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Dressing for Spiritual Battle and Other Challenges: Translating Passages with Underlying Conceptual Metaphors

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Abstract

Traditionally, the approach to translating metaphor in Scripture assumed that metaphors are descriptive literary devices with an underlying "literal meaning." Research in cognitive linguistics has challenged this idea, and a new field of study, conceptual metaphor theory, has emerged. Conceptual metaphor theory draws a distinction between image metaphors, where a target is described in comparison to a source, and conceptual metaphors, where an abstract or complex conceptual domain is actually understood in terms of a more concrete or familiar conceptual domain drawn from embodied human experience. This paper examines the importance of identifying conceptual metaphors and analyzing their accessibility when translating Scripture. Translators who encounter figurative language derived from underlying conceptual metaphors that are not culturally conventional may try to convert the mapped elements of the source domain into a series of descriptive image metaphors. This skewing of meaning could be mitigated if translators were trained to identify conceptual metaphors licensing figurative language and consider making them explicit. As a case study, a translation of Ephesian 6:13–17 in Tlacoapa Me'phaa (tpl) produced by a translator guided by Paratext notes and trained in the traditional approach to the translation of metaphors (Larson 1984) is compared with a second translation produced after encouragement to make the underlying conceptual metaphor PREPARATION IS GETTING DRESSED explicit at the beginning of the passage.[*]

1. Introduction

Embodiment and its role in human cognition and language has been and continues to be an intriguing area of exploration. In their influential 1980 book, *Metaphors We Live By,* cognitive linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson put forward the idea that the semantics of language is embodied. They claimed that our existence as embodied creatures contributes to and constrains our human conceptual systems. Incorporating insights from cognitive psychology and neuroscience, the field of cognitive linguistics emerged and gained prominence. In 2008, Lakoff and Johnson published *Philosophy in The Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought,* challenging many of the presuppositions of Western philosophy with an explication of how humans rely on metaphors derived from embodied human experience. Playing off that title in 2016 with *Theology in the Flesh: How Embodiment and Culture Shape the Way We Think about Truth, Morality, and God*, theologian John Sanders applied insights from cognitive linguistics to theology and biblical interpretation. His book challenges those involved in exegetical work to consider insights from cognitive linguistics in the process of drawing meaning from the biblical text. Taking up that challenge in one specific area, the aim of this article is to show how understanding of conceptual metaphor theory can potentially improve the translation of passages in which the figurative language of the original text relies on underlying conceptual metaphors that are not conventional in the target culture.

[*] I would like to express my appreciation to my colleague Emilia Neri Méndez for working through the translation exercise with me and for providing her two translations of Ephesians 6:13–17 for use in the case study. I would also like to thank Aaron Hemphill for his assistance checking the interlinear gloss of the texts.

2. Overview of cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor theory

Before beginning the discussion of translation issues, a brief overview of cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor theory is in order. Cognitive linguistics uses emerging technology for enhanced neuroimaging to study the brain during language processing. The term MAPPING is used in cognitive linguistics to describe the activity of creating or accessing mental connections between concepts (Lakoff 2006:189–91). The resulting mental connections are also called a mapping, and abstract theories about mapping can now be compared to actual imaging of areas of the brain during language processing. Over the last three decades, one of the most rigorously tested and robust areas of research within cognitive linguistics has been in the area of conceptual metaphor theory (Gibbs 2011:556). Cognitive linguists have focused on refining understanding of the function of metaphor in human language and cognition. They have asserted that metaphorical thinking is central to human thought processes, and that conceptual metaphors are routinely used to understand and to reason, not just to describe (Geeraerts 2006:11–12). Humans are especially likely to rely on conceptual metaphors when they are thinking or communicating about abstract ideas that are removed from their embodied, everyday experiences (Lakoff 2006:188). In every culture, people rely on their understanding of familiar, concrete concepts from everyday experience in order to reason about other concepts that are more abstract or less experientially accessible (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014:62–67). It is not surprising then that human attempts to explain and reason about spiritual and supernatural ideas rely on conceptual metaphors, and the Bible is full of both implicit and explicit conceptual metaphors that explain spiritual realities in terms of more accessible embodied human experiences.

3. Image metaphors

Many people hear the word "metaphor" think of a literary device that makes an underlying proposition more poetic or rhetorically effective. Within conceptual metaphor theory, however, metaphor is defined more broadly (Lakoff 2006:186), so it is important to establish the distinctions between what cognitive linguists call "image metaphors" and "conceptual metaphors." Image metaphors label what one typically learns about in literature class and translation training; an image-based comparison that describes one thing in terms of another thing with a salient point of similarity. In its technical use, the term image metaphor can refer to any linguistic expression that accomplishes this kind of comparison, including what would traditionally be labeled metaphors, similes, or analogies. An example (1) used by Lakoff (1987:219–22) comes from a poem:

(1) My wife…whose waist is an hourglass.

To understand this image metaphor, the mental image of the shape of an hourglass is mentally linked, or mapped, to the mental image of the wife. If a hearer is familiar with the conventional shape of hourglasses, he or she will infer that the wife has a tiny waist. This inference is based on the salient point of similarity between the shape of a woman and the shape of an hourglass.

There are several features of image metaphors that make them distinct from conceptual metaphors. First, for speakers and hearers the concept of the wife's waist is independent from the concept of hourglasses. Second, the mental connection, or mapping, between the two images is temporary, for the purpose of the description. It is not maintained in long-term memory. Third, the meaning of an image metaphor can be expressed in descriptive, non-figurative language that has no metaphor. One could say, "My wife has a tiny waist."

Image metaphors can be novel expressions that no one has heard before if the source image is conventional enough that all the members of the speech community have similar ideas about its qualities. They must be able to easily infer the point(s) of similarity between the target image and the source image that the speaker intends the hearer to infer. In other words, hearers must be able to successfully map the two images (Lakoff 1987:219–21).

Traditional Bible translation training (Larson 1984:271–279) equips people to consider whether image metaphors will translate well. If the source image is not conventional in the target culture, that will be an issue for translation. If the source image is familiar, but elicits different associations, or if different points of similarity are salient in the target culture compared to the culture of the source text, the translated metaphor will not communicate the same meaning. Many Bible translation resources point out when image metaphors

may need to be adjusted. Although they may present challenges for translation, translators generally recognize those challenges and are prepared well to address them with a variety of strategies.

4. Conceptual metaphors

Turning to conceptual metaphors, there are several important distinctions that separate them from the more familiar image metaphors. The first distinction is that conceptual metaphors are usually implicit. They are cognitive tools that license linguistic realizations called "metaphorical expressions" (Lakoff 2006:185–6), but the figurative language generated by underlying conceptual metaphors may rely on the metaphor in very subtle and even subconscious ways (Geeraerts 2010:27). It is easier to understand how conceptual metaphors work by starting with an example. A common conceptual metaphor cited by Lakoff is LOVE IS A JOURNEY (2006:189–96). Consider this passage (2) with multiple metaphorical expressions licensed by this underlying, implicit conceptual metaphor.

(2) When we first got married, the road was pretty smooth. We were living in the fast lane and enjoying the ride. But when my husband lost his job, it was a really unexpected detour and things got pretty rocky. We got back on track eventually, but we hit some bumps again when the kids were teenagers. When they went off to college, we realized we were at a crossroads. We were stuck in a rut and our relationship had really stalled out. We both knew we needed to do something, because we just weren't headed in the same direction anymore. We tried counseling for a while, but by that point it was obvious our marriage had completely broken down. We'd reached a dead end and we both needed to get out and go our separate ways.

Conceptual metaphors are sets of conventionalized mental connections, or mappings, between two conceptual domains (Kövecses 2010:8). A CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN is "a body of knowledge within our conceptual system that organizes related ideas and experiences" (Evans and Green 2006:14). In a conceptual metaphor, the TARGET domain is understood by making systematic connections between corresponding members of another domain, the SOURCE (Sanders 2016:49). In the passage in (2), elements of the target conceptual domain LOVE are mapped onto the more concrete and experiential source domain JOURNEY in order to explain multiple aspects of how a relationship developed and eventually failed. The underlying connections between the two domains license a whole range of figurative linguistic expressions (Evans and Green 2006:164). The mapping of specific elements in the target domain to specific elements in the source domain is not arbitrary. For example, accessing the sense of bodily discomfort associated with memories of going over bumpy roads explains something about the discomfort of difficulties in a relationship, so connecting those two elements aids understanding. The mapping between the two domains is represented in Table 1.

Table 1: Domain mapping in LOVE IS A JOURNEY.

Source domain JOURNEY	Target domain LOVE
travelers	lovers
vehicle	marriage
destination	shared life goals
road conditions	ease or difficulty of life circumstances
speed of travel	progress toward life goals
obstacles in the road	life difficulties
turns	changes
crossroads, dead end	decision points

It is possible to make novel connections between elements of the source domain and elements of the target domain in order to generate novel metaphorical expressions, but the implicit connection between the two domains (the conceptual metaphor) has to be conventional in the speech community for these novel

expressions to make sense (Lakoff 2006:194). For example, in a speech community where the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY is conventional, a person explaining a development in a relationship could use the following novel metaphorical expression (3).

(3) We were cruising along and didn't even see the brake lights ahead of us until it was too late.

Even if someone from her speech community had never before thought of a connection between seeing brake lights on a highway and warning signs of a troubled relationship, he would be able to understand the meaning if the mapping for LOVE IS A JOURNEY existed in his long-term memory.

A major difference between image metaphors and conceptual metaphors is that one cannot reduce the metaphorical expressions licensed by a conceptual metaphor to a more basic literal meaning or to a series of image metaphors. Removing all the metaphorical expressions from the passage (2), results in a paraphrase such as (4).

(4) When we first got married, circumstances were easy. Life was enjoyable with few problems. But when my husband lost his job, it was an unexpected change of circumstances and things became difficult. We were not pursuing our shared goals together for a while, but eventually we began to pursue our shared goals again until our children became teenagers and circumstances became difficult again. When they went to college, we realized we needed to make important choices. We were not pursuing our shared goals and our marriage had serious problems. We both knew we needed to do something, because we did not want to pursue the same goals. We tried counseling for a while, but by that point it was obvious our marriage was not functioning at all. We were not able to continue together and we both needed to end the relationship and pursue our different goals individually.

If the expressions that rely on the implicit metaphor are removed, the passage becomes vague and abstract. Affective elements of meaning are lost because they are accessed by thinking in terms of the familiar embodied experience of traveling: the freedom and thrill of driving fast on an unobstructed road; the sense of futility and frustration of being stuck in a rut; the feeling of indecision and helplessness of not knowing which way to turn at a crossroads; the feeling of irritation and anxiety when driving a car that frequently stalls.

Similarly, one cannot reduce the multiple associations between the two conceptual domains to a series of independent image metaphors without changing the meaning and significantly impacting the rhetorical effect of the passage for the worse. The paraphrase of (2) given in (5) does not capture the intended meaning of (2) because it changes the expository nature of the original text to a description.

(5) Being a newlywed was driving on a smooth road. Having few problems was enjoyably driving in the fast lane. Losing a job was taking a detour. Living in hard circumstances was driving on a rocky road. Living in hard circumstances was going off the road. Having teenagers was driving on a bumpy road. Coming to a decision point in a relationship was a crossroads. Feeling like we were not making progress toward our goals was being stuck in a rut. Our relationship was a car that stalled. Having different goals was traveling in different directions. Our marriage was a broken-down car. The failure of our marriage was a dead end. Ending our marriage was getting out of the car. Pursuing different goals in life was going separate ways.

The preceding examples help illustrate the differences between image metaphors and conceptual metaphors. First, conceptual metaphors are not just used to describe one thing in terms of another; they are used to reason, explain, and understand. They are permanent mental connections between two conceptual domains, usually a more concrete, experiential source domain, and a more abstract target domain. Although the metaphorical expressions they license may be novel, the conceptual metaphors themselves are conventionalized associations between conceptual domains that are shared by the speech community, and these mappings are stored in the permanent memory of the speaker (Evans and Green 2006:295). Instead of having a characteristic linguistic form like *X is Y*, conceptual metaphors license a range of metaphorical expressions that may be labeled in a variety of ways: figures of speech, idioms, imagery, figurative language, or extended metaphor. Processing the language licensed by a conceptual metaphor may involve mapping multiple elements from one conceptual domain onto multiple elements from another conceptual domain. Since conceptual metaphors are a cognitive mechanism, not simply a linguistic feature, the underlying metaphor

may extend beyond the semantics of a single sentence and require a discourse-level analysis (Geeraerts 2006:11). The meaning of the metaphorical expressions that result from conceptual domain mapping cannot be reduced to a series of image metaphors or to a more basic literal meaning without skewing or losing meaning. The differences between image metaphors and conceptual metaphors are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparing image metaphors and conceptual metaphors.

Image metaphor	Conceptual metaphor
Used to describe one image in terms of another image.	Used to understand a concept in terms of another concept.
Explicit	Usually implicit.
Take characteristic linguistic forms. (X is Y. X is like Y. X is as …as Y).	License a range of "metaphorical expressions" (figures of speech, idioms, imagery, figurative language, extended metaphor).
Require mapping one image onto another image to compare a salient point of similarity between the two images.	Require mapping multiple elements from a source domain onto multiple elements of a target domain.
Processed in the moment. Mapping between the two images is not stored in long-term memory.	Mapping between the two conceptual domains is stored in long-term memory.
Can be completely novel if the source image is familiar and conventional and elicits similar associations for everyone in the speech community.	Mapping between the two domains must be conventional in the speech community in order to license metaphorical expressions that rely on it.
Can be rephrased as a proposition that does not rely on the metaphor.	Resulting metaphorical expressions cannot be rephrased as non-metaphorical propositions without skewing or losing meaning.
Primarily descriptive.	May be used for a variety of purposes: to exhort, explain, argue, analyze.
Works at the sentence level.	Works at the sentence or discourse level.

5. Conceptual metaphors and translation

For the most part, conceptual metaphors are not addressed in the materials and resources provided to many minority language translators. Because they are usually implicit, translators might not even be aware of them. Many exegetical resource materials only address image metaphors. The resulting recommended approach to metaphor is usually based on several assumptions that do not always hold. The approach assumes the pragmatic purpose of figurative language is to describe; it assumes that figurative language can be adequately rephrased without metaphor; and it assumes that a sentence-level analysis is appropriate.

We see these assumptions in the traditional translation handbook, *Meaning-Based Translation, a Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence,* in which metaphors are presented as semantic forms that represent two underlying propositions that can be expressed using non-figurative language (Larson 1984:271). Translators are advised to identify the underlying propositions and the non-figurative meaning, as in the following from Larson (1984:272–3): "Analyze the metaphor and find the two propositions that are the implicit semantic structure behind the figure of speech. The topic will be different but the comment part of the two propositions will be identical and will represent the point of similarity that is the non-figurative meaning."

Although this approach may prepare translators well to deal with image metaphors, this approach falls short when one is dealing with figurative language licensed by conceptual metaphors, because as we have seen,

such language cannot be rephrased as a series of image metaphors, and the metaphorical language cannot be removed without skewing the meaning and possibly the intent of the communication.

6. Case study: Ephesians 6:11–17 in Tlacoapa Me'phaa

The limitations of approaching metaphor with the traditional methods described above is evident when considering the passage found in Ephesians 6:11–17. This passage about putting on the armor of God presents multiple challenges for minority language Bible translators.

> [11] Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. [12] For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. [13] Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. [14] Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, [15] and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. [16] In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. [17] Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (NIV)

This is a hortatory passage, but when translators see metaphorical expressions, they often want to translate them as image metaphors, which skews the meaning toward description. Instead of looking at the underlying conceptual metaphor of the discourse as a whole, translation helps may lead translators to attempt to deal with each expression at the sentence level, as a series of an individual image metaphors. These suggestions from UBS's *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians* (Bratcher and Nida 1982:161–162) recommend putting the text into image metaphors:

> The phrase <u>with truth as a belt tight around your waist</u> may be translated as "your faithfulness to God will be like a belt tied around your waist" or "the truth about God will be like a belt fastened around your waist" or "the true message about God will be…."
>
> It may be possible to translate <u>with righteousness as your breastplate</u> as, "your always doing what is right is like a protection for your chest."
>
> In verse 15 it may be better to preserve the parallelism with the two preceding statements about protection and armor by translating 'the fact that you are ready to announce the Good News of peace is like your shoes' or '… like the shoes that a soldier wears.'

Similar assumptions about the figurative language being a series of image metaphors is found in the Spanish translation of SIL's *Translator's Notes on Ephesians* (Thomas 2002).

> *Pablo usa seis metáforas para describir cómo debe prepararse el cristiano para pelear contra Satanás.*
> ("Paul uses six metaphors to describe how the Christian should prepare to fight against Satan.")

The translation process is further complicated because the metaphorical expressions involve mapping abstract nouns to armor; in many languages those abstract nouns require a relative clause to translate. Also, many minority language communities don't have a history with Roman armor and do not have indigenous parallels from which to draw the vocabulary to describe it. When translators attempt to translate the metaphorical expressions as image metaphors, the points of similarity between belts and truth, shoes and the gospel, helmets and salvation, swords and God's word are not salient. Since the images of the various pieces of equipment are not conventional in many minority language communities, the intended meaning is opaque if the comparisons are rendered as a series of image metaphors.

Instead of treating this passage as a series of image metaphors describing aspects of spiritual preparation, it could be better to analyze the whole passage as metaphorical expressions that rely on a conceptual metaphor, PREPARATION IS GETTING DRESSED.[1] The elements of being well-prepared spiritually to fight the powers of darkness are mapped onto various weapons and pieces of armor that a soldier would put on or take up to get

[1] There is also an underlying conceptual metaphor SPIRITUAL LIFE IS A BATTLE. This metaphor is more pervasive in Scripture and was conventional in the speech community in this case study. The metaphor SPIRITUAL LIFE IS A BATTLE licenses the specific kind of clothing and equipment used to express the metaphor PREPARATION IS GETTING DRESSED.

dressed for battle. The mapping of multiple elements of spiritual preparation onto the domain of dressing emphasizes the pragmatic purpose of the passage: to exhort Christians to be completely prepared, not lacking anything nor vulnerable in any area. The metaphor needs to be analyzed at the discourse level, not at the level of the individual sentences. It is the translator's job to understand the role of conceptual domain mapping so they can harness the power of the metaphor in their search for meaning equivalents and so that they can guide the interpretive possibilities of the reader (Yri 2003:191).

English speakers can process a fairly literal rendering of the Greek metaphorical expressions in Ephesians 6:11–17 because this conceptual metaphor, PREPARATION IS GETTING DRESSED, is conventional for English speakers. The fact that a mapping between these two domains exists for English speakers is evidenced by the way it licenses multiple familiar expressions that explain preparation in terms of dressing (or undressing), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: English expressions licensed by the metaphor PREPARATION IS GETTING DRESSED.

'Getting dressed' expression	'Preparation' meaning
Put on your thinking cap	Prepare to do mental work
Sleep with your boots on	Prepare for action or danger
Put on your big boy pants	Prepare to face something with maturity
Tighten up your belt	Prepare for sacrifice or hard times
Pull up your socks	Prepare to make a redoubled effort
Put on kid gloves	Prepare to deal with a delicate situation
Kick off your shoes, let your hair down	Prepare to relax
Have things all buttoned up	Be well-prepared with good planning
Get caught with your pants down	Be unprepared

Mappings between conceptual domains are not universal and differ from culture to culture. If the conceptual metaphor licensing figurative language is not conventional in a specific culture, people may struggle to understand the text and translate it (Tuggy 2003:259–61). The English free translation of a team-checked translation of Ephesians 6:13–17 produced by a trained local translator with twelve years of experience working full-time on a Scripture translation project in Tlacoapa Me'phaa (tpl) is shown in (7).[2]

(7) [13] Because of this, use all the power of our God, which is like metal clothes, for this reason you will win against the evil one when the evil day comes. And when you have finished with them, you will still be standing firm. [14] Stand strong and tie up well your waist with truth, and the good that you do, may it be like metal on your chest and back. [15] Be ready at all times to announce the good news that makes people live well. [16] What is most important is that you always believe in God because this is like a sheet of metal so that we can put out the flaming sticks that evil throws. [17] Remember that our Father saved you, because he is like a helmet of iron. Use the word of God which is like the machete of the spirit of God.

Concerns with this translation are immediately apparent. The passage has lost the cohesiveness of the source text. The discourse-level image of total preparation is lost as the focus shifts to individual items and sentence-level expressions of image metaphors. There is a further loss of the cohesiveness of the dressing for battle imagery because some elements, such as shoes in verse 15, are eliminated. There is some skewing of meaning, since the source text does not actually compare God to a helmet. The communicative intent of the source text is altered, as verses 16–17 have completely lost their hortatory emphasis.

[2] An interlinear gloss of the original Tlacoapa Me'phaa texts 1 and 2 is provided in an Appendix.

Before making a second attempt at translation, the translator and I talked about the underlying metaphor, PREPARATION IS GETTING DRESSED, and how each different article of clothing was associated with a different spiritual asset. The important point was that Christians need to be fully equipped with spiritual assets, just like a soldier needs to be fully dressed, with each article of armor in place and all his weapons in hand. The takeaway from the imagery of the passage should be the completeness of the soldier's outfit and the completeness of the spiritual preparation. The focus is not on describing specific salient points of similarity between salvation and helmets or truth and belts. The translator confirmed that the underlying metaphor of PREPARATION IS GETTING DRESSED is not conventional in Tlacoapa Me'phaa. This meant that more literal translations of the metaphorical expressions sound unnatural and hard to understand. However, if the underlying conceptual metaphor was made explicit at the beginning of the passage, the translator said it was possible to understand the imagery.

The English translation of the second Tlacoapa Me'phaa translation attempt is presented in (8).

(8) [13] Preparing to fight against evil spirits is like putting on your clothes. Put on the metal clothes and use the weapons that God gives to protect yourself from the enemy. Then when the day comes on which you fight them, you will be standing firm when you are finished fighting them. [14] So, stand firm because it is like using a complete outfit, so that you can be ready to fight with them. Tie up your waist well, this is the truth that God says. Put on the metal clothes that protect your chest, this is the good that you do. [15] Put on sandals, this is being prepared to tell the good news that says that we are good with God. [16] When you have all this just so, take the sheet of metal, this is your faith in God, so that the Devil will not hurt you. [17] Take your helmet, this is that God saved you. Take your machete that God gave you, this is the word of God.

Making the conceptual metaphor explicit at the beginning of the passage in 13 and explicitly mentioning the idea of a "complete outfit" in verse 14 led to several improvements. The translator was able to use a parallel structure (item of armor or weapon followed by a spiritual component) to keep the imagery more cohesive and to keep the hortatory emphasis. There was less skewing of meaning from including descriptive image metaphors. Although there is still the problem of lack of familiarity with Roman armor and weapons and lack of vocabulary to describe it (the arrows were eliminated from verse 16), this could potentially be addressed with a picture in the text. The overall exhortation to be completely prepared spiritually is noticeably clearer in this second attempt.[3]

[3] This paper was presented at the Bible Translation 2019 Conference in Dallas, Texas, on October 4, 2019. In a discussion at the conference, Rick Brown suggested that in translation projects in cultures where there is no existing familiarity with a majority language Bible translation and no commitment to maintain traditional versification or close adherence to the text structure of a majority language prestige translation, translators would potentially have more options when translating the conceptual metaphor in this Ephesians passage. If a translation like the second one presented here was still too hard to comprehend, translators could consider unlinking all the source domain elements and focusing on making the underlying metaphor of preparation very explicit by presenting the parallel preparation activities: "Being prepared for spiritual battle is like getting dressed. A soldier must be completely dressed in full armor before going out to fight, so that he will be found standing firm after the battle is over. He must put on his belt, secure his breastplate in place, put on his shoes, take up his shield, put on his helmet, and take up his sword. In the same way, you must be completely prepared for spiritual battle so that when the day of evil comes, you will be able to stand your ground. Be completely prepared with the protection and weapons God gives you; truth, righteousness, the readiness to share the gospel, faith, salvation, and the word of God. With this preparation, you will be protected and ready to fight." Some might argue that the mapping of specific elements of the domains is not arbitrary and could add a layer of experiential meaning which would be lost if the translation were done this way. Perhaps in a general sense, there is something more experientially aggressive about using the word of God (sword) or more defensive about salvation (helmet) and faith (shield). But if the underlying conceptual metaphor is not accessible, and the wording in the translation distracts hearers with trying to figure out what salient points of similarity there are between helmets and salvation or swords and the Bible, then the translation has failed to communicate the intended meaning well. In such a situation, minimally maintaining the underlying conceptual metaphor by making it explicit would be preferable to eliminating the metaphorical expressions of dressing entirely, and such a solution could be preferable to including imagery that is more confusing than explanatory.

7. Conclusion

Identifying underlying conceptual metaphors and analyzing their discourse-level function can help with the translation of difficult passages that include metaphorical expressions. If translation advisors and local translators are trained to look for underlying conceptual metaphors that license figurative language, it can significantly add to the discussion of the passage before translation begins. This discussion is especially important when underlying conceptual metaphors are not conventional in the culture. Exegetical advisors and translators should consider whether making explicit an underlying conceptual metaphor that is not conventional in a target language community might aid in producing a more comprehensible translation of figurative expressions. In some cases, translators may find it reduces the need to rephrase with non-figurative language. Understanding how conceptual metaphors work also helps correct the tendency to skew the intended meaning by rendering expository or hortatory figurative expressions as descriptive image metaphors.

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Appendix

1. Interlinear Gloss of Text 1[4]

Ikhaa	jŋgóó,	a̱-jmaa'=la	mbá	xógí'	tsiakhi̱y:u̱u̱	Ana̱'=lú,	
3SG	reason	IMP.2PL-use=2PL	INDF	all	power:3SG	Father/God=1PL.INCL	

rí	a̱sndo̱o	xú	xtíín	a̱jua̱n'	ja-'nii,	ikhaa	jŋgóó	ma̱'ŋg:a̱'=la
SUBR.R	until	like	clothes	metal	STV-be	3SG	reason	also:2PL=2PL

mu̱-ni̱	jmí'=la	tsú	ra̱-méjáán'	ríndo̱o	á-'kha̱nú	
IRR.PL-do/make	with=2PL	SUBR.R.AN	NEG-good.AN	when	POT-arrive	

mbi'ji	rí	ra̱-méján'.
day	SUBR.R	NEG-good

'Because of this, use all the power of our God, which is like metal clothes, and for this reason you will win against the evil one when the evil day comes.'

Khamí	ríndo̱o	wá-mbá'=la	ni̱-ni̱	jmí'=le,	xú	má	kuajúún
And	when	PAS-finish=2PL	PFV.PL-fight	with.PL=2PL	like	EMP	standing.up.PL.AN

xa̱'	á-'ni.
firm	POT-do/make

'And when you have finished with them, you will still be standing firm.'

A-wajúún	gúkú'=la	u̱-ru̱'jua̱a	méján'	smíd:ú'=la	jma̱a	rí	ŋakuun,	
IMP.2PL-stand	strong=2PL	IMP.2PL-tie.up	well	waist:2PL=2PL	with	SUBR.R	true	

khamí	rí	méján'	rí	nu̱-ni̱,	a̱'ni	a̱sndo̱o	xú	
and	SUBR.R	good	SUBR.C	IPFV.2PL-do/make	POT-do/make	until	like	

a̱jua̱n'	rí	ka-thamuu	náa̱	tsu̱xt:a̱'=la	khamí	náa̱	tsu̱d:u̱'=la.	
metal	SUBR.C	STV-protect	LOC	chest:2PL=2PL	and	LOC	back:2PL=2PL	

'Stand strong and tie up well your waist with truth, and the good that you do, may it be like metal on your chest and back.'

A̱-khuwa	xawii	má	xú'khui̱	rí	mu̱-tha̱-rá'ja	ajŋgáá	nuxi̱'
IMP.2PL-be	ready	EMP	like.this	SUBR.C	IRR.PL-speak-outward	word	new.INA

na-'ni	rí	ma̱-khu̱wá	tsímáá	xa̱bu̱.	
IPFV.SG-make	SUBR.C	IRR.SG-be	peaceful	person	

'Be ready at all times to announce the good news that makes people live well.'

Rí	phú	i̱tháa̱n	gí'doo	numuu,	u̱-tsiji	má	xú'khui̱	a̱k:u̱u̱n'=la
SUBR.R	INT	more	have.3SG	value	IMP.2PL-place	emp	like.this	heart:2PL=2PL

[4] Me'phaa has a phonologically complex verbal system in which three affix sets are used to mark subject and object agreement on verbs. These affix sets consist mainly of suprasegmental features, vowels, and glottal stops. The affix sets are used in different ways depending on the class of the verb, and they interact with the verb roots and aspect affixes in phonologically complicated ways. Because of interaction between underlying tones, phonological constraints that delete or move glottal stops, leftward spreading nasalization, and vowel coalescence, often the grammatical information in the underlying form is not phonetically realized. Representing all the underlying and suprasegmental grammatical information in a verb gloss requires analyzing the whole verb paradigm, and paradigms often have multiple suppletive stems. The gloss provided here does not attempt to offer that level of detail for the verb roots and aspect affixes and only phonologically realized morphemes are glossed.

náa	Ana'=lú	Mekhu:íí,	numuu	rí	ikhaa	ña-juun'	asndo
LOC	Father/God=1PL.INCL	heaven:LOC	because	SUBR.C	3SG	IPFV.SG-be	until

xú	ajuan'	wapa	rí	mu-ndjjui'yíí'	jma	aguu'	ix:uu	xkamídá
like	metal	flat	SUBR.R	IRR.PL-extinguish	with	flame	stick:3SG	straight

rí	na-da'	tsú	ra-méjá:án'.	
SUBR.R	IPFV.SG-throw	SUBR.R.AN	NEG-good:AN	

'What is most important is that you always believe in God because this is like a sheet of metal so that we can put out the flaming sticks that evil throws.'

A-khumaa'=la	rí	Ana'=lú	ne-'ni	k-hríñáa'=la,	numuu	
IMP.PL-remember=2PL	SUBR.C	Father/God=1PL.INCL	PFV.SG-do/make	STV-safe=2PL	because	

rí	ikhaa	ña-juun'	asndo	xú	xtédi	ajuan'.
SUBR.C	3SG	IPFV.SG-be	until	like	hat	metal

'Remember that our Father saved you, because he is like a helmet of iron.'

A-jmaa'=la	ajŋgá-raw:uun'	Ana'=lú	maŋgaa,	rí	ña-juun'
IMP.PL-use=2PL	word-source/mouth:3SG	Father/God=1PL.INCL	also	SUBR.R	IPFV.SG-be

asndo	xú	machídi:u	X:uu'	Ana'-lú.
until	like	machete:3sg	Spirit:3SG	Father/God=1PL.INCL

'Use the word of God which is like the machete of the spirit of God.'

2. Interlinear Gloss of Text 2

U-ni	xawi-mijná	rí	mu-ni	jmi'=la	giŋáá	xkaw:iin'
IMP.2PL-do/make	ready- REFL	SUBR.C	IRR.PL-fight	with=2PL	spirit	evil:AN.PL

asndo	xú	rí	nu-'gii'=la	xtiíín'=la	ja-'nii.	
until	like	SUBR.C	IPFV.PL-put.on=2PL	clothes=2PL	STV-be	

'Preparing to fight against evil spirits is like putting on your clothes.'

U-gii'=la	xtiín'	ajuan'	khámí	a-jmaa'=la	ajuan'	rí	na-xná'=la
IMP.2PL-put.on=2PL	clothes	metal	and	IMP.2PL-use=2PL	weapon	SUBR.R	IPFV.SG-give=2PL

Ana'=lú	rí	mu-ñawan-míjná	in:uu	tsu	ra-méjáán'.	
Father/God=1PL.INCL	SUBR.C	IRR.PL-protect-REFL	front:3SG	SUBR.R.AN	NEG-good.AN	

'Put on the metal clothes and use the weapons that God gives to protect yourself from the enemy.'

Xú'khui	ja-'nii	rindo	ma'ganú	mbi'ji	rí	ma-gi'duu=la	jmí'=le
like.this	STV-be	when	IRR-arrive	day	SUBR.R	IRR-fight=2PL	with.PL=2PL

maŋga'=la	ma-wajúún	xa'	rindo	wá-mbá	ni-gi'duu'=la	jmi'=le.	
together.2PL=2PL	IRR-remain	firm	when	PAS-finish	PFV-fight=2PL	with.PL=2PL	

'Then when the day comes on which you fight them, you would be standing firm when you are finished fighting them.'

Ikhaa	jŋgóó	a-wajúún	xa',	numuu	rí	ikhaa	ña-juun'	asndo	xú
3SG	reason	IMP.2PL-stand	firm	because	SUBR.R	3sg	IPFV-be	until	like

ri	nu-'gí	mbá	xabii	xtíña'=la,	xú'khui	ja-'nii	ma-khuwá
SUBR.C	IPFV.PL-use	INDF	outfit	clothes=2PL	like.this	EST-be	IRR-be.able

xawii rí ma̱-gi̱du̱u̱'=la jmí'=le.
ready SUBR.C IRR-fight=2PL with.PL=2PL

‘So, stand firm because it is like using a complete outfit, so that you can be ready to fight with them.’

U-ru̱'jua̱ méján' smíd:u'=la, ikhaa ri'khui̱ ña-juun' rí ŋakuun
IMP.2PL-tie well belt:2PL=2PL 3SG DEM.MED IPFV.be SUBR.R true

rí na-'thá Ana=lú Mekhu:íí.
SUBR.R IPFV-say Father/God=1PL.INCL heaven:LOC

‘Tie up your waist well, this is the truth that God says.’

U̱-'gí' rí xú xtíín a̱jua̱n' rí ka-thajmuu náa̱ tsu̱xt:a'=la,
IMP.2PL-put.on SUBR.R like clothes metal SUBR.R STV-protect LOC chest:1PL=1PL.INCL

ikhaa ri'khui̱ ña-juun ri méján' rí nu̱-ni̱.
3SG DEM.MED IPFV-be SUBR.R good SUBR.C IPFV.PL-do

‘Put on the metal clothes that protect your chest, this is the good that you do.’

U̱-gí' chád:a'la ikhaa ri'khui̱ ñajuun' rí khuwa
IMP.2PL-put.on sandals:2pl=2PL 3SG DEM.MED IPFV-be SUBR.R be

xawii rí mu̱-thará'ja ajŋgáá nuxi̱' rí na-'thá rí méján'
ready SUBR.C IRR.PL-speak word new SUBR.R IPFV.SG-say SUBR.C good

jmi'=la Ana'lú Mekhu:íí.
with.PL=2PL Father/God=2PL heaven:LOC

‘Put on sandals, this is being prepared to tell the good news that says that we are good with God.’

Ríndo̱o rí kua'd:áá má xógí' rí'khui̱=rá, u̱-ratuun a̱jua̱n'
When SUBR.C have:2PL EMP all DEM.MED=TOP IMP.2PL-grasp metal

rí wapa ikaa ri'khui̱ ña-juun' rí wíji̱ ak:u̱u̱n'=la
SUBR.R flat 3SG DEM.MED IPFV-be SUBR.R standing.up heart:2PL=2PL

náa̱ in:uu Ana'=lú múrí xá-'ni gínáa̱'=la gixa̱.
LOC front:3SG Father/God=2PL so.that NEG.IRR-make suffer=2pl devil

‘When you have all this just so, take the sheet of metal, this is your faith in God, so that the Devil will not hurt you.’

U̱-gí' xtédi̱' a̱jua̱n', ikhaa ríkuhi̱ ña-juun' rí ne-'ni
IMP.2PL-put.on hat metal 3sg DEM.MED IPFV-be SUBR.R IPFV.PL-make

khári̱ña̱a' Ana'=lú.
safe.AN Father/God=1PL.INCL

‘Take your helmet, this is that God saved you.’

U-ra̱thuun machídi'=la rí na-xná'=la Ana'=lú, ikaa rí'khui̱
IMP.2PL-grasp machete=2pl SUBR.R IPFV.SG-give=2PL Father/God=2PL 3SG DEM.MED

ña-juun' ajŋg:óó Ana'lú.
IPFV-be word:3SG Father/God=2PL

‘Take your machete that God gave you, this is the word of God.’