What is Explicitation?

Blum-Kulka (1986) states the explicitation hypothesis “which postulates an observed [rising] cohesive explicitness from SL [source language] to TL [target language] texts regardless of the increase traceable to differences between the two linguistic and textual systems involved.”

Steiner’s definition

“We assume ‘explicitation’ if in a translation (or language- internally in a pair of register-related texts) meanings (not only ideational, but including interpersonal and textual) are realized in the more explicit variant which are not aligned on the token level. The resulting text is more ‘explicit’ than its counterpart.” (cf. Steiner 2005)

Example

English original
First, the opponents of free trade claim to want to help poor countries but at the same time are reluctant to invest or trade with them - both of which are crucial to their development.

German translation
Erste Befürworter der Freihandel der wollen die Armen Länder unterstützen aber gleichzeitig, Investitionen in dieser Länder zu tätigen oder Handel mit ihnen zu treiben. Beide wäre für deren Entwicklung entscheidend.

Corpus-driven research on explicitation

Concordances of lexical strings
Baker (1996) refers to explicitation as one of several translation universals, i.e. typical characteristics of translated texts irrespective of the involved languages. These characteristics should be identified in corpora of texts translated from many different languages in comparison to originals from the same domain(s) in the target language.

Operationalisation of the abstract concept ‘explicitation’
Olohan & Baker (2000) discuss the use of the optional chunk in the Translatational English Corpus (TEC) as compared to comparable parts of the BNC. Concordances of forms of the verbs say and tell are retrieved from the corpora and compared.

Methodological approach

Different constellations of bottom-up and top-down approaches:

- Analysis of linguistic evidence measurable in the corpus allowing interpretation and generalisation
- Careful derivation of linguistic indicators from abstract concepts via linguistic categories
- Careful derivation of linguistic indicators from abstract concepts via linguistic categories
- Aligning source and target texts are included in the study (differentiation between explicitness and textual systems involved.

Steiner’s definition
Simplification, normalization, levelling out also possible

Corpus-driven research on explicitation

Corpus design

Corpus-driven research on explicitation

Annex and annotation of the corpus

Metadat
- Corpus layer
- Word layer
- Phrase layer
- Functions
- Sentences
- Word layer
- Phrase layer
- Functions
- Sentences

Annotations and alignment of the corpus

Combining quantitative and qualitative analyses

For investigating the relation between explicitation and cohesion (on the basis of direct anaphoric relations) quantitative as well as qualitative analyses are needed:
- Part-of-speech tagging for pronominal relations (quantitative analysis)
- Manual annotation for IS-A relations (qualitative analysis)
- String-matching for total and partial recurrences (algorithm)

Qualitative analysis of explicitation and cohesion

XML annotation and alignment suggest using XQuery. This query language is particularly suited to retrieve information from different sources like for instance individual annotation and alignment files. The use for multi-layer annotation is shown in Teich et al. (2001).

Example query retrieving an explicitation of pronominal relation

Example: XQuery: Return all units with a PRELS part-of-speech tag which are not aligned on the token level

Qualitative analysis of explicitation and cohesion

Annex specific to the research question, here IS-A relations (cf. Kunz 2006)
Precondition: drawing smaller sub-corpora from the CroCo Corpus
Use of specific tools for manual annotation
(e.g. MMAX2 for coreference analysis)

References


Conclusion

Combination of quantitative linguistic evidence that can be re-used for different purposes in linguistics, translation studies and natural language processing with qualitative data useful for an in-depth investigation

http://fr46.uni-saarland.de/croco/