

Metaphor and ESP: metaphor as a useful device for teaching L2 Business English learners

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Abstract

Metaphor, as a widespread feature of everyday thought and language, represents a central issue for both L2 ESP instructors and learners. In this paper we argue for the idea that including metaphor in a specific English language programme can provide students with a useful device to raise awareness of key concepts, models and issues and to improve their reading and translating skills. We put forward different exercises taken from an example of L2 ESP programme, the optional course 'Business English I', currently taught at the University of Valladolid (Spain). These exercises can prove revealing, telling us that metaphor has a useful function in teaching L2 ESP students effectively, thus leading us to conclude that metaphor should be included as part of any L2 ESP programme and, probably, as part of any foreign-language learning process.

Key Words: cognitive semantics, metaphor, teaching, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Business English.

Resumen

La metáfora y el IPA: la metáfora como herramienta útil para la enseñanza de Inglés Empresarial como segunda lengua

La metáfora, como fenómeno omnipresente en el pensamiento y lenguaje cotidianos, constituye un aspecto central tanto para profesores como para estudiantes del Inglés Profesional y Académico (IPA) en una segunda lengua. En este artículo se defiende la hipótesis de que la inclusión de la metáfora en un programa de lengua inglesa para fines específicos puede suponer una herramienta útil para que los estudiantes conozcan conceptos, modelos y aspectos claves y mejoren sus destrezas de lectura y traducción. Se proponen diferentes ejercicios extraídos del programa de un ejemplo del IPA en una segunda lengua, la asignatura optativa 'Inglés Empresarial I', impartida en la actualidad en la E. U. de Estudios Empresariales de la Universidad de Valladolid (España). Estos ejercicios pueden revelar el papel útil que desempeña la metáfora a la hora de enseñar eficazmente a estudiantes del IPA en una segunda lengua, lo que nos lleva a concluir que dicha figura debería

incluirse como parte integrante de los diferentes programas del IPA en una segunda lengua y, probablemente, como parte de cualquier proceso de aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: semántica cognitiva, metáfora, enseñanza, IPA, Inglés Empresarial

1. Introduction

Metaphor is a dominant feature of natural language. This is true both of everyday language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and academic language (Charteris-Black & Ennis, 2001). Yet, despite its important function in language, the status of metaphor in linguistic studies has not always been the same. Traditional approaches (Halliday, 1985) consider metaphor as a mere figure of speech, and historical semanticists regard metaphor as an important procedure of semantic change (Geeraerts, 1997; Fritz, 1998) whereas more recent frameworks such as cognitive semantics (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Johnson, 1987; Turner, 1987, 1991; Lakoff & Turner, 1989; Lakoff, 1990, 1993) view metaphor as a cognitive mechanism (Ibarretxe-Antuñano & Nerlich, 2000). In line with this last approach recent studies within the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) are analysing the role and function of metaphor in areas such as Economics (Henderson, 1982, 1986; McCloskey, 1983; Duddle-Evans & Henderson, 1990; Mason, 1990; White, 1996; Fuertes Olivera, 1998; Charteris-Black, 2000; Charteris-Black & Ennis, 2001; Cortés de los Ríos, 2001; Fuertes-Olivera & Pizarro Sánchez, 2002), Science (Salager-Meyer, 1990; Goatly, 1996; Štambuk, 1998; Cuadrado Esclapez, 2001) or Politics (Chilton, 1987; Chilton & Ilyin, 1993; Charteris-Black, 2004; Mussolf, 2004), among others.

Concerning the definition of metaphor, much of the difficulty in defining it originates in the problem of whether it is best considered as a cognitive phenomenon related to how we understand things or as a linguistic phenomenon related to how we express them (Cameron & Low, 1999). Therefore, the problems of defining metaphor arise from the complexity of the relationship between thought and language. The traditional view of metaphor characterised this figure as a linguistic phenomenon, used for some artistic and rhetorical purpose, based on a resemblance between the two entities that are compared and identified (Kövecses, 2002). Yet, in 1980 Lakoff and Johnson challenged this entrenched view of metaphor by developing a new theory that has become known as the “cognitive view of metaphor”. According to this perspective metaphor is defined as a cognitive mechanism whereby one conceptual domain is partially mapped onto a different

conceptual domain, the second domain being partially understood in terms of the first one, with the linguistic metaphor deriving from those domains. The domain that is mapped is called the *source* or *donor domain* and the domain onto which it is mapped is called the *target* or *recipient domain*. Both domains have to belong to different superordinate domains (Barcelona Sánchez, 1997; White, 2001). We will use Lakoff and Johnson's widely accepted definition of metaphor for our line of research in this paper.

If, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 5) affirm, “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one type of thing in terms of another” the possibilities that this figure offers for teaching are obvious. Danesi (1994) puts forward the view that the L2 learner speech sounds non-native because of its literalness or absence of metaphor use. Charteris-Black and Ennis (2001) describe the importance of metaphor in Economics vocabulary teaching and Littlemore (2004) examines the tendency of language learners to use metaphoric extension strategies to work out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. We can see, therefore, that metaphor is a central issue in ESP teaching. The aim of this paper is to show that metaphor should be included in specific language programmes. The texts and sample exercises selected in this study are aimed at students following an L2 ESP programme, the optional course ‘Business English I’ currently taught at the Business School at the University of Valladolid (Spain). We have focused on three different possibilities of using metaphor in teaching this subject:

- (1) business vocabulary learning;
- (2) specialised business reading;
- (3) business texts translation into Spanish.

2. Business English and metaphor

The term ‘Business English’ refers to a wide range of ESP courses characterised by having a sense of purpose, a mix of specific content and general content, and many varieties (Ellis & Johnson, 1994; Donna, 2000). The recent literature on Business English highlights the following ideas (Fuertes-Olivera & Gómez Martínez, 2004):

- Business English is one of the current areas of growth in ESP (Ellis & Johnson, 1994);

- Many Business English courses either take a skills-focused approach or a language-focused one (Edwards, 2000);
- Research is being devoted to cross-cultural awareness (Hemais, 2001);
- Cognitive Linguistics highlights the important role metaphor plays in Business English (Charteris-Black & Ennis, 2001; Fuertes-Olivera & Pizarro Sánchez, 2002);
- Oral communication skills are central for undergraduate Business students if they are not to be disadvantaged in the workplace (Crossling & Ward, 2002).

These findings are interesting to be incorporated into our daily practice as teachers of Business English. Of special relevance here is the cognitivist approach to metaphor in Business English. Indeed, several authors have pointed out that the language of economics is highly metaphorical (Henderson, 1982, 1986; McCloskey, 1983; Mason, 1990; White, 1996; Fuertes Olivera, 1998; Boers, 2000; Charteris-Black, 2000; Charteris-Black & Ennis, 2001; Fuertes Olivera & Pizarro Sánchez, 2002). There is evidence for this in numerous figurative expressions of animate metaphors used to describe economy (i.e. growth, depression, etc.) and economic organisations (i.e. parent/sister company, etc.); inanimate metaphors used to describe, for instance, market movements as animals (i.e. bear market, bull market, etc.) or inflation as horse (i.e. galloping inflation, trotting inflation, etc.); business as war (i.e. advertising campaign, corporate raiders, market competition, etc.); business as sports (i.e. an outsider, a stalemate, key players, etc.), and so on. All these metaphors are used in the field of economics for various reasons. They highlight some aspects of the “target” while leaving other aspects on the dark. In this sense, describing socio-economic processes in terms of ‘machines and mechanisms’, for example, may leave the impression that they are under control and fully predictable, unlike human behaviour. A conception of socio-economic processes in terms of ‘health care and fitness’ can be used by employers to argue in favour of slimming their companies, etc. ‘Fighting and warfare’ metaphors can be used by employers or for protectionist measures on the part of the government, etc. (Boers 2000). According to Boers (2000) typical metaphorical themes in economics are: MECHANISMS and MACHINES, ANIMALS, PLANTS and GARDENING, HEALTH and FITNESS, FIGHTING and WARFARE, SHIPS and SAILING, and SPORTS.

Henderson (1982) argues that metaphors in the economic discourse can be of different types: (i) that which is used for textual decoration or illustration (i.e. image

metaphor), (ii) that which occurs in as a central organising principle of all language (i.e. generic-level metaphor), (iii) that which aids in exploring specific economic problems and as a basis for extending the domain of economic ideas (specific-level metaphor).

It may be argued that this frequent presence of metaphor in economic and business texts may be a hurdle for second language learners when approaching L2 specialised discourse. It follows then that a better understanding of the metaphor use in L2 business discourse will lead to better L2 business comprehension and reading on the part of the non-native English speaking student and better translation. In this way the exercises we propose in the following section are hoped to provide an account of the use of metaphor in Business English and to help students to raise awareness of business lexis, to improve language learner's specialised reading of business texts and to help them produce native-like discourse when they translate business texts.

3. A proposal for using metaphor in the teaching of Business English

This proposal has been devised to gain insights on the role played by metaphor in learning Business English by students whose first language is not English –in the present case Spanish students. Our claim is that an enhanced metaphoric awareness on the part of these students can be beneficial to their specialised understanding of the subject, specialised reading and translation.

3.1. The Business English syllabus

The Business English module offered by the Business School at the University of Valladolid (Spain) is taught for two years (120 and 90 hours respectively). For this concrete study we have only focused on the first year course, namely 'Business English I'. In it at present we are offering a mixed syllabus focused on both Business and Language Skills to students with an intermediate level of English, which includes the following:

- writing (i.e. commercial correspondence)
- listening (i.e. business telephoning)
- technical and semitechnical vocabulary

- reading
- translating
- speaking

Basically we follow a combination of typical communicative methodology (e. g. asking students to engage in role plays and simulations) and a task-based approach. The published materials used are reported in “Appendix”.

3.2. Subjects

Since the module is optional, students of ‘Business English I’ are from different degrees. In this proposal the students under study are mainly in their twenties (20-22 group) and come from different degrees, such as ‘Business’, ‘Economics’, ‘Chemical Engineering’, ‘English Philology’ and ‘Telecommunications’. They are representative of Spanish university undergraduates studying numerous subjects (usually in the range of 10 to 15 subjects per year), with lectures and exams for each. The Business English module is unusual in that it has tutorials whereas most courses in Spanish universities only comprise lectures. On average, they have studied English for at least five years before entering university (some of them with extra classes in private language institutions).

Concerning the socio-economic circumstances under which these students are living, they are characterised by a shortage of adequate labour opportunities, a massive entry into university, cheap enrolment fees, lack of adequate social status for professional training, lack of emancipation from their parents and comprehensive education in the years prior to university¹.

3.3. Procedure

The proposal comprises two parts: an activation of the students’ awareness of metaphor and the presentation of the methodology and exercises used (1) to increase the students’ knowledge of technical and semi-technical business vocabulary; (2) to improve specialised business reading fluency; and (3) to improve translating business texts into Spanish.

(a) Activation of the students’ awareness of metaphor

First, we would check out the students’ awareness of metaphor by asking the following questions to our students: ‘What do you understand by metaphor?’, ‘What type of metaphors do you know?’, ‘What other figures of speech (e. g. metonymy,

simile, etc.) do you know?’, ‘What is the difference between them and metaphor?’ ‘Can you provide examples of metaphors used in literary texts, general English language texts, specific language texts or spoken discourse?’, ‘What is metaphor used for (e. g. identification, classification, comparison, etc.)?’ (Cortés de los Ríos, 2001).

Secondly, students would be introduced to the topic of cognitive metaphor by giving them the Lakoffian definition of metaphor and characteristics of it (see “Introduction”). In this respect, we would teach the terminology of the structure of this figure (i. e. target domain and source domain) and the directionality between them (i. e. the comprehension of an abstract concept via another specific one). We would illustrate this explanation with typical examples of conceptual metaphors taken from Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*: LIFE IS A JOURNEY, AN ARGUMENT IS WAR or IDEAS ARE FOOD. In the same way we would present the metaphorical concept and the metaphorical expressions and show how they are different. We would also illustrate this explanation with linguistic expressions typical of the above-presented conceptual metaphors. Lastly, we would explain the difference between literary metaphor and cognitive metaphor and would refer to other contributions as regards the figure (see “Introduction”).

In order to put these theoretical concepts into practice we have established the following sample exercises:

1. Which metaphor, i.e. which source domain and which target domain, can you recognise in the following linguistic expressions: (1) ‘economic growth’; (2) ‘corporate disease’; (3) ‘a price war’; (4) ‘a bear market’ and (5) ‘cash flow’?

(Source: Adapted from Z. Kövecses [2002],
Metaphor. A Practical Introduction, p. 13)

Answers: 1 and 2: BUSINESS (target) IS A HUMAN BEING (source)

3: BUSINESS (target) IS WAR (source)

4: BUSINESS (target) IS AN ANIMAL (source)

5. BUSINESS (target) IS WATER (source)

2. What linguistic expressions can you collect as examples of the conceptual metaphor BUSINESS IS WAR?

(Source: Adapted from Z. Kövecses [2002],
Metaphor. A Practical Introduction, p.13)

Possible answers: 'trade war', 'a price war', 'advertising campaign', 'a takeover battle', 'invading new markets', 'conquering the market', 'joining forces with other companies', 'market competition', 'mobilise ones' sales force', 'beat the competition', corporate raiders', etc.

3. *What mappings characterise the ECONOMY IS AN ORGANISM metaphor? Lay out the set of correspondences between these elements of the source and those of the target domain?*

(Source: Adapted from Z. Kövecses [2002],
Metaphor. A Practical Introduction, p. 13)

Possible answer:

Source: AN ORGANISM		Target: ECONOMY
(a) a growing organism	⇒	economy is going up
(b) a changing organism	⇒	economy is changing
(c) a decaying organism	⇒	economy is going down
(d) a healthy organism	⇒	economy is in a good state
(e) a sick organism	⇒	economy is in a bad state

(b) Methodology and sample exercises

Business vocabulary learning

Metaphors provide insight into particular ways of thinking in relation to the development of technical and semi-technical registers (Boers, 2000). As Charteris-Black (2000: 153) argues,

[...] in the case of vocabulary language teaching, if there is no clear-cut boundary between literal and figurative meanings, and the literal meanings of words are extended to provide figurative meaning, there are implications for second language learners who may not be able to distinguish between such literal and metaphorical uses.

The following sample exercises are geared towards teaching typical business metaphors (i. e. BUSINESS IS AN ORGANISM, BUSINESS IS WATER, BUSINESS IS HEALTH, BUSINESS IS SPORTS, or BUSINESS IS A PLANT) to assist L2 learners in the understanding of content specific business lexis:

1. Match the following expressions of the conceptual metaphors THE MARKET IS AN ORGANISM and THE MARKET IS WATER (indicated by numbers) with their meanings (indicated by letters):

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. the market has grown | a. supply exceeds demand |
| 2. the market is depressed | b. the market is in a good state |
| 3. the market is flooded | c. the market is in a bad state |
| 4. the market is buoyant | d. the market is bigger than it used to be |
| 5. the market has suffered | e. the market is smaller than it used to be |
| 6. the market has dried up | f. the market is undergoing a gradual process |

(Source: Adapted from M. Powell [1996], *Business Matters*, p. 28)

Answers: 1d, 2e, 3a, 4b, 5c, 6f.

2. Now complete the following extract with some of the expressions from Exercise 1:

The US market was fairly 1. _____ when we finally managed to penetrate it three years ago, even though it was largely dominated by two or three big American players. And over the next two years both the market itself and our market share 2. _____ significantly (...). I'm afraid the picture in Western Europe is not much better. European trade disputes have further 3. _____ a market which was already 4. _____ from the effects of the recession.

(Source: Adapted from M. Powell [1996]. *Business Matters*, p. 28)

Answers: 1. buoyant; 2. flooded; 3. depressed; 4. suffering.

3. This exercise gives the literal meanings of the following words (i. e. verbs, nouns and adjectives), commonly used to talk about markets and marketing in terms of something else (i.e. ships, people, water, war, etc.). Can you match them?

<i>collapse</i>	<i>prune</i>	<i>target</i>	<i>launch</i>	<i>saturate</i>	<i>flood</i>
<i>skim</i>	<i>dry up</i>	<i>penetrate</i>	<i>blitz</i>	<i>shrink</i>	<i>push</i>

1. _____ send a rocket into space or a new ship into water for the first time.
2. _____ aim at something –when shooting at something.
3. _____ remove something from the surface of something.
4. _____ go into something –a bullet into a body.
5. _____ cover with water –when a river bursts its banks.
6. _____ move something away from you.
7. _____ drop a lot of bombs on one area.
8. _____ when some soft substance is full of water so that it cannot absorb any more.

9. _____ *fall suddenly –a building during an earthquake.*
 10. _____ *when something gets smaller –clothes when they are washed.*
 11. _____ *when all the liquid in something disappears –perhaps because of too much heat.*
 12. _____ *when you cut branches off a tree so that it will grow better in the future.*
- (Source: I. Mackenzie [1997], *Management and Marketing*, p. 80)

Answers: 1. launch; 2. target; 3. skim; 4. penetrate; 5. flood; 6. push; 7. blitz; 8. saturate; 9. collapse; 10. shrink; 11. dry up; 12. prune.

4. *Write sentences of your own that contain metaphorical uses of the words from Exercise 3.*

(Source: Own elaboration)

Answers: Students' own answers.

5. *Match up the metaphors on the left (taken from horse-racing, athletics, football and chess, and indicated by numbers) with the meanings on the right (indicated by letters):*

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>an outsider</i> | a. <i>a contestant thought to have little chance of winning.</i> |
| 2. <i>the front runner</i> | b. <i>an action that causes damage to who ever does it.</i> |
| 3. <i>the odds</i> | c. <i>a serious setback that ends your hopes</i> |
| 4. <i>a knockout blow</i> | d. <i>a situation in which neither side can win</i> |
| 5. <i>on the ropes</i> | e. <i>barriers or obstacles to overcome</i> |
| 6. <i>hurdles</i> | f. <i>to be in a difficult situation</i> |
| 7. <i>an own goal</i> | g. <i>the chances or possibilities of winning</i> |
| 8. <i>to be shown the red card</i> | h. <i>the contestant currently leading a race</i> |
| 9. <i>to move the goalposts</i> | i. <i>to be disqualified</i> |
| 10. <i>a stalemate</i> | j. <i>to change the rules while something is in progress</i> |

(Source: Adapted from I. Mackenzie [1997],
Management and Marketing, p. 20)

Answers: 1a, 2h, 3g, 4c, 5f, 6e, 7b, 8i, 9j, 10d.

Specialised business reading

In line with Boers (2000) we believe that an enhanced metaphoric awareness on the part of language learners can be beneficial to their specialised reading. As one of the objectives of the 'Business English I' course is for students to be able to read and discuss real and adapted business articles, we propose now exploring if students cope

better with a register of socio-economic discourse when aware of its metaphorical underlying content. One simple way of raising learners' metaphoric awareness is to draw their attention to the source domain or to the origin of the unfamiliar figurative expressions as they encounter these in their specialised reading. The method proposed here is clearly meant for in-depth reading rather than "skimming" or "scanning activities" (Boers 2000).

Sample exercises proposed:

1. *Underline the metaphorical expressions that you encounter in the following text:*

"Coke versus Pepsi; Nike versus Reebok; Nintendo versus Sega – the battle is on amongst the world's top brands.

Aggressive comparative advertising has now reached fever pitch; extra millions are pouring into R & D, and the market leaders are under constant pressure to slash their prices in a cut-throat struggle for market domination. When Philip Morris knocked 40c off a packet of Marlboro, \$ 47-and-a-half billion was instantly wiped off the market value of America's top twenty cigarette manufacturers lesser brands went to the wall. And that's just one example of how fair competition within a free market has rapidly escalated into all-out brand war".

(Source: Passage from M. Powell [1996], *Business Matters*, p. 42; own elaborated exercise on it)

Answers: "Coke versus Pepsi", "Nike versus Reebok", "Nintendo versus Sega", "the battle is on", "The world's top brands", "aggressive advertising", "has now reached fever pitch", "millions are pouring into R & D", "the market leaders", "are under constant pressure", "to slash their prices", "in a cut-throat struggle", "market domination", "knocked (...) off (...)", "was instantly wiped off", "America's top twenty cigarette manufacturers", "lesser brands", "went to the wall", "fair competition", "free market", "has rapidly escalated", "all-out brand".

2. *Match the conceptual metaphors that the metaphorical expressions from Exercise 1 highlight*

(Source: own elaboration):

Answers:

BUSINESS IS WAR

BUSINESS IS WATER

3. Match the expressions identified in Exercise 1 with their corresponding conceptual metaphor identified in Exercise 2.

(Source: own elaboration)

Answers:

BUSINESS IS WAR: All expressions except “millions are pouring into R & D (...)” and “was instantly wiped off”.

BUSINESS IS WATER: “millions are pouring into R & D” and “was instantly wiped off”.

4. Discuss the following issues raised in the article: ‘price wars in retail marketing’, ‘quality versus price’ and ‘brand wars’². Students are encouraged to activate metaphorical mappings by using some of the expressions identified in exercise 1 and bringing in different ones by activating their knowledge of the subject from L1 and prior L2 knowledge.

(Source: own elaboration)

Answers: Students’ own answers.

Business texts translation into Spanish

Differences in metaphor use between languages may result in L2 learners and translators producing marked and non-native like translations into their L1. The extent to which metaphor presents a hurdle for second language learners’ translations may depend on the extent to which there is overlap between the metaphorical systems of the L1 and L2. Thus, it would not be surprising if there were some major differences in metaphor use between languages that if not taken into account, would result in L2 learners producing unacceptable translations into L2. This may have negative consequences for aspirant members of professional and academic discourse communities since it would lead to rejection to their translations in their academic and professional setting. It follows then that a better understanding of the similarities and differences in metaphor use between languages will lead to better translations (Charteris-Black & Ennis, 2001).

Concerning different proposals for the translation of metaphor, Dobrzyńska (1995), who follows Newmark (1988), summarises different possibilities in the translation of metaphors: (i) to use an exact equivalent of the original metaphor; (ii) to look for another metaphorical phrase which would express a similar sense; and (iii) to replace an untranslatable metaphor of the original with its approximate literal paraphrase.

These strategies were developed for analysing literary texts but, in our view, they can equally be used for the translation of metaphor in specialised texts. For this reason, our students have been taught these three different strategies to deal with the translation of metaphorical expressions, idioms, etc. in their practice of the ‘translating’ skill in each of the units of ‘Business English I’. In this section students normally translate articles from *The Economist* or *Fortune*, as they offer a register of economic discourse that is rather specialised but at the same time fairly popular and often argumentative. The use of metaphors in this type of journalistic discourse serve many different purposes and may offer a greater linguistic variety than would be expected from the use of metaphors in more technical economic registers (specialised research articles on text books on economics) (Boers, 2000).

Sample exercises proposed:

1. Render the following metaphorical collocations into Spanish (i.e. phrases, idioms, etc.) from the text “The Real Story” (*Fortune*, 3 May 2004) into Spanish and identify the translation strategy procedure in operation in your proposal:

1. “(...) be needed constant shoring up (...)”
2. “(...) a retired Coke executive (who) had been passed over for the top job earlier”.
3. “(...) Coke isn’t crippled yet (...)”
4. “(...) the brand strength (...) has remained vigorous in a time of management fiasco”.
5. “(...) aspersions on his work were leaked to the press”.
6. “(...) Three days later, Coke backtracked (...)”.
7. “(...) it’s been obvious for some time that the company’s management team is in disarray (...)”.
8. “(...) he is tough as a nail, sharp as a tack (...)”

(Source: own elaboration)

Possible answers:³

1. “(...) él necesitaba constante apoyo (...)” – approximate literal paraphrase.
2. (...) “un ejecutivo de Coca-Cola ya jubilado al que se le habían adelantado en su puesto con anterioridad” – an exact equivalent.
3. “(...) Coca-Cola no se encontraba maltrecha aún” – another metaphorical phrase.
4. “(...) la solidez de la marca se ha mantenido en plena forma en un momento de fracaso en la organización (...)” – exact equivalent.

5. “(...) su trabajo fue puesto en entredicho por la prensa” – approximate literal paraphrase.
6. “(...) tres días más tarde Coca-Cola dió marcha atrás (...)” – an exact equivalent.
7. “(...) durante algún tiempo resultaba obvio que el equipo de directores vagaba sin rumbo (...)” – another metaphorical phrase.
8. “(...) es duro como el acero y astuto como un zorro (...)” – other metaphorical phrases.

2. Propose another translation for the following translations⁴ of metaphorical collocations, taken from the article “The Future of Advertising”, *The Economist*, 26 June 2004). Compare your proposed translation with the one provided. Do they differ in the translation strategy used?

(Source: own elaboration)

1. “(...) in some cases, it can be a lot more than half of the client’s budget that is going down the drain (...)”: “(...) en algunos casos puede suceder que bastante más de la mitad del presupuesto se vaya por la borda (...)”.
2. “(...) There’re lots of ways to skin a cat today”: (...) “hay muchas formas de llevarse el gato al agua hoy en día (...)”.
3. “So far, the internet accounts for only a tiny slice of the overall advertising pie (...)”: “Hasta el momento internet constituye tan sólo una mínima parte de todo el gasto publicitario (...)”.
4. “And Google and Yahoo! Have yet to unleash the full potential of their technology (...)”: “Y Google y Yahoo tienen aún que dar rienda suelta a todo su potencial tecnológico”.
5. “The potential for advertising on the internet is tempting more firms to join the fray (...)”: “El potencial de la publicidad digital es tal que cada vez son más las empresas que se ven tentadas a entrar en liza”.

Answers: Students’ own answers.

4. Conclusion

It is worthwhile to draw L2 ESP instructors’ attention to the important role of metaphor as a teaching device. This paper has attempted to show that metaphors may have a useful function in teaching by helping to raise L2 learners’ awareness of technical and semi-technical vocabulary, to improve specialised reading and to render better translations of specialised texts into L1.

The different activities presented here from an example of L2 ESP programme, the optional course 'Business English I' currently taught at the Business School at the University of Valladolid, may show that the incorporation of metaphor in a specific language programme facilitates the learners' development of the conceptual and communicative competence in L2. This might also be useful to those involved in creating ESP materials for students whose first language is not English. In addition, the teaching procedure discussed here may leave the door open to a further discussion with regard to developing and improving other learners' competence on skills such as 'speaking', 'listening' or 'writing', not only in L2 ESP teaching but also as part of any L2 learning process.

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NOTAS

1 These data have been taken from a research project to adapt our Business English module to the forthcoming changes in the Spanish and European universities (Fuertes-Olivera & Gómez-Martínez, 2004).

2 This task, derived from reading a business text, proves that metaphorical awareness can also be beneficial for improving the L2 learners' command of the "speaking" skill. In this sense, as Henderson (1986) argues, helping students to recognise the metaphors behind commonly accepted economic models and encouraging them to adopt alternative metaphorical perspectives may foster questioning attitudes.

3 These were some of the translations rendered by our students in the classroom in the 2004-2005 academic year.

4 These were again some of the translation rendered by our students in the classroom in the 2004-2005 academic year.

APPENDIX: Materials used in 'Business English I'

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