Zero-encoding in Japanese:

(a) I am Jun Nakamura.
(b) 0 Nakamura Jun desu.

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Subjunctivity and Contraclual Alternatives in a Cognitive Linguistic approach

The notion of `subjunctivity' and `objectivity' proposed by Langacker:

1. Vanesa is sitting across the table.
2. Vanesa is sitting across the table from me.
3. Vanesa is sitting across the table from Veronica.

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 class of the construals is: from (3) to (2) = from subjective to objective.

The `contradictory alternatives' 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 conceptualizer to construe the situation).

Considering a situation of the above examples, the speaker is talking about a conceptualiser to construe the situation.

Discussions:

The song in the Japanese source text uses no personal pronouns. The first version `I walk' is the zero-encoding subject, which results in semantic ambiguity but also a possibility of multiple interpretations based on construal alternatives.

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

The formal syntactic approach: grammatical omission, which means that the absence of what there should be on a syntactic rule.

The functional/pragmatic approach: recoverability of deleting discourse information, which is based on the cooperative principles of the speech-act participants.

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 equivalences.

Concluding Remarks:

This case study demonstrates that the zero-encoding of the grammatical subject in Japanese can be reanalyzed in terms of `subjunctivity' and `contradictory alternatives' in multiple translations, instead of finding various types of equivalences used in a standard model.

Previous research of Translation Studies has used a cognitive linguistic approach to analyze a relationship between a source text and a target text. Therefore, the main field of translation analyses are often concerned as applied linguistics or constructive 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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