Objective:

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 desu.

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Cognitive Linguistics and Translation Studies:
Three major assumptions of Cognitive Linguistics (Crefeld and Cruise 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 → Foreignization → Formal equivalence → Category shifts
Sense for Sense → Domestication → Functional equivalence → Cultural Norms

Subj ectivity and Construal Alternatives in a Cognitive Linguistic approach:
The notion of ‘Subjectivity’ and ‘Objectivity’ proposed by Langacker:
(I) Yumeno is sitting across the table.
(II) Yumeno is sitting across the table from me.
(III) Yumeno is sitting across the table from Veronica.

The clines of the construals are: from (I) to (III) = 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 construct the situation).

Student 1
Let's 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 is in the clouds
Happiness lies beyond the sky
Happiness lies below the clouds

Source Text Domain
Let us walk
Walk-volitional
©?

Target Text Domain
Let's walk
We walk
©?

Shifts of Subjectivity
© indicates ‘Conceptualizer’

Discussions:
The song in the Japanese source text uses no personal pronouns. The verse ‘Let us walk’ is a zero-encoding subject, which is typical in SOV and topic-prominent languages like Japanese.

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In Japanese in

Subjectivity and Construal Alternatives in a Cognitive Linguistic approach:
The notion of ‘Subjectivity’ and ‘Objectivity’ proposed by Langacker:

Previous linguistic approaches to the zero-encoding subject in Japanese:
The formal syntactic approach: grammatical omission, which means that the absence of what should be present is of a syntactic role.
The functional/pragmatic approach: recoverability of deleting disease 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 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 ‘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 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.

Acknowledgement:
Funding support from the School of Humanities, Massey University and the students in the course 242015, Massey University.

Ethics Approval: From Human Ethics Northern Committee in Massey University, NZER 16/11 Sukiyaki project: an analysis of students’ approaches to translations.


References:

Vanessa is sitting across the table from me.”

The project was conducted in the course of Japanese and English Translation Techniques in Massey University in 2015 and 2016.

Three major assumptions of Cognitive Linguistics (Crefeld and Cruise 2004:1):

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.

Over the two years, 19 students were involved.

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

Students could prepare for their translations in advance.

The formal syntactic approach: grammatical omission, which means that the absence of what should be present is of a syntactic role.

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

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