UNIVERSITEIT GENT

Explicitation and implicitation of Dutch and German nominal compounds in translated fiction and non-fiction

Hinde De Metsenaere

Introduction

Explicitation and implicitation are two translation studies concepts that have been occupying translation researchers for the past sixty years. However, researchers have generally interpreted them in rather intuitive and different ways in the past, resulting in studies that are often difficult to compare.

The dissertation therefore aims to (re)define explicitation and implicitation and this from a relevance-theoretic perspective. It is believed that translation, as a communication act, should be studied in the light of a communication theory, relevance theory being the most promising, because its explicit-implicit distinction leans itself quite naturally to defining explicitation and implicitation.

The definitions will be put into practice in a corpus-based study for the language pair Dutch-German, with a focus on nominal compounding, which is a very productive word formation category in Dutch and German, but which is often said to be realized differently in these closely related languages: Where German prefers a compound (e.g. *Stuhllehne*), Dutch may opt for an alternative construction (e.g. *leuning van de stoel*). Four variables are considered: translation direction, text type, information distribution and translator.

Research questions

Conceptual
- How can explicitation and implicitation be defined?
- How can explicitness and implicitness be defined?
- Which explicitation and implicitation categories can be distinguished?
- How can explicitation and implicitation be distinguished from addition, omission, substitution?
- How do explicitation and implicitation differ from other translation universals?

Empirical
- How are Dutch and German nominal compounds translated in German resp. Dutch?
- Are explicitation and implicitation of Dutch and German nominal compounds in translation influenced by the following variables, and if so, how:
    - translation direction,
    - text type,
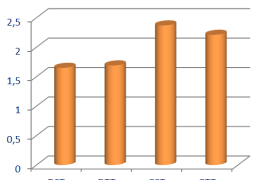   - information distribution,
    - translator?

Methods

Literature study
- Relevance theory
- Translation universals
- Nominal compounding

Corpus-based research
- PAND-corpus
    - Literary texts
    - Museum texts
    - Department of Translation, Interpreting and Communication
    - > 2 million words
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis

Preliminary results

- A first quantitative analysis confirms that German texts (G) have a higher noun-noun compound density than Dutch texts (D), whether source texts (ST) or translated texts (TT).

Noun-noun compound density

- Simple nouns / derivatives are the most frequently chosen compound alternatives in both languages. Dutch uses more phrasal constructions than German.*

German > Dutch   Dutch > German

- NN compound
- Compound other than NN
- Simple noun / derivative
- Adjectival construction
- Genitive construction
- Prepositional construction
- Appositional construction
- Construction with relative clause
- Pronouns
- Zero
- Miscellaneous

* Study involving three Dutch and three German novels and their translations.

Supervisors

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