some serious purposes, for example, in official reports, business letters, regulations, and academic writing. Informal language is generally easier to understand and is typically used in advertisements and newspaper articles. There is a growing interest in the use of metaphors in economics and business, especially within the discipline of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Metaphors are used excessively in business magazines, books and newspapers as they have positive impact on readers' cognition. Texts written by a vast number of financial analysts and commentators offer strong evidence for the argument that conceptual metaphor is a part of cognition, not just a figure of speech. Text types strongly affect the selection of translation strategy. In this regard, the researcher links between the text type (formal economic documents or media articles) and the translation method used. The researcher explores the dominant metaphoric expressions and collocations frequently used in business media discourse and suggests their translations. This paper attempts to answer the following questions: 1. What are the dominant types of metaphors used in economic media discourse? 2. How far can the Conceptual Metaphor Theory help understand and translate metaphors? 3. What are the best ways of training the translators in this regard?

Key Words: Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Michael White, Metaphoric Expressions, Teaching, Economic Translation.

التعبير المجازي كتحدٍ أساسي في تدريس الترجمة الاقتصادية

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ملخص: تعد ترجمة النصوص الاقتصادية أحد أنواع الترجمة المتخصصة حيث إنها تتناول موضوعات تتعلق بالمالية والتجارة والبنوك والأعمال وما شابه ذلك. ومن الأهمية بمكان التفرقة بين لغة الكتابة الرسمية وغير الرسمية؛ فاللغة الرسمية هي اللغة التي تستخدم لبعض الأغراض التي تتسم بالجدية مثل التقارير الرسمية، خطابات الأعمال، اللوائح، المقالات الأكاديمية. وعلى الجانب الآخر، تعتبر اللغة غير الرسمية هي الأيسر بصفة عامة فتستخدم في الإعلانات والمقالات الصحفية. وتجدر الإشارة إلى أنه يوجد اتجاه متزايد في استخدام الاستعارة في اللغة الاقتصادية خاصة في إطار مناهج (الإنجليزية لأغراض معينة). وتستخدم الاستعارة كثيراً في المجالات والكتب والجرائد الاقتصادية لما لها من أثر إيجابي على استيعاب القارئ. وتدل النصوص الاقتصادية التي يتم تحليلها من قبل عدد كبير من المحللين والمعلقين إلى أن الاستعارة التصويرية ليست فقط شكل بلاغي ولكنها تساعد على الفهم والاستيعاب. وفي هذا الإطار، تستعرض الباحثة أكثر التعبيرات المجازية والمصاحبات اللغوية شيوعاً في المقالات ذات الطبيعة الاقتصادية وفقاً لتصنيفات مايكل وايت (2003)، وكولر (2004) من حيث تقسيمها إلى خمس تصنيفات: إنسان، حيوان، نبات، عملية ميكانيكية، حرب، كما إنها تقترح حلولاً لترجمتها. وتهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى مناقشة الأسئلة التالية: ماهي أكثر أنواع الاستعارة شيوعاً في لغة الصحافة الاقتصادية؟ إلى أي مدى تساعد النظرية التصويرية للاستعارة على فهم وترجمة الاستعارة؟ ما هي أفضل الطرق في تدريب المترجمين في هذا الصدد؟ الكلمات الاستدلالية: النظرية التصويرية لاستعارة، مايكل وايت، التعبير المجازي، تدريس، الترجمة الاقتصادية.

1. Introduction

Economic translation is one of the translation genres that needs due care and attention. The translator should observe many aspects, most importantly: choosing the appropriate equivalence of the term and using it in the relevant context, formality levels of the source and target text, and metaphoric expressions frequently used in media articles.

It is important to draw a line between formal economic writings on the one hand and journalistic economic articles on the other. Formal language is the type of language we use publicly for some serious purposes, for example, in official reports, business letters, regulations, and academic writing. Informal language is generally easier to understand and is typically used in advertisements and newspaper articles.

Reiss's and Newmark's translation theories on Text Typology contribute a lot to translation studies, but there are some differences as well as similarities in them. Their theory Text Typology provides a new perspective for the study of translation. They argue that text types strongly affect the selection of translation strategy.

There is a growing interest in the use of metaphors in economics and business, especially within the discipline of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Metaphors are used excessively in business magazines, books and newspapers as they have positive impact on readers' cognition. Texts written by a vast number of financial analysts and commentators offer strong evidence for the argument that conceptual metaphor is a part of cognition, not just a figure of speech.

Deignan (2010) maintains that the "conceptual metaphor theory proposes metaphor as a link between two domains, termed the 'source' domain and the 'target' domain" (p. 44). Kövecses (2002) argues that most source domains are concrete, whereas most target domains are abstract. Accordingly, conceptual metaphors help facilitate the conceptualization of abstract ideas. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) challenged the traditional view that metaphor was an ornamental figure of speech; a surface linguistic phenomenon, then they claimed that conceptual metaphors structure our thought and behavior. According to Kövecses (2002), there are some mappings between the source domain and the target domain. The source domain is the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphoric expressions while the target domain is the conceptual domain that we try to understand; for example, in saying THE ECONOMY IS WAR, the domain of war is linked to the domain of economy

and features which characterize war are mapped onto economy to describe it. The economy works as a "target domain" that we try to understand in terms of war.

According to Dobrota and Maftai (2002), metaphors in economics are usually stable, unlike the ones in literary texts, and thus they are easier to translate. Yet, with regards to the innovative power of metaphor, translating metaphoric expressions may prove extremely demanding at the level of the translator's linguistic, cultural and literary sensitivity in both the ST and the TT.

This paper attempts to answer the following questions: 1. What are the dominant types of metaphors used in economic media discourse according to White's 2003 and Koller's 2004 classifications? 2. How far can the Conceptual Metaphor Theory help understand and translate metaphors? 3. What are the best ways of training the translators in this regard?

2. Methodology

The researcher links between the text type (whether formal economic documents or media articles) and the translation method used. If the text is a formal document, technical terminology and formality levels should be taken into consideration mainly. If the text is a newspaper article, the would-be translator has to highlight the metaphoric expressions available in this text in the light of White's (2003) and Koller's (2004) Classifications of the metaphoric expressions in economic media discourse. Once the above mentioned classification has been conducted, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is recommended for rendering a suitable translation.

3. Analysis

According to White's (2003) and Koller's (2004) classifications, metaphors in economic media discourse are classified into five main categories:

I. THE ECONOMY IS A PLANT;

II. THE ECONOMY IS AN ANIMAL;

III. THE ECONOMY IS A HUMAN BEING;

IV. THE ECONOMY IS A MECHANICAL PROCESS;

V. THE ECONOMY IS A WAR

Main metaphors are written in small capitals, and Features may overlap. The following examples clarify how can the above mentioned classifications together with the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) simplify the translator's task.

I. THE ECONOMY IS A HUMAN BEING

1- A *feel-bad economy* is better than nothing at all.

2-The economy is still *too weak* to start the *heavy lifting* this year.

According to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the source domain is a human being who feels bad or too weak to start the heavy lifting while the target domain is the economy. The domain of a human being is linked to the domain of economy and the features "feel bad, weak, lifting weights" which characterize human beings are mapped onto economy to describe it.

Therefore, the suggested translation is:

1. اقتصاد متداعٍ خير من عدم وجوده على الإطلاق.

2. لم يتعاف الاقتصاد ليتمكن من تحمل الأعباء الجسام هذا العام.

-لا يزال الاقتصاد *يحبو* فلا يقوى على تحمل الأعباء الثقيلة هذا العام.

-لا يزال الاقتصاد *عاجزاً* عن النهوض وتحمل أعباء العام.

3-Why did these footwear companies *catch a cold*?

The domain of a human being is linked to the domain of economy, and a feature characterizing humans (catch a cold) was mapped onto economy represented in companies.

لماذا مُنيت شركات الأحذية بتلك الخسائر؟

لماذا تكببت شركات الأحذية تلك الخسائر؟

لماذا سارت شركات الأحذية حافية القدمين؟

4- Did Meconic and Principal *take a bath* separately or together?

By the same token, the suggested translation is:

هل أفلست كلا من شركتي ميكونيك وبرنسيبول معاً أم بشكل منفصل؟

هل عانت شركتا ميكونيك وبرنسيبال من نزيف الخسائر سويلاً أم كلٌّ على حدة؟

هل غرقت شركتا ميكونك وبرنسيبال في بحر الخسائر سويلاً أم كلٌّ على حدة؟

5. On Monday evening it was clear that the government was engaged in a *full scale war* with the financial markets .

The domain of human is linked to the domain of economy as if financial markets were enemies who fight with the government in a severe war.

لقد بات واضحاً مساء يوم الاثنين انخراط الحكومة في حرب ضارية مع الأسواق المالية.

* In the following Arabic sentences, the source domain is a human being while the target domain is the economy. A feature of humans was mapped from source to target domain. The writer has linked the domain of a human being to the domain of economy.

6. إن الدمج يعمل على الحفاظ على سمعة الاقتصاد المصري وزيادة الإيرادات السيادية

للدولة.

Merging preserves the *Egyptian economy's reputation* and increases the state's sovereign revenues.

7. رتب البنك العربي الافريقي الدولي قرضاً مشتركاً لشركة بالم هيلز للتعمير بقيمة 2.4

مليار جنيه بمشاركة بنكي الأهلي ومصر في ترتيب و ضمان تغطية القرض.

The Arab African International Bank in collaboration with the National Bank of Egypt and Banque Misr arranged and guaranteed the *coverage of a common loan* granted to Palm Hills Company for Construction amounting to EGP 2.4 bn.

8. البرد يصيب الصرافة بالركود واليورو يهبط 13 قرشاً خلال أسبوع.

Exchange markets *are inflicted* by recession as a result of cold weather; the Euro *falls* P.T. 13 in the week.

9. الاقتصاد يسير في الطريق الصحيح.. والوقت مناسب لطرح سندات حكومية بالدولار في

السوق العالمية.

The economy *moves on the right track* and it's time to offer government bonds in dollars in global markets.

10. قال محمود منتصر نائب رئيس البنك الأهلي أن الوضع الاقتصادي في مصر يتطور للأفضل والاقتصاد في طريقه للتعافى.

Deputy Chair of the National Bank, Mahmoud Montasser said that the economic situation in Egypt has improved and that the *green shoots of the economy* have started.

11. إن ظاهرة خطف العمالة بين المصانع والمطاحن تهدد الإنتاج.

The phenomenon of labor force enticement between factories and grinders *threatens production.*

12. كنت أتمنى أن يتم منح الموافقة حتى يتم القضاء على البيروقراطية وفتح الباب أمام الفساد مرة أخرى الذي ظل يعانى منه الاستثمار والمستثمرون فترة طويلة.

I hoped that acceptance was gained to overcome bureaucracy and prevent corruption from spreading once more, the case has caused investments as well as investors *suffer* continuously for a long time.

II. THE ECONOMY IS AN ANIMAL

Animal metaphors are used to describe inflation as a horse (galloping inflation, trotting inflation... etc).

13. A plan was made to rid Brazil of its *galloping inflation*, which exceeded 5% than the preceding 2 months.

Gallop is a characteristic feature of the horse, which means that it runs very quickly that is out of control. Galloping inflation means that the inflation is very high that is out of control.

According to the (CMT), a feature of a horse (galloping) was mapped from the source domain (animal) to the target domain (inflation). Accordingly, galloping inflation should be translated into التضخم الجامح which is a lexicalized term.

A lexicalized term means that it exists in the dictionary as such.

تم وضع خطة لتخليص البرازيل من التضخم الجامح الذي زاد بنسبة 5% عن السنتين الماضيتين.

14. What steps can we take to keep inflation *in the barn rather than running wild*?

The domain of animal is linked to the domain of economy, and features characterizing a horse (*in the barn/running wild*) were mapped onto economy represented in inflation.

ما هي الخطوات التي يمكن اتخاذها لترويض التضخم بدلاً من تحوله لوحش بري كاسر؟

ما هي الخطوات التي يمكننا اتخاذها لترويض التضخم بدلاً من توحشه؟

15. Traders continued to pursue the "*scent of blood*", buoyed by handsome profits won on the devaluation of the lira (predatory animal/human).

In fact, sharks have a tendency to kill at every opportunity, which is advantageous to them over the long run. Companies have the same willingness to realize revenues and profits. Whether attacking other companies' profits with mergers and acquisitions or chewing out chunks of other markets to expand and grow, a company is attractive if it is tracking in on fresh areas of profit, just like sharks.

The domain of an animal is linked to the domain of economy and a feature characterizing animal (*scent of blood*) was mapped onto economy represented in traders.

Also, the domain of a human being is linked to the domain of economy and a feature characterizing humans (*handsome*) was mapped onto economy represented in profits.

استمر التجار في سلك مسلك اقتناص الفرص/ الصيد في الماء العكر مدعوماً بالأرباح الطائلة التي حصلوا عليها جراء انخفاض قيمة الليرة.

16. Foreign exchange reaction was mildly favorable with the pound *climbing away from its floor* against the mark and the dollar (human or animal).

The domain of animal is linked to the domain of economy, and a feature characterizing animal/human (climbing away) was mapped onto economy represented in mark and dollar.

شهد الصرف الأجنبي ردود أفعال مباشرة تزامناً مع صعود/قفزة الجنيه أمام المارك والدولار.

17. The results confirmed that the current upswing isn't just a *dead-cat bounce* but an honest-to-goodness *bull market*.

According to Longman Business Dictionary:

Dead-cat bounce is a temporary and small upward movement in share prices after a large fall, often before they start to fall again.

The domain of animal is linked to the domain of economy, and animals (bull, dead cat) are used to describe economy represented in upswing/market.

أثبتت النتائج أن الصعود الحالي ليس مجرد تعافٍ مؤقت بل سوق صاعدة بمعنى الكلمة.

III. THE ECONOMY IS A PLANT

In the following sentences, the source domain is a plant while the target domain is the economy. A feature of plant is mapped from the source domain to the target domain. The writer has linked the domain of plant to the domain of economy.

18. America offers a *thriving economy*.

The domain of plant is linked to the domain of economy and a feature characterizing plant (thriving) was mapped onto economy.

تقدّم أمريكا نموذجاً لاقتصاد مزدهر.

19. قال منير الزاهد رئيس مجلس الإدارة والرئيس التنفيذي لبنك القاهرة إن **باقة المنتجات** المبتكرة التي يمتلكها البنك تتيح لعملائه الفرصة نحو استثمار أموالهم.

20. حققت قطاعات الأعمال المختلفة **نموً** مطرداً خلال التسعة أشهر الماضية من العام

The suggested translation is:

-Mounir Al Zahid, Chairman and Chief Executive of Banque du Caire, said that a **bunch of novel products** owned by the Bank provides a good opportunity for its customers to invest their money.

-Different business sectors achieved **a steady growth** throughout the previous nine months.

* It is important to note that the word growth is a dead metaphor: it is used in our daily life without knowing that it is a traditional metaphor.

IV. THE ECONOMY IS A MECHANICAL PROCESS

21. Reducing capital spending would allow the company to reduce its **debt leverage** to about 40% and give it more financial stability.

تقليل رأس المال الذي يتم انفاقه قد يسمح للشركات بتقليل قوة رفع الدين إلى حوالي 40%
ويمنح الشركات مزيداً من الاستقرار المالي.

(inaccurate translation)

In this sentence, debt leverage was translated literally (in the bad sense of the term) which leads to a loss in meaning. The problem in this sentence lies in the absence of this collocation in bilingual specialized dictionaries; only the term leverage exists as رافعة مالية which cannot be used in this sentence as such. In this case, the translator should resort to mono-lingual specialized dictionaries to try to understand the meaning beyond the term.

According to Longman Business Dictionary, to reduce leverage means to reduce the amount of borrowing. But still, there is a problem with trying to create an Arabic equivalent to the collocation 'debt leverage' that suits the context.

Thus, the researcher applies the CMT to try to provide a suitable Arabic equivalent that preserves the image by imagining that the company is a person and that debts are heavy weights that she carries on her shoulder as follows:

إن الحد من الإنفاق الرأسمالي من شأنه أن يؤدي إلى تحرير الشركة من قبضة الديون إلى حوالى 40% ويمنحها مزيداً من الاستقرار المالي.

22. There are several commercial activities that *oil/grease the wheel* of the economic growth.

According to Oxford Dictionary:

If you grease a part of a car, machine, you put grease on it in order to make it work smoothly.

The domain of mechanical process is linked to the domain of economy and a feature characterizing mechanical (*oil/grease the wheel*) was mapped onto economy represented in economic growth.

هناك العديد من الأنشطة التجارية التي تدفع بعجلة النمو الاقتصادي.

23. The committee will be also responsible of proposing mechanisms to *activate* the market.

According to Oxford Dictionary: To activate means to make something such as a device or chemical process start working.

The domain of mechanical process is linked to the domain of economy, and a feature characterizing mechanical process (activate) was mapped onto economy represented in the market.

ستكون اللجنة مسؤولة أيضاً عن اقتراح آليات لتحفيز السوق.

24. The introduction of new foreign exchange controls in Venzuela has *fuelled* inflation, which has caused imported goods to become scarcer.

According to Oxford Dictionary:

To fuel means to supply sth with material that can be burnt to produce heat or power. For example, rockets are fuelled to use them in war.

The domain of mechanical process is linked to the domain of economy, and a feature characterizing mechanical (fuelled) was mapped onto economy represented in inflation.

اشتعل فتيل التضخم في فنزويلا نتيجة فرضها ضوابط رقابية جديدة على الصرف الأجنبي، الأمر الذي زاد من ندرة البضائع المستوردة.

25. There are fears that a drawn-out international conflict would *drive* the global economy into recession and *undermine* financial US stocks down following falls in Asia and Europe.

According to Oxford Dictionary:

**Drive* means to provide the power that makes a machine work.

**Undermine* means to make somebody's confidence or authority, gradually weaker or less effective.

وفقاً لمعجم أطلس: أطاح بالشخص = أسقطه، فمثلاً أطاح بالوزير = أسقطه
أطاح بماله = أفناه

In this example, features overlap. This means that the sentence gathers a mix of two domains; a mechanical process and a human being.

The domain of mechanical process is linked to the domain of economy, and a feature characterizing mechanical process (*drive*) was mapped onto economy represented in recession.

The domain of human being is linked to the domain of economy and a feature characterizing humans (*undermine*) was mapped onto economy represented in financial stocks.

ثمة مخاوف من أن الصراع الدولي الطويل قد يؤدي إلى **الدفع** بالاقتصاد العالمي نحو الركود **والإطاحة** بالأسهم الأمريكية عقب التراجعات في آسيا وأوروبا.

In the following Arabic sentences, the source domain is a mechanical process while the target domain is the economy. A feature of a mechanical process was mapped from source to target domain. The writer has linked the domain of a mechanical process to the domain of economy.

26. دائماً ما يبدي المستثمرون في الكويت استعدادهم لضخ تدفقات مالية كبيرة إلى مصر.

- Kuwaiti investors are often willing to *pump* large *cash flows* to Egypt.

27. ودعا إلى تقنين تشريعات من شأنها تحفيز المستثمرين على الاستثمار عبر تعديلات

تشريعية وقوانين محفزة للاستثمار.

- He called for codifying legislations that will *motivate/activate* investors via legislative amendments and *investment- catalytic laws*.

28. قال إن تعطيل الصفقات التجارية مع الجانب الإندونيسي ليس هو الحل السليم لضبط

إيقاع الميزان التجاري.

- He said that crippling trade deals with the Indonesian side is not the sound solution to *clap the rhythm* of the trade balance.

29. أشار لطفى إلى أن نتائج إطلاق خدمات تمويل المنشآت الصغيرة والمتوسطة مشجعة،

وحققت نمواً مليون جنيه ، لأهمية القطاع الكبيرة الذى يعد قاطرة النمو الاقتصادى فى

مصر.

Lotfy pointed out that the results of launching finance services for small and medium enterprises are encouraging as it realized EGP 91 m due to the paramount importance of this sector, which is considered the *economic growth engine* in Egypt.

30. يعد القرض الأكبر في مجال التنمية العقارية إيماناً من البنك بجدوى القطاع الذي يعد

قاطرة أساسية للاقتصاد المصري.

The large loan will be allocated to property development as the Bank is convinced of the effectiveness of the sector which is considered the main *Egyptian economic locomotive*.

V. THE ECONOMY IS A WAR

31. It is too easy for the prime minister to blame city speculators for *blowing his economic policy to smithereens*.

According to Oxford's Dictionary of Advanced Learners:

- To blow means to break something open with explosives. With money, it means to spend or waste a lot of money on something; for example, he inherited over a million dollars and blew it all on drink and gambling. With wind: when the wind or a current of air blows, it is moving; when it blows, the wind is blowing.
- Smithereens means to destroy something completely by breaking it into small pieces. If something is smashed or blown to smithereens, it breaks into very small pieces (infml).

The domain of war is linked to the domain of economy and features characterizing war (blowing/smithereens) were mapped onto economy represented in economic policy.

من السهولة بمكان على رئيس الوزراء لوم مضاربي المدينة على العصف بسياسته الاقتصادية وجعلها هباءً منثوراً.

32. Diversification can *ruin* your best ideas.

The domain of war is linked to the domain of economy and a feature characterizing .war (ruin) was mapped onto economy represented in diversification

قد يذهب التنوع في الاستثمارات بمعظم مخططاتك أدراج الرياح/ قد يقرب معظم مخططاتك رأساً على عقب.

33. Oil prices eased yesterday, having *hit* a new high last week.

According to Oxford Dictionary:

Hit (of a bullet, bomb) means to reach and touch a person or thing suddenly and with force.

.Hit (sports) means to score points by hitting a ball

The domain of war is linked to the domain of economy and features characterizing war 'hit' was mapped onto economy represented in prices. This means that oil prices are bullets that hit the target violently or balls that score points. The researcher translates according to the second meaning.

تراجعت أسعار النفط بالأمس تراجعاً طفيفاً بعد أن كانت قد أحرزت ارتفاعاً جديداً في الأسبوع الماضي.

34. *Mexico's Bolsa index fell 4.5 % this week- its seventh weekly decline, marking the longest drop in almost seven years- on concerns that slower US growth will *hit* its economy.*

The domain of war is linked to the domain of economy and a feature characterizing war (hit) was mapped onto economy represented in (growth).

هبط مؤشر بولسا المكسيكي هذا الأسبوع بنسبة 4% للأسبوع السابع على التوالي مسجلاً أطول تراجع له خلال قرابة سبع سنوات وسط مخاوف من أن تباطؤ النمو من شأنه أن يضرب الاقتصاد الأمريكي في مقتل

4. Conclusion

Translating economic texts is problematic due to the linguistic features governing economic language, namely the excessive presence of specialized terms and collocations that need to be tackled through consulting reliable specialized dictionaries.

It is hoped that the study has explored one of the main obstacles that may face would-be translators in translating economic texts, namely the frequent use of metaphors in economic media discourse which has proved to be not just a surface ornamentation of language but an expression of human thought.

In addition, the study has explored, in detail, the dominant types of metaphors in media articles, namely THE ECONOMY IS A HUMAN; THE ECONOMY IS AN ANIMAL; THE ECONOMY IS A PLANT; THE ECONOMY IS A MECHANICAL PROCESS; THE ECONOMY IS A WAR. In this regard, the researcher has gathered White's (2003) and Koller's (2004) contributions together. It is worth mentioning that THE ECONOMY IS A HUMAN BEING dominates other types of metaphors from Arabic into English unlike the opposite direction; i.e., from English into Arabic in which metaphors are used interchangeably. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory has been adopted as the main pillar for conceptualizing and understanding metaphors frequently used in business media discourse, which in turn, has resulted in distinct improvement in translating such metaphors. This theory has been found to be a figure of speech as well as a method for cognition and thought.

It is recommended for economic translators to be aware of text typology which is initially proposed by Reiss and later developed by other scholars which can guide them to conduct text analysis before getting down to translation because different text types require different translation methods.

Translation students are advised to pick out the metaphoric expressions present in the article under review, classify them according to White's (2003) and Koller's (2004) classifications and apply the CMT to help understand the metaphor and thus provide an equivalent translation to the source text.

5. References

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