The Cognitive Approach to Translating Metaphors Revisited

The Case of pure, clear and clean vs. čist and jasan

Nikola Dobrić

Idiomatic expressions often pose great difficulties in the contrastive analysis of languages, which implies that translating them from one language into another demands in-depth knowledge of the conceptualization properties, cultural characteristics and formal aspects of both the target and the source language in order to cause the least possible amount of ‘noise’ in interpreting the given idiomatic expression in the target language. This paper revisits and expands on cognitive semantic methodology as applied to translating metaphors and illustrates this with the examples of the adjectives pure, clear and clean in English and čist and jasan in Serbian (or more accurately the metaphors they lexicalize).

1. Introduction

One of the most frequently recurring problems both translators and lexicographers encounter is the treatment of idiomatic expressions in language. Due to the combination of cultural and cognitive factors involved in their original conception, such expressions also pose a significant challenge to contrastive linguistics. The present paper tries to account for the apparent ease of translating some metaphors and the utter impossibility of translating others. For this purpose it revisits and expands on a methodology of metaphor correspondence, equivalence and translation based on a cognitive approach combined with corpus and dictionary data, which can be readily applied in practice, both in individual work as well as on a larger scale in the production of dictionaries.

The cognitive approach to meaning employed in the paper focuses on semantic representations inherent in individual expressions and it is
based on the universally applicable metalanguage of semantic concepts in combination with contemporary metaphor theory.\(^1\) Conceptual primitives (Wierzbicka 1996: 34), image schemas (Johnson 1987), and basic notions (Grković-Mejdžor 2008: 53) can be seen as universal pre-language first-order concepts (Danesi 1993:121), which serve as basic building blocks of cognition. These are supposed to be transferred by the cognitive apparatus – influenced by discourse and culture (Burr 1995) – to metaphorical concepts (Johnson & Lakoff 1980: 7) and to be then expressed by the lexico-grammatical means of the specific language.\(^2\) The cognitive approach applied here\(^3\) is complemented by a sociosemantic approach to language (Teubert 2010), which observes the cultural and social influences involved in the encoding of meaning, with corpora serving as the empirical basis for the analysis (Dobrić 2009).

2. Semantic Analysis

The paper presents a short analysis of the metaphorical potential of three synonymous adjectives in English, viz. *pure*, *clear* and *clean*, also providing a contrastive view by comparing them to their counterparts in Serbian, viz. *čist* and *jasan*. These adjectives were chosen due to their similarity both in non-metaphoric meaning and (as will be shown later) in their conceptualization properties. The current chapter will present an overview of all corresponding senses of the given adjectives. The analysis of metaphors and the concept(s) they lexicalize requires a thorough analysis of the senses exhibited by the lexemes at hand. The goal is to create a pool of corresponding senses which can be used for translating metaphors in the most appropriate way.

For identifying the different senses of the three English adjectives I used the *New Oxford Dictionary of English (NODE)*, which was chosen due to its cognitive approach to sense discrimination, in combination with the

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\(^1\) For a full history and overview of a cognitive approach to linguistics, and cognitive semantics in particular, see e.g. Dirven and Verspoor (1998), Evans and Green (2006), Ungerer and Schmid (1996).

\(^2\) It is important to bear in mind that conceptual/semantic primitives are indeed Aristotelian and atomic in nature and can be argued to belong not to the cognitive framework but rather to the *Natural Semantic Metalanguage* approach. NSM, though cognitive-conceptual in nature, can perhaps be better characterized as *neostructuralist* because it foremost constitutes a compositional approach to the description of meaning (Geeraerts 2010). In the paper *primitive* will, however, be used to refer to the cognitive atom of meaning shared by the given idiomatic expressions.

\(^3\) The combinatory approach of first-order semantic primitives (as I see them) and metaphorical concepts is based on the assumption of a hierarchical structure of concepts as it developed in phylogenes is and as it is replicated in ontogenesis (c.f. Danesi 1993 or Halford 1985).
frequency data from the *Corpus of Contemporary American* (COCA).\(^4\) The frequency data is useful for distinguishing the prototypical from the marginal senses of the adjectives, which allows a better insight into their semantic properties.\(^5\) As far as Serbian sources are concerned, due to the lack of a dictionary satisfying the needs of this paper regarding a cognitive approach, the senses presented are based on a manual analysis of 9,751 occurrences of the two adjectives in all inflectional forms in the *Corpus of the Contemporary Serbian Language* (CCSL).\(^6\) The senses were established by using the corpus-based method of clustering citations (Kilgarriff 1997: 92)\(^7\) in combination with my native speaker intuition.

Figure 1 presents a contrastive overview of corresponding senses. The left-hand column of the figure shows all of the senses in English corresponding to the senses in Serbian given in the right-hand column.

The first striking observation is that, apart from the two senses in Serbian ‘devoid of detail, simple’ and ‘(of plants) organic in production’,\(^8\) all meanings identified in Serbian can be interpreted as congruent with most of the senses identified in English.\(^9\) From a practical point of view, this is a favorable outcome since it facilitates the process of translating metaphors, especially when there is no cognitive match.

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\(^4\) The *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) is the largest (400 million words) freely-available representative and balanced corpus of (American) English.

\(^5\) The prototypicality of senses was attested according to their frequencies in the corpus (Durkin and Manning 1989).

\(^6\) The *Corpus of the Contemporary Serbian Language* is a corpus of 24 million words (of written text only) developed and maintained by the Faculty of Mathematics at the University of Belgrade.

\(^7\) The meanings extracted from the analyzed corpus have also been cross-referenced with the *Rečnik srpskohrvatskog književnog jesika* (1967), which even in the light of newer publications is still considered the most comprehensive dictionary of Serbian (Serbo-Croatian).

\(^8\) Bez suvišnih detalja, jednostavno, and (za biljke) organskog porekla.

\(^9\) Some of the identified meanings in English were not found in Serbian but this is not relevant for the present analysis, since only the corresponding ones are of interest for this paper.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PURE</strong></th>
<th><strong>ČIST</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>of unmixed origin or descent; pure of blood</td>
<td>čistog porekla; čiste krvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involving or containing nothing else but; sheer</td>
<td>kompletno; samo; bez dodataka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free of any contamination</td>
<td>nezagadoeno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wholesome and untainted by immorality, especially that of a sexual nature</td>
<td>moralno neiskvreno; seksualno neiskvreno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without any extraneous and unnecessary elements</td>
<td>bez nepotrebnih dodatnih elemenata; jednostavno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(of a sound) in tune and with a clear tone</td>
<td>ispravnog, nepomućenog zвука</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CLEAR</strong></th>
<th><strong>JASAN</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(of a color) pure and intense</td>
<td>nepomešane, intenzivne boje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free of cloud, mist, or rain</td>
<td>nebo (vreme) bez oblaka, kiše ili magle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(of a person's skin) free from blemishes</td>
<td>koža (lice) bez nečistoća</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complete, full; net</td>
<td>potpuno, puno; neto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free of something which impairs logical thought</td>
<td>nesputan um; nesputano mišljenje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free of something undesirable or unpleasant (person)</td>
<td>bez nepoželjnih ili neprijatnih osobina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(of a person's conscience) free of guilt</td>
<td>bez krivice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(of a person's eyes) unclouded; shining</td>
<td>sjajnih, otvorenih očiju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having or feeling no doubt or confusion</td>
<td>bez sumnje ili zabune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaving no doubt; obvious or unambiguous</td>
<td>nedvosmisleno, očigledno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easy to perceive, understand, or interpret</td>
<td>lako za razumeti, pojmiti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CLEAN</strong></th>
<th><strong>ČIST</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>free from pollutants or unpleasant substances</td>
<td>uredan i pedantan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(of a person) attentive to personal hygiene</td>
<td>papir na kome nije pisano ili crtano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(of paper) not yet marked by writing or drawing</td>
<td>bez prljavštine, neumrljano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free from dirt, marks, or stains</td>
<td>nije pod uticajem droge ili alkohola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(of a person) not taking or having taken drugs or alcohol</td>
<td>potpuno legalno i po zakonu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not possessing or containing anything illegal</td>
<td>bez kriminalne istorije</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>done according to the rules</td>
<td>po pravilima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not sexually offensive or obscene</td>
<td>pristojno u seksualnom smislu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morally uncontaminated; pure; innocent</td>
<td>moralno nezagadoeno; seksualno nevino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having a smooth edge or surface</td>
<td>glatke površine i ravnih linija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having a simple and well-defined shape</td>
<td>jednostavnog oblika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free from irregularities</td>
<td>bez nepravilnosti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 1:** Corresponding senses of English *pure, clear, clean* and Serbian *čist* and *jasan*, with English as a source language, given on the left.
3. Cognitive Translation Hypothesis

The research presented in this paper takes into account both universal cognitive notions and the cultural sociosemantic values contained within metaphors, which are especially significant when translating between culturally diverse languages. Different societies classify their environments in different ways, both culturally and (under the influence of discourse) cognitively, which makes translating metaphors a rather demanding task. The extent to which cultural experience and semantic and cognitive aspects are shared by two languages determines how simple and straightforward the translation will be. It is easy to see how ‘universal’ metaphors, stemming from pre-conceptual experience (Johnson 1987), such as metaphors relating to the human body for instance, are comparatively simpler to transfer between languages, since they represent similar ideas spanning different cultures and usually have ready-and-waiting equivalents in the target language. However, they represent a minority of cases, most metaphors being, to some extent, culturally conditioned.

Based on the work of authors who have investigated the problem of the interlingual correspondence between metaphors (cf. Mandelblit 1995, Al-Hasnawi 2007), three schemes of cognitive mapping relevant to metaphor comparison and, in turn, to metaphor translation are proposed. These can be psycholinguistically defined as based on “the difference in reaction time due to a conceptual shift that the translator is required to make between the conceptual mapping systems of the source and target languages” (Mandelblit 1995: 493) and the language structures he or she has to use to come up with a suitable interpretation. The three schemes, which also result in three possible strategies of translation, are:

1. Same Mapping Structure (SMS);
2. Comparable Mapping Structure (CMS); and

The Same Mapping Structure group encompasses metaphors with the same conceptual makeup which are also lexicalized similarly. Comparable Mapping Structure refers to metaphors which do have the same conceptual content, but differ in their lexicalizations. The Different Mapping Structure group encompasses metaphors which do not match cognitively and need to be adapted. This means that the translator plays the role of a converter, him- or herself relating the conceptual mapping into the target language in order to facilitate full understanding. In such a case the translator must try to find a conceptual domain which, though not lexicalized or conceptualized in the same way, may serve as an equivalent. In this process a thorough analysis of the socio-cultural backgrounds of both the source and target languages is essential. Likewise, in such cases the translator can still draw on the data yielded by a corpus-based analysis of se-
mantic correspondence and the cognitive insights into metaphorization in both target and source language the former allows (as will be shown in the paper). If this strategy fails, the translator can only relate the metaphor using a simile, a paraphrase, a footnote explanation, or s/he may even omit it altogether.

To explore these schemes more thoroughly, a corpus analysis coupled with relevant dictionary references was used to extract all of the possible cases of metaphors containing one of the given adjectives, both in English and Serbian. The results of this analysis are presented in Figure 2 and are described in detail below. The concepts lexicalized through the metaphors are identified along with the metaphors which can be seen as universal or at least as common to the two languages under investigation, and suggestions regarding their translation are proposed.

4. Conceptual Analysis

The adjectives pure, clear and clean in English lexicalize the underlying primitive of light (which, etymologically speaking, is the meaning the three adjectives may have shared in Proto-Indo-European, cf. Pokorny 1959), usually conceptualized as a positive notion, whether physical or abstract. Such a conceptual first-order primitive can be seen in a number of metaphors, not only lexicalized by the five adjectives presented, but also by other expressions (i.e. a candle in the night, illuminate the path, abide in the light, and many more). All attested metaphors represent expressions stemming from an intermediary metaphorical concept describable as ‘(the unobstructed passage or reflection of) light is good’, which is then realized in the conceptual metaphors MORALITY IS PURITY, (POSITIVE) QUALITY IS PURITY and CLARITY IS PURITY, under which all of the examples found in my data can be subsumed (with the exception of one idiosyncratic metaphor not belonging to any group marked by a metaphorical concept). Figure 2 shows how the underlying primitive of light spreads through more intermediary metaphorical concepts and is lexicalized by individual metaphorical expressions.

10 The following sources were used for identifying English metaphors: Sommer and Weis 1996, and Wilkinson 2002; in combination with the described English language corpus (COCA). These additional sources were used to avoid manually searching through a large number of corpus citations in English, which would in practice be the more objective and preferable way, especially by applying some of the existing strategies (cf. Deignan 2005). The frequency searches were thus performed based on the relevant examples of metaphors listed in these two dictionaries. As this option was not available for Serbian as there is no special dictionary of metaphors, the full number of 9,751 citations of both adjectives in all inflectional forms was manually searched for metaphors.

11 At least as far as a reconstructed language warrants such conclusions.

12 The identified metaphors are given individually in the following section of the paper as part of the analysis.
The ‘flow’ of the metaphorization, i.e. the progress from primitive first-order concepts via less abstract conceptual schemes (for English metaphors in Figure 2 and for Serbian metaphors in Figure 3) to concrete lexicalizations, is represented by arrows.

The attested prototypical sense of pure is ‘not mixed or adulterated with any other substance or material’, in both a physical and an abstract sense (NODE). Looking at clear, its primary meaning in contemporary English describes a physical condition, ‘free of anything that marks or darkens something’, which is metaphorized together with the corresponding abstract sense ‘free of any obstructions or unwanted objects’. Clean, which in Latin originally had a meaning closer to the contemporary prototypical sense of pure (OED), lost this meaning when it was adopted into English. Furthermore, clean lost a lot of its abstract meanings and now ‘free from dirt, marks, or stains’ is its prototypical sense.

The analysis reveals that clean appears in 12 metaphors (plus one idiosyncratic metaphor), while pure and clear, contrary to expectations, are only found in 6 and 5 metaphors, respectively. Even though it mostly occurs in concrete senses in contemporary language, clean still seems to be very common in metaphorical expressions, which can perhaps be attributed to its original meaning ‘shiny, radiant’ it is claimed to have had in Proto-Indo-European (cf. Pokorny 1959), which has apparently survived in metaphors.

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**Fig. 2. Metaphorization of pure, clean and clear.**
Serbian lexicographic sources for this kind of analysis are scarce, to say the least, so deriving senses from the Serbian corpus (CCSL)\textsuperscript{13} was the only possible solution. As with the English metaphors, we can observe the same underlying concept and the same metaphorical concepts being lexicalized (Figure 3), with the whole flow of metaphorization roughly being the same.

The adjective \textit{čist} appears in 13 metaphors in the analysis and its prototypical sense, as shown by the corpus analysis, is ‘free from dirt, marks, or stains’ in a physical sense, which is also extended to abstract senses. \textit{Jasan} appears only 4 times with its abstract prototypical sense of ‘easy to perceive, understand or interpret’.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{metaphorical_lexicalization.png}
\caption{Metaphorical lexicalization of \textit{čist} and \textit{jasan}.}
\end{figure}

5. **Translation and Equivalence Analysis**

In the following, I will demonstrate the roles played both by the universality or translilingual relevance of the attested metaphors and their social conditioning by reviewing possible translation solutions. It has been shown that the same underlying concept of ‘light’ and in most cases also

\textsuperscript{13} The identified metaphors are given individually in the following section of the paper as part of the analysis.
the metaphorical concepts of ‘(the unobstructed passage or reflection of) light is good’ inhere in the English and the Serbian metaphors. This suggests that the two languages, sharing a common ancestry and thus including etymologically related lexical material, display cognitive and concomitant cultural similarities, which, as we will see, is of great help in the process of translation.

The metaphors are categorized according to the three schemes introduced above.

1. Metaphors with the same conceptual structure and the same lexicalization pattern (Same Mapping Structure):14

These cases cause the fewest problems regarding their translation from English into Serbian and vice versa, since they have an easily identifiable and accessible correspondent in the target language. Correspondences of this kind appear in the two languages for three possible reasons: (a.) the metaphor at hand represents a part of universal human experience, rooted in our common biological and cognitive makeup, and is thus expressed by the same lexical means (panhuman metaphors); (b.) the metaphor is part of a common cultural heritage shared by the speakers of different languages (pancultural metaphors, connected to religion and other social institutions); and (c.) cultural and lexical borrowing (either from a third source such as Latin or through interlanguage contact, e.g. from English into Serbian).

These are examples15:

E: A clean hand needs no washing.; God looks to clean hands, not to full ones.
S: Neće on svakom da pruži ruke. Tek tako! Njegove ruke su čiste. Ruke pravde!
‘He will not to anyone reach out the hands. Just like that! His hands are clean. The hands of justice.’

E: The search for perfection […] of idealists, the purest of heart.
S: Samo čovik čista srca može da načini ikonu pred kojom će se moliti – objašnjava naš sagovornik.
‘Only men with clean hearts can construct the icon they will pray for […] explains our interlocutor’

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14 How the etymology of the metaphors presented conditions metaphorical equivalence will not be discussed in this paper.
15 Metaphors marked by an asterisk were not identified in the corpora and references, but are the my translation suggestions, and as such fit the designated groups, since they can be translated word-for-word preserving both the conceptualization and the lexicalization pattern.
E: Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise

S: [...] gde kaže da Bog ima dva hrama; jedan od njih predstavlja cego svet, a njegov sveštenik je slovo Božije; a drugi je čista i razumna duša, čiji je sveštenik čovek.

‘[...] who says that god has two sanctuaries (temples); one represents the whole world, and his priest is the letter of God; and the other is the clean and reasonable soul whose priest is mankind.’

E: A clear conscience is a coat of mail./A clear conscience is a good pillow

S: Pitala se mogu li mirno da spavaju oni koji tvrde da im je savest čista i da su vladali demokratski i po zakonu.

‘She asked herself whether those who claim to have a clean conscience and have acted democratically and according to the law can sleep quietly’

*S: Znam da sam pred sobom nedužan, čist i nevin kao jagnje, ali ne i pred razjarenim mužem sirote žene.

*E: I know I stand before myself free of guilt, pure and innocent as a lamb, but not before the angry husband of the poor wife.

*S: Naš prota je pred Bogom čist.
*E: Our pastor is clean before God.

*S: Onda otvori oči i, odjednom čiste glave i zdrav, odmoran i odlučan da nešto učini.
*E: Then he opened his eyes and with a clear head and healthy, well rested and determine to do something.

2. Metaphors with the same conceptual structure and different lexicalization pattern (Comparable Mapping Structure)

Although English and Serbian metaphors in this group share the same conceptual structure, they display differences regarding lexicalization. Such metaphors count as equivalents, perfectly conveying all of the cognitive and cultural content, except for their lexical structure. For instance, if we look at the first two examples below, they both convey the sense of ‘having all previous (usually bad) events settled and erased and having a new opportunity to start over without prejudice’. Both slate and račun ‘bill, invoice, a sheet listing costs’ represent the idea of a score of debt eventually settled in some way, with the same cultural connotations. But unlike in the previous group, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the lexical representations.

E: To have a clear slate.
S: Ali ono što želi Stepašin jesu čisti računi, barem za ono što je do sada učinjeno.

‘But what Stepašin wants are clear account/calculus, at least for what has been done so far.’
E: Though nature had given [...] absolutely pure and without alloy.

S: Važno je biti čist. Čist – ponavljao je moj drug Avram Mitrović.
‘It is important to be pure/clean. Pure/Clean – repeated my friend Avram Mitrovic’

E: The explanation was really clear-cut.

S: Da, sigurno ne krijem, vrlo ču biti jasan i glasan protivnik njima.
‘Yes, surely I am not hiding it, I will be a very clear and loud opponent to them.’

[...] diže glas, ali i kad je vrlo tih zna da bude kristalno jasan.
‘he raises the voice, but when he is very quiet he can be cristal clear’

Zašto? Odgovor je kratak i jasan.
‘why? The answer is short and clear.’

*E: A clean glove often hides a dirty hand.

*S: Zlo je često prikriveno lepin.
‘Evil is often hidden by something nice/beautiful.’

*E: Keep your nose clean.

*S: Ostat čist.
‘Keep clean.’

*S: Samo oni koji su čiste svesti, una i razuma mogu da prihvate Hristovu nauku.

*E: Only those of unclouded [‘clear’] minds, intellects and reasons can em-brace
[‘receive’] the teachings of Christ.

3. Metaphors with different conceptual structures and different (or the same\(^{16}\)) lexicalization patterns (Different Mapping Structure)\(^{17}\)

Metaphors in this group serve as good examples of different cultures and societies conceptualizing experiences in different ways (Wierzbicka 1992). This category poses the greatest challenge for the translator, as it is up to him/her to interpret the meaning of the metaphor, viewing it from an additional socio-cultural and discourse standpoint, and to reproduce it, using some of the mentioned techniques, in the target language. This is the point where it becomes difficult to follow the outlined data-driven approach of using corpora and lexicographic sources other than for excluding the two mapping structures mentioned above. The translator must now creatively replace the figurative meaning of the source language with a target language solution that does not cause ‘noise’.

The following examples and the suggestions for their translations are categorized according to the type of translation procedure applied:

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\(^{16}\) Theoretically, the lexicalization could be the same despite differences in the conceptual structure, but no such case was found in the data.

\(^{17}\) Legend: Es – English as a source language; Et – English as a target language; Ss – Serbian as a source language; St – Serbian as a target language.
a. direct translation or paraphrasing

ES: He's Mr. Clean.
St: On je pravi čistunac.
‘He is a real purist.’

ES: Be/do the clean potato.
St: Uradi pravu stvar.
‘Do the right thing.’

ES: He was respected as being clean-fingered/with clean fingers.
St: Poštovan je jer je nepotkupljiv/nekorumpiran.
‘He is respected because he is uncorrupted.’

ES: Julia always spoke with a clean tongue.
St: Džulija je uvek govorila pristojnim jezikom.

ES: This coffee is pure milk.
St: Ova kafa je čist kvalitet.
‘This coffee is pure quality.’

ES: Simon has a clean bill of health.
St: Sajmon je zdrav kao dren.
‘Simon is as healthy as a cornel.’

ES: The coast’s clear.
St: Nema nikoga i sve je čisto.
‘There is no one and everything is clear/clean.’

SS: [...] otkazali su svoje učešće na simpozijumu kulturni atešei Austrije, Nemačke i Rusije što smo primili čista obraza.
Et: [...] the cultural attachés of Austria, Germany and Russia cancelled their participation in the conference and we took it as no fault of ours.
‘ [...] which we took/received with clean cheeks.’

SS: Zamislite [...] ?! – jasan je Lončar.
Et: Imagine [...] ?! – Loncar was resolute ['clear']

SS: Pitao me polako: – Reci ti meni, jesli čist?
Et: He asked me slowly – Tell me, are you sane or not? ['are you clean?’]

SS: [...] izumitelj i nije baš pri čistoj pameti.
Et: [...] the one who invented it was a bit crazy.
‘The inventor is not really close to a clear mind.’

ES: Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way.
St: Gde jasni tok razuma nije prestao da postoji.
SS: Spominjav sam ikone, svetitelje, ali baba – je bila ubeđena da tu nisu čista posla.
Et: I was talking about icons, prophets, but the old woman – she was convinced that everything was not right there ['that these were not clean jobs.‘]

b. translation into a simile

ES: Nouns and verbs are almost pure metal; adjectives are cheaper ore.
St: Imenice i glagoli su kao čisti metal; pridevi su već jeftinija ruda.

c. footnote/explanation

ES: The Simpsons are pure merino.
St: Rani Australijski doseljenici koji nisu deportovani nego su svojevoljno emigrirali.
   ‘Among the first Australian settlers who were not deported but voluntarilly immigrated.’

The shaded fields in Figure 4 represent corresponding metaphors found in the corpora. The unshaded fields contain metaphors which do not occur in the corpora of both languages but which could exist judging from the results of the cognitive and lexical analysis and have therefore been coupled with suggestions for translation. Bidirectional arrows with full lines represent metaphors of the first scheme described (same mapping structure), sharing conceptual mapping and lexicalization. Bidirectional arrows with dotted lines represent metaphors of the second scheme (comparable mapping structure), sharing conceptual mapping but not lexicalization. Unidirectional arrows with dash-and-dot lines (pointing from the source to the target language) represent the third scheme (different mapping structure), i.e. metaphors which neither display the same conceptual mapping nor the same lexicalization.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MORALITY IS PURITY</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clean hand; clean hands</td>
<td>čiste ruke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pure of heart</td>
<td>čista srca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear spirit</td>
<td>čista duša</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear conscience</td>
<td>čiste savesti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear slate</td>
<td>čist račun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep one’s nose clean</td>
<td>biti (ostati) čist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean tongue</td>
<td>govoriti pristojno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Clean</td>
<td>pravi čistunac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean fingered/with clean fingers</td>
<td>nepotkupljiv, nekorumpiran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean gloves</td>
<td>Zlo je često prekriveno lepim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean potato</td>
<td>uraditi ispravnu stvar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pure merino</td>
<td>Prvi dobrovoljni emigranti u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be sane</td>
<td>biti čist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean before God</td>
<td>pred Bogom čist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pure and innocent as a lamb</td>
<td>čist i nevin kao jagnje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no fault/ no disgrace</td>
<td>čist obraz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>something is wrong</td>
<td>(nisu) čista posla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUE IS PURITY</th>
<th>VALUE IS PURITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>absolutely pure</td>
<td>biti čist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean bill (of health)</td>
<td>zdrav kao dren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pure milk</td>
<td>čist kvalitet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pure metal</td>
<td>kao čist metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unclouded mind</td>
<td>čiste svesti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear head</td>
<td>čiste glave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a bit crazy</td>
<td>pri čistoj pameti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLARITY IS PURITY</th>
<th>CLARITY IS PURITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clear cut</td>
<td>kratak i jasan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear stream of reason</td>
<td>jasan i glasan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be resolute</td>
<td>kristalno jasan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jasni tok razuma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDIOSYNCRATIC METAPHOR</th>
<th>IDIOSYNCRATIC METAPHOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clear coast</td>
<td>biti jasan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sve je čisto i nema nikoga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4. Metaphor translation overview.
Out of the 24 identified English source language metaphors and the 17 Serbian source language metaphors, 9 English and 10 Serbian ones can be classified as equivalent (either both in conceptualization and lexicalization or only in conceptualization) in the analyzed corpora (5 Es and 4 Ss metaphors belonging to SMS and 4 Es and 6 Ss metaphors to CMS). Out of the translated metaphors, 2 have been identified as belonging to the first group (1 Es and 1 Ss), 2 as belonging to the second group (again 1 Es and 1 Ss). The remaining 16 pairs belong to the third group.

Another interesting aspect is that 5 of the 12 English and 3 of the 9 Serbian source language metaphors with no equivalents found in the other language were translated using one of the equivalent senses given in Figure 1. This underlines the importance of a good insight into the semantic aspects of the given lexicalization items. The other metaphors were translated using different linguistic means, as described above (7 Es metaphors and 6 Ss ones).

6. Conclusion

The presented analysis outlines the conditions that need to be satisfied in order to suitably translate a given metaphor: the translator has to (a.) understand both the universal and the socio-cultural value of the metaphorical concepts involved; (b.) be aware of the cultural and specific discourse-related differences and similarities between societies; and (c.) have access to appropriate lexical tools (such as good corpora, dictionaries and encyclopedias).

The translation of metaphors should firstly be approached from a cognitive perspective, trying to find appropriate conceptual equivalence (of any form) rather than viewing metaphors only as linguistic or stylistic phenomena. Additionally, sociosemantic insights into the lexicalization properties of the cognitive notions in question are required. In the absence of a cognitive equivalent, the translator must turn to other translation tools at his/her disposal (such as simile, paraphrasing, etc.), which might result in more or less successful solutions.

Even though the scope of this paper is limited and would need to be further expanded (emphasizing here a need for a dictionary of metaphors in Serbian and the need for the application of cognitive semantic methodology to dictionaries of metaphors generally), it nonetheless strongly highlights the benefits a lexicographical approach to metaphors can gain from taking this kind of cognitive perspective combined with a sociocultural view and corpus linguistic methods. Only if these conditions are fully met can we expect to successfully translate a given metaphor, causing no or minimal ‘noise’ both in communication and in cognition.
References


Sources


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