Abstract

Shimaa A Elabasiry

Investigating Explicitation in three Corpora of Native, Non-native and Translated English Texts

The present study aims at investigating whether explicitation is a universal feature of translation a linguistic feature which exists similarly in translated and non-translated texts. Under the title of Translation Universals (TUs), Baker (1993) defines some universal features which "typically occur in translated texts rather than original utterances and which are not the result of interference from specific linguistic systems" (p.243).One of these features as Baker (1993) points out is "the marked rise in the level of explicitness in translated texts compared to original texts" (p.243). The main focus of the study is to examine whether explicitation is a linguistic feature that characterizes translated texts per se, i.e. a translation inherent feature, does it occur in higher frequencies in non-translated texts, i.e. direct written productions. Another main focus of the present study is to further examine whether explicitation is a translation inherent feature a result of language mediation. In other words, the study aims at examining whether this marked rise in the level of explicitness also occurs in non-native rather than native direct written productions. The rationale for focusing on the explicitation hypothesis rather than other translation universals is that it has been investigated through different comparable corpora of translated texts and direct written productions, but to the best of the researcher's knowledge it has not been much investigated through corpora of non-native direct written productions. Accordingly, the present study attempts an analysis of three comparable corpora of native direct written productions, non-native direct written productions and translated texts. The corpus of the study is especially compiled and designed for the purpose of the research. It is divided into three comparable corpora of native, non-native and translated English texts belonging to the domain of fiction. The rationale behind Selecting fiction is that almost all of the studies investigating explicitation in comparable corpora of translated and non-translated texts have used the Translational English Corpus (TEC) and the British National Corpus (BNC). Both TEC and BNC include different sub-corpora of different text types however, the dominant sub-corpus in both of them is fiction (80%). Accordingly, the three corpora of the present study follow the same comparability design of the TEC and BNC in the sense that they both cover the same genre, the same approximate number of tokens and the same time interval. The present study does not use the comparable TEC and BNC corpora as they do not include a third comparable non-native corpus. Accordingly, for the purpose of the investigation, three comparable corpora of English literary translated texts, native direct written productions and non-native direct production texts have been compiled and investigated. The present study adopts Pápai's (2004) method in investigating explicitation. Pápai investigates explicitation in corpora of Hungarian translated and non-translated texts. He presents four levels of explicitation, namely, logical visual, lexico-grammatical, syntactic and textual and extra-linguistic. The logical visual relations are manifested in the addition of punctuation marks. The lexico-grammatical level is revealed by the use of lexical repetitions. As for the syntactic level, it is shown in the addition of conjunctions. Finally, the textual and extra linguistic levels of explicitation are established by using discourse organizing items. The present study intends to investigate only two levels of explicitation (a) The Lexico-grammatical and (b) The Syntactic. The rationale for choosing the syntactic and lexico-grammatical levels of explicitation –according to Pápai (2004) –is that "they are the most frequently investigated text features, and are likely to provide insights into the nature of explicitation" (p.14). The syntactic level of explicitation is subcategorized into three sections: (1) Elaboration Conjunctions, (2) Extension Conjunctions, (3) Enhancement Conjunctions. The categorization of conjunction types is mainly adopted from Halliday's typology (2004). Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the present study aims at investigating whether explicitation is a universal feature of translation a linguistic feature which exists similarly in translated and non-translated texts. Accordingly, textual and extra linguistic levels of explicitation are disregarded altogether. The findings of the study support that explicitation is a universal feature of

translation, which is likely to exist in higher frequencies in translated texts rather than non-translated texts through concrete linguistic manifestations. The study sheds light on the fact that explicitation also tends to exist in non-native direct productions in higher frequencies than in native direct written productions. This by virtue questions the idea that explicitation is a translation inherent feature: a feature that is specific to translated texts rather than non-translated texts direct written productions.