

The study of meaning construction across cultures: an epistemological framework for cognitive translation studies

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The aim of this paper is to connect a theoretical analysis of cognitive sciences with its implications for translation studies. The general idea is that although cognitive linguistics has better tools to deal with the untranslatable than the translatable aspects of meaning construction and communication, cognitive translation studies seem a useful epistemological framework for the development of a more realistic definition of what translation is.

In an attempt to review some of the basic concepts of translation studies I have chosen the concept of equivalence, often considered as the relationship existing between source and target texts. I will try to show through different examples of translated texts how the term *equivalence* (understood as the correspondences across linguistic or conceptual systems) is the logical result of the lack of a *tertium comparationis* and a comprehensive methodology to observe the conceptual strategies of meaning construction in different cultures. It will be argued also that translation processes can be more accurately explained by processes of analogy (analogous construction of meaning) than any other kind of correspondence based on linguistic parameters only. This view is coherent with both functional and cognitive approaches to translation, and can account for the relative subjectivity of meaning construction and the continuum where it can evolve, from morphemes to cultural models.

Such a framework would set the theoretical roots for the analysis of translator's strategies as creative (and partly unconscious) mechanisms of meaning recreation (Fauconnier 1997; Fauconnier and Turner 2000: meaning construction creativity). A cognitive methodology for the analysis of translated texts can help testing whether translation relies on phenomena such as conceptual blending as described by Fauconnier and Turner. In this vein, the assumption for an analogous construction of meaning would rely on the hypothesis that no translated text is or can be the "projection" of a source text meaning, but an "emergent structure in a third space and [thus] a recreation." (Wang Bin)