METAPHORICAL AND INTERLINGUAL TRANSLATION IN MOVING ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES ACROSS LANGUAGES

Abstract

Organizational scholars refer to translation as a metaphor in order to describe the transformation and movement of organizational practices across institutional contexts. However, they have paid relatively little attention to the challenges of moving organizational practices across language boundaries. In this conceptual paper, we theorize that when organizational practices move across contexts that differ not only in terms of institutions and cultures but also in terms of languages, translation becomes more than a metaphor; it turns into reverbalization of meaning in another language. We argue that the meeting of languages opens up a whole new arena for translator agency to unfold. Interlingual and metaphorical translation are two distinct but interrelated forms of translation that are mutually constitutive. We identify possible constellations between interlingual and metaphorical translation and illustrate agentic translation with published case examples. We also propose that interlingual translation is a key resource in the discursive constitution of multilingual organizations. This paper contributes to the stream of research in organization studies that has made translation a core aspect of its inquiry.

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Introduction

For over three decades, scholars have been interested in how organizational practices move between different societies and institutional contexts (Zilber, 2006). These questions have been approached using several different concepts, including recontextualization (Meyer, 2014), hybridization and bricolage (Frenkel, 2009), transfer (Kostova, 1999) and translation (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996). Increasingly, scholars have opted for the concept of translation as the metaphor to denote that the movement of organizational practices across institutional contexts involves their transformation and adaptation in the receiving context (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996).

Despite the origins of the 'translation metaphor' in linguistics (Zilber, 2006) and the broader linguistic turn in organizational institutionalism over the past decade (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000), the translation approach has paid relatively little attention to the challenges of moving practices across language boundaries. Yet, given the interest of organizational scholars in the constitution of organizations through language and communication (Cooren, Taylor, & van Every, 2006; Schoeneborn, Kuhn, & Kärreman, 2019) and the role of meanings, labeling and vocabularies in institutional processes (Becker-Ritterspach, Saka-Helmhout, & Hotho, 2010; Zilber, 2006), there is considerable potential in shedding light on the interplay between metaphorical and interlingual translation.

In this conceptual paper, we argue that when organizational practices move across contexts that differ not only in terms of institutions and cultures but also in terms of languages, translation becomes more than a metaphor – it turns into reverbalization of meaning in another language, opening up a whole new arena for translator agency to unfold. The meeting of

languages provides local actors with a space to actively influence the ways in which incoming organizational practices are expressed. These translators occupy particular organizational positions and may have specific organizational agendas and political purposes when translating and executing incoming organizational practices. Interlingual and metaphorical translation processes are often at play simultaneously, either working in the same direction or sometimes contradicting and complicating one another. Interlingual translation solutions can also be used as evidence of metaphorical translation, because they leave a 'paper trail' of translation strategies used by the translators and editors of incoming practices. Thus, understanding the interplay between metaphorical and interlingual translation can illuminate the role of translator agency in the discursive constitution of multilingual organizations.

Our theoretical arguments integrate insights from organization studies, particularly new institutional thinking, and the field of translation studies. New institutional scholars have advanced conceptualizations of translation as change and movement and stressed its constitutive character in organizations and institutional fields. While translation studies explicitly deal with interlingual translation and not with metaphorical translation, it provides relevant concepts for better understanding both forms of translation. Yet, so far there are no accounts that draw together interlingual and metaphorical translation as mutually constitutive processes. By integrating insights from translation studies, we can explain how organizational practices change in translation, bring into light language resources of translators, as well as the power positions and hierarchies created by these resources, and render the consequences of multilingualism in organizations visible.

We begin with an introduction to the translation approach in organization studies which is characterized by a metaphorical view of translation. We then turn to the field of translation studies in order to contrast and compare metaphorical translation with interlingual translation. We discuss the relationship between these two forms of translation and provide a typology of

constellations between them. Our discussion focuses on one type, namely agentic translation, in which both forms of translation are intensely present. This type is potentially the most disruptive or productive in terms of creating change to organizational practices, and it is therefore the one that organizational researchers need to become aware of. Through an analysis of three published examples, we identify how interlingual translation creates spaces and sets trajectories for metaphorical translation. The discussion positions our contribution in organization studies and provides suggestions for future research. While we acknowledge the growing interest in multimodality (Höllerer, Daudigeos, & Jancsary, 2018; Jancsary, Meyer, Höllerer, & Boxenbaum, 2017) and intersemiotic translation (e.g. from verbal to visual or vice versa, Jakobson, 2000), this paper focuses on the verbal mode of communication.

Metaphorical Translation in Organization Studies

Organization studies have developed a degree of sensitivity to the notion of translation. Different schools of thought increasingly use translation to understand the movement and change of practices, ideas, objects and people when transported from their point of origin to 'elsewhere' (Wæraas & Agger Nielsen, 2016), but in this paper we focus on organizational practices for the sake of clarity. There are different strands in organization research that use translation metaphorically to refer to transformation, change and transference of human and material resources across organizations, institutional fields and countries such as Scandinavian institutionalism (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005) and glocalization (Drori, Höllerer, & Walgenbach, 2014) that we will turn to next.

A significant contribution was made by Scandinavian institutionalism[1] (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996, 2005), a school of thought inspired by actor network theory[2] (Callon, 1986; Latour, 1986). Boxenbaum and Strandgaard Pedersen (2009, pp. 190–191) define translation as the 'modification that a practice or an idea undergoes when it is implemented in a new

organizational context'. By scrutinizing processes of reception in the new local context, Scandinavian intuitionalists have provided explanations of why practices remain distinct rather than become isomorphic and standardized (Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2009). Furthermore, the agency of local actors who receive and spread organizational practices (Boxenbaum, 2006; Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996, 2005) contributes to the heterogeneity of these practices. Sahlin-Andersson (1996) describes local actors as editors, whose editorial decisions unfold in contexts where the arrival of something 'new' affords them with a space for agency. Local actors include agents such as consultants, experts (Frenkel, 2009), academics (Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall, 2002), local managers and leaders (Whittle, Suhomlinova, & Mueller, 2010), as well as lower-level organizational members (Zilber, 2002).

A school of thought that pays explicit attention to the cross-border travel of practices is glocalization (Drori et al., 2014). Scholars in this tradition see boundaries as transgressing, fluid and even merging, and local agents as 'glocalizers' who marshal available discursive resources to influence the reception or fusion process 'across time and space' (Drori et al., 2014, p. 92). Glocalization researchers argue that agents are 'positioned at junctions of translation' (Drori et al., 2014, p. 92) and are therefore able to overcome meaning boundaries. Meanings 'cannot be transported "wholesale" from one cultural context to another', because they 'have to pass through a powerful cultural filter' and 'can thus only spread if they resonate within this context' (Meyer, 2014, p. 81). Local agents do important recontextualisation work through which 'processes of translation and amalgamation among entities' on the global-local scale are enacted (Drori et al., 2014, p. 90). As with Scandinavian institutionalism, the literature on glocalization stresses the importance of language, meaning and translation, but does not explicitly concern itself with interlingual translation.

However, a handful of studies provide at least a glimpse into the crossing of language boundaries and the role of English in understanding neo-colonial power relations (Dar, 2018),

the formation of identities as 'Anglophones' (Boussebaa & Brown, 2017) and changes in vocabularies. For example, Geppert (2003, p. 322) carried out a comparative analysis of vocabularies within global manufacturing discourse and noted the different meanings of the term 'engineer' as a profession in Germany versus the UK. Meyer and Höllerer (2010) found that the concept of shareholder value changed when it moved from an Anglo-Saxon context to Austria. The German translation of the English term was more ambiguously framed than the original, accentuating the local tradition of a strong stakeholder approach to governance. Becker-Ritterspach et al. (2010) studied a change initiative labeled 'Star Trek' in a German subsidiary. They reported translation and relabeling of this initiative from 'Star Trek' to 'nothing is impossible' in German (nichts ist unmöglich) in order to gain the cooperation of the local workforce. Within these comparative pieces some of the identified discursive acts involve interlingual translation in order to create a shared vocabulary that resonates sufficiently in the respective local setting.

In general, although the field of organization studies engages deeply with language, meaning and processes of sense-making and sense-giving, it is primarily monolingual in its orientation. Even studies likely to have been conducted in multilingual settings (e.g. Gammelgaard, Haakonsson, & Just, 2019; Tyllström, 2019) do not give an account of interlingual translation and consequently, some of the translation work remains hidden. In order to make it more visible, we now turn to the field of translation studies, the discipline that deals with interlingual translation.

Interlingual Translation in Translation Studies

As discussed above, the relationship between the notion of translation and actual interlingual processing of written or oral texts is rarely taken under scrutiny in organization studies. Still, the word translation is borrowed – or translated – from its interlingual meaning, and it therefore

makes sense to assume that these two forms of translation are related (see also Røvik, 2016). Indeed, in the transfer of practices across linguistic boundaries, the two forms of translation, the metaphorical and the interlingual, are intertwined and co-exist in various combinations. In this section, we analytically separate interlingual translation from its metaphorical 'cousin' and bring it under scrutiny in its own right.

The field of translation studies recognises the multiplicity of semiotic systems and translations between them. Jakobson (2000) distinguishes between intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic translation (e.g. translating across semiotic systems from verbal to visual or vice versa), but in its prototypical sense translation is seen to operate between two natural language systems. Most research in translation studies deals with the transfer of meaning between spoken natural languages in either written (translation) or spoken (interpretation) form. While the lay understanding is often mechanistic, focusing on mapping how individual *words* are expressed in the other language, interlingual translation scholarship and practice emphasize the importance and the complexity of carrying intended *meanings* across. This may sometimes necessitate that the translator deviates from word-level equivalence, reorganizes the macro-structure of argumentation and uses strategies and techniques such as making implicit information explicit, adding explanations, adapting and omitting elements (see e.g. Chesterman, 2016, pp. 104–109). Because the translated text will enter a new cultural, political and social context, a non-adapted literal re-rendering, while being a faithful translation on the level of words, may fail miserably at the level of meaning. Hence, the most relevant unit of analysis in translation studies is rarely individual terms or words but entire texts, as details need to be assessed in their discursive context.

Because of this constant strategic processing and the necessity of adaptive transformations, interlingual translation is best understood as decision-making (Levý, 1967; Pym, 2015). It is the task of the translator to assess the target context and to adapt and rewrite the translation to

meet the cultural expectations and social reality of the target audience (Lefevere, 1992). This kind of target-orientedness (Toury, 2012) differentiates translation studies from a purely linguistic analysis, as such contextualization brings social and cultural elements into the equation and introduces issues such as power dynamics and status hierarchies (see e.g. Strowe, 2013). The power of translation is borne of this decision-making nature of the task, and it plays out at the level of text, in the closures of interpretation brought about by the necessity to finalize language choices. In comparison, a typical metaphorical translation process is interpretively more open-ended and allows for on-going processual development.

Decision-making also highlights the translator's agency and space for active engagement in adaptively reshaping the 'message-carrier' (i.e., the translated text) to fit the intended purpose, or 'skopos,' of the translation process (Holz-Mänttäri, 1984; Vermeer, 1996). The skopos, in translation studies, is understood to be the intended purpose of the commissioner of the translation, and the task of the *professional* translator is seen to use their agency to produce an optimal text to forward that aim. In recent literature, more attention has been put to *non-professional* modes and contexts of translating and interpreting, and some scholars have further differentiated between activities entirely outside the professional realm (volunteer work, hobbies etc.) and *paraprofessional* translation and interpreting that professionals of other fields engage in as part of their daily work (Koskela, Koskinen, & Pilke, 2017; Tuylenev, 2014). For volunteer and paraprofessional translators, the skopos of the translation is often likely to be much more personal than for professional translators rendering their services to clients, and the former can therefore be expected to take on more agentic roles.

To gain an understanding of the decision-making process inherent in translating and of translators' agentic activities, comparative textual analysis is needed. In translation studies, comparisons between source texts and target texts is one standard method of research, but it does not foreground sameness over difference. Rather, the dominant view has been to observe

and analyze the deviations from sameness between the texts, as these are seen to reveal relevant aspects of the cultural relations concerned.

One topic often highlighted in translation studies literature is the notion of invisibility (Venuti, 1995). Translation tends to be perceived by other actors as a mechanistic and simplified activity, and the element of strategic decision-making is often overlooked, rendering the translators unobserved. The resulting invisibility adds to their agentic power by removing constrains of having to explain, justify or account for their decisions. This, together with language skills that other participants do not necessarily possess, allows translators a lot of hidden power and room for independent reshaping of meaning. Because of this hidden power, professional translators and interpreters have formulated professional ethics and codes of practice which emphasise their neutrality and impartiality (Baixauli-Olmos, 2017), as well as trust (Chesterman, 2016), and loyalty (Nord, 1991).

For our purposes of explaining the interplay between interlingual translation and metaphorical translation, three key points can be distilled from the above. First, we draw on the core concept of *skopos*, which allows us to appreciate the purposeful nature of translation practice. Decision-making over best translation strategies and techniques is dependent on what the translation aims to achieve and what kind of an organizational change it is part of. Second, in metaphorical translation scenarios we often encounter paraprofessional interlingual translators who engage in translation activities alongside their recognized organizational role and are therefore more extensively embedded in the organizational reality than translation professionals. Because of their double role, these *agentic translators* are more likely to be willing to use their agency in both interlingual and metaphorical translation. In contrast, professional translators are less likely to have their own agendas and to actively aim to shape the metaphorical translation through their interlingual translation decisions. Third, we deal with the issue of *translator (in)visibility*. A mechanistic understanding of translation may result in a

failure to recognize the agentic role of the translator because it does not support the idea of translators' active involvement in meaning-making. Yet, interlingual translators often have hidden power and agency to either promote or to undermine the skopoi of other communicating partners, which we intend to make visible in this paper.

Similarities and Differences between Metaphorical and Interlingual Translation

Table 1 charts the similarities and differences between metaphorical translation in organization studies and interlingual translation in translation studies.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

As Table 1 shows, the two forms of translation share many similarities but they also have significant differences. A core similarity is that we are looking at two meaning-making processes that are fundamentally language- and text-based. However, metaphorical translation can also operate on level of materializations of practices or ideas, which remains outside the scope of this paper. Both metaphorical and interlingual translation are concerned with taking something that exists already from the context where it was first conceived of to another, and making it fit in its new environment. To achieve this, purposeful adaptations are made. In both forms of translation, the relationship between the original and its translation is based on relevant similarity rather than actual sameness in the sense of the two being fully identical (Chesterman, 1996).

As Table 1 indicates, a significant difference concerns the role and identity of the person doing the translating: the field of translation studies predominantly assumes a professional translator, doing commissioned work to a client and functioning as the expert of intercultural communication (Holz-Mänttäri, 1984). In contrast, the metaphorical translation work is

conducted by consultants, managers, and other members of the organization who are fully embedded in the translation process and who often also engage in interlingual translation.

In contrast to hired professional translators, these paraprofessional translators have a more complex organizational role. In addition to the skopos provided by the commissioning agent at headquarters or elsewhere, they have their own local agendas, and they often have high levels of agency and a lot of visibility to others (for a comparative case study of professional vs paraprofessional translation of a business studies text book see Buzelin, 2014). The degree of freedom in deviating from their 'source' practice may vary depending on their position in the organizational hierarchy, the prestige of the sending organization and the practice being transferred, as the case analysis after the next section will show. After detailing the similarities and differences between metaphorical and interlingual translation we shall bring them together by providing a typology of constellations between them.

Relationship between Metaphorical and Interlingual Translation

The focus of this paper is on multilingual contexts in which metaphorical and interlingual translation are intertwined and mutually constitutive. We do not concern ourselves with monolingual settings where metaphorical translation can exist by itself (e.g. Cassell & Lee, 2017). Thus, in multilingual contexts, the combination of metaphorical and interlingual translation produces four prototypical, idealized types of constellations, with high or low degrees of either form of translation, depending on the context and the agents involved.

Figure 1 presents this typology of metaphorical and interlingual translation in a two-by-two matrix. The x-axis relates to the degree of metaphorical translation and the y-axis captures the degree of interlingual translation. Each cell of the matrix represents a particular type of translation for analytical purposes. In what follows, we first define each type of translation work and illustrate it with examples from selected published work.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Type 1: Automated translation (high degree of interlingual translation, low degree of metaphorical translation)

As Figure 1 shows, it is possible to have a situation with a high level of interlingual translation, but with very little or no metaphorical translation. An extreme contemporary case is machine translation, which allows for endless translations between various languages (i.e., interlingual translation) but the machine does not have any agency or understanding of the receiving context to consciously adapt the translated text to the local setting (i.e., metaphorical translation). The complete lack of fitting for skopos or local context makes it a risky choice in terms of successful implementation, potentially leading to unintended consequences.

Employees in organizations routinely execute interlingual translation in their day-to-day operations, when translation work has become standard practice and follows established textual patterns and accepted terminology. This routine work is often conducted by professional translators, either employed by the company or outsourced as it often requires a higher degree of technical expertise.

Type 2: Borrowing (high degree of metaphorical translation, low degree of interlingual translation)

Sometimes practices that undergo metaphorical translation into a new locale resist interlingual translation, leading to borrowing of foreign terms, expressions and labels in their original form (Westney & Piekkari, 2019). This is related to an attitude of respecting or even flaunting the foreignness of the foreign terms, texts and practices such as the Japanese 'kaizen' (continuous improvement) and 'gebba-kai' processes (quality circles adopted by engineers, Saka, 2004, p.

218). The Japanese example is a case in point due to its radically different and unfamiliar culture, language, and social structure. Yet, translators have to engage in considerable metaphorical translation to make the Japanese practices accessible and legitimate for receiving audiences (Westney & Piekkari, 2019). In translation studies such borrowing of foreign terms is called 'foreignization' and contrasted with 'domestication' which refers to local adaptation (Paloposki, 2011; Venuti, 1995).

Type 3: Parallel practice (low degree of metaphorical translation, low degree of interlingual translation)

As Figure 1 shows, there are situations in which both interlingual and metaphorical translation are low. For example, members of the same multilingual organization may operate in and between several languages on a daily basis without the need for interlingual translation. This is termed parallel multilingual practice, i.e., contact and flow of information between groups who share the same linguistic resources. Some multinational corporations (MNCs) may also be categorized as multinational but not as multilingual organizations (Piekkari & Westney, 2017) because they remain within a shared linguistic space (e.g. Spanish MNCs serving major parts of South-America in Spanish). While some local adaptation still takes place in both forms of translation (*intra*lingual translation between different varieties of Spanish and adaptations to cultural differences), linguistic, cultural and institutional similarity enables fairly smooth transfers and assists sense-making across borders. However, previous research indicates that the success of parallel practice may be superficial, and non-translation can put native speakers at an advantage (Neeley, 2017).

Type 4: Agentic translation (high degree of metaphorical translation, high degree of interlingual translation)

Type 4 is theoretically the most interesting to the community of organization scholars because in this type the two forms of translation are simultaneously intensively present (see Figure 1). It is potentially the most disruptive or productive in terms of changing organisational practices. These are cases where a radically novel foreign practice is being moved across a linguistic boundary to a new context that significantly differs from the original context (i.e., metaphorical translation is required) and where participants have very different linguistic resources (i.e., interlingual translation is required). These cases call for extensive local adaptation of meaning as it needs to be recontextualized in the receiving location to render the translation as familiar as possible for the receivers and creating an equivalent effect (Nida, 1964), or optimal functionality from the viewpoint of the skopos of the commissioning party has to be achieved (Vermeer, 1996). In these cases the translator creates intelligibility of a new practice at the receiving location both on textual and practice level. The translation process allows for the accommodation of new insights, but it also enables manipulation of meaning and new trajectories for metaphorical translation as we will illustrate in the following section.

Interplay between Metaphorical and Interlingual Translation in Three Published Cases

We now turn to three previously published empirical studies that engage with both metaphorical and interlingual translation in organizational contexts to illustrate our theoretical points. These examples were selected because they document the translation work of paraprofessional translators who pull in new organizational practices from outside or receive them from corporate headquarters. In terms of our typology presented earlier, the three cases represent Type 4 – agentic translation – in which both forms of translation are intensely present (see Figure 1). Not many articles document both interlingual and metaphorical translation in

the same study and therefore these three cases provide an opportunity to comment on the dynamics and complexities between these two forms of translation as they unfold in contexts of use.

In the following, we offer a reading of the three published articles from the viewpoint of the interplay between interlingual and metaphorical translation. The two first cases portray how creative and accommodating interlingual translation set particular trajectories for metaphorical translation to unfold in line with the skopos of the commissioning agents. The third case documents a situation in which interlingual translation is used to set a trajectory for metaphorical translation which is in line with the skopos of the local subsidiary agent but contradicts the skopos of the global agent at corporate headquarters. Table 2 compares agentic translation across the three cases.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Case 1: Alignment between creative interlingual translation and organizational translation

The study by Tietze, Tansley and Helienek (2017) is set in a Slovak company in a period of internationalization and modernization. The article analyses the translation task of an external consultant as the paraprofessional translator, who is commissioned by the managing director of the Slovak company to translate English language materials about talent management. The translation task of the consultant was not planned, but since he was appalled by the quality of the translation provided by a professional translation agency, he engages in it.

The consultant, who is fluent in both Slovak and English, has a close working relationship with the managing director and therefore shares the managing director's intent to introduce talent management as a means to modernise the mind-set of the leadership team. More

importantly, he has lived through the transformation of the Slovak Republic and shares the collective memory of the communist regime as well as the suspicion against the influx of Western practices.

The study is located in what the authors conceptualise as a situation of 'discursive void', where neither sufficient English language skills nor relevant vocabulary about the incoming practice are available to the target audience to make sense of the incoming practice. For example, terms such as 'equitable assessment criteria' and 'war for talent' do not exist in the Slovak language (Tietze et al., 2017, p. 163). Consequently, the paraprofessional translator becomes quite alarmed about the 'deficiency' of the Slovak language in conveying the meaning of talent management and engages in creative interlingual translation or transcreation (Pedersen, 2014). He omits large sections of the English language material, which he finds irrelevant or over-complicated, and also invents examples about how to use talent management practices in order to convince his audience about its legitimacy. The consultant also translates 'through the prism of communism' in order to render this new organizational practice locally meaningful (Tietze et al., 2017, p. 165). In this way, creative translation becomes the platform and prerequisite for metaphorical translation. In other words, the translator's skopos is aligned with that of the most powerful stakeholder – the managing director – so that interlingual translation decisions pave the way for metaphorical translation.

Thus, Tietze et al. (2017) offer a socio-cultural analysis of the translation process but without any direct involvement with translation studies. What, then, could we gain from a more interdisciplinary approach? First, we believe that a translation studies perspective would enhance the use of textual data, providing a methodology for a fine-grained analysis of shifts and changes in meaning. Insights from translation studies would allow researchers to contrast and compare textual data with interview data. Second, it would extend the observational chain to the full length of the translation event. In the case of Tietze et al., the researchers could have

begun from the failed agency of professional translators and followed the texts all the way to the end users to verify whether the skopoi of the senders and translators were accepted and accommodated by the recipients, or whether they had their own agendas and understandings. The other two examples engage more directly with insights from translation studies.

Case 2: Alignment between accommodating interlingual translation and organizational translation

The second case is based on two sister papers by Ciuk and James (2015) and Ciuk, James and Slíwa (2018) that draw on a rich data of personal interviews, company documents and formal observations of a 6-hour long translation session collected in Pharmacia, a US-based pharmaceutical company. The two papers provide a fine-grained analysis of how 'a group of managers in a Polish subsidiary of a US company…translate centrally promulgated corporate values into the local language and context' (Ciuk & James, 2015, p. 566). The US headquarters of Pharmacia decides to promote its official corporate values globally and subsidiary managers are given considerable discretion to implement the corporate project locally. Despite this, many subsidiary managers 'did not feel they had the option to disregard to any great extent the corporate perspective' (Ciuk & James, 2015, p. 573).

The corporate values of care, innovation, pioneering, and achieving reflect North American views. While some of them have equivalent terms and meanings in Polish, the inappropriate or undesirable connotations of literal translation rule out any equivalence of meanings to enable a smooth and easy translation process. The local paraprofessional translators debate the 'marked discrepancies between the official definitions of the corporate values and their preferred meanings of these values' (Ciuk & James, 2015, p. 572), but 'staying faithful' to the original source text was not their main concern. The translators' choices reflect local priorities

and context, but also the mounting pressure from Pharmacia's headquarters to improve the financial performance of the Polish subsidiary.

The more recent one of these two papers is, as far as we know, the only empirical analysis of interlingual translation in an MNC in organization studies that integrates translation studies as a means to investigate the reception of process. It draws on the usability of the skopos concept in understanding interlingual translation as a tool for power. The findings of the two papers show how and why the source text generated by headquarters undergoes considerable adaptation and change. The translators consciously redesign 'the values in a way which would facilitate a positive reception' by subsidiary employees, trigger desirable attitudinal and behavioural changes among them and ultimately improve subsidiary performance (Ciuk & James, 2015, p. 573). This accommodating approach to interlingual translation allows the subsidiary managers to comply with the headquarters' strategic objective precisely because they took the agency to rethink the corporate values in the Polish context.

Thus, in this case, the team-based interlingual translation supports the metaphorical translation process. To ensure acceptance of the new corporate values at the local level, the translators actively deviate from the literal meaning of the source text despite being aware of the intended meaning inscribed by headquarters. They let their metaphorical translations of values inform their interlingual solutions. Had they strictly engaged in literal translation the chances of the new corporate values being positively received would have been considerably reduced. The Polish subsidiary managers, who occupy the dual role of the translator and implementer of new corporate values, use interlingual translation strategically to advance their own and the headquarters' goals. In this regard, the meeting of languages serves as a hidden arena for reinforcing metaphorical translation.

Case 3: Misalignment between resistant interlingual translation and metaphorical

translation

The study by Logemann and Piekkari (2015) plays out in a European multinational that is facing strategic change and its French subsidiary. The new strategic direction of the company towards global alignment challenges the position of 'highly autonomous foreign subsidiaries' (Logemann & Piekkari, 2015, p. 37).

Unprecedented in company history, the new CEO sends a letter to all employees – in English, the common corporate language – about the direction and strategic priorities of the firm. The CEO intended that the English text would remain untranslated to enhance its unifying effect across all subsidiaries. However, because most of the French subsidiary employees have limited proficiency in English, the long-standing general manager decides to translate the CEO's letter into French. In the course of the translation work, however, he locally adapts the CEO's message and 'smuggles in' deviating meaning by privileging local understanding over the corporate headquarters' intent in his footnotes. This suggests that his skopos was to allow for more discretionary decisions and room to manoeuvre at the local level. These acts of interlingual translation show resistance towards the new practice of communicating the corporate strategy to the entire workforce, preventing the CEO's 'effort to create a shared terminology to support global alignment' (Logemann & Piekkari, 2015, p. 42).

Thus, in this case the practice of communicating the new strategic direction of the company to the entire workforce (rather than the strategy itself) called for extensive metaphorical translation and resistant interlingual translation as Table 2 shows. This study points to the invisibility of interlingual translation, which takes place under the radar of corporate headquarters. Since French was hardly spoken at corporate headquarters and few subsidiary employees spoke English, 'much of this kind of translation behavior is hidden from headquarters and beyond its control' (Logemann & Piekkari, 2015, p. 42). This strengthened

the translator's agency as he did not have to account for his decisions. Borrowing a typology of textual, paratextual and intertextual (in)visibility used in translation studies (Koskinen, 2000) and looking into the translated text, its textual framing as well as the general transparency of translation practices would allow us to see further complexities in translator agency: the general manager hid the agentic translatorial activities on textual level but highlighted translator agency by using footnotes. The lack of transparency and structuring of translation practices at organizational level again contributed to added invisibility.

In sum, in all three above cases interlingual and metaphorical translation interact, because new organizational practices are moved from one institutional, cultural and language environment to another. The three cases share an important boundary condition: they are all situated in periods of change during which a lexical or semantic register is not available in the target language yet and meanings are fluid. Translators have a window of opportunity to wield their agency to instigate change or to challenge dominant logics. Over time, as new vocabularies and practices become rooted in the target context, the space for translators' agency may diminish. The cases also demonstrate that literal deviations from the original text *per se* do not necessarily undermine metaphorical translation; on the contrary, in two of the cases interlingual translation supports metaphorical translation. From a methodological perspective, interlingual translation provides concrete empirical evidence of how organizational practices transform as they travel and how various language versions differ. Thus, in all examples interlingual and metaphorical translation are closely intertwined, shaping and influencing each other. Interlingual translation can be seen to punctuate metaphorical translation by bringing closure to meaning-making, defining important junctures and setting new directions for subsequent translation processes – a point we will return to in the next section.

Discussion

This conceptual paper contributes to the translation approach in organizational studies which engages with language, texts and meaning but not with interlingual translation. We identify a new group of agents, the paraprofessional translators, whose translation work is significant in the moving of organizational practices across languages. The meeting of languages provides local translators with a whole new space – 'an undercover arena'[3] – to actively influence the ways in which incoming organizational practices are received and changed.

Our discussion has shown that interlingual and metaphorical translation are two distinct but interrelated forms of translation which are mutually constitutive in multilingual contexts. Our comparison of interlingual and metaphorical translation suggests that both forms of translation are fundamentally concerned with language- and text-based processes. However, in translation studies, interlingual translation is largely considered an invisible activity undertaken primarily by professional translators, sometimes also by paraprofessional translators. Both metaphorical and interlingual translation is undertaken by paraprofessional translators – managers, employees and consultants working for the organization – who are more visible on the organizational scene than professional translators although their translation work tends to remain hidden from the purview of top management. Future research could draw on translation studies and conceptualize multilingual workplaces as 'translatorial spaces' (Koskinen, 2020, p. 2), which include both metaphorical and interlingual translation as agentic acts.

Translators' agency and skopos

Our analysis showed how interlingual translation is used strategically to shape the direction and impact of metaphorical translation. In doing so, the paraprofessional translators promoted or undermined the intentions of other communicating partners in the organization. Thus, interlingual translation became a platform and prerequisite for metaphorical translation – or a

hidden arena for resisting a new incoming organizational practice. In this regard interlingual translation is an important discursive resource used by translators to achieve their skopos in multilingual contexts.

Compared to paraprofessional translators, who operate primarily on the level of the receiving organizations as our examples showed, professional translators often act as field-spanning agents. Within translation studies, over the past thirty years, a wealth of case studies of interpreters, translators and translations in various cultural, social and institutional contexts has provided ample evidence of their often under-the-radar agentic role in forwarding or hindering particular agendas. Sometimes this role may be dramatic; more often the role is more subtle in pushing things in an agreeable direction or preventing culture bumps or political gaffes from happening (see e.g. Obst, 2010). Future research could address professional translators' decision-making (see Kettunen, 2016) and compare the agency and zone of influence between professional and paraprofessional translators across different multilingual settings.

It is worth noticing that even in seemingly translation-free environments, ongoing negotiations about language use do take place (Steyaert, Ostendorp, & Gaibrois, 2011) which may well include ad-hoc translation and interpreting. Also non-translation is a strategic choice that carries meaning and produces outcomes that may be crucially relevant for understanding the full picture (Duarte, 2000). The studies by Meyer and Höllerer (2010) and Becker-Ritterspach et al. (2010) include instances of interlingual translation, which express the local skopos and point to its role in metaphorical translation. In these examples, the incorporation of interlingual translation deepened the insights gained about adoption, change or rejection of incoming organizational practices. Future investigations into the borrowing of foreign terms and labels may explore the multifaceted reasons for why a foreignization, domestication or a

mixed approach was chosen, and the (un)intended consequences of these interlingual translation decisions (see also Westney & Piekkari, 2019).

Another exciting avenue for exploring agency and skopos in future research is offered by machine translation despite its seemingly non-intentional nature. Machine translation systems do not actually translate but select from existing data on the basis of man-made algorithms. Any bias in either these data or the algorithm will find its way to subsequent interlingual and metaphorical translations. For example, machine translation has been found to reinforce stereotyped gender roles, which has been corrected by reworking the algorithm to produce a more even distribution of gender pronouns (Stanovsky, Smith, & Zetlemoyer, 2019). Thus, even machine translation is not free of translator agency or skopos.

Performative functions of interlingual translation

The field of translation studies has established that interlingual translation is a decision-making process (Levý, 1967; Pym, 2015) which reaches closure through linguistic choices. This view, together with our case analysis, allows us to derive two important functions for interlingual translation, namely directing and concluding. In making decisions about interlingual translation, paraprofessional translators direct organizational translation onto particular paths, which reflect their skopos as well as the prevalent historical, political, and business contingencies at the time. These directing and concluding functions play out at the level of text, in the closures of interpretation brought about by the necessity to finalize language choices. In doing so, paraprofessional translators reduce and close down alternative interpretations or explanations. In this regard, interlingual translation provides a counterbalance to the interpretively more open-ended sense-making and sense-giving processes inherent in metaphorical translation, which allow for on-going developments (see Table 1). While deselection of alternative interpretations may be temporary, interlingual translation can be seen to influence the pace of the reception of an incoming practice.

Acknowledging the performative function of interlingual translation in moving organizational practices across language boundaries resonates with research about the communicative constitution of organizations (Cooren et al., 2006). Our discussion reveals the performative and agentic nature of paraprofessional translators who use interlingual translation to direct and conclude decision-making aligned with their skopos. How these particular acts are inscribed into the ongoing constitutions of multilingual organizations through communication, by whom and with which consequences is as yet poorly understood. Furthermore, Tietze et al. (2017) observe, in passing, the creative function of interlingual translation. Thus, beyond the directive and concluding functions, interlingual translation can potentially lead to innovation in organizations. Future research could uncover the various functions of interlingual translation within multilingual communicative acts.

Translation as a boundary object

Crossing language boundaries necessitates both metaphorical and interlingual translation. Metaphorical translation of practices often takes place at an ideational or mental level, but it can also operate on the level of materializations. One such locus for materialization is interlingual translation, as the negotiations of meaning and tailoring for local needs are inscribed in texts. Interlingual translation, in the many forms it takes in the quadrants of our typology, can therefore be seen as seen as a boundary object, that is, as 'arrangements that allow different groups to work together' (Star, 2010, p. 602). These arrangements of interlingual translation enable knowledge and information to be transferred, and they also create positive or negative emotional bonds towards both the content at hand and among the communication partners in question. Interlingual translations are also objects that demarcate the boundary: a change of language is a concrete signpost signaling difference and boundary-crossing. As translations are situated on the border between two social worlds, they can be

operationalized to construct in-groups and out-groups, inclusion and exclusion. As such, they can be analyzed as a repository of documented information on how the intersection of social worlds (Star & Griesemer, 1989) has been constructed and negotiated in a particular boundary crossing event.

Translation decisions as part of the global language order

In the global language order, English symbolically stands for the elusive 'global' and 'other' languages for the local. The three cases present pairings of English-Slovak, English-Polish and English-French. In the latter two cases, English is the language of headquarters and in the first case the Slovak language is described as 'deficient' *vis-à-vis* the English language. Piekkari and Tietze (2014) discuss the existence of language hierarchies in MNCs, where the language of the home country and the common corporate language (usually English) tend to be ranked over subsidiary languages. Translation decisions need to be seen within these language orders, because paraprofessional translators in peripheral subsidiaries enact language hierarchies through their dual role of translator-implementer. Thus, their use of interlingual and metaphorical translation is embedded in the context of hierarchies and center-periphery relationships (Üsdiken, 2010) beyond the organizational ones.

An avenue for future inquiry relates to the dominance of English and how it regulates identity formation of knowledge workers (Tietze & Dick, 2013). This is in line with the hegemonic expectations of using English, ultimately 'remaking' locals into Anglophones (Boussebaa & Brown, 2017). Dar (2018) provides a critical account of neo-colonial power relations that are sustained by the English language in India. She also comments on translation as a liberating 'space where hybridized and multilingual selfhoods' can be expressed and created (Dar, 2018, p. 581). In the meeting of the global and the local, interlingual translation makes the encounter possible and creates spaces for selfhood to be discovered. Future research

could unpack how the encounter between the global and the local unfolds by tracking the genesis of (hybrid) identities and meanings.

Our theoretical arguments contribute to glocalization research (Drori et al., 2014) which has not yet integrated interlingual translation into its conceptual repertoire. In the studies by Meyer and Höllerer (2010) and Becker-Ritterspach et al. (2010), the dominant, original concepts are in English which get translated. Interlingual translation is here used to 'smuggle in' some of the local meanings, values and perspectives in a cunning manner. Interlingual translation is therefore part of recontextualisation through which appropriation of meaning occurs.

Multimodal translation

In this paper, we have focused on metaphorical and interlingual translation as expressed in written texts. Yet, there is growing interest in the material and visual turn in organization studies which investigates how '[c]omplex ideas are defined, made sense of, transported and stabilized through words but also through visual and material artifacts' (Boxenbaum, Jones, Meyer, & Svejenova, 2018, p. 598). We agree that texts are '[m]ultimodal compositions of verbal text, images, and other visual artefacts' (Höllerer et al., 2018, p. 617; see also Jancsary et al., 2017). However, composite texts also travel across languages and therefore are subject to the same mechanisms that are at work in interlingual translation. While organization scholars are yet to discover how meaning is generated in the interplay between the verbal, the visual and the material in the translation processes, there is considerable knowledge about this in translation studies, offering ample opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation.

Methodological considerations

As we have shown, recent research in management and organization studies tracks the full process of translating a text from the viewpoint of the translators, thus combining textual analysis with sense-making processes surrounding it (Ciuk et al., 2018). However, actual text

analysis is not an easy methodological path to follow and rarely taken in organization studies for a number of reasons. First, it poses challenges for researchers and research teams as they may not possess the necessary language and translation competence. Second, there are no protocols nor traditions for articulating, discussing and reporting multilingual data sets in our field. For example, Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki and Welch (2014) provide evidence that in international business research the use of back translation – a method often considered dubious in translation studies and hardly ever used – is considered to be a fully sufficient way of dealing with interlingual translation issues. Yet, Xian (2008) argues that translating Chinese data into English was not a mechanical process of finding equivalent terms, but a core part of data analysis, which she found difficult to report within the conventional expectations ruling the production of written research accounts. Third, even much of the cross-cultural research is 'language-free', drawing on a simplified assumption of equivalence between languages (Usunier, 2011, p. 315; see Pym, 2010 for a more nuanced view in translation studies).

To sum up, the integration of interlingual translation into research designs can be based on different strategies, such as comparing the source and target texts (Ciuk et al., 2018); employing the notion of equivalence when interrogating translated data (Chidlow et al., 2014), theorizing acts of interlingual translation of data as part of data analysis (Xian, 2008), or engaging in a self-reflexive discussion of author subjectivity (Dar, 2018) as part of challenging neo-colonial positioning.

While we acknowledge that choice of words or texts is a decision-making process also in monolingual contexts, in multilingual contexts interlingual translation decisions are harder for the commissioner or the audience to scrutinize if they lack competence in the source or target language. When paraprofessional translators are the only ones proficient in the source and target languages (Logemann & Piekkari, 2015), their agency is enhanced. Our focus has been organizational level of analysis, but metaphorical translation also takes place on the level of

institutional fields (Boxenbaum & Battilana, 2005; Zilber, 2006) and nations (Tatli, Vassilopoulou, Ariss, & Özbilgin, 2012). It is equally accomplished by other actors than organizations such as management gurus, policy makers or the media (Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall, 2002). Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that the choices translators make in their work are influenced by the norms and practices of their profession.

Conclusion

The linguistic turn in organizational studies has advanced the understanding of organizations as being constituted through communication (Schoeneborn et al., 2019). Acts of metaphorical translation can be seen as part of this tradition, which to date has been based on the implicit assumption of monolingualism.

Our own fascination with shifts in meaning is rooted in the belief that texts need to be translated – both literally and metaphorically – in a multilingual world. The taken for granted use of English symbolizes the dominant 'global' in the relationships with localities and their languages and traditions. We align our perspective with a particular European tradition outlined in 2010 by Meyer and Boxenbaum, who published a paper in this journal as part of the 30th anniversary issue of *Organization Studies*. In this paper they reflect on the European-ness of organizational research in the context of globalization and the declining importance of territory and geographical boundaries for scholarly identity. Meyer and Boxenbaum (2010, p. 747) emphatically discuss the role of English as a potential (but not unavoidable) handicap for diversity of knowledge as manifested in the underrepresentation of non-English speaking European scholars and the limiting effects (and potential limits) on organizational research itself (p. 750). Meyer and Boxenbaum (2010, p. 752) lament that European scholars 'have devoted surprisingly little effort to defining European scholarly identity in proactive, positive terms'.

To conclude, we would argue that many fields of knowledge are 'imprisoned in English' (Wierzbicka, 2014), and so are organization studies. While we do not advocate the abandonment of English as a lingua franca in academic publishing, we advocate a degree of reflexivity when using it (Boussebaa & Brown, 2017; Dar, 2018). Some scholars (Steyaert & Janssens, 2013; Tietze, 2018) have already outlined intellectual agendas as well as practical steps how to include 'other languages and language difference' (Steyaert & Janssens, 2013, p. 131) into organization studies. These proposals reach deeply into the institutional structures of academia and require willingness to acknowledge and engage with a multilingual world and its inevitable consequence – translation. We believe that a translatorial turn in organization studies, not unlike the linguistic turn taken some decades ago, can provide inspiration for future inquiry and scholarship.

Notes

1. Scandinavian institutionalism initially developed its approach in relative isolation because research in this tradition was often published in Swedish or Danish (Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2009). The choice of Swedish or Danish as the language of publication meant that due to lack of translation, English-language audiences of management scholarship could not immediately access the knowledge generated by this group of researchers.

2. In a personal interview, Barbara Czarniawska emphasized the important role of the actor network theory for the development of Scandinavian institutionalism as a school of thought (August 9, 2018).

3. We are grateful to our anonymous reviewer for proposing this term.

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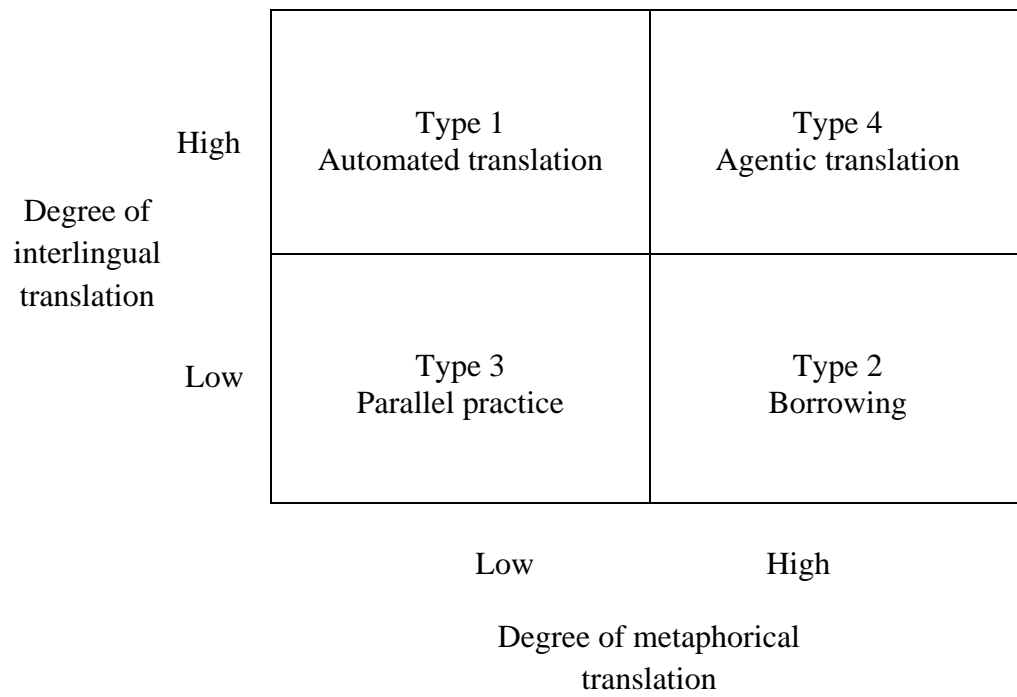
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Table 1. Similarities and Differences Between Interlingual and Metaphorical Translation.

Key dimensions	Interlingual translation	Metaphorical translation
Definition	A process of reverbalizing meaning in another natural language	A process through which practices get modified when they are moved to a new organizational context
Basis for translation	Language- and text-based	Language- and text-based, but also materializations of practices
Objective	Finding relevant sameness between source and target texts with necessary adaptations to fit the translation in the new context	Fitting the new practice in the receiving context and making it locally relevant
Translator	Primarily professional translators, but sometimes also paraprofessional translators, who undertake interlingual translation	Paraprofessional translators (i.e., managers, employees and consultants), who undertake both metaphorical and interlingual translation
Agency of the translator	Invisible	Visible
Dominant view of translation process	Translation as a decision-making bringing closure and direction through language choices	Translation as an open-ended, on-going sense-making/-giving process
Key references	Holz-Mänttäri, 1984; Lefevere, 1992; Levý, 1967; Pym, 2010; Toury, 2012; Venuti, 1995; Vermeer, 1996	Boxenbaum, 2006; Czarniavska & Sevón, 1996, 2005; Drori, Höllerer, & Walgenbach, 2014; Sahlin-Andersson, 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall, 2002; Saka, 2004; Zilber, 2006

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                                    ┌──────────────────────┬──────────────────────┐
                                    │                      │                      │
                                    │     Type 1           │     Type 4           │
                         High       │  Automated           │  Agentic             │
                                    │  translation         │  translation         │
      Degree of                     │                      │                      │
      interlingual                  ├──────────────────────┼──────────────────────┤
      translation                   │                      │                      │
                                    │                      │                      │
                         Low        │     Type 3           │     Type 2           │
                                    │  Parallel practice   │  Borrowing           │
                                    │                      │                      │
                                    │                      │                      │
                                    └──────────────────────┴──────────────────────┘

                                           Low                    High

                                       Degree of metaphorical
                                             translation
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Figure 1. Four Idealized Types of Metaphorical and Interlingual Translation in Multilingual Contexts.

Table 2. Comparison of Agentic Translation across the Three Published Cases.

Dimension	Case 1 (Tietze, Tansley, & Helienek)	Case 2 (Ciuk, James, & Sliwa)	Case 3 (Logemann & Piekkari)
Need for high degree of metaphorical translation	Introduction of talent management, a new Western management practice in a Slovak company, which is a radically different context from the West	Implementation of new corporate values in a US-owned subsidiary in Poland; these corporate values reflect North American views which differ from local context	Introduction of a new practice to communicate corporate strategy to the entire workforce through letters from the CEO
Need for high degree of interlingual translation	Talent management travels from English to Slovak, no Slovak vocabulary to express talent management practices	Corporate values travel from English to Polish, raising inappropriate or undesirable connotations locally	CEO letters travel from English to French
Organizational status of paraprofessional translator(s)	External consultant; close associate of managing director	Group of Polish subsidiary managers	Managing director of the French subsidiary
Skopos of paraprofessional translator(s)	To introduce talent management as a progressive management practice and modernize the mindset of the leadership group	To rescue the subsidiary from a downward spiral and ensure that organizational change is implemented	To retain the autonomy of the local subsidiary, allow for more discretionary decisions and room to manoeuvre at the local level
Skopos of the commissioner of the translation	The skopos of the Slovak managing director is the same as that of the paraprofessional translator	The skopos of the US headquarters is the same as that of the paraprofessional translators	Different skopoi between CEO and paraprofessional translator; CEO aims to create a shared terminology and enhance global alignment across the subsidiaries of the multinational corporation
Nature of translation work by paraprofessional translator(s)	He omits large sections of the English language material, invents	They consciously redesign corporate values to facilitate a positive reception by	He translates a text that was not supposed to be translated, adapts the

	own examples, takes decisions about what not to translate, invents stories, labels and words to make up for terms that do exist in the Slovak language	Polish subsidiary employees, trigger desirable attitudinal and behavioural changes and ultimately improve subsidiary performance	CEO's message, reproduces meaning, privileges local over corporate understanding, adds his own interpretation of key strategic terms and broadens CEO's terminology
Agency of the paraprofessional translator	High agency due to intimate knowledge of context, discursive void, close relationship with the local managing director, limited English skills in the Slovak company	Medium agency as subsidiary managers were given considerable discretion to implement corporate values, but many of them did not feel they had the option to disregard to any great extent the corporate perspective	High agency as most of the French subsidiary employees have limited proficiency in English and limited skills in French at headquarters
Interplay between metaphorical and interlingual translation	Creative interlingual translation is well aligned with the purpose of metaphorical translation to introduce talent management	Accommodating interlingual translation reinforces the purpose of metaphorical translation to implement corporate values	Resistant interlingual translation undermines the purpose of metaphorical translation to communicate directly the strategic priorities to the entire workforce, including the French subsidiary