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The retention of cognitive structures in translation

Abstract:

In our poster, we sum up the results of the empirical work carried out, so far, on finding evidence on dissociating linguistic and cognitive description in translation. In line with cognitive linguistic thinking and with reference to evidence on Figure-Ground alignment and Force Dynamics (Mäkisalo & Lehtinen 2014; Mäkisalo & Lehtinen 2017; Mäkisalo & Lehtinen 2018), we argue that what is transferred (retained) in translation is the cognitive level (cognitive model of the state of affairs). This claim is justified by the findings in translations between English and Finnish, on the basis of which Mäkisalo and Lehtinen (2014) suggested the following general hypothesis called The Cognitive Retention Hypothesis: When describing translation from a source text to a target text, it is possible to distinguish linguistic and cognitive levels, and it is the cognitive level (cognitive model of the state of affairs) that is primarily retained in translation.

In cognitive linguistics, Figure–Ground alignment and Force Dynamics are among the main construals, that is linguistic operations based on general cognitive processes. Talmy (2000) lays the foundations of major conceptual structuring in language at the sentence level to be (1) configurational structuring (space and motion), (2) attention (figure and ground, time and event-related structures) and (3) force and causation (force dynamics and causation). We argue that the Figure–Ground distinction and the Force Dynamics provide one tool for describing the aspects of this cognitive level.

Our project Cognitive Description in Translation aims at constructing a systematic and empirically based description of translation at the sentence level, mainly following the theoretical framework developed by Leonard Talmy and William Croft. In this poster, we sum up our findings in Figure-Ground alignment and Force Dynamics with the addition of spatial cognitive structures of Space configuration. Construing spatial structures is one of the very basic configurations in human perception, and in translation it is retained more often than other structures at the cognitive level. In addition to our previous studies, we widen the selection of language pairs to Polish–Finnish and Swedish–Finnish.

References:


Mäkisalo, Jukka & Lehtinen, Marjatta 2014. Dissociation of Linguistic and Cognitive Description in Translation: The Cognitive Figure-Ground Alignment. In Paulasto Heli,

