Where the Water Goes

Translation of the Gerund-Participle, Metaphors and Similes in a Scientific Report about Ocean Science

Author: Mia Bonn
Supervisor: Helena Frännhag / Fredrik Heinat
Examiner: Chantal Ottesen
Term: VT14
Subject: English
Level: Advanced
Course Code: 4EN31E
Abstract

The aim of this study is to discuss which strategies may be used in translation from English to Swedish of a scientific text on oceanography. Focus is on how to deal with translation of the gerund-participle form, metaphors and similes. The source text is *Mapping the Deep: the Extraordinary Story of Ocean Science*, written by Robert Kunzig (2000), from which a selection of interesting and challenging examples are chosen to be discussed and analyzed. A theoretical background is given about the gerund-participle form according to Huddleston & Pullum (2002) and Ingo (2007), and about metaphors and similes according to Ingo (2007) and Newmark (1988). The discussion and analysis is framed around Vinay’s and Darbelnet’s translation model presented in their *Comparative Stylistics of French and English* (1995), a model with a linguistic approach, based on two general translation methods – direct translation and oblique translation.

The examples analyzed in this study are translated with both a direct translation strategy and oblique translation strategy using varying procedures. As a result, the analysis and discussion show that there is no particular given strategy or procedure that applies to the translation of gerund-participles, metaphors and similes from English to Swedish, but instead each and every example and situation needs to be carefully assessed in aspect to the context, as well as source and target language structure and culture.

**Keywords:** gerund-participle, metaphor, simile, Vinay and Darbelnet’s translation model
**Contents**

1. **Introduction** .......................................................... 1
   
   1.1 Aim ........................................................................... 1
   
   1.2 Method and Material .................................................. 2
   
   1.3 Background Theory ................................................... 2
      
      1.3.1 Translation Model of Vinay and Darbelnet ............... 2
      
      1.3.2 The Gerund-Participle ......................................... 6
      
      1.3.3 Metaphors and Similes ......................................... 9
   
2. **Analysis** ................................................................. 11
   
   2.1 The Gerund-Participle ................................................. 12
   
   2.2 Metaphors and Similes ................................................. 16
   
3. **Conclusion** .............................................................. 22
   
**Reference List** ............................................................ 24
1. Introduction

The main aim of translation is to enable cross-cultural intra-lingual communication among people. Therefore, the translator plays a very important role as a cross-cultural transmitter, attempting to interpret a variety of texts as faithfully and accurately as possible. Consequences of incorrect translations can be detrimental; thinking of for example misleading or confusing information in science, medicine or legal matters. Consequently, it is important to have an excellent command of language and translation strategies and specific knowledge areas to produce a faithful and accurate translation.

However, even if the translator has all the prerequisites, certain translation issues can still constitute difficulties, where a direct translation is not possible. In these cases, which can be of cultural or linguistic kind, some kind of re-writing is needed. When dealing with these difficulties, is it much up to the translator’s skills and insight to be able to produce a target text faithful in meaning and style. The source text used as material in this paper, contains metaphors, gerund-participial forms, cultural-specific phenomena as well as scientific-specific terminology, which might require substantial changes in the target text.

This paper will focus on two of these problematic areas, more precisely the English gerund-participle form and metaphors (included similes) translated into Swedish. The gerund-participle often leave things unsaid, forcing the translator to decide for example what connection the participle has to the predicate. A gerund-participle is formed by a verb and the suffix –ing, as in for example: I am running. Metaphors and similes are often very culture-specific, and pose difficulties in finding appropriate solutions in the target language. A metaphor changes meaning of words that are based on the similarities between two referents, as for example: it’s raining cats and dogs. Since finding solutions to dilemmas is a constant in the work of the translator, a study of these problems along with a discussion of possible solutions, is of interest and importance for professionals, translation students, and those otherwise interested in the subject of translation.

1.1 Aim

This paper aims to discuss which strategies may be used in translation from English to Swedish of a scientific text on oceanography. Focus will be on how to deal with

1) the gerund-participle form

2) metaphors and similes
1.2 Method and Material

The method used for conducting the study and producing this paper, was firstly to translate an English scientific source text (henceforth ST) about oceanography into a Swedish target text (henceforth TT). In order to do this, I used aids such as parallel texts to ensure that the terminology was correctly translated, as well as Internet sources to obtain a deeper understanding of the scientists mentioned in the text. Furthermore, thesauruses were used to avoid repetition. From my material (the ST and the corresponding TT), I then picked examples of metaphors, similes and the gerund-participle form that I found interesting and challenging to translate, for qualitative, in-depth analysis. Because the data was obtained from a limited source - the ST, comprising only about 10 pages, and the corresponding TT - a qualitative analysis seemed more appropriate than a quantitative analysis. This way, the paper produces an in-depth analysis, which is very interesting for translators translating similar texts.

The ST is a passage taken from a popular science book on the sea and its science. It is an extraordinary story about sea currents and how they control our climate. The report, *Mapping the Deep; the Extraordinary Story of Ocean Science*, is written by Robert Kunzig (2000). *Mapping the Deep* is not only aimed at oceanographers; it is aimed at anybody who has an interest in the sea. It uses a language understandable not only for oceanographers. The style is very colourful and descriptive, with a figurative language and many metaphors. Consequently, the TT attempts to follow the same kind of style, with the target text readers being oceanographers as well as laymen with an interest in the sea.

1.3 Background theory

In this section there will first be a presentation of the translation model on which the analysis will be based – the equivalence model of Vinay and Darbelnet. Next, the two kinds of phenomenon that is going to be discussed in the analysis; the gerund-participle form and metaphors (included similes) will be presented.

1.3.1 Translation Model of Vinay and Darbelnet

In the sections about the gerund-participle form, metaphors and similes, it will be illustrated that it is often not possible with a literal translation to convey the same meaning from a ST to the TT. In the case of metaphors this is because many metaphors’ apparent equivalents may be out of date or affected or used by different social class or age, in the case of which the
The translator has to replace the source language image with another established target language image, or reduce them to sense. The gerund-participle form cannot always be translated literally to Swedish or other language that do not have the same syntactic possibility to use a similar verb form. Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet presented in their *Comparative Stylistics of French and English* (1995), a translation model with a linguistic approach, based on two general translation methods – direct translation and oblique translation.

Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 31-40) give directions about the procedures to follow when dealing with the two strategies. The three procedures for a direct translation strategy are:

**a) Borrowing.** The source language word is transferred directly to the target language. This applies to for example the Finnish word *sauna*, which is exactly the same in the English language. Other examples of borrowings from Swedish to English are *gravad lax*, in English *gravlax* and *smörgåsbord*, in English *smorgasbord*.

**b) Calque.** This is a special kind of borrowing, where a language borrows an expression form of another, but then translates literally each of its elements. Calques as well as borrowings are often fully integrated in the target language, although sometimes with some semantic change. Some examples of calque from English to Swedish are *teenager* – *tonåring* and *skyscraper* – *skyskrapa*.

**c) Literal translation.** This is a word for word translation that is common in translation between languages from the same language family and culture. According to Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 34-35), a literal translation should always be used unless it gives a different meaning, has no meaning, is impossible for structural reasons, does not have a corresponding expression within the metalinguistic experience of the target language or corresponds to something at a different level of language.

As English and Swedish both belong to the same language family – the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family – a word for word translation is sometimes possible. An example of a stock metaphor that can be translated literally is:

1) A heart of stone  
   Ett hjärta av sten

Again, an example of gerund-participle used as an adjective and where a literal translation is possible is:
2) The jumping rabbit

Den hoppande haren

In those cases where a direct translation is not possible, an oblique strategy should according to Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 34) be used. This strategy consists of four procedures:

a) **Transposition.** This involves a grammatical change like for example replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message, such as a change from a verb to a noun, or an adverb to a verb. Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 94) consider this the most common structural change done by translators. An example with gerund-participle could be:

3) The *running* horse is thirsty

Hästen som *springer* är törstig

Instead of using a literal translation, which also would be possible, the translator can decide to use a transposition for a more idiomatic target text, and in this case change the gerund-participle *running* used as an adjective to a verb, *springer*.

b) **Modulation.** This changes the semantics and point of view between source language and target language, and should be used when a literal or transposed translation results in a grammatically correct utterance, but is still unsuitable, unidiomatic or awkward in the target language. Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 246) consider the usage of modulation as “the touchstone of a good translator” whereas transposition “simply shows a very good command of the target language”. Modulation involves a very wide range of phenomena, and can also be obligatory or optional. An example of an optional modulation is:

4) *It is not that difficult*

*Det är ganska lätt (it is quite easy)*

Here, we see the modulation negation of opposite, where an optional way of the target language is to say *it is quite easy* instead of *it is not that difficult*. Obligatory modulations are utterances that are required by the lexicon or the grammar of the target language. An example of an obligatory modulation is:

5) What is the *time*?

*Vad är klockan? (what is the *clock*?)*

These utterances are fixed in both the source language and target language and the translator has no option of translating *what is the time* literally: an obligatory modulation needs to be used.

c) **Equivalence.** Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 38) refer to this strategy when the languages
describe the same meaning by different textual structure or symbols. This happens often in
translations of for example animal sounds, idioms, proverbs and clichés. An equivalence
procedure in metaphors could be a change of symbol, as in:

6) Talking about the devil

När man talar om trollen (talking about the trolls)

This example can also be argued to be an obligatory modulation, as in change of symbol in a
metaphor. Replacing the source language image with another established target language
image – if one exists that is equally frequent – is also what Newmark (1988: 108) describes as
common procedure for translating stock metaphors. Looking at gerund-participle forms, an
English ST and Swedish TT often need an equivalence strategy when a gerund-participle
cannot be literally translated with a source language gerund/participle. Ingo’s (2007: 182)
example, where a translation is challenging because it is unclear what kind of connection the
gerund-participle has to the predicate in the clause, is:

7) hunting alone, he cannot get any help

när han jagar ensam (when he hunts alone)

Here, the translator can decide to translate with a temporal, causal, conditional or concessive
connection to the predicate, and the decision needs to be made depending on the context of
the gerund-participle. However, in all of these ways, an equivalent strategy has been used as
the languages describe the same meaning by different textual structures.

d) Adaptation. Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 39) refer to this procedure when the cultural
connotations do not exist in the target culture. This can also be argued to be a kind of
situational equivalence, as in:

8) Christmas Day

Julafton (Christmas Eve)

In Britain, Christmas is celebrated on Christmas Day the same way as it is celebrated in
Sweden on Christmas Eve. So even if the actual day is different, it contains the same kind of
cultural connotations with gifts, Christmas dinner and so on.

Like demonstrated in the examples above, the strategies can be used by
themselves or in combination with each other. As a matter of fact, Vinay & Darbelnet (1995:
40) admit that it is in some translations difficult to distinguish between the strategies.
1.3.2 The Gerund-Participle

The English language’s gerund-participle form, is a very interesting phenomenon for a translator since the form may carry the functions of an adjective, a verb or a noun. Traditionally, the terms have been divided into gerund and present participle, based on the idea that gerunds are like nouns and present participles are like adjectives, but Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 1220-1223) argue that there is no justification for making an inflectional distinction; the forms belong to the same inflectional category.

Looking at the traditional present participle, it can combine with an auxiliary to form the progressive aspect, like in Huddleston & Pullum’s (2002:80), example 1).

1) The train to Bath is now approaching platform 3.

But it needs to be distinguished, whether the present participle is a verb form or a participial adjective. Mostly there are no problems separating the two, but sometimes there can be ambiguous cases. Huddleston & Pullum’s (2002:80) example 2) is a form of verb, 3) is a participial adjective whereas 4) is an ambiguous case.

2) They are entertaining the prime minister and her husband.

3) The show was entertaining.

4) Her parents are entertaining.

In 4), the meaning can be interpreted as something as “her parents are entertaining some guests”, which would be having a verb form, or as “her parents have entertaining qualities”, which would be having a participial adjective.

The traditional gerund is understood as a word derived from a verb base, which functions as a noun. Huddleston & Pullum (2002:81) give the following example:

5) Destroying the files was a serious mistake.

Destroying the files, could be replaced with the destruction of the files, where destruction clearly is a noun. Consequently, the primary difference between a gerund and a participle is that a participle has functions comparable with an adjective and a gerund has functions comparable with a noun. Gerunds do not either combine with auxiliaries the way participles do.
Accordingly, it is the function of the gerund that can be comparable to a noun, but the gerund is not always a noun. Dictionaries often define a gerund as a verbal noun, but the *destroying* could be analyzed also as a form of a verb in example 5). It is important to be able to separate gerund forms that may function as a noun, but which may on a word level be a verb, with genuine nouns ending with –ing. These genuine nouns can according to Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 81) be referred to as gerundial nouns, like seen in their example:

6) She had witnessed the *killing* of the birds.

These nouns and verbs are similar looking, but have major grammatical differences. To be able to tell these similar looking nouns and verbs apart, the main grammatical differences need to be recognized. They are: complementation, modification by adjective or adverb, determiners and plural inflection. Nouns and transitive verbs takes different complementation; transitive verbs can take noun phrase objects while nouns take an *of* preposition phrase. It is also possible to have predicative complements with verbs but not with nouns. Looking at the modification by an adjective or an adverb; verbs are modified by adverbs and nouns by adjectives. Regarding determiners, nouns can take the determiner *the*, while verbs cannot. Finally, gerundial nouns can very often be plural, while this is never possible with verbs. At the word level there are normally not any difficulties in distinguishing between nouns and verbs depending on the virtue on their dependents, but if there are no such dependent, ambiguities may arise. This is seen in Huddleston & Pullum’s (2002: 82) examples 7), 8) and 9), where 7) is a verb, 8) a noun, but 9) is an ambiguous case.

7) Kim hates *writing* thank-you letters.

8) Kim was involved in the *writing* of the letters.

9) Kim had been talking about *writing*.

In 7), the verb can be distinguished by the fact that it is followed by an object, in 8) the noun can be distinguished by the fact that it is surrounded by *the* and *of*. In 9), *writing* can be interpreted as a verb as if it were followed by an object, or as a noun as talking about *writing* as a phenomenon.

Consequently, a distinction between gerund and present participle cannot be sustained, according to Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 82). Historically the forms had different
sources, but in modern English the forms are identical. Therefore, the verb marked by the –ing suffix has by Huddleston & Pullum (2002:82) been labelled gerund-participle.

In translating the gerund-participle form into Swedish, the present progressive aspect is normally translated with present tense and past progressive aspect with past tense or with pseudo-coordination. Pseudo-coordination defined by Josefsson (2011: 177) is a coordination of two verbs and the Swedish conjunction och, which may have the same progressive interpretation that frames another event. An example of this kind of pseudo-coordination is:

10) Han satt i fåtöljen och läste en bok   He was sitting in his armchair, reading a book
   (not läsande en bok)

On the other hand, sometimes the gerund-participle may be challenging for a translator, even if it is used as a verb. This is according to Ingo (2007: 182) because of the things that are left unsaid, for example what kind of connection the participle has to the predicate in the clause (temporal, causal, conditional, concessive etc.) Consequently, when translating into Swedish the translator has to decide from the context what the connection should be, which is particular to Swedish and other languages that do not have the same syntactic possibility to use a similar verb form. As Ingo (2007: 182) describes; depending on the connection in the context, the translator can decide to translate hunting alone, he cannot get any help with a temporal connection: när han jagar ensam (when he hunts alone), with a causal connection: emedan han jagar ensam (because he hunts alone), with a conditional connection: om han jagar ensam (if he hunts alone), or with a concessive connection: fastän han jagar (even though he hunts alone).

A direct translation of the English gerund-participle in Swedish would be –ande/ende, but these endings should not be overused in the Swedish language. Like Catharina Grünbaum (2010) writes in the magazine Språktidningen ”Every sharp translator from English knows that the English present participle, the –ing form, should far from always be reproduced with a Swedish present participle”.
1.3.3 Metaphors and Similes

Metaphors are phenomena found in all types of text such as fictional, academic and scientific texts. According to Ingo (2007: 118), they are changes of meanings of words that are based on the similarities between two referents. Ingo (2007: 118-119) gives the examples 1) and 2):

1) The *neck* of a bottle

2) The *mouth* of a river

Here, the top of a bottle is compared with a person’s neck in 1) and the place where a rivers runs out in the seas is compared with a person’s mouth in 2). Ingo (2007: 118) claims that the metaphor normally has an emotional function in novels. An example of an emotional metaphor is:

3) Love is a *flower*

On the other hand, in academic or scientific texts the metaphor may instead be used for cognitive reasons to make certain ideas clearer (Ingo, 2007:118). A cognitive metaphor refers to the understanding of one idea, in terms of another idea. An example of a cognitive metaphor from the ST is:

4) Move at a *glacial pace*

In 4), the referent *glacial pace* is compared with the very slow pace the polar water masses move.

Similes are defined as “a phrase that uses the words *like* or *as* to describe someone or something by comparing it with someone or something else that is similar” (Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia). Unlike a metaphor, the resemblance is indicated by the words “like” or “as”. The difference is shown in Merriam-Webster’s examples:

5) She *is as* fierce *as* a tiger

6) She *is* a tiger when she is angry

Example 5) is a simile while 6) is a metaphor.

Newmark (1988: 107-113) distinguish between six different types of metaphors: dead, cliché, stock, adapted, recent and original, and gives some advice about how to deal
with their translations. Dead metaphors are the type of metaphor where you are not very conscious of the image due to extensive, repetitive popular usage. They normally refer to universal terms of space and time, the main part of the body, general ecological features and main human activities. Examples of dead metaphors are: lose face, head teacher, to lend a hand, to run for office.

Newmark (1988: 107) defines cliché metaphors as “metaphors that have perhaps temporarily outlived their usefulness, that are used as a substitute for clear thought, often emotively, but without corresponding to the facts of the matter”. Examples of cliché metaphors and similes are: Don’t put off for tomorrow what you can do today, as easy as pie, there’s no place like home. According to Newmark (1988: 107-108) a translator should get rid of clichés of any kind when they are used in an informative text. There is a choice of replacing the cliché metaphor with sense, i.e. with the literal meaning of the metaphor, or to replace it with a less tarnished metaphor.

Newmark (1988: 108) defines stock metaphors like “an established metaphor which in an informal context is an efficient and concise method of covering a physical and/or mental situation both referentially and pragmatically”. Stock metaphors can be tricky to translate, since their apparent equivalents may be out of date or affected or used by different social class or age. Translators should not use metaphors that do not come natural to them. A common procedure for translating stock metaphors is to replace the source language image with another established target language image, if one exists that is equally frequent. Another way of translating stock metaphors is reducing them to sense or literal language. When using this method, the emotive or pragmatic impact of the metaphor will be lost. Newmark (1988: 108) gives examples of stock metaphors like keep the pot boiling, wooden face, and oil the wheels. Cliché and stock metaphors overlap, and it is up to the translator to distinguish between them.

Adapted metaphors are according to Newmark (1988:111) stock metaphors that have been adapted in some way. Newmark (1988: 111) gives the example that Ronal Regan used “the ball is a little in their court”, adapted from the stock metaphor “the ball is in their court” (literal meaning: it is up to them to make the next decision or step). In translation, an adapted stock metaphor should where possible, be translated by an equivalent adapted metaphor.

Newmark (1988: 111) defines recent metaphors as “metaphorical neologisms”, which have spread rapidly. It can designate a recently current object or process, or also a
number of qualities that continually renew themselves in language. Newmark (1988:111) provides the examples: In or with it (fashionable), pissed (drunk) or spastic (stupid). Recent metaphors are treated like other neologisms, with particular reference to the referent and the level of language of the metaphor. The recent metaphors described by Newmark (1988:111-112) are more metonymies than actual metaphors. A metonymy is “a figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated” (Merriam-Webster encyclopedia). Metonymy works by the association between two referents, whereas metaphor works by the similarity between them.

Original metaphors are created or quoted by the source language writer and these should normally be translated literally in authoritative and expressive texts whether they are universal, cultural or subjective. Newmark (1988: 113) sets this principle, because an original metaphor contains the core of an important writer’s message, his personality or his comment on life. This kind of metaphor is also a source of enrichment for the target language. However, Newmark (1988: 112) also says that if an original cultural metaphor is a little obscure and not very important, it can sometimes be replaced with a descriptive metaphor or reduced to sense. In non-literary texts, an original metaphor can be translated literally and the metaphor will retain the interest of the readership, but it can also be modified or reduced to sense to suit the style of the text. Here, it is up to the translator whether he wants to emphasize the sense or the image.

Ingo (2007: 120) states that the translator needs to carefully assess whether the phenomena that are being compared in the source language and source culture, can at all be understood the same way in the source language and target language. A direct translation of metaphors building on a certain religion, a small geographical area or a small group of individuals should thus be avoided. Naturally it is also important when translating similes that the translator carefully assess the phenomena that are being compared, like Glucksberg (2001: 30) says: The translator has to recognize in which regard two items are alike in the source culture and target culture.

2. Analysis

In the following section I will analyze the aspects mentioned in the aim and in the theoretical background sections, i.e. the gerund-participle form, metaphors and similes.
2.1 The Gerund-Participle

The ST contains a fair amount of gerund-participles, of which some will be discussed in the examples below.

In example 1) it is shown how a gerund-participle in a prepositional phrase is translated by using a temporal clause in the TT. A literal strategy could possibly have been used, but results in a slightly unidiomatic utterance.

1) Slowly at first, but with gathering speed as more of us join in, and it becomes clear that there is nothing to catch us – no water underneath that is denser than us.

The gerund-participle could be translated literally with a participle in the TT; med ökande hastighet, but the utterance together with the rest of the sentence becomes somewhat clumsy and unidiomatic; Först långsamt, men med ökande hastighet när fler av oss ansluter sig, och det blir uppenbart att det inte finns något som kan fånga upp oss. If I had chosen to use a participle clause in the TT, the rest of the sentence would have needed to be re-constructed like in for example; Först långsamt, men med ökande hastighet när fler av oss ansluter sig, blir det uppenbart att det inte finns något som kan fånga upp oss. This construction is completely idiomatic, but a nuance of the specific style of the ST and consequently I chose the temporal clause construction instead. Here, Vinay & Darbelnet’s (1995: 94) transposition procedure has taken place where an attributive adjective gathering has been transformed into a verb ökar in the TT. I decided to use a temporal clause; när fler av oss..., instead of a causal clause; eftersom fler av oss ansluter sig ökar hastigheten, since it is still clear from the context that the speed gathers because more water join in, but it is the temporal aspect that is interesting for the story.

In example 2), the gerund-participle in the TT is used as a gerundial noun and a typical way of translation into Swedish, according to Ingo (2007: 183-184) is with a Swedish subordinate “att” clause.

2) Then the falling starts again

Sedan börjar vi (att) falla igen
A literal translation according to Vinay & Darbelnet’s (1995: 34-35) translation strategies would be *Sedan börjar fallandet igen*, which in such is not wrong or even unidiomatic, but results in the kind of stilted TT that wants to be avoided, particularly when the ST has a very flowing language style. The solution to translate the gerund-participle used as a noun, with a subordinate “att” clause in the target language, results in a much more idiomatic utterance. Admittedly, a *vi (we)* has been added to the ST, even if a pronoun is not mentioned in the TT. However, we infer from the greater context that it is *we* who are falling and not anybody else. Here, Vinay & Darbelnet’s (1995: 94) transposition procedure has also been used, since the gerundial noun *falling* used as a subject in the ST is changed into the verb *falla* in the TT.

In the above examples, there has not been much doubt in which way the ST gerund-participle should be translated, but in example 3) the context needs to be studied carefully to be able to determine which solution to decide on.

3) *Falling, we pull shallower water in* behind us from our right flank       *När vi faller, drar vi från vår högra sida med oss grundare vatten.*

Here, the translation options are not only the temporal clause used *när vi faller* and a literal translation *fallande,* but also a causal clause *för att vi faller,* a conditional clause *om vi faller,* or a concessive clause *fastän vi faller.* A literal translation can be excluded due to the stilted form, and from the context, it is clear that the water mass *is* falling, so a conditional clause can be excluded. It is also quite clear that it is because of the falling that water is pulled in behind, which means a conditional clause can also be excluded. Left to choose from is *när vi faller* or *för att vi faller,* which both are alternatives. Studying the context, it must be because the water mass falls that it pulls in other water behind. But since a causal clause would sound rather strange as the story follows a trail and a time-line, my final choice is a temporal clause *när vi faller,* since the meaning can also include the cause. Yet again, the transposition procedure by Vinay & Darbelnet has been used, since the gerund-participle *falling* is an adjective in the ST and a verb in the TT.

Also a typical way according to Ingo (2007: 183) is to translate an English gerund-participle to Swedish as a relative clause. An example of this from the ST is seen in 4):
4) Yet still our mighty host advances, 80 Amazon Rivers *marching* along the ocean floor
Men ändå avancerar vår väldiga massa, 80 Amazonfloder *som marscherar* längs havsbotten

In this example, the two options of translation procedures classified by Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 34-38) are a literal procedure, *80 Amazonfloder marscherande längs havsbotten* or an equivalence procedure changing the structure of the text, in this case the ST gerund-participle to a relative clause in the ST; *80 Amazonfloder som marscherar*. As the result of the literal procedure is stilte in the target language, I decided on the equivalence procedure with a relative clause in the TT.

An additional case where an equivalence procedure has been used in a typical way of translating a gerund-participle is seen in example 5):

5) All through the South Atlantic our army remains intact, *hugging* the western slope of the ocean basin.
Hela vägen genom södra Atlanten hålls vår armé intakt *då vi håller oss fast* vid den västra sluttningen av havsbassängen.

Here, the reason that the army (referring to the water mass) is kept intact is because it hugs the slope of the ocean basin. Consequently, the best translation option is a causal clause, which according to Ingo (2007: 183) is one of the typical ways of translating English gerund-participle forms to Swedish. For idiomatic reasons, *hugging* is translated to *håller fast* instead of a literal *kramar*, which results in a solution where a participle clause in the ST would be old fashioned (*hållandes oss fast* vid den...). The structure of the text has been changed from a gerund-participle clause in the ST to a causal clause in the TT, which means that an equivalence procedure has taken place. In this case, Vinay & Darbelnet’s (1995: 246) modulation procedure, which changes the semantics and point of view between source language and target language, can also be argued to have been used: *Hugging* would directly translated be *kramar*, but for idiomatic reasons is *håller fast* a better option.

The option to translate a gerund-participle clause with a coordination is also found in the ST, like seen in example 6).

6) There the trade winds part the waters, and tropical heat mixes down into us, *buoying* us to the surface.
Där delar passadvindarna vattnen och tropisk hetta blandas med oss *och lyfter* oss till ytan.
In this case, the only translation options were a literal translation or equivalence procedure with a change in textual structure between ST and TT. After determining that a literal translation yet again is too stilted (lyftandes oss), the choice was the equivalence procedure changing the ST gerund-participle into a coordination in the TT. Even though a literal translation with the participle-s construction (-ande/ende + s) in the target language is fashionably used today in spoken language, a construction borrowed from the English language and connected with an old form of the Swedish language (Grünbaum 2010), it is not suitable in this kind of text.

A describing example from the ST of how inappropriate a literal translation could be is shown in 7). Here, the modulation procedure needs to be used.

7) Clothing and feeding the Bavarian troop was one of Rumford’s responsibilities.

A literal translation of the gerund-participles in the ST results in a non-understandable utterance in the TT, klädande och matande den bayerska truppen, and cannot be used. These gerund-participles are best translated with an infinitive construction in the TT, but even a literal translation of the meaning of the gerundial nouns clothing and feeding; att klä och mata den bayerska truppen, does not work. This utterance gives the impression that Rumford was spoon-feeding the troop. My solution of the dilemma was an addition of förse (provide) into the TT, to be able to produce an idiomatic utterance in the source language (to provide the Bavarian troop with clothes and food was one of Rumford’s responsibilities). Consequently, the translation procedure used in this case is Vinay & Darbelnet’s (1995: 246) modulation. Modulation changes the semantics and point of view between source language and target language, and should be used when a literal or transposed translation results in a grammatically incorrect utterance.

Finally, there are also cases in the ST where a gerund-participle also can be translated with a participle TT, in other words a literal translation procedure is used. An example of this is:

8) They must have been observed before, by cooks standing over boiling pots of soup if by no one else

De måste ha blivit observerade förut, av kockar som stått över kokande soppgrytor om inte av någon annan
The gerund-participle *boiling* used as an adjective in the ST, can easily be literally translated with a participle also used as an adjective in the TT. The usage of *kokande* about liquids is so common and idiomatic that it would be much more unidiomatic to reconstruct the gerund-participle in the ST to a relative clause (*soppgryttor som kokar*) or anything else in the TT.

Like seen in the discussion above, there is no certain strategy that can be used in the translation of the English gerund-participle into Swedish. Instead, every instance needs to be carefully assessed to see which translation strategy and which procedure is most suitable. In some cases, even a combination of two strategies has been used.

### 2.2 Metaphors and Similes

Although the ST is a scientific report, it also contains sections with very expressive and descriptive text that has many original metaphors as well as some similes. Again, the informative sections of the scientific ST contain many of the other types of metaphors, such as for example stock metaphors. Most metaphors, but especially original ones are challenging for the translator.

According to Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 34-35), a literal translation should always be used in any translation unless it gives a different meaning, has no meaning, is impossible for structural reasons, does not have a corresponding expression within the metalinguistic experience of the target language or corresponds to something at a different level of language. In example 9), a stock metaphor where a literal translation is not possible is shown.

9) In our *mind’s eye* we can almost see it  *För vårt inre öga* kan vi nästan se det hela whole

*Mind’s eye*, would literally translated be *själen öga*. This utterance does not mean anything, so a literal translation is not an option in this case. The metaphor is an established expression in English, meaning, according to Marriam-Webster thesaurus (2014) *something imagined or pictured in the mind*. In some languages, for example Finnish, there is an established literal translation “sieni silmissä”, even if Finnish and English do not belong to the same language family or culture. If a literal translation is not possible, an oblique translation strategy should be used according to Vinay and Darbelnet (1995: 34-35). In Swedish, there is an established expression for the metaphor *in my mind’s eye*, which is *för mitt inre öga* (literally for my inner
eye). This would according to Vinay and Darbelnet (1995: 38) be an equivalence translation strategy, where languages describe the same meaning by different textual structure or symbols. Another option for a translation of mind’s eye that I considered was to omit the established translation for the metaphor and reduce it to sense like: ser vi det hela framför oss (literally see the whole thing in front of us). According to Newmark (1988: 108), a common procedure for translating stock metaphors is to replace the source language image with another established target language image, but it is also possible to reduce them to sense or literal language. But when reducing to sense, the pragmatic impact of the metaphor may be lost. Following this advice of Newmark (1988: 108), I decided to use the translation method of replacing the source language image with another established target language image.

There are also some stock metaphors in English that do not have any established metaphor images in Swedish. An example of such a stock metaphor is shown in example 10).

10) Swallow’s own contemporaneous account gives a better idea of the flavor of the work – and of physical oceanography in general:

Swallows egna dåtida redovisning ger en bättre idé om hur jobbet i själva verket var – och om fysisk oceanografi i allmänhet:

Again, according to Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 34) a direct translation should be used if possible. Directly translated to Swedish, this would be ge en bättre idé om arbetets smak/doft. This is not at all idiomatic in Swedish, so another solution needs to be adopted. Flavor of something can keep many different meanings in English, but most often it refers to the nature, feeling or being of something. Since it has been established that a direct translation is not possible, the translation needs, according to Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 34) be solved with an oblique strategy. My solution is in this case is i själva verket, which gives the approximate same meaning as flavor of. Unfortunately, the fine details of the particular expression flavor of are left out, when it is translated with the basic is (literally gives a better idea of how the work actually was). This oblique translation is best described with a modulation, which changes the semantics and point of view of the source language, and should be used when a literal or transposed translation results in a grammatically correct utterance, but is still unsuitable, unidiomatic or awkward in the target language (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995: 36). My translation solution is also backed up by Newmark’s (1988: 109) suggestion to reduce a stock
metaphor to sense, where an established target language image does not exist, even though the pragmatic impact of the ST metaphor may be lost.

In example 11), an original metaphor from the expressive parts of the ST is illustrated. The metaphor compares the similarities of falling of the water like a *parachute drop* and a *headlong rush*.

11) Then the falling starts again. Only now it is not a *parachute drop* but a *headlong rush*

Literally translated into the target language, this would be “Fast nu är det inte ett *fallskärmsfall*, utan ett *huvudstupa rusande*”. Although the source language culture and the target language culture are fairly similar and a *parachute drop* has the approximate same connotations in both languages, the language structures and usage are different. The direct translation is not incorrect, or not even unidiomatic, but it still does not sound as natural and finely tuned as the source language. Therefore, I made the choice to use Vinay & Darbelnet’s (1995: 35) oblique translation strategy, which would best convey the finely tuned meaning of the source language. *Parachute drop*, refers to a very slow falling, the air stopping a fast fall. In the target language, *dala ner*, gives connotations to for example a leaf or snow slowly falling down, being held up by the air. *Dala ner* is completely idiomatic in the target language and gives the same meaning and connotations as *parachute drop*, which is the reason why I decided to use this oblique strategy. The same optional strategy is used for the translation of *headlong rush*. The direct translation *huvudstupa rusande* is slightly unidiomatic and strange, whereas an oblique strategy works better like in *att störtdyka*. Referring to Vinay & Darbelnet’s (1995: 36-40) oblique procedures, this would involve both equivalence where the languages describe the same meaning by different textual structure or symbols, and modulation that changes the semantics and point of view of the ST. My choice of translation strategy is also backed up by Newmark’s (1988: 112) advice that original metaphors can be reduced to sense if a literal translation is obscure.

In the expressive parts of the ST, there are also original metaphors where a literal translation is possible. This is seen in example 12).
12) But that reassuring guide ends where South America does, and in the stormy Southern Ocean we are scattered by the great centrifuge, the mixmaster, the buzz saw – what metaphor can do justice to the Antarctic Circumpolar Current?

Men den trygga vägledaren slutar på samma ställe som Sydamerika, och i den stormiga södra oceaanen skingras vi av den stora centrifugen, mixaren, cirkelsågen – vilken metafor kan ge rättvisa åt den antarktiska cirkumpolarströmmen?

This metaphor is comparing the Antarctic Circumpolar Current with a great centrifuge, mixmaster and buzz saw. As Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 34-35) suggest, if possible a literal translation strategy should be adopted. A literal translation is den stora centrifugen, mixaren, cirkelsågen, which conveys the same meaning as the source language and is completely idiomatic. Since a literal translation works fine, there is no reason to adopt an oblique translation strategy. This decision is supported by Newmark (1995: 112) who says that original metaphors are created or quoted by the source language writer and these should normally be translated literally in authoritative and expressive texts if they are universal, cultural or subjective.

A simile found in the ST is shown in example 13):

13) They sail like Frisbees out of the Strait of Gibraltar and cross the ocean to join us.

De seglar som frisbees ut från Gibraltarsundet över havet för att ansluta sig till oss.

Here, the author compares the movement of spinning blobs of water to the motion of Frisbees sailing through the air. This simile enables the reader to mentally picture the motion and movement of the water. Without the simile, the context would be lacking this particular mental picture. Comparing the source culture and the target culture, it can be established that both have approximately the same cultural habits of using a Frisbee (hobby or competition), and of course the way a Frisbee is flying and sailing through the air is also the same. Consequently, after I have recognized that the two items are alike in the source culture and target culture, I use Vinay & Darbelnet’s (1995: 34-35) direct translation strategy. A literal translation procedure would result in de seglar som Frisbees. Another option could have been to use flyger instead of seglar, which is slightly more common in the target language. But even if flyger is more common, it leaves out the way something sails through the air (or in this
case water) without any effort, which is the reason I decided on a literal translation procedure.

A stock metaphor found in the ST where the target language could keep the same metaphorical image, but where the metaphor is changed to a simile, is shown in 14).

14) In the absence of any real physical understanding, oceanographers made the simplest assumption: that the polar water masses were advancing toward the equator in broad fronts, across the whole ocean basin, and at a glacial pace.

I brist på någon riktig fysisk uppfattning gjorde oceanograferna det enklaste antagandet: att vattenmassorna från polerna rörde sig i riktning mot ekvatorn i breda fält, tvärs över hela oceanbottnen, i samma takt som en glaciär.

The metaphor at glacial pace, can be defined as stock, or standard metaphor, because it is a frequently occurring metaphor. It compares the speed something moves in with the speed a glacier moves. This is to emphasize the extremely slow but steady speed a huge mass like a glacier moves (about 0,1-1 m per day). The ST compares the way the polar water masses advance toward the equator with the way a glacier is advancing, in broad fronts. In the target language, there is no established equivalent for this metaphor. A literal translation would be i glaciärisk fart. Technically, it is possible with such a form as glaciärisk, but this is very unidiomatic and not used in everyday conversation. Looking at other sayings in the target language that emphasizes slow speed, similes like långsam som en lus på en tjärad sticka (slow as molasses) or långsam som en snigel (slow as a snail) are found. These examples, however, do not emphasize the huge mass of a glacier. Consequently, an oblique translation strategy needs to be used. My solution is to use the same referent, glacier, but to use a transposition to achieve an idiomatic utterance; i samma takt som en glaciär, as well as an equivalence procedure due to the transformation from a metaphor to simile (addition of som). Transposition according to Vinay & Darbelnet (1995: 36) changes parts of speech without changing the sense, such as a grammatical change, which in this case is a change from an adjective glacial in the ST to a noun glaciär in the TT. Equivalence, according to Vinay and Darbelnet (1995: 38), describes the same meaning by different textual structure or symbols.

Example 15) is another interesting example of a metaphor found in the ST where the target language could keep the same image, even though the metaphor image is changed to a simile image.
Thus does the Atlantic become a *layer cake* of water masses, all readily distinguishable by their particular combinations of temperature and salinity. 

The stock metaphor *layer cake*, originally refers to a political arrangement called dual federalism, in which power is divided between national and state governments where state governments exercise powers given to them without interference from the national government. Dual federalism has been called *layer cake* to emphasize the distinct segments and clearly delineated powers, like in the different layers of a layer cake. However, in this ST the metaphor image compares the water masses in the Atlantic with its particular combinations of temperature and salinity with a layer cake, having nothing to do with dual federalism. In the target language, there is no established metaphor for layer cake. I tried first with a literal translation, *Atlanten blir en tårta...*, which in the same way as *layer cake* describes the different layers of water in the Atlantic. This is an interesting example, since *layer cake* is a stock metaphor in its original meaning (dual federalism), but an original metaphor in the ST with the different layers of water in the Atlantic being compared to a layer cake. According to Newmark (1988:113) original metaphors in expressive texts should be translated literally if possible, but he also says that in particularly non-literary texts the original metaphor can be reduced to sense. However, even if the ST is an expressive text, I decided to change the metaphor to a simile in the ST, *Atlanten är som en tårta*. In other words, I reduced the metaphor to sense and adopted an equivalence translation procedure, which according to Vinay and Darbelnet (1995: 38) describes the same meaning by different textual structure or symbols. The reason why I decided to reduce this original metaphor to sense even if Newmark (1988: 113) suggests otherwise, is because the target language does not have a similar stock metaphor (*layer cake* in the meaning of dual federalism), and because a direct translation *Atlanten är en tårta* is slightly unidiomatic.

Finally, in example 16) an interesting example of modulation is shown:
16) One day, after burning his mouth on a piece of apple pie he resolved to understand the nature of the beast.

In the Oxford dictionary (2014) the nature of the beast, is defined as “The inherent and unchangeable character of something”. This metaphor can be thought of as taking the face value of something, as for example if a wolf comes into your garden and kills the chicken, you cannot really get angry with the wolf, because it is his nature and he will not change. A direct translation would be something like odjurets natur, which does not make sense at all.

The source language actually has an equivalent metaphor, which is sakens natur. This is more of a translation of the definition of the metaphor, and can be looked at as a modulation. The modulation changes the semantics and point of view of the source language, and should be used when a literal or transposed translation results in a grammatically correct utterance, but is still unsuitable, unidiomatic or awkward in the target language (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995).

Alike the discussion about gerund-participle, it is seen in the discussion above that there is no certain strategy that can be used in the translation of English metaphors or similes into Swedish. Instead, every instance needs to be carefully assessed to see which translation strategy and which procedure is most suitable. In some cases, even a combination of two strategies has been used.

3. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to discuss some strategies that can be used in translation from English to Swedish of a scientific text on oceanography, with the focus on the gerund-participle form as well as metaphors and similes. The analysis was made in reference to the background theory of Vinay & Darbelnet’s translation strategy presented in their Comparative Stylistics of French and English (1995), a translation model with a linguistic approach based on two general translation methods – direct translation and oblique translation. From the examples of gerund-participle forms, metaphors that I had picked to analyze, most where translated with the help of an oblique translation strategy. I had picked eight examples concerning the gerund-participle form that I found particularly interesting or challenging to translate, and out of these examples, three were translated with help of a transposition procedure, two with an equivalence procedure, one using both an equivalence and a modulation procedure, one with modulation procedure and finally one with a literal
translation procedure. So to summarize, out of the eight examples analyzed, seven were translated with an oblique strategy and only one with a direct translation strategy. I also picked eight examples concerning metaphors and similes from the ST that I found interesting, and out of them two was translated an equivalence procedure, two with a modulation procedure, one with both equivalence and modulation procedure, two with a literal procedure and one with both transposition and equivalence procedure. The summary of the metaphor and simile section is accordingly that six of the examples were translation with an oblique strategy and two with a direct strategy. These figures only represent the examples I picked from the ST, they do not represent the whole ST.

Since the analysis of the translation of the gerund-participle form, metaphors and similes was restricted to a certain text, and the translation examples were picked because they were interesting and challenging, it is not possible to draw any general conclusions about what procedures are most common, nor any other kind of general conclusions. It is on the other hand possible to draw conclusions of the analysis of the specific examples from the specific ST discussed in this paper.

It has been shown that there is no particular given strategy or procedure that applies, but instead each and every example and situation regarding gerund-participles, metaphors and similes needs to be carefully assessed in aspect to the context as well as source and target language structure and culture. This way, it is a small but valuable contribution to translation science, and it would be interesting to continue the analysis of which strategies and procedures that could be used in translation of gerund-participle forms, metaphors and similes from English to Swedish. A further study could be conducted for example in a quantitative fashion, looking systematically at all occurring gerund-participles, metaphors and similes in certain scientific text. Nonetheless, translation is not resolved by statistics, and each translation still needs to be assessed and judged separately.
Reference List

Primary Source


Secondary Sources


