A Cognitive-Pragmatic Perspective on Proverbs and Its Implications for Translation

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Abstract: *The present paper offers a state-of-the-art cognitive-pragmatic view of proverbs by reviewing two dominant theories known as the Great Chain Metaphor Theory (GCMT), defended by Lakoff and Turner (1989), Turner (1991, 1996, 2000), and Gibbs (1994, 2001, 2002, 2006), and the Extended Conceptual Base Theory (ECBT), defended by Honeck and Temple (1994), Honeck and Welge (1997), and Temple and Honeck (1999). The paper builds on some of the weaknesses and omissions of these two theories, suggesting adjustments and modifications for a more explanatory framework in light of evidence from English and Tunisian Arabic proverbial data. In particular, the ECBT's conceptual, pragmatic, and psychological dimensions are questioned while the GCMT is criticized for the unilateral nature of its GENERIC IS SPECIFIC component. The outcome of this discussion offers a re-classification of proverbs as mapping-free, single-mapping, and multiple-mapping. The paper closes by addressing some of the implications of a cognitive-pragmatic view of proverbs for proverb translating.*

Introduction:

Proverbs form the gist of what cultures consider of real concern to them (Lawal et al. 1997:636), presenting cultural undesirables and desirables, all of which betray the cultural models a culture lives by (Shore 1996). Honeck and Welge (1997:609) capture this as a "cognitive-ideals hypothesis," consisting of "ideal-disconfirming" and "ideal-confirming" proverbs. Ideal-disconfirming proverbs exhort people to shun undesirable behaviors and ideal-confirming ones propagate desirable cultural values. People of the same culture transmit proverbs to posterity, and, above all, use them not only as a regulatory mechanism for their life, but also as a privileged mode of understanding. As representing recurrently lived and deeply entrenched cultural experiences, proverbs are invoked to make sense of abstract and concrete everyday experiences.

Proverbs have been shown to perform various functions in cultures, namely, stylistic (Lawal et al. 1997:637), pragmatic (Lawal et al. 1997; Honeck and Welge 1997; Temple and Honeck 1999), cognitive (Lakoff and Turner 1989; Honeck and Welge 1997), didactic (Fox 2004; Brown 2004), socio-psychological (Haas 2002), and even therapeutic functions (Al-Krenawi 2000). In particular, Lawal et al. (1997:637) showed how proverbs play an important socio-pragmatic function among the Yoruba, whereby being elderly correlates with the privilege to speak proverbially and with being respected by the young for this very privilege of speaking proverbially.

Colston (2000:627) situates the study of proverbs at the intersection of the disciplines that constitute the cognitive sciences. Indeed, they have linguistic, cognitive, psychological, and anthropological dimensions. Proverbs have obviously a linguistic side, which makes them apt to be transmitted culturally, and to apply to various states of affairs in the world. Their cognitive dimension is that we use them in our everyday interactions with other people to make sense of current experiences. Honeck and Welge (1997:608) argue that "proverb cognition involves a complex set of cognitive structures and processes that are common to all humans." Proverbs, thus, reside in "the cultural part of cognition," to which "each generation has added some of its wisdom to the total stock of 'pass it along' type of information (D'Andrade 1981:179). Their psychological function is that "they categorize events and motivate thought and behavior" (Honeck and Welge 1997:608). Their anthropological dimension reveals them as a cultural wealth summing up the way of life and thought of a given culture.

Proverbs can be situated within the tendency of humans to favor indirect communication. As such, proverbs can be classified along with metaphors, idioms, irony, hyperbole, and indirect speech acts (Gibbs 1994; Temple and Honeck 1999). As an indirect mode of speaking and understanding, proverbs offer their users the freedom to conceptualize indirectly what they would have thought about twice before saying directly without offending their targets. Conversely, their targets are given to understand them by aligning two apparently different but cognitively similar states of affairs, depending for their resolution for the most part on metaphoric mappings.

The structure of the present paper is as follows. The first section offers an overview of Lakoff and Turner's (1989) and Honeck and Temple's (1994) views on proverbs. The second section addresses the weaknesses of both theories. The third section tries to amend both views by suggesting a classification of proverbs according to types of mapping. The last section discusses the implications of a cognitive-pragmatic view for proverb translating.

1. Cognitive-pragmatics of proverbs

As far as my knowledge goes, there are two dominant cognitive views of proverb understanding, namely, the Great Chain Metaphor Theory (GCMT), defended by Lakoff and Turner (1989), Turner (1991, 1996, 2000), and Gibbs (1994, 2001, 2002, 2006), and the Extended Conceptual Base Theory (ECBT), whose main proponents are Honeck and Temple (1994), Honeck and Welge (1997), and Temple and Honeck (1999). This section sets the two frameworks side by side, highlighting their basic tenets.

1.1. The Great Chain Metaphor Theory

Lakoff and Turner (1989:172) define the Great Chain Metaphor Theory (GCMT) as "an ensemble, something like a string quartet, in which there are four members with separate entities, but who so often play together that their identity as a group is more prominent than their identities as individuals." The first member of this quartet is the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor, which maps a single generic-

level schema onto a large number of specific-level schemas having the same generic-level structure (Lakoff and Turner 1989:162). The GENERIC level of the mapping is the proverb's text and the SPECIFIC level is the state of affairs in the world that the proverb profiles. The GENERIC-SPECIFIC mapping preserves the schematic structure of the SPECIFIC level, and requires that the two levels have the same isomorphism or internal schematic structure, otherwise the GENERIC level would not be invoked to conceptualize the SPECIFIC one.

Lakoff and Turner (1989:163-4) exemplify their theory using the case of a presidential candidate who commits a personal blunder that was reported by the press, thus destroying his candidacy. Instead of blaming himself, he blamed the press coverage for disclosing his blunder. The particular proverb that can be invoked to conceptualize this political state of affairs is "Blind blames the ditch." The application of the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC to this state of affairs enables us to posit the following correlations or mappings across the GENERIC and the SPECIFIC domains:

Blind person: the presidential candidate
Blindness: the committed imprudence
Falling into the ditch: committing the imprudence
Being in the ditch: the destruction of the candidacy
Blaming the ditch: blaming the press coverage
Judging the blind man as foolish for blaming the ditch: judging the candidate as foolish for blaming the press

Thus, proverbs have "the power of generality, that is, the power to make sense of a wide range of cases" (Lakoff and Turner 1989:165). Indeed, the same generic schema may be applied to an infinite number of other specific states of affairs sharing the same generic structure.

Lakoff and Turner (1989:166) argue that the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC "applies to proverbs worldwide," and that the "distinction between generic-level information and specific-level information is common in conceptual systems throughout the world and that proverbs are common in the world's cultures because of this distinction." This universal dimension of the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC may follow from the mediation of metaphor/analogy as a cognitive capacity available in the human mind. However, this cognitive universalism is to be contended with culture specificity.

The GCMT is more complex, involving, beside the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor, the Great Chain of Being (GCofB), the Nature of Things (NofT), and the Maxim of Quantity (MofQ). According to the GCofB, "we understand proverbs as offering us ways of understanding the complex faculties of human beings in terms of these other things" (Lakoff and Turner 1989:166), where humans stand on top of the hierarchy of beings in the world. The GCofB, thus, offers itself as "a contemporary unconscious cultural model indispensable to our understanding of ourselves, our world, and our language" (Lakoff and Turner 1989:167). Thus, the use of animals and lower beings on the chain to talk about humans is but a form of evaluation of human behavior, whereby what is at stake

is man's "aesthetic and moral sense, and rational capacity, not his physical characteristics, his animal desires, or his raw emotions" (Lakoff and Turner 1989:166-67). By linking the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC and the GCofB, the GCMT "allows us to comprehend general human character traits in terms of well-understood non-human attributes; and, conversely, it allows us to comprehend less well-understood aspects of the nature of animals and objects in terms of better-understood human characteristics" (Lakoff and Turner 1989:172).

The NofT is "a largely unconscious, automatic, commonplace theory about the nature of things, that is, the relationship between what things are like and how they behave" (Lakoff and Turner 1989:170). Thus, the NofT is "a causal theory that links attributes to behaviour: the characteristic behaviour of a form of being is a consequence of its characteristic attributes" (Lakoff and Turner 1989:171). The NofT in the GCMT combines with the GCofB to account for proverbs. The MofQ, on the other hand, uses Grice's (1975) dictum, "Be as informative as is required and not more so," which builds into the GCMT "a pragmatic principle of communication" (Lakoff and Turner 1989:171-72), regulating the flow of knowledge between the different components of the theory. For instance, in the proverb "Big thunder, little rain" the MofQ constrains the amount of knowledge we have about thunder and rain, excluding lightning, wind, etc.

1.2. The Extended Conceptual Base Theory

The ECBT is conceived of as a "problem-solving framework" and "process-oriented theory" since proverbs are held to be puzzles that need resolving (Honeck and Temple 1994:91-92). According to Honeck and Temple (1994:92), proverb resolving follows a multistage-processing model of understanding, consisting of three phases: a literal phase, a figurative-meaning phase, and an instantiation phase. The model works by elimination, i.e., in the absence of enough clues for non-literal interpretation, literal meaning is assumed as a default mode of understanding, otherwise the literal mode is abandoned in favor of a figurative understanding (Honeck and Temple 1994:93). Honeck and Temple (1994:94-95) argue that "the figurative meanings for proverbs cycle back to incorporate their literal meanings." To ascertain that the multistage-processing model may work with proverbs when it did not with metaphors, idioms, and indirect speech acts, Temple and Honeck (1999:44) suggest that its invalidation with proverbs is more difficult because the latter may admit literal and metaphoric readings.

Two types of situations are distinguished for the interpretation of proverbs: "irrelevant-context situations" and "relevant-context situations." An irrelevant-context situation is one where a proverb is used rather artificially, with no supportive context or situation to which the proverb may be applicable. A relevant-context situation is, however, uttered in a genuine communicative situation to which it is intended to apply (Honeck and Temple 1994; Temple and Honeck 1999). Honeck and Welge (1997:608) argue that "the key premise in the

cognitive view is that proverbs are best treated as abstract theoretical mental entities, rather than as familiar, culturally embedded forms."

2. Criticism of the ECBT and the GCMT

As mentioned earlier, the ECBT defends a multistage processing model of proverb understanding (Honeck and Temple 1994; Temple and Honeck 1999). This model consists in thinking that a figurative understanding emerges from a literal sequel, making the same mistake made by Searle (1979:59) in his pragmatic view of metaphor, whereby metaphor is thought to be grounded in a literalist view of language, which holds that metaphoric meaning is mediated by literal meaning. There exists tremendous psycholinguistic evidence that metaphor processing does not involve such a strenuous exercise, whereby understanding it entails transiting via the literal words that make it up. This processing procedure has been demonstrated to be cognitively uneconomical and psychologically unreal (Gibbs 1994; Gibbs and Beitel 1995; Colston 2000). If such is the case with metaphor processing, and since the understanding of a substantial number of proverbs depends on metaphoric mapping, therefore what applies to metaphor processing should logically apply to the processing of proverbs.

For a theory that draws on pragmatics for proverb understanding, the ECBT makes not so useful a distinction between "irrelevant-context situations" and "relevant-context situations." There are at least two pragmatic problems with Temple and Honeck's "irrelevant-context situations" category. First, this category presupposes that proverbs are invoked without a situational context to which they can attach, which is pragmatically inappropriate. Marmaridou (2000:216), for one, rightly argues that "the most prototypical speech acts are socioculturally and/or linguistically conventional, whereas less prototypical ones rely more heavily on interaction for a specification of their illocutionary force." In practice, people do not use a proverb in isolation and ask their interlocutors to find a specific state of affairs in the world that may fit the proverb. This may only occur in rare situations such as the pedagogic one as Temple and Honeck themselves acknowledged it. In actual fact, things happen the other way round; if there is no state of affairs to which they may apply in the real world, proverbs will not in the first place be invoked by users.

Second, a corollary of the first misconception is that since proverbs are actually uttered to conceptualize a state of affairs in the world, the spatio-temporal context, which maximizes cognitive economy (Sperber and Wilson 1995:125), should minimize equivocation or ambiguity of a proverb. If *The best fish are found near the bottom* were attached to its pragmatic context of enunciation, Temple and Honeck (1999:44) would not have stated that the instantiation of this proverb admits a literal or figurative interpretation. For instance, if this linguistic form is uttered by the seaside in daylight, no attempt will be made to compute it as a proverb; it would be a statement of fact about real fish existing near the bottom. However, if it is uttered in a classroom, making sense of it without seeking the help of a mapping will not succeed in accounting

for it as a proverb. In genuine communicative situations, this evocation-invocation pair (Fillmore 1982:122) between a specific state of affairs in the world and the way it is conceptualized proverbially, is essential for both the generation/production and processing of proverbs. Thus, the "irrelevant-context situations" category has no real practical usefulness.

There are two major criticisms that can be leveled against the GCMT. Although the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC is a useful and valid account of proverb processing, it is an overgeneralization to claim that all proverbs require it. Lakoff and Turner assume that all proverbs abide by metaphoric mappings. On the other hand, members other than the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC in the GCMT are, to say the least, superfluous. As Honeck and Temple (1994:100) rightly argued, the GCofB restricts knowledge about proverbs to human beings when not all proverbs are about human beings. I believe that in processing proverbs we make use of the same knowledge and cognitive processes active in other non-proverbial phenomena. In this case, if we admit that proverbs involve metaphoric mappings, therefore they are processed using the same cognitive mechanisms implemented in processing metaphor. Moreover, there is no need to make provisions for the NofT as a separate knowledge base since this is already part of our general knowledge of the world, i.e., our pragmatic competence. Another criticism has to do with positing Grice's MofQ as a regulatory pragmatic principle in the understanding of proverbs. It seems to me that the MofQ is only ancillary to Sperber and Wilson's (1995) general principle of relevance, as Honeck and Temple (1994) rightly pointed out.

Thus, the two views suffer from some pragmatic inadequacies. The ECBT contrives a category that is pragmatically anomalous while the GCMT makes provisions for a pragmatic scheme which is already part of our pragmatic competence. The ECBT, on the other hand, adopts the psychologically unreal multistage processing strategy while the GCMT assumes that all proverbs require the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor.

3. Alternative proposal

Although the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC will be retained, it will be argued that it is much too restricted to account for all proverbs. The GCMT should allow for non-metaphoric proverbs to occur. Honeck and Temple's concept of "relevant-context situations" will also be retained as it provides pragmatic grounding for proverbs. The ECBT should allow for proverbs to arise naturally from pragmatic contexts, without the contrived "irrelevant-context situations."

To make sense of proverbs, relevance-theoretic framework will be drawn upon. Sperber and Wilson (1995:125) capture their theory in the following way:

> *Relevance*
>
> *Extent condition 1*: an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its contextual effects in this context are large.
>
> *Extent condition 2*: an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort required to process it in this context is small.

I take the issuance of an utterance in context to be the assumption in Sperber and Wilson's scheme, where the context involves a state of affairs in the world. If the utterance triggers enough contextual effects, i.e., if it is felt to apply to this state of affairs, it is relevant to this state of affairs. Relevance in the case of proverbs obtains whether a proverb is literal or metaphoric. If the utterance is found to apply literally to the state of affairs, then the proverb is mapping-free. However, if the utterance is found to apply metaphorically to the state of affairs, the proverb involves a mapping, and here the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC comes in. In both cases, relevance should obtain as a result of minimal processing in context. Metaphor and non-metaphor have been shown to involve the same cognitive abilities (Sperber and Wilson 1995:237) and the same response times to process them (Gibbs 1994). The decision for literal or metaphoric understanding happens at the cognitive unconscious level, whereby "most of our thought is unconscious, not in the Freudian sense of being repressed, but in the sense that it operates beneath the level of cognitive awareness, inaccessible to consciousness and operating too quickly to be focused on" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:10).

To account for proverbs in English and TA, two languages belonging in two remotely- related cultures, two classes of proverbs will be distinguished: mapping-free and mapping-motivated proverbs. Mapping-free proverbs apply literally to only one specific state of affairs in the world targeted by the proverbial utterance. However, mapping-motivated proverbs espouse the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor. Mapping-motivated proverbs will be further distinguished into single- and multiple-mapping proverbs, where the former maps the generic structure of the proverb onto a single specific state of affairs, while the latter maps the generic structure of the proverb onto a multiplicity of specific state of affairs in the world.

3.1. Mapping-free proverbs

Recall that the ECBT proposed a multistage model of proverb processing (Honeck and Temple 1994), which has been shown to be at odds with its own psychological reality, and which is in contradiction in terms with Temple and Honeck's (1999:42) own claim that the rule in proverb understanding is "constructing a figurative or literal proverb meaning." Recall also that the GCMT offers a metaphoric model, whereby each proverb depends for its interpretation on the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor (Lakoff and Turner 1989). There is, however, evidence in English and TA of a category of proverbs that are independent of the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor, which, to say the least, constitutes a major exception to Lakoff and Turner's GCMT. This category of proverbs admits only a literal interpretation that is not a transitional route to their figurativeness as Honeck and Temple stipulated (1994).

There is a sizeable corpus of proverbs that strictly say what they mean about a particular state of affairs in the world. Such cases may include the following proverbs in English and TA:

(1)

Never put off till tomorrow what can be done today.

A friend in need is a friend indeed.
A hungry man is an angry man.
A man is known by the company he keeps.
Take things as they come.
Without hope the heart would break.

(2)

itRadda	wi-thadda	w-law ykun		3li-ik	id-dayn
have lunch-IMP	and lie down	and if	be-IMPERF	on you	the debts
wi-t3aśśa	wi-tmiśśa	law	kaan	ykunu	xaTwtayn
and dine	and walk	if	be-PERF	be-IMPERF	step-DUAL

'Have lunch and lie down even if you have debts, and dine and have a walk even if it were only two steps.'

kul 3ala	kaifi-k	wi-lbis	3ala kaif in-naas
eat on	choice your	and wear	on choice the people

'Eat what you want and dress the way people want.'

3iiš	ki-ma	tilqa	muš	ki-ma	tHibb
live-IMP	like what	find-IMPERF	not	like what	like-IMPERF

'Live as you find not as you like.'

Presumably, all the proverbs in (1) and (2) do not require any mapping of a GENERIC scene onto a SPECIFIC. Such proverbs are unambiguous as to what particular scene they should apply—a literal scene that is not figuratively extendable within the culture.

Theoretically, there are two potential stands: either to consider that the foregoing proverbs are not proverbs by the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC standard, or to consider them as full-fledged proverbs, in which case the GCMT needs to be amended to include them. As we are not going to discard these as non-proverbial because they do not fit the theory, we have, however, to accept them as they are, i.e., as proverbs, and make the theory embrace them, which is to be discussed later on in the paper. This category called tentatively mapping-free proverbs is testimony that the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor is not the only applicable scheme, neither is the sense of "literal" in understanding the same as the one stipulated by the ECBT, which is one of the three phases of the theory. Thus, this category of proverbs is a problem for both the GCMT and ECBT.

3.2. Single-mapping proverbs

The GCMT stipulates that the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC "maps a single specific-level schema onto an indefinitely large number of parallel specific-level schemas" (Lakoff and Turner 1989:162). There is, however, need to modulate this categorical statement about the nature of the mapping. This overgeneralization does not seem to take into account proverbs whose applicability is far too restricted in scope than assumed by the theory. Indeed, this category of proverbs includes proverbs allowing a single mapping, whose target

is specified in the very text of the proverb. Examples of this kind may include the following in English and TA:

(3)

Speech is silver, but silence is gold.

kaan	l-kaalem	min fiDDa	ykun	is-skaat	Dhabb
if	the speech	from silver	be-IMPERF	the silence	gold

'If speech is from silver, silence would be gold.'

The speech-silence proverb praises the merit of silence over speech in English and TA, evaluating it using the marketable value of gold against that of silver, with the result that whoever happens to be the target of the proverb would favor silence over speech for obvious general knowledge about the comparative value of the two precious minerals used in profiling speech economy. In practice, this proverb applies to ONE specific situation or state of affairs in the world—that of speaking, which can be captured in the conceptual metaphor, SPEAKING IS USELESS/BAD.

This category of proverbs is a problem for the ECBT in the sense that the theory does not allow for metaphoric mappings without transiting by literal understanding; it is also a problem for the GCMT in the sense that the theory stipulates multiple mappings for each proverb.

3.3. Multiple-mapping proverbs

This category accounts for what Lakoff and Turner call the GCMT and what Honeck and Temple call "relevant-context situations." It has to be pointed out that this class accounts for an important number of proverbs in English and TA (and perhaps in many other languages and cultures), all involving multiple mappings as in the following proverbs:

(4)

Barking dogs seldom bite.
Constant dropping wears away a stone.
The leopard cannot change its spots.

(5)

illi	yHibb	il-lallu	yiShar	il-layl	bkillu
who		like-IMPERF	the jewels	stay up-IMPERF	the night whole

'He who likes jewels stays up the whole night.'

illi fii-h 3aynay-h ma twarrii-h
who in him eyes his no show-IMPERF him
'He who has eyes needn't be shown anything.'

id-dwaam	yinqib	ir-rxaam
the perseverance	make holes-IMPERF	the marble

'Perseverance makes holes in marble.'
Constant dropping wears away a stone.

It is crucial to note the potential multiplicity of specific states of affairs in which this category of proverbs may be invoked. Various contexts in the world are responsible for this potential multiplicity. Empirical studies, however, are needed to tell us about the frequency of occurrence of each type of proverb in naturally-occurring discourse.

To sum up, it was shown that proverbs come as literal and non-literal. When they are non-literal, they may apply either to one or multiple specific states of affairs in the world. The fact that they can be accounted for literally partly invalidates the ECBT and GCMT for the reasons invoked earlier on. However, the fact that they may accept single or multiple mappings partly invalidates the GCMT.

4. Implications for translation

It has been customary to think that, in terms of its linguistic and pragmatic dimensions, a translation enterprise is "*the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)*" (Catford 1965:20, emphasis in original) or "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the SL message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (Nida and Taber 1974:12). However, three comments are in good order here, namely that (i) it is not clear how this "replacement" operates in practice. Is it a matter of lexical alignment from a source language to a target language? The answer is definitely negative; (ii) likewise, the notion of equivalence shared by the two conceptions of translation is, to say the least, opaque for pedagogical purposes: What are the criteria or conditions involved in this search for "equivalence?" and (iii) the separation between form and meaning in the second quotation is misleading since it considers style and meaning as two separable entities. To invoke evidence against this separation, Cluyesenaar (1976:41) claims that "anyone who doubts the inseparability of form and meaning cannot do better than attempt the translation even of quite ordinary utterances."

Translating is a complex, interdisciplinary enterprise. Its linguistic (Catford 1965; Hatim 1997), pragmatic (Vlasenko 1993; Triki and Atari 1993; Newmark 1995), cultural (Nida 1964; Lefevere and Bassnett 1990; Snell-Hornby 1988-1995), and cognitive dimensions (Alexieva 1993; Tabakowska 1993; Mandelblit 1995; Maalej 2003) have been addressed, although the cognitive dimension has comparatively received less attention because of the fairly recent emergence of cognitive views of translation. Whatever the theoretical persuasion of the translator, the following assumptions are unavoidable in every translation project:

1. *Linguistic expression*: Nida (1964:2) rightly argues that "underlying all the complications of translation is the fundamental fact that languages differ radically one from the other." These differences could lie at the level of word building capacities, patterns of word order, techniques of linking clauses into sentences, signals of discourse, etc. As a result, rendering meaning in translation will, at least partly, occasion changes to the

linguistic form of the target language: "To preserve the content of the message the form must be changed" (Nida and Taber 1974:5). Romaine (1994:28) suggests that "a useful way of conceptualizing differences between languages is to think of them as varying not so much in what it is possible to say, as what it is unavoidable to say."

2. *Constraints on concepts*: Linguistic expression in a given language is constrained by cultural factors. Thus, expressing meanings in translation is not immune to cultural considerations, which play a crucial part in determining the meaning conveyed. Translating unavoidably operates linguistic changes to source texts because "each language comes with an enormously wide range of such concepts [culturally defined frames] and their corresponding expressions" (Lakoff 1987:312).
3. *Conceptual systems*: If languages unavoidably differ in expressing concepts, then translating is not pairing two syntactic systems. As a consequence, "accurate translation requires close correspondences across conceptual systems" (Lakoff 1987:312). In cognitive terms, equivalence in the experience of participants makes translating a form of "mapping from one language to another language" (Lakoff 1987:312).

But, by far, the most important changes to language are enacted under the influence of culture.

4.1. Translation and culture

Emphasizing the place of culture in translation, Lefevere and Bassnett (1990:8) argue that "'faithfulness,' then, does not enter into translation in the guise of 'equivalence' between words or texts, but, if at all, in the guise of an attempt to make the target text function in the target culture the way the source text functioned in the source culture." Thus, the translator's aim towards faithfulness has to do with finding "equivalence in the *experience of the participants*" (Beaugrande and Dressler 1981:216-17, emphasis in original). Ideally, "translators must convey the same kind of experience with the same kind of language material, and to expand, reduce, or modify textual components only as far as necessary to minimize a divergence of experience" (Beaugrande and Dressler 1981:216-17). This exigency of conveying the same experience through the same linguistic material is hard to find across cultures for the reasons just expounded.

Proverbs fall within those uses of language whereby cultures may unavoidably conceptualize the same experiences profiling different cultural categories. In other words, for the same specific scenes, cultures may implement different generic scenes. Since proverbs are culture-bound, they tend to vary across cultures in terms of the categories of experience they profile to conceptualize states of affairs in the world, which may constitute a serious challenge to their translatability. In the same way "universal experiences do not necessarily lead to universal metaphors," and since many metaphors are "based on cultural considerations" (Kövecses 2005:4), universal experiences do not yield universal proverbs as they are culture-dependent.

This obviously does not entail that there are no universal proverbs that are the product of inter-culturally shared experiences. These are not infrequent even among culturally remote languages. A look at the Internet (http://creativeproverbs.com) reveals a wealth of such proverbs. However, this should not be mistaken for the huge differences in profiling the same concept across languages and cultures.

4.2. Cognitive-pragmatic approach to translating proverbs

As a word of caution, there is need to point out that in a cognitive program for translation, what I am calling translational process may be a misnomer. That is, the translator may not need to translate a proverb at all since proverbs exist as such in all cultures. Rather, the job of the translator may have to consist in measuring the degree of conceptual correspondence/equivalence between two languages/cultures. In other words, a translator may have to do more cognitive than translational work. However, in case a proverb needs to be translated, as in giving that as an exercise to students, care should be taken to raising students' awareness about these conceptual/cognitive matters.

The translation of idioms between Arabic and English (Baker 1992; Abu-Ssaydeh 2004; Homeidi 2004) has received a better treatment than that of proverbs. As far as my knowledge goes, apart from El-Yasin and Al-Shehebat's (2005) proposal, there is in the Arabic tradition hardly any other attempt to offer a translational model for proverbs. El-Yasin and Al-Shehebat's (2005) offered a translation assessment of proverbs in a novel, giving us no translation model of proverbs based on a theoretical background, and blurring the distinction between proverbs and idioms available in the literature. As an alternative, the present paper aims to offer a cognitive model of proverbs translating based on data from metaphor theory.

Mandelblit (1995) offers for metaphor translating a "Cognitive Translation Hypothesis," which postulates two cognitive scenarios, a "similar mapping condition" (SMC) and a "different mapping condition" (DMC). Since a sizeable number of proverbs is based on metaphoric mapping (Lakoff and Turner 1989), I argue that the translation of proverbs should follow a path similar to that of metaphor translating. In translating proverbs, the SPECIFIC scene will keep under the same GENERIC scene across languages if the two cultures in presence are close enough to share a SMC. If, however, the SPECIFIC scene is invoked via a different GENERIC scene across two languages, the two cultures are so remote from each other as to adopt a DMC. In both cases, the translator should strive to search for the experiential, pragmatic, equivalent GENERIC proverb that best suits a source language GENERIC proverb. Here, the translator should show near-native, if not native knowledge, of both the source and target cultures.

Hiraga (1991:151-161) offers a four-scenario scheme to account for the possible combinations of metaphoric expressions and conceptual metaphors, namely, (i) similar metaphorical concepts and similar metaphorical expressions, (ii) similar metaphorical concepts but different metaphorical expressions, (iii)

different metaphorical concepts but similar metaphorical expressions, and (iv) different metaphorical concepts and different metaphorical expressions. Since proverbs offer the same skewing as metaphors, they can be dealt with in a similar fashion. Extrapolating from and simplifying Hiraga's scheme, I hypothesize that the translation of proverbs comes in two scenarios, namely,

(i) similar SPECIFIC scene and similar GENERIC scene;
(ii) similar SPECIFIC scene and different GENERIC scene;

Scenario (i): similar SPECIFIC scene and similar GENERIC scene

Because mapping-free proverbs lack a mapping between generic and specific, their translation is more straightforward. Indeed, it may be argued for this type that they pose the least problems as they may show little variation across languages both at the conceptual and linguistic levels as in the following proverbs:

(6)

Never put off till tomorrow what can be done today.

la	tu?ajjil	3amala	l-yawmi	ila l-Radi
no	postpone-IMPERF	work	the today	to the morrow

'Do not put off today's work to tomorrow.'
Never put off till tomorrow what can be done today.

Indeed, where text alignment is a reality between two languages/cultures, a memory of translation as afforded by information technology is an indicated and useful technique to save time and energy.

Scenario (i) may be exemplified from single-mapping proverbs across English and TA as in the following example:

(7)

kaan	l-kaalem	min fiDDa	ykun	is-skaat	Dhabb
if	the speech	from silver	be-IMPERF	the silence	gold

'If speech is from silver, gold would be gold.'
Speech is silver, but silence is gold.

The difference between TA and English conceptualizations of speech-silence in terms of silver-gold is a matter of semantic relations between the two. In TA, the conceptualization of the speech-silence pair builds on epistemic conditional thought (if-then conjunction), which "expresses the idea that the knowledge of the truth of the hypothetical premise expressed in the protasis would be a sufficient condition for concluding the truth of the proposition expressed in the apodosis" (Sweetser 1990: 116). However, Sweetser (1990:116-7) argues that there is "no logical connection between protasis and apodosis." Instead, there is a cultural logic in building in the database of truthful knowledge about gold on that of silver. In English, on the other hand, the conceptualization of speech-silence is posited in terms of the epistemic adversative conjunction "but," but without marking a clash in the epistemic domain between speech and silence as evidenced by their evaluation in the knowledge domain as silver and gold, respectively. Our

knowledge about silver and gold tells us that both of them can be acquired, possessed, and transacted, but the latter is more valuable, which simply gets mapped onto silver and gold. Thus, the "if" and "but" are not simply linguistic subtleties between two languages, but, more importantly, a reflection of two cultural models of speech and silence in TA and English.

Multiple-mapping proverbs also exist in this scenario, where proverbs across languages/cultures show the same specific and generic scenes as in the following case:

(8)

Drabb	3aSfurayn	b-Hajra
[he] beat-PERFECT	bird-DUAL	with stone

'He beat two birds with one stone.'

To kill two birds with one stone.

The difference in translation is mainly what is unavoidable in both languages. Because in TA the dual is possible, the plural is not acceptable, and because the dual does not exist in English, the plural is used with "two birds." Because there is no infinitive in TA, the proverb comes in the third person masculine seen as default gender. However, the process in Arabic and English have been conceptualized slightly differently. TA foregrounds process (hitting) and instrument (stone) in the act of killing birds, and backgrounds the result of it (killing), while English foregrounds the result and the instrument, thus backgrounding the process (hitting). The result of the process is presupposed in Arabic while the process itself is presupposed in English.

Scenario (ii): similar SPECIFIC scene and different GENERIC scene

Scenario (ii) takes care of proverbs that show a similar specific scene and a different generic scene across languages/cultures, and may be exemplified using single-mapping proverbs in TA and English:

(9)

šwayya lal-lah		w	šwayya l-3abd-allah
little to Allah	and	little	to slave Allah

'Give some to God and take some to yourself.'

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

On this scenario, the specific scene is the same in TA and English, which has to do with balance between work and leisure. The conceptualization of the generic scene is, however, different across the two languages/cultures. Work and leisure in TA are conceptualized by correlating work with faith in God and leisure with human beings, and distributing them equally by substantiating them with the same quantifier, šwayya (some/a little). This religious profiling reflects the complementary nature of godly and earthly matters in the everyday life of Muslims. English, however, conceptualizes this work-leisure balance generically by profiling it through the juxtaposition between "all" and "no." The proverb can be read as built around an epistemic if-then, whereby if all is work and no leisure, then an individual becomes dull, which situation is shunned as an animal state.

Clearly, although these two single-mapping proverbs exist in the two cultures in presence at the generic level, they depend at the specific level on two different cultural models of work and leisure represented generically by two different scenes. To be able to naturally render them from one language to another, there is need to understand the functioning of the cultures in which they originate, whereby equivalence becomes a matter of cross-linguistic/cultural knowledge, hence the cognitive nature of the translational process. In the absence of this, the translational process might jeopardize translatability, producing an unnatural rendering in a target language.

Scenario (ii) may also be exemplified through multiple-mapping proverbs as in the following cases:

(10)

muš il-mdawwar l-kul ka3k
not the round the all doughnuts
'All that is round is not doughnuts.'
All is not gold that glitters.

TA and English profile the SPECIFIC scene of the deceptiveness of appearances using two different GENERIC scenes as in (10) above. TA profiles this using roundness as a salient property of doughnuts, and maps this knowledge onto deceptiveness. However, the proverb denies that roundness is salient to doughnuts only. English, however, conceptualizes deceptiveness by warning against correlating gold with glitter, presupposing that, even though glittering is salient for gold, the latter shares it with other categories that should not be mistaken for gold.

Ease of translation begins to disappear with "culturally defined frames … that are not shared (American baseball and Balinese calendar)" (Lakoff 1987:312). The organization of experience is crucial not only for understanding it but also rendering/translating it into a target language/culture. In short, in translating in general and rendering/translating proverbs in particular, understanding the functioning of the culture in terms of the cultural models that it lives by is crucial, and framing and organization should be preserved across languages/cultures.

Conclusion

So far, the GCMT remains the best theory available on the market to account for proverb understanding and production. It presents itself as a cultural, cognitive, and pragmatic theory. It is cultural in the sense that proverbs are part of the mind, which thrives in its cultural environment, and are invoked in directing, instructing, and judging people in their everyday states of affairs. It is cognitive in the sense that it offers an indirect conceptualization of these states of affairs in the world via the metaphoric/analogical mapping suggested by the generic frame of the proverb itself. It is also pragmatic since it depends on the uptake of a proverb by a language user, and considers proverbs as indirect, situated ways of tackling interaction in a socio-cultural environment.

The ECBT, however, is a theory that calls itself conceptual, basing itself on the theory of categorization, but ignoring conceptualization in proverb processing and production, i.e., metaphor/analogy is denied a place in all this. It adopts a multistage processing mechanism that has been demonstrated to be anachronistic by the growing psycholinguistic evidence against the psychological unreality of this multistaging. It criticizes the GCMT as structuralist, and confuses it with structure-mapping (Gentner, 1983), which consists in mapping the schematic structure of a SPECIFIC scene onto that of a GENERIC one. The ECBT, thus, seems to experience a contradiction between its conceptualist claim and the GCMT's conceptual dimension, which consists in relating the processing and production of proverbs to the structure of knowledge in two domains mediated through metaphor/analogy.

As a synthesis, the paper proposed a re-working of the GCMT by drawing categorizational and translational processes from data, instead of bending the theory and denying the existence of proverbs that do not depend on metaphoric mappings for their production and processing. The paper has also experimented with the applicability of the GCMT in a translational program, and argued that the cognitive view of proverbs is useful for rendering proverbs into various languages/cultures, providing that translators aim at implementing their linguistic, conceptual, and cultural knowledge of a given pair of languages/cultures. Thus, rendering proverbs across languages/cultures becomes more like a complex cognitive exercise in comparative linguistics, comparative metaphor, and comparative culture.

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