

Original Paper

The Translation of English Financial Humor into Spanish: Cognitive, Linguistic and Pragmatic Issues

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Abstract

This paper addresses the translation of financial humor from English into Spanish. However, from a linguistic and pragmatic angle, both languages appear to be worlds apart in the way they approach this specialist language and discourse. English often resorts to various linguistic and communicative solutions in order to allow non-specialist readers understand the intricacies of abstract professional discourses as is the case with financial language. At the other end, Spanish tends to maintain an academic and professional tone whoever the interlocutors. Consequently, non-specialist Spanish-speaking users find financial terms and procedures intricate and difficult to understand. Humor is commonly and largely used in financial English to ease its conceptual load and favor its conceptual and linguistic understanding. Spanish, at the other extreme, very rarely uses this linguistic solution in professional financial settings.

Keywords

Finance, humor, neonyms, English-Spanish translation

1. Introduction

One of the current issues translators specialized in Economics and Finance have to address concerns the rendering into their languages of the large number of new financial terms and expressions (neonyms) that are constantly devised and incorporated in English. They represent not only one of the most dynamic neological fields today but also one of the trickiest. This is mainly due to the cognitive, linguistic and pragmatic issues their translation raise and which those who specialize in the study and analysis of this domain of specific languages know well. However, there is an ineluctable social and professional need to approach and transfer the continuous flow of new financial terms from English

into the rest of languages and this makes this translation modality very attractive (Alcaraz, 2000; Mateo, 2007, 2010, 2014, 2015, 2017; Orts & Almela, 2009).

Many of these terms and expressions serve to define newly-created business modalities. They are also used to explain or illustrate innovative purposes and behaviors related to money in all its forms, in a social context deeply dependent on Economics and Finance. The geopolitical situation of today's world has made the United States its epicenter where the most important economic and financial decisions are taken, being Wall Street the global financial mecca. The fact that English has become the lingua franca of Finance implies that the rest of languages, not only feed on the specialist English terms that describe global economic procedures but they are also conditioned by the idiosyncratic aspects derived from the way Anglo-Saxons understand and define the world and the economy.

Economics and Finance play a transcendental role in today's society. Everyone, whatever their social, educational or employment status, depends on the fluctuations of the world economy, today more than in any other period in history. Although business language is used by everybody, some are more experts than others. Many are lay people and there are even those who, despite acknowledging that their lives may depend to a large extent on the decisions taken in this area, have a nearly absolute ignorance of basic economic rules and behaviors. To remedy this situation, a broad repertoire of terminological solutions, adapted to the different social groups, is used in English, including humor. This communicative resource that reflects an idiosyncratic and characteristic approach to this variety of specialty language will be the focus of this paper.

The translation of humor, in general, has been approached by the academic literature with some assiduity. In this respect, there is some coincidence in highlighting certain cognitive, linguistic and pragmatic-cultural problems that, for some authors, make humor translation very difficult or practically impossible to tackle (Vandaele, 2010; Martínez Sierra & Zabalbeascoa, 2017; Mateo, 2015). In Diot's words (cited by Vandaele, 2010, p. 159): "When it comes to translating humor, the operation proves to be as desperate as that of translating poetry".

In the following pages, we shall focus on certain issues, in our opinion interesting and relevant, that concern the translation of financial humor in English and Spanish, two languages almost in the antipodes and very different in the way they address this field of specialized discourse. On the one hand, English resorts to the use of different cognitive, linguistic and communicative elements and strategies, including humor, to facilitate those interested in finance, an easy access and understanding of this field of professional discourse, often very expert and opaque. On the other hand, and possibly at the other extreme, Spanish tends to focus on the more technical and serious aspects of finance where humorous linguistic resources are very uncommon and almost anecdotal. In Spanish, pure technical language is preferred with few concessions to lighter, humorous issues. In this disparate and, a priori, problematic context, we shall address this modality of professional discourse from the conviction that its translation is also possible provided we identify the obstacles and, consequently, take the most convenient solutions among those possible, to reach our goal.

2. The Translation of Financial Humor from English to Spanish

Basically, the specialized translation process from one language to another implies searching and adapting not only the technical concepts expressed in specialized terms into the target language but also the communicative and cultural patterns they include. This process is facilitated in languages that (more or less) share a common linguistic and cultural background which might be the case with English and Spanish. However, there are some singularities that may pose obstacles to this process and this is not an unusual circumstance in the translation of financial between both languages. In this particular specialized field of discourse, Spanish translators confront a “hybrid (English) discourse, half scientific, half informative, and often colloquial in their terminological selection” (Mateo, 2014) which combines highly technical vocabulary with colloquial and humorous twists rarely present in Spanish.

This type of discourse structure poses a big challenge to Spanish financial translators, unfamiliar with this “specialized” approach to technical discourse. They are forced to implement different translation strategies in the process of adapting and transferring these humoristic nuances into Spanish, a language which rarely uses them. In that respect, three translation variables should be considered by Spanish language translators when approaching a financial English humoristic term or expression (adapted from Mateo, 2014):

- a) The humoristic cognitive-inferential structure.
- b) The humoristic, linguistic and semantic content.
- c) The humoristic, pragmatic and communicative purpose.

The first translation variable enables target readers infer the necessary clues to approach the financial term cognitively from a humorous perspective. This interpretation materializes in an *ad hoc* linguistic-semantic content (second variable) that manifests the writer’s pragmatic and communicative purpose (third variable). These three translation variables seem essential in the translator’s efforts to transfer not only the linguistic and terminological structures included in L1 financial humor terms and texts but also the intentional and communicative constituents originally intended by the author. Financial English is popularly explained through the use of humoristic metaphors as they can ease the complex technical procedures involved and allow non-expert readers a better understanding of the cognitive mechanisms that play a fundamental role in this process.

2.1 Humorous Financial English and Spanish Metaphors

Humor seems to be a distinctive pattern in English financial language and discourse while it is a more unusual linguistic and communicative strategy in financial Spanish as we shall see below. We could basically divide humorous financial metaphors in English into two main types (Charteris-Black, 2004, pp. 135-136) but of course this is quite a broad distinction which endows a clear pedagogical purpose:

- 1) The first type of metaphors has a professional and technical orientation intended to describe, evaluate or predict different economic processes (*predatory* lending, product *architecture*, *noncore* assets, etc.) To be understood, these metaphors require a high level of abstraction and specialized knowledge in line with any other scientific-technical language.

2) The second type of metaphors, which we find very interesting from a terminological and translational perspective, are aimed not only at specialists, as being part of their professional jargon, but also at less expert users (*fall in prices, banking recovery or salary sacrifice*). Their purpose is to make transparent and accessible to everybody the complex processes and mechanisms used in financial contexts through the use of real life analogies and humor. These are the kind of financial metaphors that sometimes have the same or equivalent meanings in Spanish (*caída de los precios, recuperación de la banca o sacrificio de los salarios*).

From a cognitive and pragmatic angle, a humorous expression brings together two different and often opposite communicative scenarios (Kyratzis, 2003, pp. 1-2). This duality is not initially perceived by recipients until they suddenly realize it and laugh. Raskin drew up in 1979 the so-called *Semantic Script Theory of Humor*, considered the first linguistic theory on humor. According to this theory, a text or expression can be considered humorous if it meets the two following conditions:

- a) To be compatible and interchangeable, in part or entirely, in two different communicative contexts.
- b) The two contexts in which this compatibility takes place oppose each other and may overlap in whole or in part in such text or expression.

The idea of two opposing contexts or scenarios that originate a certain humorous effect when they come into contact is called a *script*. Basically a *script* is “an organized chunk of information about something, a cognitive structure internalized by the speaker which provides him/her with information on how the world is organized” (Raskin, 1983, p. 199). “*Scripts* provide speakers information on how the world is organized” (Asimakoulas, 2004, p. 822). Often, one of the elements in the *script* has a figurative meaning, as is usually the case with the metaphors and humorous twists commonly used in financial English humor. In this respect, we must bear in mind that, paraphrasing Deirdre Wilson (2001), metaphors (including humorous ones) are not, as is often believed, simple decorative elements intended to embellish language but powerful linguistic resources in themselves which, as she wrote, “cannot be paraphrased in literal terms without loss to the meaning” (Deirdre Wilson, 2001, p. 196). In consequence, what should a Spanish-language translator specialized in finance do when s/he runs into all kinds of turns and humorous expressions in English that do not exist or are rare in Spanish?

The question does not seem simple to elucidate because humor is not only a special language feature. It is impregnated, as we have seen, of all kinds of cognitive, pragmatic and cultural nuances characteristic of a particular language, in our case English, that hardly coincide with those of other languages like Spanish. Often, this circumstance makes translation difficult and an extremely complex task, full of traps and obstacles, some very difficult and often almost impossible to elucidate.

The use of humor in financial contexts is frequently endowed with a characteristic allegorical purpose. In our everyday life, speakers and writers use metaphors as communication devices, as cognitive understanding resources which, by comparing their real and imaginary meanings, become powerful informative instruments. Metaphors in general and humor metaphors in particular raise powerful cognitive stimuli in recipients that activate the creation of inferences and assumptions. Metaphors often

help smooth out and understand the meaning of their underlying concepts, however complex they may be.

Although language in general, whether natural or specialized, abounds in metaphors, their use seems to be more common in certain languages than in others, in some communication contexts than in others. This circumstance often makes the translation process difficult and unnatural.

There seems to be, however, a wide consensus in considering human inferential processes regulated according to universal principles (Mateo & Yus, 2009) or as Viale et al. (2013, p. 22) wrote: “the cognitive abilities develop from universal type inferential principles that are genetically inherited” although they may often manifest themselves differently depending on languages and cultures. Metaphors in general and financial ones in particular also show a specific sociocultural component (and, in our particular case, an expert one) in which each language has developed its own way of conceptualizing and naming the things, procedures, etc. typical of each professional environment.

Furthermore, metaphors tend to adjust in diverse intracultural exchanges in a relatively simple way. Different interlocutors often share the cognitive and cultural knowledge of these metaphorical terms and, in this particular case, their humorous financial meanings. Thus, as we wrote above, we can also find terms and expressions in this guise in Spanish such as “hipoteca basura” (subprime mortgage), “mercado matao” (fucked up market) “chiringuito financiero” (shady financial company) or “mariachis” (fictitious investors who offer illegal investment services). However, this cultural identification may not be guaranteed between different intercultural language contexts where source language metaphorical meanings do not always match the linguistic, pragmatic or professional expectations of target language users. This is especially evident in the case of humor as we shall see later.

2.2 The Translation of Humorous Financial Metaphors from English into Spanish

Translating, as everybody knows, is not an easy task which can be solved only with a good knowledge of both the source and target languages or with the aid of appropriate lexicographic tools such as dictionaries, glossaries, databases, etc. Translation is a more complex task that brings together different elements and parameters that necessarily interact with one another. Basically, it is a complex holistic task that involves different cognitive, semantic, pragmatic and cultural components which interact and feed one another so that only the sum of all of them can guarantee an adequate translation.

In English financial discourse, puns and metaphors with a humorous meaning are powerful and effective communication tools in themselves. Through their practice, users, whether expert, semi-expert or lay, are able to interpret complex financial concepts without having to resort to the complicated inferential mechanisms normally required in most specialty languages. In these cases, humorous metaphors, endowed with a powerful cognitive force, allow communication and the pragmatic knowledge or use of these complex specialized terms while facilitate their access to virtually any user. This evident fact paves communication among English language users. However, when recipients come from other linguistic contexts and cultural areas, in our case Spanish, where the use of humor in financial contexts is not so usual, understanding the meanings of some financial terms may become

arduous.

In this specialized field, translators of humorous financial terms from English to Spanish face the apparent paradox of having to approach the translation of singular lexical structures (humorous financial metaphors) which were originally created to facilitate English speaking users the understanding of complicated financial mechanisms. However, these metaphors, due to their pragmatic-cultural load, often pose important and added comprehension/communication challenges to target Spanish readers, especially due to their ignorance of the pragmatic-cultural aspects they include. This fact may make rather difficult for them to understand certain complex specialized concepts.

It should then be necessary, in this view, that English-Spanish financial translators met two basic conditions in their work:

1) Humorous financial terms should include the same or similar cognitive and lexical contents in the target language (Spanish) as those in the source language (English). There is no doubt that this desideratum may pose important handicaps mostly derived from the usual lack of similar terms in Spanish capable of activating analogous cognitive-linguistic responses in their readers and consequently allow them to achieve homonymous meaning results.

2) These homonymous terms should be able to trigger corresponding humoristic inferences in (Spanish) target readers as a result of applying similar linguistic and pragmatic strategies to those used by (English) source readers. However, this can be a complicated task for target readers because, due to linguistic and especially cognitive, pragmatic and cultural limitations, they may be forced to apply greater cognitive efforts in their comprehension process. Consequently, in our opinion, financial translators should try to help target language readers recognize the humorous character included in the translated financial terms or statements so that they could access the correct inferences with the lowest cognitive cost possible.

The following image briefly illustrates and summarizes how the cognitive coding/decoding process of a humorous financial term or metaphor would develop ideally. In the image below, we can see that a source language business text (L1) includes metaphorical / humorous financial terms originally intended to explain or facilitate their specialized meanings to source language readers. In context 1, the L2 translator would try, first of all, to access the mental representation of the intention underlying the original humorous financial metaphors in order to formulate, if possible, similar ones in the target language. By doing that, target language readers would be able to activate equivalent inferential responses in context 2 that would allow them to interpret their financial contents correctly. After decoding the humorous elements present in the original metaphors, they would access equivalent metaphoric and humoristic meanings in the target language for those terms.

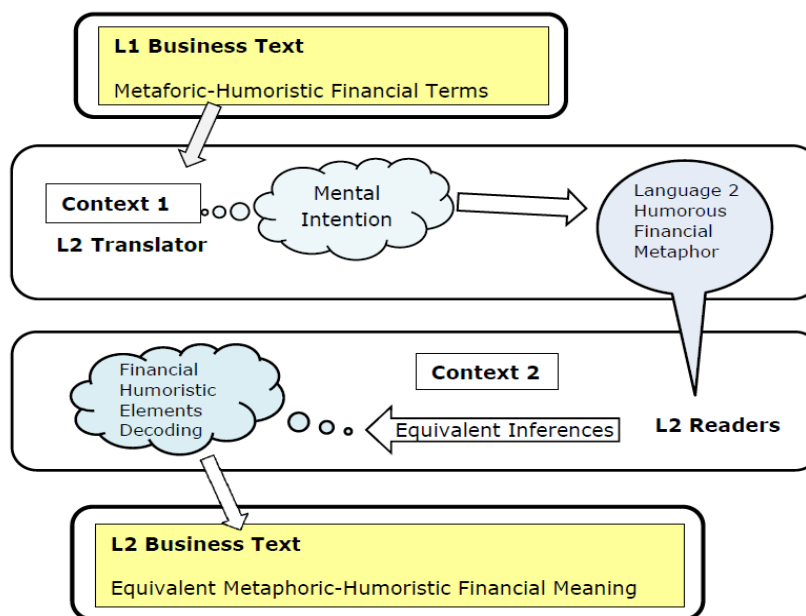


Figure 1. The Cognitive Coding/Decoding Translation Process of a humorous Financial Term or Metaphor

Let's keep in mind that this graphic depicts, as has been said, a pedagogical model that summarizes the translator/reader interactive process but which does not include other variables that also play a decisive role in the translation process, such as the translators' degree of expertise and knowledge in the subject, their experience in this specialized translation field or their own specific knowledge in finance just to cite some.

2.3 Cognitive, Linguistic and Pragmatic Issues in the Translation of Financial Humor from English to Spanish

Once the issue has been tackled and some of the difficulties involved acknowledged, we can now address and suggest some methodological clues for the translation of financial humor into Spanish with the help of some specific examples. To that end, we shall not only approach it from a linguistic perspective but also from a cognitive and pragmatic angle since doing it exclusively from a linguistic view would be, as we have seen, practically useless if not impossible except for some specific lucky cases.

Before dealing with the issue a little deeper, it would be convenient to establish a basic typology of financial humor in English. The application of linguistic and humorous procedures when it comes to illustrating or explaining certain financial concepts and uses has been very broad in English and depicts a long tradition. It covers an extensive casuistry that implements different language resources and strategies: metaphors, personifications, set phrases, hyperbolic language, word puns and others. As we know, metaphors are rhetorical and linguistic solutions speakers commonly employ in many communication contexts, being so familiarized with their use that quite often they are not aware of it. Once the communicative intention predominates over the purely linguistic one, metaphors turn out to

be conventional to the point that speakers may become unaware of their metaphorical meaning, such as when we say: *Time is running out, life is a journey* or “*your attitude hurts*” (Kövec, 2002, p. 31). In the case of financial discourse, metaphors also play a similar role, as can be seen in the following examples: *A high-flying company. The government should pull up its socks* or the famous *Green shoots of the economy*.

Financial humor, in addition to being widespread in English, is essentially based on similar metaphoric solutions designed to establish powerful conceptual equivalents between real and financial meanings. These linguistic and communicative resources seek to comply with the premises of highlighting, interpreting and facilitating certain notions that may be complex, especially for less expert users. Among the financial metaphorization processes with a clear humorous intention in English, we can mention the following:

1) Animal metaphors used to explain certain financial behaviors, so together with the well-known *Bull and Bear Markets* we find many more like: *Alligator Spread, Bear Hug, Bunny market, Cash Cow, Dog And Pony Show, Fat Cat, Golden Geese, Gorilla, Hunting Elephants, Killer Bees, Pork chop, Tortoise Rally, Unicorn, White Elephant*, etc. Animal metaphors, according to Bielenia-Grajewska (2009, p. 144) typically come from the “friendly animal world” which makes these financial metaphors more close to their readers’ lives and uses.

2) It is also interesting to mention the personification of certain financial uses and products in famous English and American celebrities or literature characters such as: *Jennifer Lopez, Bo Derek, Bowie Bond, Trumpflation, Lady Macbeth Strategy, Robin Hood Effect* or *Ninja Loan*.

3) Daily activities and actions also have their place: *Clean Your Skirts, Cutting a Melon, Double Irish with a Dutch Sandwich, Losing Your Shirt, Haircut, One Night Stand Investment, Suicide pill, Yo-yo stock* and others.

4) Word plays like *Rumortrage, Shrinkflation, Whistleblower, Eat Your Own Dog Food*, including terms similar to *Brexit* such as *Oustria* (Out Austria), *France* (Frexit), *Italy* (*Italexit* or *Italeave*), the *Czech Republic* (*Czech-out*) and *Portugal* (*Departugal*).

5) Miscellaneous: *Graveyard Market, Low Ball, Nonbank Banks, Open Kimono, Pac-Man, Tombstone, Zombie Bank*.

From the Spanish translator’s perspective, the transfer of financial neonyms in general and with a humorous meaning in particular, ranges from being easy in theory when the L1 term meaning is unambiguous with a precise correlation between term and concept, to become an almost fiendish semantic game when the L1 term includes all kinds of cultural allusions, puns, colloquialisms or metaphors.

In this case, some cultural references that should favor L1 disambiguation can complicate the translators’ approach by making their work more complex and time consuming. Paradoxically, as has been said before, the conceptual simplification of English financial terms, intended to clarify their meanings to likely readers, often makes their understanding more obscure and complicated to

Spanish-speaking ones. On these occasions, the Spanish translation may result incomplete or mediocre. As has been noted, from a communicative point of view, financial humor and colloquial registers are created in English so that less expert and even lay users in the field can understand the complex mechanisms of money and their purpose.

Let's see some examples:

Ankle biter: Low capitalization stocks.

Jingle Mail: Lit. It is the act of relinquishing one's obligations on a property by literally mailing the keys to the lending bank. (<https://www.investinganswers.com> › financial-dictionary › debt-bankruptcy)

Graveyard Market: a period during which prices in a financial market have been going down for a long time and there is very little trading activity.

<https://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/graveyard-market>

Voodoo Accounting: It refers to any accounting practices that artificially inflate the profits reported on a company's financial statements. <https://investinganswers.com> › dictionary › voodoo-accounting

Wedding Cake: It is a product that bets on the stability of an index, a stock or a currency. <https://www.investment-and-finance.net> › derivatives › wedding-cake

However, many of the financial neonyms, we have approached in the previous examples, quite often lose their humorous meanings and keep their strict financial meaning in Spanish. The reasons are not only linguistic or semantic but, above all, cognitive, pragmatic and cultural in nature, with the result of missing most of their English original explanatory purpose when translated into Spanish. In this regard, many Spanish-speaking financial experts tend to use straight English terms or offer literal translations which, due to their heterogeneity, give rise to a certain terminological chaos. Often, the same English term is translated into Spanish in different forms. This complicates the panorama not only for terminologists and translators but also for Spanish users who cannot decide which Spanish financial option best gathers the English financial meaning as can be seen in the following example (Google search 12/February/2020):

Subprime mortgage (1.260.000 hits in English)



As we can see in the figure above, the procedures used in the different translations of *subprime mortgages* into Spanish are varied. Thus we have:

- 1) A pure loan: Subprime mortgage: 26,620 results.
- 2) A mixed loan: *Hipoteca* subprime: 224,000 results.

3) Two descriptions: one includes a clearly pejorative complement “*hipoteca basura*” (trash mortgage) with 73.700 results; the other explains the financial meaning of *subprime* by adding “*alto riesgo*” (high risk) with 75.900 results; and finally

4) A somewhat strange calque: *Hipoteca subprima* with 234 results.

Basically, we can identify five commonly-used procedures in the translation of financial neonyms, including humorous ones, from English to Spanish:

1) Straight English loans: *repo*, *factoring*, *actuals*. Sometimes Spanish neonyms include terms in both languages: *precio cash flow*, *an ásis Quant*.

2) Calques: *inversor angel* (angel investor), *capital simiente* (seed capital).

3) Cultural adaptations: *get-rich-quick attitude* = *cultura del pelotazo*.

4) Circumlocutions or paraphrases: *warrant* = *derecho de adquisición de acciones*.

5) Neonyms derived from the English term: *Banking* = *bancarización*; *crowdfunding* = *micromecenazgo*.

A double issue should be considered in the translation of financial humor: On the one hand, as has already been pointed out, the use of humor is not very common in Spanish financial discourse and it does not include any pedagogical intention like in English.

Humor is used in a restricted and sporadic way in Spanish and mainly as part of the financial analysts’ daily jargon. In this fashion, they use terms like *chicharos* referring to low capitalization high risk stocks (the term comes from a cheap kind of fish eaten by socially-disadvantaged people), *marichis* (investors who try to take advantage of certain tax cuts) or *cocos* (a type of bonds which can be converted into shares). Paradoxically, Spanish financial jargon may be complicated for financial lay people as it lacks the pedagogical purpose financial English often shows.

On the other hand, the highly specialized character that usually depicts Spanish academic and scientific discourse tends to restrict the use of colloquial and humorous solutions. When they are used, the result tends to be plain calques in Spanish which have lost most of their original English meanings:

Dead cat bounce: *Salto/rebote del gato muerto* (7,800 internet results)

Liar Loans - *Pr estamos mentirosos/engañosos* (990 internet results)

Angel investor - *Ángel inversor* (108,000 results)

Ninja Loans - *Pr estamos Ninja* (1,630 results). In this particular example, the meaning of the English acronym *NoIncomeNoJobsnoAssets* is completely lost.

It seems clear that the common Spanish procedures employed in the translation of English financial neonyms with a humorous twist are not, in our opinion, perhaps the most appropriate, especially when they are not present in the Spanish financial practice and consequently lack suitable equivalents. It should be necessary to go beyond the linguistic level and address their translation into Spanish with the aid of cognitive and pragmatic tools, that is, to deepen their meaning and use in order to find more appropriate translating solutions even if that would imply small changes in their semantic meanings. The important thing, in our opinion, is to achieve that source and target terms may share equivalent

meanings.

From the Spanish translators' perspective, the rendering of humorous financial English terms and expressions into Spanish could be an easy task in theory, especially when such terms or expressions have unique and univocal meanings and show similar conceptual, linguistic and cultural equivalences. However, it might also become an almost fiendish semantic game when such terms include cultural twists, puns, colloquialisms or metaphors which Spanish lacks. In some cases, cultural references intended to favor meaning disambiguation in English may, paradoxically, cloud the Spanish translators' job and make it much more complex and difficult.

Let us illustrate this point with two examples of financial English metaphors in order to analyze likely translation alternatives in Spanish:

a) The *bear* has *bad breath*

In the first example, English-speaking readers may find these two metaphors easy to understand if they are familiar with this specialized financial phraseology. However, they may be incomprehensible for Spanish-speaking readers ignorant or little accustomed to English financial jargon. Anglo-Saxon readers are cognitively stimulated by the two metaphors included in the statement: *bear* and *bad breath*. Their purpose is to facilitate the activation of certain specific inferential mechanisms that may allow them to interpret their metaphorical-humorous content in strictly financial terms. Logically, as we said above, these inferences will be reached depending on the specialized knowledge English-speaking readers have on this field:

[1] Bear = pessimistic market or investor, seller, speculator, etc.

[2] Bad breath = unfavorable speculative tendency; price drop, excess sales, etc. [It would trigger off adverse financial inferences caused by the connotative meaning of "bad breath"] which metaphorically refers to negative financial behavior.

Once the inferential process has been completed, source language recipients can achieve the utterance's precise financial meaning which includes a quasi-literal sense plus a metaphorical-humorous one:

The *bear* has *bad breath*

[3] Literal (which contains some common stock market metaphors) = The *bear* has *bad breath* (that is, the selling stock market stinks)

[4] Financial (which translates these metaphors into financial terms). The pessimism of the markets/investors increases the sale (price drop) of securities.

Ideally, the Spanish translation should reproduce similarly the cognitive, metaphorical, semantic and humorous content of the English original. However, this is often a difficult if not an impossible task. That may be the price to pay on most similar occasions. Translators must weigh the pros and cons of adopting a translation decision or another. They could have said, for example:

"Los mercados apestan (Markets stink)"

The question is if this translation would meet the same or equivalent meanings included in the English original. This is the moment when translators have to take thoughtful and pondered decisions. In our

view, the Spanish translation would go far beyond the original English meaning by including a series of presuppositions and implicatures that exceed the strict scope of the English metaphor. This is intended for a particular context in the Stock Market activity and could furthermore add ethical or moral implications that are not necessarily present in the English original.

In our opinion, in this and in other similar examples, translators should try to elaborate, if possible, similar target language metaphors which included both their linguistic forms and their connoted meanings. These would allow target readers activate equivalent meaning inferences. In this way, they could frame appropriate cognitive and linguistic responses capable of decoding the English metaphor's financial contents correctly. We reckon this a difficult task since, it implies, on the one hand, having an extensive experience and knowledge of both finance and this specialized language and, on the other hand, having enough time to research alternative linguistic solutions, all of which seem utopic in the world of professional translation.

The second example addresses the following "humorous" financial metaphor in English (although it may seem a black humor example):

2) How High Can a *Dead Cat Bounce*?

Regarding the meaning of the expression *Dead Cat Bounce*, it appeared for the first time in 1985 applied to a slight recovery of Asian markets after a long period of falls.

The sources consulted agree that it is based on the following comparison: just as a dead cat would bounce if it falls or is thrown from a sufficient height, stock prices at a time of serious crisis or lethargy could also rise slightly to fall again (Smith, G. 1995). Consequently, the likely Spanish translations vary from literal ones: *salto de gato*; *rebote del gato muerto*, *salto del gato muerto* to more precise financial renderings: *recuperación temporal* (temporary recovery); *rebote por inercia* (bounce by inertia); *aumento rápido y temporal en el precio de una acción tras una caída muy pronunciada* (rapid and temporary increase in the price of a share after a very sharp fall); *ligero repunte en un mercado bajista* (slight rebound in a bear market), among others in the same guise.

The options presented to translators seem to be two: choose between (1) a direct or literal translation of the metaphor or (2) offer a financial explanation of its meaning in Spanish.

In the first case we would have: *¿A qué altura puede rebotar un gato muerto?* (How high can a dead cat bounce?)

In the second case: *¿Cuánto durar á/subir á ese rebote por inercia/esa recuperación temporal/ese ligero repunte?* (How long/high would that temporary recovery/that slight rebound by inertia be/last?)

If we chose the first solution, the Spanish reader, being a novice in financial jargon, would possibly ignore any financial connotation and opt for the literal meaning expressed above unless s/he was offered a more specialized context.

The financial translator, however, being aware of the Spanish readers' shortcomings in stock market English jargon, would be careful not to translate the English sentence literally (option a): *¿A qué altura puede rebotar un gato muerto?* and would try to transfer it taking into consideration its

technical-financial significance, as we can see in option (b): *¿Cuánto subirá/durará ese rebote por inercia/esa recuperación temporal/ese ligero repunte?* (How long will that rebound/recovery last).

In this second option, the inevitable result would be the loss of its metaphorical meaning, its humoristic angle (although black, in this case) capable of stimulating a more intense cognitive response in source language readers. We face then an issue that goes beyond the exclusively linguistic field and enters a cognitive-pragmatic and cultural dimension. This dimension implies taking important decisions that require translators, when addressing this kind of metaphoric uses, a sufficient knowledge not only of the subject but also of certain extra linguistic aspects necessary to configure a correct target language outcome.

It goes without saying that this polyhedral perspective in English implies the translators' acknowledgment of different levels of formality which range from scrupulously technical and conceptual decisions to more colloquial and practical ones. The final translation will, therefore, be intended either for target language specialists in the field or for less expert users and even laypersons.

Two different philosophies or manners of approaching financial language seem to confront both linguistically and pragmatically. In the case of English, the use of humor has a double purpose:

- a) On the one hand, its use strengthens the feeling of belonging to the same professional group. This increases solidary bonds among its members;
- b) On the other hand, it provides a pedagogical component to semi-expert and lay recipients with the aim of facilitating their understanding of some financial terms and techniques, often abstract and complex.

In Spanish, however, this second possibility is barely offered to users who are not expert or are untrained in finance while a certain terminological obscurantism is maintained. Humor is practically irrelevant in Spanish financial discourse. Consequently, the difficulties Spanish translators have to face when it comes to transfer this humorous-metaphorical load from English into Spanish are clear and culturally difficult to address and confront.

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