The significance of Ono Yoko’s translation is explicable not as in the literature but in the cognitive linguistic analysis, for the ‘hortative’ modality. On the other hand, ‘you walk’ is objective walk’ is.

Discussions:

The song in the Japanese source text uses no personal pronouns, because it is a monologue style and the conceptualiser construes him/herself as the listener. However, the analysis of translation also has a plenty of potential for examining various linguistic hypotheses and concepts.

Concluding Remarks:

This case study demonstrates that the zero-encoding of the grammatical subject in Japanese can be reanalyzed in terms of ‘subjectivity’ and ‘construal alternatives’ in multiple translations, instead of finding various types of equivalences used in a standard model of Translation Studies.

Case Study: Translation Project of the song called ‘Sukiyaki’.

The project was conducted in the course of Japanese and English Translation Techniques in Massey University in 2015 and 2016. The procedure: Students in the course had to do the translation practice of a song called ‘Sukiyaki’ from Japanese to English and explain their Skopos and techniques to be used. Then they compared their own renditions with Yoko Ono’s translation in the final examination of the course. Students could prepare for their translations in advance. Over the two years, 19 students were involved.

Subjectivity and Construal Alternatives in a Cognitive Linguistic approach

The notion of ‘Subjectivity’ and ‘Objectivity’ proposed by Langacker:

1. Yasuno is sitting across from the table.
2. Yasuno is sitting across from the table from me.
3. Yasuno is sitting across from the table from Verónica.

When the involvement of an event is expressed in a language it is a ‘subjective construal’, if the speaker does not express a conceptual element of the event. The clause of the construal is: from (1) to (3) - from subjective to objective.

The ‘construal alternative’ is a notion related to the speaker’s construal of referents, and it asks how the speaker assigns the same referent with different construals (the speaker is a conceptualiser to construe the situation).

Considering a situation of the above examples, the speaker is talking about a photo which shows the speaker and Yasuno sitting across from the table, (1) and (2) are construal alternatives, one of which is selected based on more or less the speaker’s subjectivity (subjective conceptualisation).

Source Text Domain | Target Text Domain | Shifts of Subjectivity
---|---|---
Let us walk towards the top | We walk | COP
So as not to spill tears | So our tears won’t fall | Conversion
Spring day to remember | Remembering those spring days | Transformation
lonely night | And the lonely nights | Conversion
Let us walk towards the top | Let’s walking up | Conversion
Counting the blurred star | I count the stars with tears | Conversion
Happiness lies in the clouds | Happiness lies beyond the sky | Conversion
Happiness lies in the clouds | Happiness lies beyond the clouds | Conversion

Google translation:

Let us walk towards the top
So as not to spill tears
Spring day to remember
lonely night
Let us walk towards the top
Counting the blurred star
Happiness lies in the clouds
Happiness lies in the clouds

Subjectivity and Construal Alternatives

(© indicates ‘Conceptualiser’)

COP

E’s a mate arukō ‘Sukiyaki’

Ur a mate arukō
up ACC facing walk-colonial
sonne ga koko-net yori
ears NOM drop-NEG in order to
avendan torna no to ni
remember spring GEN day
kiterukō no yori
alone GEN night
ajō de kōbu o kazō
burst star ACC counting
kurō no kuma no wa ni
happiness TOP cloud GEN up LOC
surē wa e no o wa ni
happiness TOP sky GEN up LOC

COP

Student 2

I hold my head up as I walk
So no one sees i cry
ing
I remember these happy spring days
On this lonely night
I hold my head up as I walk
Counting the stars through my tearing eyes
Happiness lies above the sky
Happiness lies above the clouds

COP

Student 1

Let’s walking up
So our tears won’t fall
Remembering those spring days
And the lonely nights
Let’s walking up
I count the stars with tears in my eyes
Happiness lies beyond the sky
Happiness lies beyond the clouds

COP

Translated by Yohe Yokoi (2014):

Look at the sky as you walk through life
So the tears won’t overflow your heart
As you remember the spring days so bright
On this lonely, lonely night
Look at the sky when you walk through life
See how the stars blur when your tears flow
Happiness may seem just out of sight
Beyond the clouds, try as we might

Bibliography:


Vanessa is sitting across the table.

COP

Vanessa is sitting across from the table from me.

COP

Vanessa is sitting across from the table from Verónica.

COP

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The contrastive analysis of multiple translations: Sukiyaki song from Japanese to English

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