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Applying the Discourse Dynamics Approach to metaphors for women in the Spanish translation of the Chinese novel *Wei Cheng*

Hongying Li , Mario Bisiada  and Yingfeng Xu

Department of Translation and Language Sciences, Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain

ABSTRACT

The Discourse Dynamics Framework (DDF) assumes that the dimensions of metaphor (e.g., linguistic, cognitive, affective, physical, cultural) are interconnected, which facilitates our understanding of the use of metaphor in discourse. However, DDF is not yet widely used in translation studies of metaphors. Moreover, the translation of metaphors for women has not yet received sufficient attention despite its high social value. Therefore, this study applies the DDF to analyse the Spanish translation of the metaphors for women in the modern Chinese novel *Wei Cheng*, aiming to propose a multi-level model to help us interpret the metaphors and their translation issues in complex discourses. To this end, we proposed three most important systematic metaphors in the data collected and carried out a qualitative analysis of their Spanish translation. They are *WOMAN IS ANIMAL*, *WOMAN IS PLANT* and *WOMAN IS FOOD*. This study shows that DDF can provide insight into the cognitive, semantic, affective and socio-cultural-historical contexts of metaphor translation and how the ideas, attitudes and values they convey in source text are presented in target text.

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1. Introduction

As a relatively new approach to the studies of metaphor, the Discourse Dynamics Framework (DDF) (Cameron, 2010) is concerned with metaphor in social interaction and its different contexts (e.g., linguistic, cognitive, affective, physical, cultural). Currently, DDF is mainly applied to metaphor-led discourse analysis (e.g., Cameron, 2007; Cameron et al., 2009; Nacey, 2022), aiming to infer the thoughts, attitudes and values of the participants in the discourse by exploring the systematicity of metaphor use in discourse (Cameron, 2010, p. 93).

However, nowadays DDF has received little attention on studies of metaphor in translation. Meanwhile, little attention has been paid to the translation of metaphors for women in current relevant studies. In fact, most metaphors are not neutral in their evaluative stance (Moon, 1998), but are charged with an ideological or attitudinal component (Fernando, 1996; as cited in Rodríguez, 2009), so that the study of the

translation of metaphors for women can help us to understand the situation of women in a particular historical and cultural context, and how they are presented in another language and culture.

Therefore, by analysing the Spanish translation of metaphors for women in the modern Chinese novel *Wei Cheng* within the Discourse Dynamics Framework (DDF), this study aims to propose a multi-level model to interpret the metaphor translation in complex discourses. The findings show that this DDF-based analytical model can take metaphor's cognitive, semantic, affective and socio-cultural-historical contexts into account in the studies of metaphor translation, thus can evaluate whether the ideas, attitudes and values conveyed by the metaphors are fully rendered in another language and culture.

2. The discourse dynamics framework for metaphor

DDF has been profoundly influenced by the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), but differs from CMT in that it shifts the attention from the conceptual level of metaphor across whole speech communities to the complex dynamics of real-world language use in social situations (Cameron et al., 2009). Besides, the complex dynamics system emphasises the changes and connections of metaphors in linguistic, cognitive, affective, physical and cultural dimensions, and takes timescales into account.

DDF provides an operational definition for the analysis of the data. Metaphor can be defined as 'words or phrases that can be justified as somehow anomalous, incongruent or 'alien' in the on-going discourse, but that can be made sense of through a transfer of meaning in the context', and such identified incongruous words or phrases are referred to as 'metaphor vehicle terms' (Cameron & Maslen, 2010, p. 102). The metaphor vehicle and its topic form a vehicle-topic mapping (i.e., linguistic metaphor) in discourse.

Another important point in DDF is the 'systematicity in metaphor use', which plays a critical role in revealing the ideas, attitudes and values of discourse participants. A systematic metaphor is not a single metaphor, but an emergent grouping of closely connected metaphors. In DDF, it refers to a collection of semantically related linguistic metaphors that evolve and adapt as discourse progresses (Cameron, 2010, p. 91).

On the one hand, DDF asserts the possibility of reflection of the metaphorical thinking and conversational patterns of discourse participants by emergent systematic metaphors, without granting them an independent a priori existence. On the other hand, in DDF, the connection between linguistic metaphor and conceptual resource is no longer just a top-down 'instantiation' from thought to language but an interaction between language and thought, and what happens in the moment of discourse can be influenced by factors at all scales and levels (Gibbs & Cameron, 2008; cited as in Cameron, 2010). Both aspects reflect the differences between DDF and CMT at a theoretical level, in that CMT tends to downplay language to focus on the cognitive aspects of metaphor, and views conceptual metaphors as a mental store of static and fixed mappings with their attached linguistic expressions (Cameron, 2010, pp. 78–79). Accordingly, the DDF will show differences from the CMT also in the empirical study, which will be revisited in the next section.

3. Metaphor translation

To date, the studies of metaphor translation from a cognitive perspective have yielded many results. For different languages, these studies have examined the changes of conceptual mappings from the source text (ST) to the target text (TT), the level of entrenchment and their linguistic realisation (e.g., Ding et al., 2010; Li, 2022; Schäffner, 2004). Among them, the most relevant one to this study is Li (2022) who, by conducting a comparative analysis, finds that the 110 linguistic metaphors of the conceptual metaphor HUMAN IS AMINAL in the Chinese novel *Wei Cheng* were retained by 81.81% and 79.09% in the English and Spanish versions, respectively. Furthermore, cultural differences allow these metaphors to be presented in the two TTs differently from the ST to some extent, both in conceptual and lexical level. However, few of these previous studies have specifically focused on translation of metaphors for women. Indeed, most studies related to feminine metaphors have focused on analyses within a single language or comparing specific conceptual mappings for women between two different languages, with WOMAN IS ANIMAL receiving the most attention. Although these studies do not directly address the translation of feminine metaphors, their conclusions can still be very enlightening.

Baider and Gesuato (2003) indicate that, in English, metaphors that describe women in terms of animal categories such as livestock, pets, insects and wild animals contribute to sexist representation of females. In addition, Vasung's (2020) comparative analysis of the metaphor of WOMAN IS A BIRD in Bulgarian and Romanian shows that in both languages, pejorative terms which serve to semantically derogate women dominate over terms with positive connotations. Moreover, even in the case of endearments, there are derogatory and sexist connotations (Vasung, 2020). Examining animal metaphors for women in English and Spanish, Rodríguez (2009) concludes that stereotypical influences on women are reinforced, whether in the form of pets, farmyard animals or wild animals. Of these, pets and farmyard animals often carry positive connotations due to their 'domesticated' and 'non-threatening' nature. Wild animals, however, mostly have a negative association when describing women due to their 'uncontrolled' and 'relatively more powerful' nature.

Analysing how 'women' are conceptualised can help us understand the perceptions of womanhood in a linguistic community. Thus, regarding the translation of metaphors for women, an important issue is that of how the impressions of women as reinforced through these metaphors are presented in another language. To address this issue, the social, cultural and historical contexts of the two languages must be taken into account. Furthermore, at the textual level, it is indispensable to consider the affective factors carried by the metaphors, such as the positive or negative valence of the metaphor, including a set of distinct states such as sadness, anger, fear, and happiness (see Sopory, 2005, p. 438).

Indeed, as an influential theoretical framework, CMT has been widely applied in the studies of metaphor translation. However, regarding previous relevant studies, Hong and Rossi (2021, p. 21) point out that simply comparing the conceptual mappings between source and target text and their linguistic realisation is still insufficient to understand metaphor translation. The cognitive approach needs to be complemented by an analysis of meaning shifts to paint a clearer picture of metaphor translation. Additionally,

Seepheephe and Makha-Ntlaloe (2020) indicate that the cognitive approach has limited the focus to issues of mapping across domains and draws little attention to commentary on the structure, message, language and style of the text. Thus, they propose an alternative discourse-based approach to metaphor translation research, that is, applying the DDF to this area.

As mentioned above, in DDF the formation and use of metaphor in discourse does not only depend on cognitive factors but is the result of a combination of different contexts, including linguistic, cognitive, affective, physical and cultural dimensions (Cameron et al., 2009). Therefore, Seepheephe and Makha-Ntlaloe (2020) argue that, unlike CMT, DDF enables effective assessment of the semantic, affective and pragmatic impact of metaphors in TT. However, they did not integrate DDF with metaphor translation research in a systematic and effective way, which is precisely what this study aims to address.

Considering that, since its inception, DDF has been used mainly in metaphor-led discourse analysis studies (e.g., Cameron, 2007; Cameron et al., 2009; Nacey, 2022), its application in the studies of metaphor translation is still a new approach. We believe that it can advance our theorisation by revealing more information about metaphor in translation, that is, we can gain more insight into whether those attitudes and values about women in the ST have been fully conveyed in the TT. We therefore propose a multi-level analytical model based on DDF to understand the connections between the various elements of metaphor in the discourse and their impact on the TT in order to help us better evaluate the Spanish translation of the metaphors for women in the novel *Wei Cheng*.

4. Materials

The data source for this study consists of the Chinese novel *Wei Cheng* (围城) (Qian, 1947/2017) and its Spanish translation *La fortaleza asediada* (Qian, 2009). Written by Qian Zhongshu in 1946, *Wei Cheng* is considered by the Chinese literary critic C. T. Hsia to be ‘the most delightful and carefully wrought novel in modern Chinese literature; ... perhaps also its greatest novel’ (Hsia, 1961, p. 441). This novel depicts a group of intellectuals in China at the beginning of the war in the first half of the last century, vividly reflecting the behaviour and confusion of these people at a special time when the country was in a collision between traditional Chinese culture and foreign Western culture. It is also known for its sarcastic style, revealing human weaknesses and the plight of the human spirit. More importantly, the richness of the metaphors contained in *Wei Cheng* makes it a proper source of data for metaphor-related studies (Wang, 2007).

To date, *Wei Cheng* has been translated into several languages. The Spanish version, *La fortaleza asediada*, was translated directly from Chinese by the Spanish sinologist Taciana Fisac. It was first published in 1992 and reprinted in 2009 by the same press Anagrama. Here we have chosen the 2009 edition, which is now on sale in the Spanish market and no statement has been found in the book regarding any changes made to the 1992 edition.

The original novel is 253,000 Chinese characters in length, and we need to identify the metaphors of interest to this study from the entire novel and analyse their Spanish translation.

5. Methods

This research applies the DDF (Cameron, 2010) to the study of metaphor translation. Therefore, this section consists of three steps, (1) dealing with the identification of linguistic metaphors, (2) seeking to the establishment of the systematicity of metaphor and (3) proposing an effective model based on DDF to analyse the metaphor translation.

Previous work by Lu and Wang (2017) has demonstrated in detail the application of MIPVU (*Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit*) (Steen et al., 2010) to metaphor (including the similes) annotation in Chinese texts, so here we will devote more space to showing the establishment of the systematicity of metaphor and the analytical model for metaphor translation. But we still need to illustrate a modification made by DDF to MIPVU in its application. MIPVU is originally only implemented at the lexical unit level (see Steen et al., 2010, p. 27). However, Cameron and Maslen (2010, p. 105) emphasise that neither language nor metaphor works only at the level of words, and often it is a group of words that are used metaphorically in the form of chunks or stretches of language. It is therefore necessary to allow the metaphorical terms in the vehicle to include the words or phrases, rather than identifying only the metaphors in lexical units. In this way, this identification procedure can be combined with DDF.

Having identified the relevant linguistic metaphors, we proceed to establish their metaphor patterns, and this aims to find the systematic metaphors for women in *Wei Cheng*. In concrete, we need to collect those metaphors into groupings of vehicles with similar semantic characteristics, thus allowing us to learn about the ideas, attitudes and values concerning the topic of ‘women’ that may have been active in the mind of the speaker. Each metaphor grouping is, in effect, a semantic label for the metaphor, and this label must be able to generalise about the metaphor vehicles within the group.

At this stage, Cameron et al. (2010) stress that an important principle is that labels of grouping should be as specific as possible (p. 118). In this way, one can avoid giving names that abstract from or generalise beyond the evidence of the data. Apart from this, the flexibility of the grouping process should also be considered (Cameron et al., 2010, p. 119). In other words, initial decisions will remain open to revision until later stages of the analysis since each addition might force us to reflect on the nature of a grouping and lead to a split or re-labelling. Table 1 shows part of our labelling and grouping of the metaphor vehicles in *Wei Cheng* that have ‘women’ as their topic:

As this study deals with the issue of metaphor translation, it is necessary to reapply the process shown in Table 1 to the translation of the identified linguistic metaphors and to

Table 1. Partial metaphor vehicles labelling and grouping in the ST.

Vehicle group	Metaphor vehicles	Source text	Glosses of source text
FOOD	五根香肠/five sausages	她手上生的五根香肠, 灵敏得很	The five sausages grown in her hands were quite nimble
ANIMAL	美丽的驴子/ beautiful donkey	柔嘉不再说话, 脸长得像个美丽的驴子.	Roujia stopped talking, her face stretched out like a beautiful donkey .
PLANT	旧葛藤/old kudzu vine	今天太值得纪念了, 绝了旧葛藤, 添了新机会.	Today certainly deserves to be commemorated, cutting off the old kudzu vine , adding new opportunities.

compare the results with those of the ST. The labelling and grouping of the translations for each of the three examples in Table 1 has been presented in Table 2 to facilitate comparison:

In fact, we may not find any metaphor vehicle in the translation of a metaphor if the translator uses the ‘paraphrase’ technique in the TT. Thus, as shown in the second line of Table 1 and Table 2, the metaphor vehicle *ANIMAL* is no longer present. In this circumstance, there is no vehicle-topic mapping in the TT, and there is no need to label it as a vehicle group. Besides, by comparing the data in the last line of Tables 1 and 2, we can observe that the vehicle group in the TT can be different from that of the ST (i.e., from *PLANT* to *TIES*) due to the change of the metaphor vehicle in the TT.

The first step of our work identified 179 linguistic metaphors for women in *Wei Cheng*. In the second step, we proposed three dominant systematic metaphors to analyse their Chinese-Spanish translation, which are the top three in terms of the number of metaphor vehicles they contain, i.e., 16, 13 and 11 respectively. Those are *WOMAN IS ANIMAL*, *WOMAN IS FOOD* and *WOMAN IS PLANT*, consisting of 40 vehicle-topic mappings in total.¹ While the other 139 metaphors belong more sporadically to 74 different labels, which will not be specified here. Table 3 shows in detail the specific metaphor vehicles of the three dominant groups:

In the third step, we integrate the DDF with our analytical model for metaphor translation. As the DDF advocates understanding the use of metaphor in discourse in terms of linguistic, cognitive, affective and socio-cultural-historical aspects, we propose the following four aspects in the analytical model (Figure 1):

In addition, an explanation of the co-text (i.e., the surrounding discourse of the linguistic metaphor in the text) is also necessary before proceeding with the analysis. Nevertheless, we do not subsume it into our analytical framework as we did not find any deletion or modification of the co-text of these metaphors in the TT. We thus assume in our analysis that the co-text of the TT and the ST are the same.

Based on the four dimensions described above, we present a multi-level analysis of the Spanish translation of the metaphors for women in *Wei Cheng* and evaluate the images of women portrayed by these metaphors and the ideas, attitudes and values they reflect as presented in the Spanish translation.

Finally, the six examples chosen in this paper are representative in terms of four aspects: namely they involve (1) three different systematic metaphors, (2) different translation techniques, (3) different discourse participants and (4) issues in different dimensions in the TT.

Table 2. Partial metaphor vehicles labelling and grouping in the TT.

Vehicle group	Metaphor vehicles	Target text	Glosses of target text
<i>FOOD</i>	salchichones/ sausages	Los cinco dedos de sus manos, gordos como salchichones , eran muy diestros	The five fingers on her hands, fat as sausages , were very dextrous
/	/	Roujia no dijo nada pero frunció el ceño.	Roujia said nothing but frowned.
<i>TIES</i>	viejas ataduras/ old ties	Aquel día merecía una celebración: había roto con sus viejas ataduras y se le abrían nuevos horizontes.	That day deserved a celebration: he had broken his old ties and new horizons were opening up to him.

Table 3. Metaphor vehicles and their groupings in the ST.

Vehicle grouping	Quantity of vehicles	Metaphor vehicles collected into the grouping
ANIMAL	16	死鱼肚 (<i>dead-fish-belly</i>), 小猫 (<i>kitten</i>), 小狗 (<i>puppy</i>), 政治动物 (<i>political animals</i>), 计算动物 (<i>calculating animals</i>), 鸟 (<i>birds</i>), 雌老虎 (<i>tigress</i>), 刺猬 (<i>hedgehog</i>), 狗 (<i>dog</i>), 大蜘蛛 (<i>large spiders</i>), 鲸鱼 (<i>whale</i>), 鸡 (<i>chickens</i>), 鸭 (<i>ducks</i>), 鸟 (<i>birds</i>), 斗鸡的冠 (<i>the comb on a fighting cock</i>), 美丽的驴子 (<i>beautiful donkey</i>)
FOOD	13	秀色可餐 (<i>a feast for the eye</i>), 桃李 (<i>peach and plum</i>), 吃不消 (<i>indigestible</i>), 熟肉 (<i>cooked meat</i>), 生鱼片里未净的刺 (<i>uncleaned spines in sashimi</i>), 五根香肠 (<i>five sausages</i>), 蜜糖 (<i>honey</i>), 糟糠 (<i>crude foods such as wine dregs and rice bran</i>), 冷血的鱼翅 (<i>Cold-blooded shark's fin</i>), 好水果 (<i>delicious fruit</i>), 饴糖 (<i>maltose</i>), 外国肉庄里陈列的小牛肉 (<i>veal on display in a foreign butcher's shop</i>), 半溶化的奶油喜字蛋糕 (<i>half-melted cakes with a 'happiness' character</i>)
PLANT	11	花 (<i>flowers</i>), 蔷薇科木本复叶植物 (<i>rosaceae dicotyledonous</i>), 旧葛藤 (<i>old kudzu vine</i>), 姹紫嫣红开遍的花园 (<i>a garden of beautiful flowers and blossoms</i>), 花 (<i>flowers</i>), 花 (<i>flowers</i>), 柳 (<i>willows</i>) 一朵花 (<i>a flower</i>), 漩涡里的叶子在打转 (<i>a leaf spinning in a whirlpool</i>), 中国写意画里的满树梅花 (<i>a plum tree in full bloom in a Chinese impressionist painting</i>), 怒放的红花 (<i>red flowers in full bloom</i>)

Note: The same metaphor vehicle will be identified separately when it appears in different phrases or co-texts, e.g., 鸟 (*birds*) and 花 (*flowers*) in the Table 3.

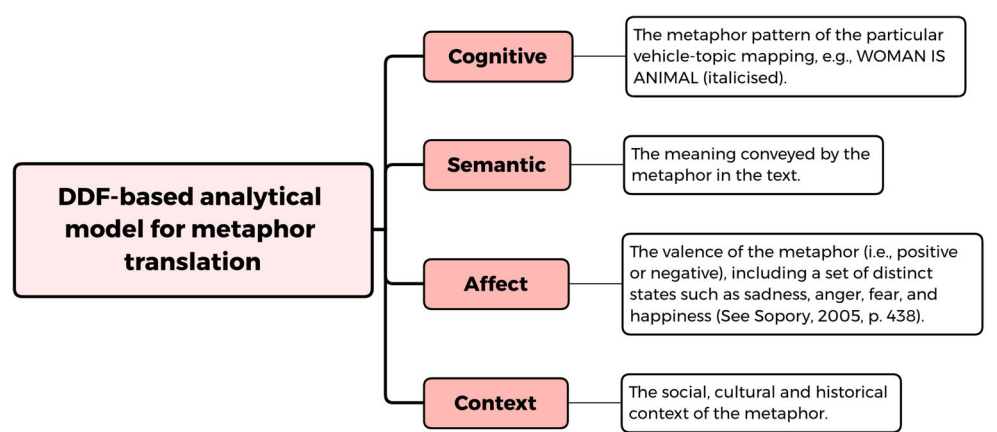


Figure 1. DDF-based multi-level analytical model for metaphor translation.

6. Analysis

6.1 WOMAN IS ANIMAL

Sixteen linguistic metaphors are included in this systematic metaphor, and here we have selected two examples for analysis.

Example (1)

什么‘做媒’、‘介绍’，多好听！还不是市场卖鸡卖鸭似的，打扮了让男人去挑？

[What a nice thing to say about ‘matchmaking’ and ‘introduction’! It’s just like selling **chickens** and **ducks** in the market, dressing up and letting men pick them?]

«mediación para el matrimonio», «presentar», ¡eran sólo bonitas palabras! En realidad las trataban como a **los pollos y patos** del mercado.

[‘Marriage mediation’, ‘introduction’ – these were just nice words! In reality they were treated like **chickens** and **ducks** at the market.]

In the novel, the quote comes from an unmarried woman in her early twenties who is persuaded by her brother and sister-in-law to go on a blind date, so she expresses her

views to them on the matter. In this translation, there are two vehicle-topic mappings: *chicken-woman* and *duck-woman*, which belong to the systematic metaphor *WOMAN IS ANIMAL*.

The semantics of the two linguistic metaphors is that this woman felt that during the matchmaking process, women were like chickens and ducks in a farmer's market, waiting for men to pick and buy them. It is worth noting that, due to the presence of the word 市场 (mercado/market) in the discourse, we believe that the two animals, chicken and duck, also have the property of 'commodities' in this co-text. Therefore, we also grouped these two metaphor vehicles under the semantic label of *COMMODITY*, and it helps us reinforce our understanding of the object status of women as domesticated farm animals in the 'transaction' of matchmaking or marriage.² Men, on the other hand, are the potential purchasers of these 'farm animals', the subjects of the 'transaction'.

As for the socio-cultural and historical context of this metaphor, it reveals and satirises the passive situation of women in the marriage market in traditional Chinese society (especially in the historical context of the novel). Furthermore, the use of the word 'chicken' to describe a woman in Chinese is likely to imply that the person is a prostitute. Although, according to the plot, the girl does not intend to associate herself with a prostitute, the term still has the potential to provoke some negative associations in the mind of the readers of the ST. On this basis, we can also sense from this overall discourse that the girl feels anger, resentment and shame at being treated as a chicken or a duck in the marketplace as a very undignified act. Thus, the affective valence of this metaphor is negative in its entirety.

In the TT, the translator has retained these vehicle-topic mappings intact. In Spanish, it is commonly seen that women are referred to as domesticated animals on farms (Fernandes, 2021; Rodríguez, 2009). On this point, Fernandes (2021) argues that both in English and Spanish, the portrayal of women as farm animals essentially underscores a sense of domesticity, evoking the patriarchal view that the status of women should be confined to the domestic sphere (p. 39). This also coincides with the situation in Chinese society against the background of the novel, that is, when they enter into marriage, women need to perform continuous productive activities like animals such as chickens and ducks (i.e., running the household, taking care of their husbands and children, etc.) to emphasise their value.

We note that in Spanish the word *gallina* (i.e., specifically the feminine category of the chicken, as opposed to *gallo*/rooster) also has a similar symbolic meaning to the Chinese word 鸡 (chicken), i.e., prostitute (Wu, 2014, p. 258). However, the translator did not translate the Chinese 'chicken' as 'gallina' here, but chooses to use another word, 'pollo'. This word refers to chicken meat that has been cooked and served as food. Thus, in response to this subtle change, we consider that the systematic metaphor in relation to 鸡 (chicken) has changed from *WOMAN IS ANIMAL* to *WOMAN IS FOOD*. The *pollo* as food no longer has the implicit meaning of 鸡 (chicken) in the original metaphor (i.e., prostitute). In other words, the translator could have conveyed the negative association of the metaphor vehicle 鸡 (chicken) in the TT, but instead chose another vehicle with no relevant association. Furthermore, in Spanish, the plural 'pollos' can also refer to 'young people', which adds an implication of 'someone young in need of protection' in the TT. Thus, this translation weakens the negative valence of the original metaphor.

Therefore, this translation method chosen by the translator, aided by the co-text, helps the Spanish readers understand the cognitive mapping, the semantic and the socio-cultural-historical context of the metaphor, and even resonates with their own cultural background. However, the negative connotations of this metaphor are dissipated as the translator replaced the specific vehicle 鸡 (chicken), and therefore the associated affective value is weakened in the TT. Despite that, the TT readers can generally comprehend the dilemmas that Chinese women may face in the marriage market through this small microcosm in the literature.

6.2 WOMAN IS FOOD

Example (2)

范小姐 [...] 多喝了半杯酒，脸上没涂胭脂的地方都作粉红色，仿佛外国肉庄里陈列的小牛肉。

[Miss Fan [...] had drunk half a glass more wine, her face was pink where it was not rouged, as if it were **veal on display in a foreign butcher's shop.**]

La señorita Fan [...] Había bebido medio vaso de vino de más y la parte de su rostro sin maquillar estaba roja y le daba el aire de **un venado colgado en una carnicería occidental.**

[Miss Fan [...] She had drunk half a glass of wine too much and the part of her face without make-up was red and gave her the air of **a venison hanging in a western butcher's shop.**]

The co-text of this example is that the character of Miss Fan shows a keen interest in her blind date at a dinner party, which makes her feel excited and shy. In addition, coupled with the alcohol, her face appears very flushed. Unfortunately, however, she did not notice that the man was not the least bit interested in her. The author compares her face to 外国肉庄里陈列的小牛肉 (a veal on display in a foreign butcher's shop) in a third person narration, to highlight her blushing. This vehicle-topic mapping belongs to the systematic metaphor *WOMAN IS FOOD*. In the TT, the translator replaced the 小牛肉 (veal) of the ST with *venado* (venison), so that, although it still belongs to the same systematic metaphor, a different metaphor vehicle has been chosen.

In terms of socio-cultural-historical contexts, traditionally, China has been an agricultural society. Apart from a few nomads, farmers who made their living from farming (mostly the main way of life for the ancient Chinese) considered cattle as a highly valuable tool of productivity (Hsu, 2012, p. 145). Therefore, it was traditionally more common for the Chinese to eat pork than beef.

In the 1930s (the background of the novel), the Western lifestyle was considered more avant-garde, and the author does emphasise the 'foreign' nature of veal. Meanwhile, veal has always been a local food in Spain. However, venison, a food similar in texture and flavour to veal, is not an easily available food source for Spaniards (it is usually hunted or eaten in restaurants at high prices) and today it is mainly exported to other European countries (mainly Northern Europe or France and Germany), making it a rather exotic food, at least for most Spanish city dwellers (Sierra Wild, 2019). In the TT, the translator replaced the word 外国 (foreign) with *occidental*, as a clear indication of 'Western civilisation' (and Spain is considered a Western country). Nevertheless, by replacing veal with venison, the 'exotic' character of the food in the metaphor is still conveyed. And this in fact plays a very important role in showing the affective level of the metaphor. In the novel's historical background, the Western lifestyle is considered superior to the native, traditional lifestyle. This female character, therefore, tries hard to maintain an

elegant (whether it is *foreign* or *occidental*) posture in front of her blind date, yet is essentially no more than a piece of veal or venison in a shop to be selected, and probably still bloody. Furthermore, the presence of the shop in the discourse allows us to simultaneously assign it to the semantic label of *COMMODITY*. Similar to the example in (1), this reinforces our understanding of this woman's inferior position in this match-making. Besides, similar to the 外国肉庄里陈列的小牛肉 (veal on display in a foreign butcher's shop) in the ST, in a conventional sense, *un venado colgado en una carnicería occidental* (a venison hanging in a western butcher's shop) in describing a woman's appearance is not a metaphor that evokes positive emotional overtones, and it also conveys the author's irony or sympathy for Miss Fan's wishful thinking.

In short, through this substitution of metaphor vehicles, the TT is in line with the target culture's context and successfully conveys the underlying meaning and affective level of the metaphor. The next example, however, is a different situation:

Example (3)

鸿渐想去年分别时拉手，何等亲热；今天握她的手
像捏着冷血的鱼翅

[Hongjian thought of how intimate it was to hold her hand when they parted last year; today, holding her hand was like squeezing **a cold-blooded shark's fin**.]

Con lo cálidamente que le había saludado al despedirse el año anterior, ahora tocar su mano era como agarrar **la fría aleta de un pez**.

[As warmly as she had greeted him when she said goodbye the year before, now touching her hand was like grasping **the cold fin of a fish**.]

The utterance in (3) appears as the psychological activity of Hongjian, the male protagonist of the novel. He feels that Miss Su is not as welcoming as she was when they separated last year, or even somewhat indifferent. Therefore he thinks that the touch of her hand is like 冷血的鱼翅 (cold-blooded shark's fin).

In the TT, the translator replaced the 冷血的鱼翅 (cold-blooded shark's fin) with *la fría aleta de un pez* (the cold fin of a fish). In our view, this new metaphor is no longer part of the systematic metaphor *WOMAN IS FOOD* but is subordinate to *WOMAN IS ANIMAL*. That is because shark's fins are a unique presence in traditional Chinese recipes, but the fins of ordinary fish are rarely seen as ingredients by the Chinese. In fact, the Spanish *aleta de un pez* (fin of a fish) does correspond to the literal meaning of the Chinese phrase 鱼翅 (shark's fin), because 鱼 (fish) in Chinese is indeed a general term for all fish. However, when it is used in this context (i.e., as a cooking ingredient with a long history), it refers explicitly to sharks, not any other kind of fish.

As a traditional Chinese culinary ingredient, 鱼翅 (shark's fin) has the characteristics of being cold to the touch (at least until it is processed as an ingredient) and expensive (due to its nutritional value, difficulty of hunting, etc.). These two features suggest, respectively, Miss Su's 'indifference' and 'nobility'. However, even if Miss Su is a well-off, highly educated and good-looking woman, she is still just a dish in the eyes of this male character. And he does not really understand how his 'dish' can suddenly be so indifferent to him.

However, compared to the shark's fin, the fin of a fish possesses only one characteristic: being cold to the touch. Thus, we believe that this new metaphor vehicle in the TT only conveys the 'indifference' of Miss Su, while ignoring her 'nobility'. Accordingly, the phenomenon that even upper-class women are treated like 'food' by men cannot be exposed. It also weakens the emotion of discontentment in the mind of the speaker.

To speculate on the reasons why the translator chose to translate this metaphor in this way, we carried out a corpus search for the concordances of the Spanish term *tiburón* (shark) to examine the extent to which the Spanish society (including the translator herself) was aware of this part of shark as cooking ingredient at the time when the novel was translated to Spanish in year of 1992. Checking all documents of Spanish origin from 1975 to 2000 in CREA (*Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual*), we found that *aletas de tiburón* (shark's fins) only appeared as a food in one document from 1995. To determine whether Spanish society might have been influenced by other Spanish-speaking countries in the Americas before 1992, we looked at documents from other Spanish-speaking countries from 1980-2000. The result shows that, before 1992 there was only one mention of *aletas de tiburón* (shark's fins) as food in a document from Mexico in 1981. This finding leads us to speculate that, until at least 1992, members of the Spanish society were not familiar with shark's fin as a traditional Chinese culinary ingredient and knowing it through other Spanish-speaking countries was less likely.

However, a brief review of the Spanish translator Taciana Fisac's early educational experiences reveals that she had a relatively extensive knowledge of Chinese language, society and culture before 1992 (see Ramírez Ruiz, 2018). As a sinologist, she is more likely to have had some knowledge of 鱼翅 (shark's fin) than the average member of Spanish society. Nonetheless, the reality is that in the TT she has translated it literally (i.e., *aleta de un pez/fin* of a fish). Moreover, in subsequent reprints (i.e., the 2009 edition), this translation remained unrevised. The result is that compared to the ST, the cognitive mapping of this translation is altered, the underlying meaning is partially missed, and the emotional expression is weakened.

6.3 WOMAN IS PLANT

In the previous examples (1) and (3), the speakers are a woman and a man respectively, so those two metaphors are in fact representative of the women's and the men's perceptions of the status of 'women' respectively. In this part we decided to analyse three discourse examples, containing a total of four highly lexicalised metaphors. According to Lomotey (2019, p. 327), proverbs are 'normally endowed with internal cohesion and brief rhythmic structure that condense what is generally considered as collective conceptual awareness'. In fact, Chinese idioms have the same characteristics. Therefore, through the metaphors chosen here in the form of four-character idioms, we can get a glimpse of the ideas, attitudes and values towards women at the level of Chinese society as a whole.

Example (4)

猜想他在国外花天酒地

[(They) guessed that he had spent his time in sky of **flowers** and Earth of liquor when he was in foreign country]

se había dado a **las mujeres** y al vino

[(He) had been given to **women** and wine]

Example (5)

愈是有钱的年轻人愈不肯结婚 [...] 宁可交女朋友，花天酒地的胡闹

[The richer the young people are, the less they want to get married [...] (they would) rather have girlfriends and spend their time fooling around in sky of **flowers** and Earth of liquor.]

Los jóvenes más adinerados son los menos dispuestos a casarse [...] prefieren alternar con jovencitas y gozar de una vida de **mujeres** y vino.

[The wealthiest young men are the least likely to marry [...] they prefer to mix with young girls and enjoy a life of **women** and wine.]

Example (6)

训导长寻花问柳的榜样，我们学不来

[The example of the head disciplinarian's seeking **flowers** and asking for **willows**, we can't learn from it.]

Nosotros no seguimos el ejemplo del vicedecano de los estudiantes que va detrás de **las prostitutas**

[We do not follow the example of the deputy dean of students who goes after **female prostitutes**.]

In examples (4) and (5), 花 (flowers) appear as a metaphor vehicle in the idiom 花天酒地 (sky of flowers and Earth of liquor), while in (6), 花 (flower) and 柳 (willow) appear as metaphor vehicles in another idiom, 寻花问柳 (to seek flowers and ask for willows). After consulting the online Chinese dictionary 汉典, we confirm that the original topic of all the three flowers and the willow is 'female prostitute', while the overall meaning of the two idioms is 'to indulge in prostitutes and drinking' and 'pleasure with prostitutes' respectively. These four vehicle-topic mappings therefore all belong to the systematic metaphor *WOMAN IS PLANT*. The translator has chosen to paraphrase them, so that there is no longer any vehicle-topic mapping in the TT.

In fact, women are often compared to flowers in Chinese. The flower as an ornamental object, in addition to being 'beautiful', also implies that it can be 'picked up at will', and this could be evidenced by a popular old poem from the Tang dynasty (618-907): 有花堪折直须折 (When flowers are in bloom, pick them as soon as possible). Thus, in the eyes of men, a woman is an object for their viewing and pleasure, and this value is reinforced throughout society through language. If these implicit meanings were to be expressed in the TT, the translator would probably need to devote a large amount of space to the relevant socio-cultural context. The translator has therefore chosen to omit the metaphor vehicle and to directly specify the topic.

However, it is noteworthy that only in (6) the TT has explicitly referred to 'prostitutas (female prostitutes)', while in (4) and (5) the hypernym of 'prostitutas', *mujeres* (women), is chosen. After searching these two idioms in the corpus provided by CCL (*Center for Chinese Linguistics PKU*), we found that the semantic scope of 花天酒地 (sky of **flowers** and Earth of liquor) has been expanded from the original 'to indulge in prostitutes and wine' to a general reference in modern Chinese to a man 'associating with many women (not professional prostitutes)' and can even be used to describe a woman's 'debauched life'. While 寻花问柳 (to seek **flowers** and ask for **willows**) remains relatively fixed and narrow in contemporary and modern Chinese, referring specifically to 'having fun with prostitutes'.

Returning to the text, according to the co-text in (4) and (5), the removal of the woman's relatively sensitive status as a prostitute does not actually affect the readers' understanding of the text; it is simply a description of a man who is unattached to his relationship or unwilling to be tied to a one-to-one spousal relationship. In the co-text of (6), however, the speaker is taking an emotional tone in alluding that the head disciplinarian has engaged in sexual relations with prostitutes. In such a provocative, accusatory and sarcastic reference to another person's 'dissolute' lifestyle, it is necessary to specify the object (i.e., the identity of the woman). And this is also in line with the underlying meaning of 寻花问柳 (to seek flowers and ask for willows) itself.

We therefore consider that these three examples of translation correctly convey the most basic meaning of the metaphor vehicle in the co-text, although the paraphrase does not capture the deeper meaning of the source culture where women are conceptualised as 'flowers'. However, this is probably the challenge that most highly lexical metaphors may pose for translation.

7. Conclusion

This study shows that the multi-level model that we have developed based on DDF helps to assess more comprehensively whether the cognitive, semantic, affective and socio-cultural-historical contexts behind the metaphors have been fully represented in translation. Regarding the Spanish translation of *WOMAN IS ANIMAL*, *WOMAN IS FOOD* and *WOMAN IS PLANT* in *Wei Cheng*, the translator's decisions seem to depend to a large extent on the specific co-text of the metaphors in the ST, i.e., the hierarchy of the importance of these dimensions is not fixed but varies with the context.

Furthermore, in addition to evaluating the results of metaphor translation, this model can also serve as a reference for translators' decisions. Translation is a process of decoding and encoding the text (Bassnett, 1980), also a complex communicative and cognitive operation in which the translator plays the role of a cultural coordinator, rather than a mechanical transfer between two language systems (Rojo & Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2013, p. 13). Therefore, when decoding (understanding) the ST, this multi-layer approach allows the translator to find the contextual highlighted value for a multidimensional metaphor. While in the encoding process (reconstructing the message) for the TT, this model gives the translator the flexibility to dynamically deal with this communicative activity without being restricted to use the identical metaphor vehicle.

Apparently, further investigation in depth is needed in the future. For example, apart from the 'semantic' level addressed here, the 'linguistic' dimension that DDF concerns can also shed light on metaphor translation from a broader perspective, such as the impact of the similarities and differences of metaphor construction, the frequency and preference of metaphor use in the two languages may have on translators' decisions. Nevertheless, taken together, we believe that this multi-level model is not restricted to a specific language or text but can generally contribute to the studies of metaphor in translation.

Notes

1. Capitalised terms (e.g., *ANIMAL*) indicate a conceptual metaphor. By contrast, italicised capital terms (e.g., *ANIMAL*) indicate a systematic metaphor proposed by DDF, which reflects the possible metaphorical thinking and patterns of the participants in the discourse without giving them an independent a priori existence at the level of the social group.
2. Grouping the same vehicle to another semantic label does not conflict with the DDF, as the theory allows a metaphor vehicle to be grouped into more than one semantic label at the same time (see Cameron et al., 2010, p. 122).

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Hongying Li is a PhD candidate in the Department of Translation and Language Sciences at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. Her research interests include Metaphor in translation, Metaphor-led discourse analysis and Intercultural studies.

Mario Bisiada is Associate Professor in Translation and Applied Language Studies at Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona (Spain). His main research interests include cross-linguistic studies of power relations in discourse, editorial intervention in translation, and migration in translation

Yingfeng Xu is Associate Professor in Translation and Applied Language Studies at Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona (Spain). Her area of interest is terminology, translation and second language teaching.

ORCID

Hongying Li  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0222-0018>

Mario Bisiada  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3145-1512>

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