Cognitive Linguistic Approach in Translation Studies

Cognitive Linguistics and Translation Studies:

Three major assumptions of Cognitive Linguistics (Cf. and Crc. 2004: 1):

(I) Language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty.
(II) Grammar is conceptualization.
(III) Knowledge of language emerges from language use.

Translation Studies: a contrastive analysis between two or more different languages in terms of what is retained and what is lost from a source text to a target text. Two main streams of key concepts in Translation Studies:

Word for Word: Formal equivalence, Functional equivalence, Functional Norms

Sense for Sense: Foreignisation, Domestication, Cultural Norms

Subjectivity and Construal Alternatives in a Cognitive Linguistic approach:

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

1. Venous is sitting across the table.
2. Venous is sitting across the table from me.
3. Venous is sitting across the table from Verônica.

When the involvement of an event is expressed in a language it is ‘subjective construal’, if the speaker does not express a conceptual element of the event.

The cluster of construals is: from (1) to (3) = from subjective to objective.

The ‘subjective construal’ is a notion related to the speaker’s construal of referents, and it also 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 relation of a so-called ‘subjectivity’. The speaker’s construal of referents, and it also how the speaker assigns the same referent with different construals (the speaker is a conceptualiser to construe the situation).

The formal/pragmatic approach: recoverability

The functional syntactic approach: grammatical principles of the speech-act

The lexical approach: depending on translation directions

Translation Analyses: depending on translation directions

From Japanese to English, addition of a subject

From English to Japanese, deletion of a subject

Both strategies are aimed for ‘domestication’ with functional equivalence.

Concluding Remarks:

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

Previous research of Translation Studies has used a linguistic approach to analyse a relationship between a source text and target text. Therefore, the main field of translation analyses are often considered as applied linguistics or construative literature.

However, the analysis of translation also has a plenty of potential for examining various linguistic hypotheses and concepts.

As a future direction, this case study demonstrates that Translation Analysis is not just for teaching language but can also be used for teaching linguistics.

Dr. Jun Nakamura

Lecturer in Japanese, School of Humanities
Massey University

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

Nakamura, J

2016-11-21