Grammatical metaphor through translation

Nordrum, Lene

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English nominalizations translated into Norwegian and Swedish: a discussion of degree of grammatical metaphor

Nominalization has long been devoted considerable attention in linguistic theory. There has been a constant surge of interest from generative, cognitive, typological and functional theories with the shared focus of the relation between the nominalization and the clause. In SFL, this relation is regarded in terms of relationships of agnation, where nominalizations are grammatical metaphors that are agnate to congruent clauses, and it is emphasized that nominalizations can have different degrees of metaphor. However, not much has been done in terms of specifying lexicogrammatical patterns on the cline from metaphor to congruent constructions.

In my paper I investigate English nominalizations that contain a nominalized process and one or two of the participants from a corresponding clause expressed as an attribute, e.g., the introduction of a new crop and my investigation, and their translations into Norwegian and Swedish. The material comprises 586 examples with translations, collected from the two translation corpora English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC) and English-Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC).

A major goal of the paper is to show that cross-fertilization between linguistic theories can prove valuable in determining types of grammatical metaphor. It is argued that if the argument structure of deverbal nouns is analyzed in more detail, lexicogrammatical patterns with different degrees of grammatical metaphor can be determined. Another goal is to use translations to throw more light on meaning types, assuming that relationships of agnation can be revealed through translations between typologically closely related languages.