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

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Nominal style

- German is a 'high informational density' language (Fabricius-Hansen 1999:203; Hansen-Schirra et al. 2009:112)
- $\hookrightarrow$ 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)
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Hybridisation (Hansen-Schirra 2011:136)

Project background

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... $\rightarrow$ 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)

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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?

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Ideational grammatical metaphor

Definition by Halliday & Matthiessen (2004:637)

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

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It is expensive *to maintain* a house.   congruent
The *maintenance* of a house is expensive.   metaphorical
Maintaining a house is expensive.   congruent
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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'

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Congruent forms: primary in a logogenetic sense (Steiner 2004:159)
↪ source text primary ⇒ concept applicable to translation

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Grammatical metaphor and translation

Translation as de-metaphorisation (Steiner 2001)

- understanding meaning – recreating the understood meaning
  ↪ necessarily involves de-metaphorisation.

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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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⇒ lower frequency of metaphorisation in translations (2001:11)

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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
- treating a proposition textually as a discourse referent

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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

ST People may even shun the development of new resources in order **to preserve** existing values and **retain** power. (HBR 7/10,102)

man *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.']

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

TT   Den Wert einer Marke zu erhöhen kann bestenfalls dazu dienen, ein wichtigeres Ziel zu erreichen: die Steigerung des Kundenwerts.

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Method of investigation for this paper

Quantitative analysis of selected items

- Deverbal nominalisations
  - steigern ('increase') > die Steiger**ung**
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$\hookrightarrow$ 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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Preliminary findings

Abbr.	ST form	Translator	Editor	Instances
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VNV	verbal	nominalisation	verbalisation	175
VVN	verbal	—	nominalisation	15
NNV	nominal	—	verbalisation	81
NVV	nominal	verbalisation	—	18
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- ⇒ Translators nominalise – editors verbalise

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Process type	VNN		VNV		Diff.
material	214	76.4%	140	80.0%	3.6
mental	46	16.4%	16	9.1%	7.3
behavioural	3	1.1%	4	2.3%	1.2
verbal	10	3.6%	10	5.7%	2.1
existential	1	0.4%	2	1.2%	0.8
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$\rightsquigarrow$ German prof. discourse is usually 'content-oriented' (Becher et al. 2009:138)

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HBR 7/08,50	At Cummins, for example, Solso had to find a way to **shift**[mat] the culture from a "best-efforts company," where people **felt**[men] that it was good enough to be smart and work hard and do the best they could, to "**believing**[men] that they actually had to deliver on their performance commitments."
man7	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".
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Conclusion

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- editors change structures to make the text more readable

- importance on style, not on correctness or faithfulness of translation?

⇒ explicitation in translation or 'literal translation' misleading

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

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