Objectives: To present interdisciplinary analyses between Cognitive Linguistics and Translation Studies by using multiple translations from Japanese to English. To describe the zero-encoding subject in Japanese in a comparison of multiple translations in terms of ‘Subjectivity’ and ‘Construal Alternative’. Japanese is a SOV and topic-prominent language.

Zero-encoding subject in Japanese: (a) I am Jun Nakamura. (b) 0 Nakamura Jun deu.


1. Language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty
2. Grammar is conceptualization
3. Knowledge of language emerges from language use.

Translation Studies: a contrasting 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
- Foreignization
- Formal equivalence
- Category shifts
- Sense for Sense
- Domestication
- Functional equivalence
- Cultural Norms

Case Study: Translation Project of the song called “Sukiyaki”.

The project was conducted in the course of Japanese and English Translation Techniques at 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.

Discussions:
The song in the Japanese source text uses no personal pronouns. The first verse ‘Us a mate aru’ is the zero-encoding subject, which expresses semantic ambiguity but also a possibility of multiple interpretations based on construal alternatives.

The cline of the construals is: ‘let us walk’ and two of them kept their construals in ‘exclusive You’ mode. That is, the aesthetic effects of her work are not motivated by regular construals.

The analysis of translations 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.

Previous linguistic approaches to the zero-encoding subject in Japanese:

- The formal syntactic approach: grammatical omission, which means the absence of what should be on a syntactic role.
- The functional/pragmatic approach: recoverability of deleting discourse information, which is based on the cooperative principles of the speech-act participants.

Translation Analysis: 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 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.

Previous research of Translation Studies has used a linguistic approach to analyze a relationship between a source text and a target text. Therefore, the main field of translation analyses are often considered as applied linguistics or contrastive 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.
The contrastive analysis of multiple translations: Sukiyaki song from Japanese to English

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