Reconceptualizing Explicitation as Informativity Control

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ABSTRACT

Explicitation is an indispensable part of the translator's arsenal and an essential topic in translation studies. The past few decades have seen a dramatic proliferation of studies on the subject, but the concept is still curiously unsettled and there are ambiguities that have yet to be dispelled. This paper aims to provide some clarity by reconceptualizing explicitation in terms of informativity, one of the textual standards studied in text linguistics. After reviewing the relevant literature, including works by Blum-Kulka, Klaudy, Pym, Saldanha, and Beaugrande and Dressler, we will redefine explicitation as a means of controlling informativity. Informativity can change during translation and shift to a higher or lower level in the target text. Explicitation can be viewed as a means of controlling the relationship between a text and its translation with respect to informativity. Once we make this functional connection, we can further identify explicitation with downgrading and implicitation with upgrading informativity, and distinguish the way both processes either maintain or change the informativity level of the source text by labelling them type-m and type-c processes. This finer distinction should allow us to furnish more detailed predictions and to better explain the phenomenon of explicitation.

KEYWORDS

explicitation, implicitation, informativity, type-m process, type-c process

1. Introduction

This paper deals with the concepts of explicitation and implicitation. The two are generally thought to be mirror processes and discussed together, but explicitation tends to receive more focus and is at times used as an umbrella term for both. We will follow that convention. Explicitation is recognized as an indispensable part of the translator's arsenal. Its presence is ubiquitous, so much so that some scholars speak of it in the same breath as translation universals. The past few decades have seen a dramatic proliferation of studies on the subject, and it has established itself as an essential topic in translation studies. For all that, the concept as a subject of scholarly discussion in translation studies still feels relatively new, and still trailed by a haze of ambiguities that have yet to be dispelled.

On this, Anthony Pym (2005: 29-30) provides an anecdotal account of how he was introduced to explicitation which bears revisiting. In 1992 when he and Gideon Toury met Kinga Klaudy at a conference in Hungary to hear her speak on the subject, it was still a concept he "only vaguely grasped," mainly associated with language systems and linguistic research, but he says it has since become "curiously central to the development" of translation studies, linked with such ideas as translation norms and universals. His use of the adverb 'curiously' here is apt because while great strides have been made over the years, exactly what explicitation is or should be still seems to be an unsettled question, and it is indeed curious that this basic process of translation should still remain controversial.

The motivation for this paper, then, is to dispel some of the haze surrounding explicitation and bring it into sharp relief. Our aim is to examine the concept in translation studies and redefine it in terms of informativity, one of the textual standards discussed in text

linguistics. We will critically review the most salient features of the two concepts, which will necessarily take up about two-thirds of this paper, before joining them together. This paper proposes that explicitation be reconceptualized as a means of controlling informativity in the translation process. This identification will enable us to associate explicitation and implicitation with what is called informativity downgrading and upgrading, and to distinguish the way both processes can be used to either maintain or change the informativity level of the source text.

2. State of the Art on Explicitation

2.1. Definition

Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies (Baker and Saldanha 2009) has an especially insightful article entry on explicitation by Kinga Klaudy which gives us a good starting point. Klaudy begins her exposition by giving the following basic definition:

> Explicitation is the technique of making explicit in the target text information that is implicit in the source text. (Klaudy 2009: 104)

The definition sounds simple enough: take something existing implicitly in the source text and make it explicit in the target text. This general sense of the phenomenon has been widely accepted from the beginning and is still used today. However, what "being implicit" and "making explicit" mean exactly is highly debatable.

Klaudy points to Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995) as having first introduced the terms explicitation and implicitation as part of their

work on translation methodology. For Vinay and Darbelnet, something being implicit in the source text referred to anything that could be derived from "the context or the situation" (1995: 342). They also identified implicitation as a reverse process of explicitation, in which what is explicit in the source text becomes implicit in the target text. They viewed the two concepts of explicitation and implicitation in terms of gains and losses that occur in translation. Klaudy also notes Nida (1964) as having made contributions on the subject with his extensive analyses of the various ways information could be added or subtracted during translation. Although he never actually used the terms 'explicitation' and 'implicitation,' his work is seen today as having described fundamentally the same phenomenon (Klaudy 2009: 104).

2.2. Blum-Kulka: Explicitation Hypothesis

The seminal paper that provided the impetus for current research on explicitation is "Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation" by Blum-Kulka (1986/2000). It is generally considered to be the first systematic examination of the subject (Klaudy 2009: 105; Pym 2005: 30-31) and to have set the agenda for much of the subsequent research, including the search for translation universals. Blum-Kulka's explicitation hypothesis essentially states that there is a translation-inherent process operating in optional shifts that raises the level of cohesive explicitness in the target text and thus of redundancy. This hypothesis has since been strengthened by successive studies (for example, Øverås 1998; Olohan and Baker 2000), although still disputed by others (House 2004; Becher 2010, 2011: 55-57). We need not get into all the details of Blum-Kulka's paper, but here we should note something she stated, just before

introducing her hypothesis, as a possible explanation for the phenomenon:

> The process of translation, particularly if successful, necessitates a complex text and discourse processing. The process of interpretation performed by the translator on the source text might lead to a TL text which is more redundant than the SL text. (Blum-Kulka 2000: 300)

The suggestion being made here is that it is the translator's experience of processing the text while translating that tends to make the translation more explicit or redundant in the target language. We will come back to this in a later section.

One of the early criticisms of Blum-Kulka's work was that her definition of explicitation as a "redundancy" expressed in the form of "cohesive explicitness" in the target text is too narrow. Instead, Séguinot (1988: 108) defined explicitation much more expansively to include occurrences which are "not in the original," which are "implied or understood through presupposition in the source text" but are "overtly expressed in the translation," and which are "given greater importance in the translation through focus, emphasis, or lexical choice." Thus, while Blum-Kulka would not consider an occurrence of additional information not present in the source text as explicitation, Séguinot would. On this issue, Klaudy notes that different scholars hold different views. Still with others, their views are unclear. In Toury's *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, for example, he seems to hold addition and explicitation as overlapping but distinguishable concepts (1995: 177).

2.3. Types of Explicitation

Klaudy states that explicitation has grown into a "cover term" for

various operations in translation, and she identifies four types: obligatory, optional, pragmatic and translation-inherent (2009: 106-107). The first two types were discussed by Blum-Kulka, and the last type is what should be proven by the explicitation hypothesis. The third type is motivated by pragmatic considerations of differences in social or cultural knowledge. Séguinot's idea of including addition would likely be identified as pragmatic explicitation. Klaudy also distinguishes explicitation as a process and as a product of translation, and its consideration as a potential translation universal by some scholars and no more than a translation law or norm by others (Olohan and Baker 2000; Pápai 2004; Toury 2004; Pym 2005; Englund Dimitrova 2005; Becher 2011). Regarding Klaudy's four types of explicitation, it should be clear upon reflection that pragmatic and translation-inherent types should actually be classified under optional. A process is either obligatory or optional, which means all occurrence of explicitation should be classified as one or the other. The unstated consensus seems to be that discussions of obligatory and optional types generally focus on the issues of language and grammar, whereas the focus for the other two types is more on pragmatic factors. House formalizes this delimitation by categorizing the various sources of "explicitness" in translation as obligatory and optional linguistic choices under the heading of "linguistic system-internal sources" and as translator, situational and translation-task variables under the heading of "other sources" (House 2004: 204).

2.4. Klaudy: Asymmetry Hypothesis

Another important idea regarding explicitation is the asymmetry hypothesis postulated by Klaudy (2001). She showed that when there

are obligatory explicitation shifts from language A to language B, matching implicitation shifts seem to occur from language B to language A, but when the explicitation shifts are of the optional type, matching implicitation shifts tend to occur less frequently. In other words, there is an asymmetrical relationship between explicitation and implicitation in translating. Her argument is enticing not only because it supports the intuitive view many professional translators have, that it never hurts to explain and add more clarity to one's translation while leaving out information is often a risky strategy, but also because if the asymmetrical hypothesis is verified, it would lend credence to explicitation being a "universal strategy of translation, independent of language-pair and direction of translation" (Klaudy 2009: 107).

2.5. Pym: Risk-management Theory

In quite a different approach to explaining explicitation, Pym (2005) put forward a theory of risk-management. In this view, explicitation is interpreted through a "risk-management framework" where the translator's focus rests not so much on correct or incorrect translation but rather on high-risk and low-risk, and the "idea of a comfortable human 'correctness' usually turns out to be a low-risk interpretation" (2005: 34-35). Pym notes that translators are, among other things, acutely aware of the difficulties of "constructing meaning (because they are trying to make sense of the source text)" and naturally want to help the readers, which means when the source text is more difficult, they would work harder and be more likely to "make their renditions explicit" in order to make sure the readers understand. Such perspective is consistent with the principles of relevance theory, in particular with Grice's Cooperation Principle (see

also Pym 2008: 322-323), but translators actually work harder and provide more "communicative clues" than what would normally be expected from non-translators—hence the proclivity for explicitation but not for implicitation—because translators are motivated by the conditions of their profession and communicative context to be risk-averse (2005: 38-40).

2.6. Three Studies: Weissbrod, Englund Dimitrova, Saldanha

It would impractical and inefficient to try to cover all the numerous studies on explicitation over the years, but three works have drawn significant conclusions concerning the phenomenon which are relevant to our study.[1]

Weissbrod (1992) researched English to Hebrew translations of "canonized" and "non-canonized" literature and concluded that explicitation is a norm-dependent phenomenon. She found different norms were at work in the two types of translations, with explicitations tending to occur more in the latter type. The translators were apparently being motivated differently as well, with the translators of canonized literature explicitating to conform to a "strong language norm which dictated a preference for well-built sentences" and the translators of non-canonized literature explicitating to improve readability because their readers were "perceived as an unsophisticated audience" (1992: 161). Her findings suggest that if explicitation is norm-dependent, then it should change "with historical circumstances" (1992: 153).

Englund Dimitrova (2005) conducted an in-depth case study with a small group of professional and non-professional translators and found that experienced translators tended to use explicitation more than inexperienced translators. One of her aims was to examine the

phenomenon as a process as well as a product, and based on her findings, she distinguishes between norm-governed and strategic explicitations, the former characterized by a high degree of "frequency and regularity" of occurrence in the target text and by "non-problematic processing," and the latter marked by its "ad hoc nature, being more varied than the norm-governed explicitations" and used to solve problems (2005: 236-237). She suggests that norm-governed explicitations are acquired through experience, with certain types of explicitations starting out in a translator as "strategic problem-solving procedures" but eventually becoming "automated" or norm-governed. The implication here is that the same type of explicitation can be identified as norm-governed in a more experienced translator while being identified as strategic in an inexperienced translator because they process it differently. For Englund Dimitrova, then, explicitation can no longer be "identified from textual data only, but must be found in process data," that is, within the translator's cognitive process (2005: 239).

Saldanha (2008)[2] examined the works of two literary translators, Margaret Jull Costa and Peter Bush, in order to question certain basic assumptions regarding explicitation and argue for the need to include the translator's attitude in studying it. She found that translations by Costa displayed more occurrences of explicitation than those by Bush. Based on her interviews with the two translators, Saldanha proposes that the reason for the difference between the two is their differing attitudes toward translating. Although they both translate for "an educated English-speaking readership that is prepared to read translated literature," Costa wants her translations to be "acceptable in the terms established by the target culture … a pleasurable experience" and does not want the readers to be interrupted by information that they "cannot process in their own

cognitive environment," which makes her more likely to mediate through explicitation. Bush, on the other hand, is "driven by a desire to introduce new foreign authors" to the literary market and wants to "challenge readers," which makes him more resistant to explicitation. Saldanha's conclusion is that explicitation, at least when it is a conscious strategy, is motivated by the translators' assumptions about the "cognitive context and environment of their readers" and how they "see their role as intercultural and literary mediators" (2008: 31-32).

2.7. Critical Discussion

Having reviewed the literature for some of the core ideas concerning explicitation, let us now consider the concept more critically. We noted that when Blum-Kulka hypothesizes the existence of translation-inherent explicitation, she also suggests that as translators examine a source text, a certain cognitive processing occurs that encourages the production of shifts in the target text, which she calls "process of interpretation." But she does not pursue this line of thought. Indeed, her examination of explicitation as a matter of increased level of cohesion in the target text is somewhat like doing anatomy and naming body parts but not discussing their functions. She describes the phenomenon but stops short of asking the why question, and when she does move into an explanatory mode in the second half of her paper, it is to distinguish different shifts of coherence. Her approach, therefore, is descriptive and lacks explanatory power. While Séguinot expands the definition of explicitation to include addition and Klaudy's asymmetry hypothesis also manages to avoid Blum-Kulka's narrow definition, their studies are still of the same descriptive kind, focusing on quantitative

linguistic analysis.

The pragmatic approaches to explicitation that we have reviewed do provide us with possible reasons for why its occurrences should vary among translators, such as different translation norms (Weissbrod 1992), different levels of expertise and different types of explicitation processing (Englund Dimitrova 2005) and different translator attitudes (Saldanha 2008). Englund Dimitrova's explanation of explicitation being a matter of norm-governed and strategic cognitive processing and Saldanha's argument for "bringing the reader into the picture" (the subtitle of her 2008 paper) when explaining explicitation are both insightful and helpful. With Pym (2005) as well, while we may not agree that viewing the phenomenon as a form of risk-management is the best way to explain it, he does make a strong case for why translators would want to be risk-averse, thus supplying a practical rationale for the asymmetrical relationship between explicitation and implicitation.

With all these studies, however, the mechanism of explicitation itself does not get much attention: there is a sense that they have treated that part of the phenomenon as a given, a kind of black box. They describe or explain its many variations but there is no detailed examination of how the process works. Englund Dimitrova's use of "think-aloud protocols" and computer logging should perhaps be counted as a step in that direction but, while being scrupulous and data-driven, even classifying explicitation types and recording her subjects' motivations, her analysis still stops short of analyzing the process itself. In other words, the great strides made over the years notwithstanding, we still seem to be in want of a good explanation. It would be helpful if we could get inside that black box of cognitive processing or "process of interpreting" as Blum-Kulka would say, and see how the cogs were turning. Perhaps then we could gain some

understanding that would lead to greater “explanatory power” or “explanatory principles” (Toury 2004: 29; Chesterman 2004: 45). To do that, let us now turn to text linguistics and, in particular, to the concept of informativity.

3. Informativity and Explicitation

Informativity is one of the seven principles or standards of textuality presented in Beaugrande and Dressler’s Introduction to Text Linguistics (1981), a seminal book the contents of which are still fundamental to the study of text linguistics and discourse analysis. Beaugrande and Dressler define a text as a “communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality,” meaning if any of these standards are not met or are “strongly defied,” then the presentation is deemed non-communicative and should be “rejected as a non-text” (1981: 3, 34). Before focusing on informativity, let us briefly review the seven standards as presented in the book.

3.1. Principles of Textual Communication

1) *Cohesion* is concerned with how words as components of the surface text are “mutually connected within a sequence … according to grammatical forms and conventions” (1981: 3). It can be created in a text from such factors as recurrence, partial recurrence, parallelism, paraphrase, pro-forms, ellipsis, junction, and tense and aspect (1981: 79-80).

2) *Coherence* is concerned with “the configuration of concepts and relations which underlie the surface text [which] are mutually accessible and relevant” (1981: 4). Simply put, it is the way we “make

sense" of a text. Coherence involves a complex web of ideas such as continuity of sense, activation, strength of linkage, spreading activation, memory, economy, global patterns, inheritance, and compatibility between language in texts and cognition (1981: 109).

3) *Intentionality* is concerned with the text producer's attitude and intentions, and

4) *Acceptability* is concerned with the text receiver's attitude in terms of accepting the text (1981: 7, 113, 129). While cohesion and coherence are text-centered notions, intentionality and acceptability, along with the remaining three standards, are more pragmatic, "user-centered notions" (1981:7).[3]

5) *Informativity* is concerned with "the extent to which the occurrences of the presented text are expected vs. unexpected or known vs. unknown" (1981: 8-9). Informativity can be classified into three levels of expectation: first-order informativity, occurring in the "upper range of probability" and requiring little attention from us; second-order informativity, occurring below the upper range of probability and catching our attention; third-order informativity, occurring "outside the set of more or less probable options," demanding much of our "attention and processing resources" and triggering a "motivation search" (1981: 142, 144).

6) *Situationality* is concerned with "the factors which make a text relevant to a situation of occurrence." It is discussed in terms of situation monitoring and situation management, and the book lists 12 general discourse strategies for monitoring or managing interactive situations (1981: 9, 173-179).

7) *Intertextuality* is concerned with "the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts" (1981: 10). To put it negatively, it is recognizing that no text can exist independently of other texts. The

book discusses the concept in terms of many ideas already introduced as well as text types, text allusion, discourse-world model, and the various ways “stored world-knowledge and text-presented knowledge” systematically interact (1981: 202).

3.2. Informativity Downgrading and Upgrading

As introduced above, informativity according to Beaugrande and Dressler is essentially a way of explaining the amount of work required to process information being presented. First-order informativity is generally trivial content which we tend to pass over quickly when reading, articles and conjunctions for example. They require almost no cognitive processing on our part, hence little attention, because everything we see of the first-order is highly predictable. In contrast, third-order informativity is generally puzzling content that disrupts or discontinues our reading because we cannot understand what is being presented or find it difficult to accept. It makes us do a “motivation search—a special case of problem-solving” to find out what it means and how it can be “integrated back into the continuity that is the basis of communication” (1981: 144). If the search is successful, we say it has “downgraded the third-order occurrence into the second order,” but if the search not successful, then “senselessness (or nonsense)” results and the disruption to the continuity of sense is not restored, thus degrading coherence (1981: 144). This motivation search is thus an example of the regulative principles at work when a text is being read. It should also be noted here that the three orders of informativity are artificial divisions of a range of “fuzzy set of options,” a temporary rudimentary grouping of contextual or “general probabilities” (1981: 141), which are ultimately subjective and thus non-quantifiable. In this sense, we can identify

third-order informativity as any content that triggers a downward motivation search.

When informativity downgrading does occur, it proceeds in one of three ways or directionalities: the motivation search may succeed by going back to an earlier part of the text, called backward downgrading; it may go forward in the text to solve the puzzle, called forward downgrading; or it may find success by resorting to some knowledge outside the text, called outward downgrading. As for how informativity is to be classified into one of the three orders, Beaugrande and Dressler provide five sources of "human expectations" against which what is being presented is to be examined: the first source of expectation is our knowledge of the real world, which provides us with "the privileged source of beliefs underlying textual communication"; the second source is "the organization of the language" of the text; the third source arises from "the techniques for arranging sequences according to the informativity of elements or group of elements," for example, intonation or ellipsis; the fourth source is "text type," meaning different text types will bring different expectations; the fifth source is "the immediate context where the text occurs and is utilized" (1981: 146-150).

Just as informativity can be downgraded from third-order to second-order, it can also be upgraded from first-order to second-order in certain situations. When that happens, the upgrading gets realized in one of three directionalities the same way as happens with downgrading. Informativity upgrading should be seen as a mirror operation of informativity downgrading. Just as a difficult and puzzling content will motivate the reader to solve or downgrade it, a trivial, seemingly meaningless content can motivate the reader to discover some hidden meaning, thus elevating the content to something more meaningful. In discussing literary studies, for

example, Beaugrande and Dressler note that criticism is essentially an "activity of downgrading (finding motivations that integrate improbable occurrences) and upgrading (finding more specialized motivations for everyday occurrences)" (1981: 215). In other words, criticism has the effect of controlling the informativity of the text in question. We shall soon see that this is also what happens in translation.[4]

Informativity is associated with reader's interest in or enjoyment of the text as well. In terms of using cognitive processing resources, second-order informativity is the default level, meaning it is the level of informativity that a reader feels comfortable with. Because first-order informativity has little to offer in terms of meaningful content, although it may be necessary, it is generally uninteresting. When informativity is upgraded to the second level through a motivation search, however, the process can bring joy of discovery to the reader. The same is true for third-order informativity downgrading. While it requires effort to downgrade to second-order, it can make the reading experience more interesting and enjoyable precisely because of the challenging nature of that effort. The clear implication here is that, in presenting a text, the level of informativity should not continue to be so low as to lose the reader's interest, but it should also not be so high that the text would frustrate the reader's motivation searches and jeopardize communication.

To illustrate how motivation search operates with respect to informativity, Beaugrande and Dressler make good use of a simple example in chapters 1 and 7 of their book, and we should do well to take a look at that example now (1981: 9, 145). Consider the following opening part of a passage from a science textbook:

> The sea is water …

The information being presented here is so well known that it should convey no new information to a typical reader. We could consider it first-order informativity because there is nothing to attract our attention. Here is the entire opening passage:

> The sea is water only in the sense that water is the dominant substance present.
> Actually, it is a solution of gases and salts in addition to vast numbers of living organisms ...

Because the second part of the passage presents us with something "less expected" from the common view, the informativity of the whole opening passage ends up being upgraded to second order. Now consider what would happen if we were to present the passage the following way:

> The sea is not water. It is actually a solution of gases and salts.

The first sentence should present a typical reader with third-order informativity because it contradicts the commonly held view of what sea is made of. This disruptive condition, called an "unstable information state," is quickly resolved by the second sentence because it supplies us with a meaningful explanation for the first sentence, thus downgrading the content being presented to second-order informativity (1981: 145).

What this example illustrates is that successful communication involves a "continual removal and restoration of stability" (1981: 145), a rhythmic wave of informativity, if you will, rising and dipping to unstable information states, then being downgraded and upgraded by reader as if surfing to the stability of second-order.

3.3. Textual Standards and Explicitation

Turning our attention now to studying explicitation using the framework of text linguistics, we can see that scholars have already associated the concept with most of the seven standards of textuality, if not always by name then at least in terms of their signification. Blum-Kulka's explicitation hypothesis is based on detecting increased cohesive patterns in translated texts, and she also discusses shifts in coherence (1986/2000: 304-312). Implicit in her distinction between reader-focused and text-focused shifts of coherence are ideas of user-centered standards of textuality as well. Other pragmatic approaches, such as the view expressed by Pápai (2004: 160) that the "ultimate function of explicitation strategies" is generally to "adjust to target text standards and satisfy the target readers' expectations" and Pym's explanation of explicitation as part of a more general strategy of risk reduction that was considered above, are also similar in their reasoning to Blum-Kulka's argument for coherence shifts. The desire to bridge cultural and linguistic gaps and adjust to target text standards concerns text producer's intentionality. The principle at work in satisfying readers' expectations or reducing risks in translation concerns text receiver's acceptability. Situationality and intertextuality are also at work, if more indirectly and operating in the background (under the framework of relevance theory for example), whenever a translator considers the appropriateness of using explicitation in a specific translation situation and in relation to other relevant texts. Indeed, these principles are always at work whenever a text is being translated.

If translation is viewed as a text and the process of producing (or rewriting) a text with a communicative purpose, it is of course entirely appropriate that standards of textuality should be applied to

translation, and translation studies scholars have long recognized the importance of applying the concepts of text linguistics and discourse analysis to translation (Károly and Fóris 2005: 12). For all that, when we take stock of what has so far been the association between the seven textual standards and explicitation in the literature, it is peculiar that while cohesion and coherence have received a great deal of attention and user-centered notions of intentionality, acceptability, situationality and intertextuality have also received their fair share of attention, the association between informativity and explicitation has been noticeably lacking. This is indeed curious because if explicitation is about nothing else, it is about information.

3.4. Informativeness and Explicitation

Blum-Kulka's seminal paper on shifts of cohesion and coherence contains only a single occurrence of the word 'information' and in a context unrelated to explicitation (1986/2000: 303). Klaudy's encyclopedia article, which served us as a useful guide in section 2, is also deficient in this respect. The word is used to define explicitation at the beginning but then mostly neglected for the rest of the article. Pápai (2004) uses the word to define the concept as well, but then she merely comments toward the end of her study that translators of technical texts, "in their effort to convey the information given by the ST as closely and clearly as possible, will inevitably use explicitation strategies," (2004: 159) thus equating explicitation with a clear transfer of information. Likewise, the word occurs several times in Pym's paper "Explaining Explanation" but, other than for defining explicitation, its use is limited to stating that it is explicit or implicit in certain texts (2004: 33, 36). In fact, with the exception of Saldanha (2005; 2008), all the studies we have so far examined and many

others simply make the assumption that an occurrence of explicitation means there is more information or that it makes the translation more informative (Weissbrod 1992; Olohan and Baker 2000; Englund Dimitrova 2005; Becher 2011; Murtisari 2013). Likewise, Puurtinen (2004: 167) contrasts explicitation with being "uninformative" and Hatim and Munday (2004: 223) contrast it with "ambiguity." Becher (2011: 88, 135) and Murtisari (2013: 336) use the term 'informativity,' but only as a synonym for 'informativeness' and not in the way it is used in text linguistics. Thus for Becher and Murtisari, a translation that becomes more informative is seen as having increased informativity.[5]

To be sure, the assumption that explicitation makes the translation more informative is only to be expected, given the widely accepted definition as the one formulated by Klaudy (see section 2.1). A target text in which information is explicitly stated would naturally be more informative than the one in which information remained implicit, especially if that implicit meaning was dependent on some knowledge of the source culture that target readers were not privy to. Saldanha's argument is, therefore, unusual in this regard.

3.4.1. Saldanha's Chicha Example

Saldanha questions two basic assumptions underlying the definition of explicitation, that "(1) instances of explicitness in the target text correspond to instances of implicitness in the source text, and that (2) there is increased 'informativeness'" (2008: 20). Let us examine in detail one of the examples she uses to argue against the second assumption[6] as it reveals a subtle confusion which is also significant for the purposes of our study. Saldanha uses the following text and its English translation:

[…] cuando éstos se adormecían bajo los efectos de la chicha y de la natema… (BSST)
[…] when they would fall asleep under the effects of the chicha and the natema… (literally)
[…] once they had fallen asleep, overcome by chicha beer and *natema*… (BSTT) (2008: 27)

Here, the first line is from a Spanish novel, the second sentence is Saldanha's literal translation, and the third sentence, the actual translation by Peter Bush. Chicha is a fermented alcoholic beverage that gets translated into English as 'chicha beer.' Bush most likely added the word 'beer' to let the readers know that chicha should be thought of as a type of beer or something similar. For Saldanha, the fact that 'beer' has been added makes this a clear instance of explicitation, but in the local culture where the drink is consumed, chicha and beer are apparently different products, and so Saldanha notes that "the item *chicha*, on its own, is likely to be much more informative to a source culture reader than *chicha beer* to an Anglo-saxon reader" and that "a reader who has been acquainted with *chicha* may find it rather misleading that it should be called a type of 'beer'" (2008: 27). This is where Saldanha's analysis becomes confusing, for she seems to be arguing that explicitation on this occasion has failed to make the target text more informative than the source text. But should the claim of explicitation be that it makes the target text more informative than the source text? A little bit of reflection should tell us that this is not what the process is about. Rather, the claim of explicitation should be that it makes the target text with explicitation more informative than an alternative target text without it. Then the right comparison to be made here is not between "overcome by chicha beer" and "bajo los efectos de la chicha" but between "overcome by chicha beer" and "overcome by chicha," in

which case “chicha beer” would be considered more informative to the target readers.

3.4.2. Hatim and Munday’s Definition of Explicitation

Having gone through Saldanha’s example, it may appear that she has made a rather rudimentary error in her analysis, but this confusion between source text and target text is not Saldanha’s alone. In introducing explicitation, Hatim and Munday (2004) seem to have made the same error. They give the following definition in the book’s glossary:

> Explicate, Explicitation: Explanation in the TT that renders the sense or intention clearer than in the ST” (2004: 339).

Again, the problem with the definition here is that the motivation for explicitation arises not when sense or intention is unclear in the source text but when it will be unclear in the target text unless it is “explained,” for the focal consideration in translation is always the target text. Saldanha’s chicha example would certainly serve as an argument against Hatim and Munday’s definition because here we have an instance of explicitation where something that is informative in the source text becomes less informative in the target text. It is clear, then, that the definition given by Hatim and Munday is problematic. But is this another rudimentary error? Perhaps something else is going on.

Let us turn this around and ask the following question. If we did have a source text condition as stated in Hatim and Munday’s definition, that some sense or intention is unclear in the ST and it is made clear in the TT, would that be an instance of explicitation? It would certainly appear so. Here is a simple example from the Korean

novel *Please Look after Mom* by Shin Kyung-sook.

… J시로 가는 기차로 갈아탔다. (2008: 49)
… *changed to a train going to J City. (literal translation by the author)*
… got on a train to Chongup. (2011: 36)

In the target text, the narrator gets on a train to Chongup, her mother's home town, but in the source text, we are not given the name of the city. The only given information is "J City." In fact, the name of mother's home town is never given in the original novel and the reader is left to guess where that city could be. In the English version, however, J City turns into Chongup, which is an actual southern city in Korea.[7] The target reader is given extra information, which makes the target text more informative. If we can accept this as an example of explicitation, it would support Hatim and Munday's definition, in which case what we should say about their definition is not that it is wrong but that it is inadequate. In this example, explicitation does make the sense of the source text clearer. But how do we make this hang together with Saldanha's example? What we have so far, then, is a picture which appears complicated and contradictory—a puzzle still being pieced together. We can bring some clarity to this situation if we approach explicitation as a strategy of controlling informativity.

4. Explicitation as Informativity Control

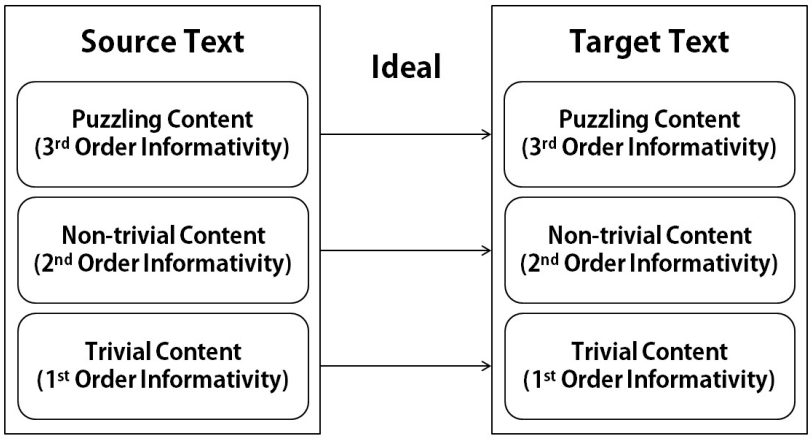
4.1. Informativity Changes in Translation

We have seen that Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) divide informativity into three levels or orders. First-order informativity is

highly predictable and is generally treated as trivial by the reader; the second-order is not as predictable and requires the reader's attention; the third-order is puzzling or disruptive and requires the reader to pay greater attention, use more processing resources, and resolve or "downgrade" the disruption in order to maintain the continuity or coherence of the text. We need to keep this concept of informativity in mind because the word 'informativity' can sometimes be misused to mean "being informative" as we have seen above.

In an ideal translation world that we could imagine for ourselves, where skies are blue and translation is straight-forward and perfect, the level of informativity in the source text will match the level of informativity in the target text, meaning there will be an "equivalence" of informativity. Trivial content will stay trivial, non-trivial content will remain non-trivial, and puzzling content will continue to puzzle in the target text as shown in figure 1.

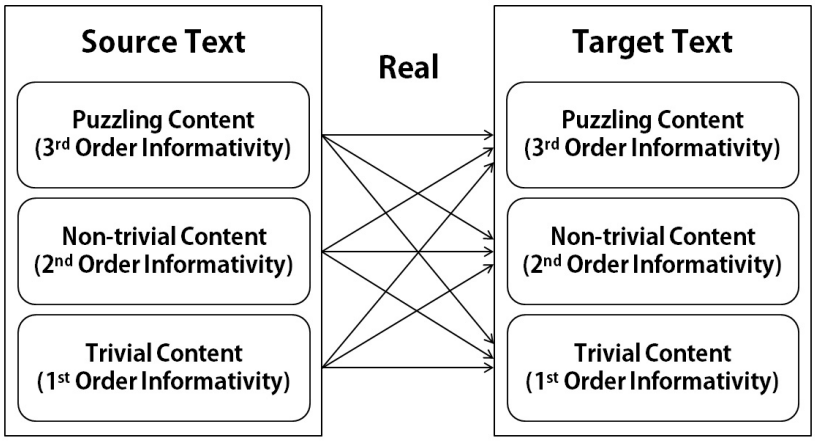
Figure 1 Informativity in ideal translation



In real translation situations, of course, this is almost never the

case. A “straight-forward” translation can change the level of informativity in the target text and, when there is change, we are likely to see informativity increase. Saldanha’s chicha example would be a case in point. Theoretically, however, each level of informativity could change to any of the other two levels. Trivial content in the source text could rise to non-trivial or even puzzling content in the target text, meaning change from first-order to second or third-order informativity. Non-trivial content in the source text could change to trivial or puzzling content in the target text, going from second-order down to first or up to third-order informativity. Although highly unlikely, puzzling content in the source text could also be lowered to non-trivial or trivial content in the target text, from third-order to second or first-order informativity. In terms of possible outcomes, then, we have a one-to-many relationship between source text and target text informativity as shown in figure 2.

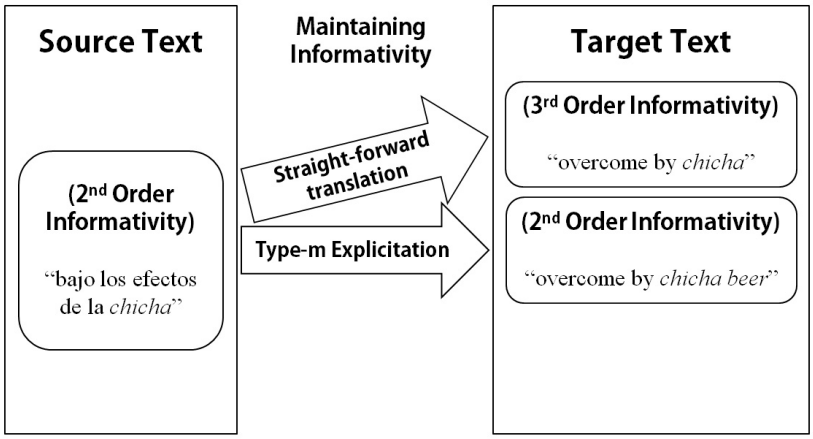
Figure 2 Informativity in real translation



4.2. Maintaining Informativity: Type-m Processes

We can now identify the way explicitation and implicitation function in translation. In a situation where a straight-forward translation will produce an increase in the level of informativity, explicitation can be utilized to maintain it. In the chicha example, a straight-forward translation “overcome by chicha” will likely produce a puzzling content or third-order informativity for readers who do not know what chicha is. The explicitation “overcome by chicha beer” shifts the informativity to second-order for the readers. To be precise, the addition of ‘beer’ in the target text should help the readers in their motivation search to downgrade the informativity to second-order but with no guarantee that will actually happen. In Saldanha’s view, the source text “bajo los efectos de la chicha” remains more informative to the Spanish readers than the target text “overcome by chicha beer” is to the English readers, and there is also the possibility of confusing those readers who are already acquainted with chicha and do not associate the drink with beer. Be that as it may, whether the strategy is successful or not is a separate question from why and how it was utilized. The motivation for the translator in this case is clear: a straight-forward translation would increase the level of informativity and produce a puzzling content for readers, one which most of them would not be able to solve on their own, thus disrupting the continuity of communication and the coherence of the text. His strategy of adding ‘beer’ helps to shift the level of informativity to the second-order. The intention for using explicitation here, therefore, is to maintain the level of informativity in the target text. Let us call this type-m explicitation, with ‘m’ standing for “maintaining informativity” (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Type-m explicitation for maintaining informativity



For implicitation, let us make use of a well-known example. While critiquing the work of Hönig and Kussmaul, Pym (2010: 53) quotes one of their examples, which has come to be known as "the Eton" example.[8] The argument itself is complex but we need not get into it as our use of the example will be for a much simpler purpose. Here is the "Eton" sentence followed by one of its German translations:

> In Parliament he fought for equality, but he sent his son to Eton.
>
> Im Parlament kämpfte er für Chancengleichheit, aber seinen eigenen Sohn schickte er auf eine der englischen Eliteschulen. (… one of the English elite schools) (Pym 2010: 53)

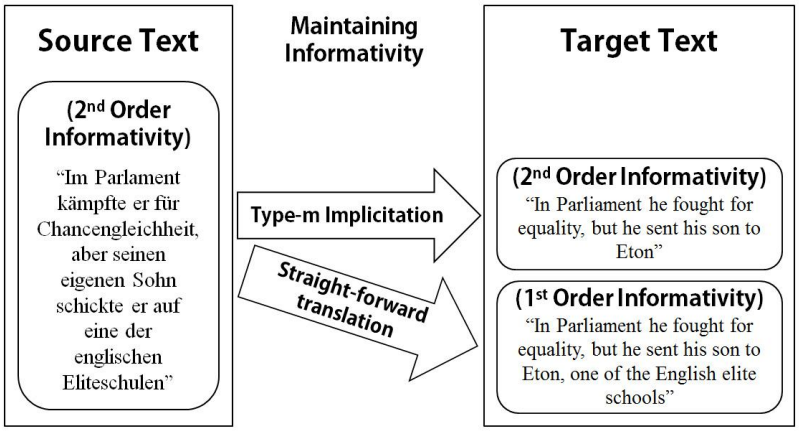
In the German translation, "one of the English elite schools" is added to describe Eton, the rationale being that in Germany, readers may not have enough knowledge of Eton to make sense of the sentence otherwise. This would be identified as an instance of pragmatic explicitation or, to use the term we just introduced above, type-m

explicitation. But now, let us change direction and try translating the same sentence from German to English. A straight-forward translation of the German sentence would be the following:

> In Parliament he fought for equality, but he sent his son to Eton, one of the English elite schools.

Let us assume the target text is to be published in Britain. The translator may feel that the description “one of the English elite schools” will be redundant and unnecessary, even jarring, to British readers and decide to delete the phrase in the target text. If this is what she does, then we can interpret her action in terms of informativity control. She sees that the target readers will gain no new information concerning Eton from the description and its informativity will be in danger of being downgraded to first-order. That is, readers may find the phrase trivial and boring. This motivates her to maintain the same level of informativity by deleting the phrase, which is a strategy of implicitation. Let us call this type-m implicitation (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Type–m implicitation for maintaining informativity



With the example we just covered, we took a well-known case from another context and artificially constructed a translation situation that mirrors the explicitation process in order to produce an instance of implicitation. This was done, in part, to show that implicitation also mirrors explicitation in its aim of maintaining informativity. In other words, they serve the same function. When the two processes are viewed this way, they can also provide us with a simple explanation for why there should be an asymmetrical relationship between optional explicitation and implicitation (see section 2.4). The motivation to upgrade first-order informativity to second-order is of a different kind from the motivation to downgrade third-order to second-order. A reader can easily skip along the trivial parts of the text paying little attention but cannot go through the difficult parts the same way. The difficult parts are, by definition, disruptive or discontinuous content, meaning the pressure to downgrade their informativity and continue reading will always be stronger than any pressure to upgrade. This uneven pressure from first and third orders of informativity likely motivates the translator in the same uneven manner to apply explicitation more than implicitation. If we accept this line of reasoning as sound, one important corollary is that it validates Klaudy's asymmetry hypothesis, which in turn strengthens the argument for the existence of a translation-inherent process and, by extension, translation universal. Let us classify these two mirroring translation strategies as type-m processes, which are used to maintain the level of informativity in translation. This type of informativity control is different from the kind of example we discussed while examining Hatim and Munday's definition of explicitation, to which we now turn.

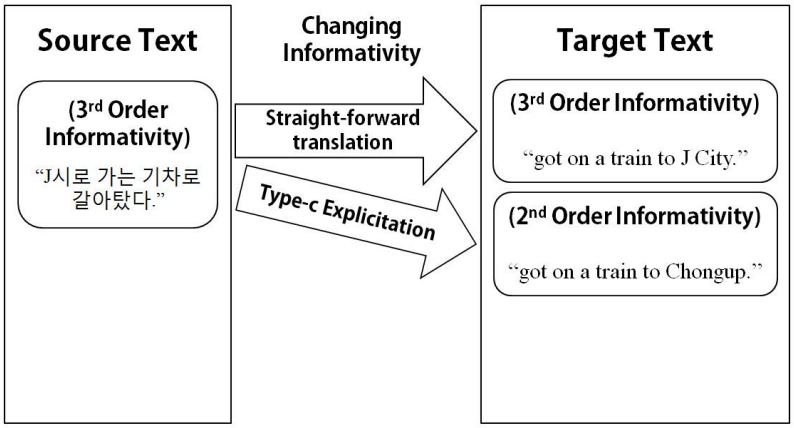
4.3. Changing Informativity: Type-c Processes

Let us once again return to the observation that Blum-Kulka made just before formulating her explicitation hypothesis: "The process of interpretation performed by the translator on the source text might lead to a TL text which is more redundant than the SL text" (1986/2000: 300). We have just discussed cases where the translators' process of interpretation has led them to conclude that a straight-forward translation will produce a change in the level of informativity in the target text, thus motivating them to use explicitation or implicitation in order to maintain the level of informativity. But the process of interpretation might also lead them to conclude that there are contents in the source text they should change not because a straight-forward translation will increase or decrease the level of informativity but rather because they do not want to maintain it. This is a distinctly different process of interpreting the source text from type-m processes and should be classified as such.

Going back to the example from *Please Look after Mom*, it may be that a straight-forward translation "got on a train to J City" would not have been at all problematic. There are examples where such literary device has been put to good use and carried over in translation, as in the works of Kafka[9] for instance, and it is certainly possible the readers of *Please Look after Mom* would not have minded. But the change was made. It could have been the translator or the editor, or in this case even the author herself, but someone made the decision that the text as it stood was not acceptable or adequate or desirable for English readers. For the sake of convenience, we will conflate these decision makers into one entity called the translator. In terms of informativity, a likely interpretation is that the translator felt the text

was disruptive enough to the reader to warrant a shift in her translation. By changing "J City" to Chongup, she sought to downgrade the level of informativity in the target text from third-order to second-order. Again, as with the chicha example, whether this strategy was warranted or successful is a separate question. What is clear is that the translator made a deliberate decision to change the order of informativity in the source text. Let us call this type-c explicitation, with 'c' standing for "changing informativity" (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Type-c explicitation for changing informativity



We now turn to the last example in this section, that of using implicitation to change informativity. For that, let us expand on the *Please Look after Mom* example we just examined. Here is the longer text and its translation:

> 서울로 가는 비행기를 포기하고 P시에서 L시까지 택시를 타고 와 엄마의 집이 있는 J시로 가는 기차로 갈아탔다. 거의 두 계절 동안 엄마의 얼굴을 보지 못했다는 생각을 하면서.
> (2008: 49)

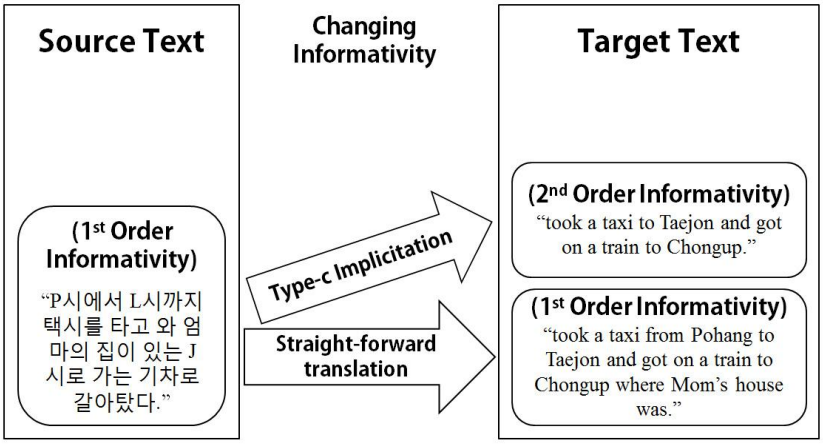
[You] gave up the plane to Seoul, took a taxi from P City to L City, and changed to a train going to J City where Mom's house was. Thinking that you hadn't seen Mom's face in almost two seasons. (literal translation by the author)

You decided against taking the plane to Seoul, and instead took a taxi to Taejon and got on a train to Chongup. Thinking all the while that you hadn't seen Mom's face in almost two seasons. (2011: 36)

A quick comparison tells us many changes were made, including additional instances of explicitation, and that J City was not the only city mentioned. The narrator decided not to go to Seoul. She took a taxi from P City, explicated as Pohang earlier in the narrative, and went to L City, explicated as Taejon.[10] She then caught a train to go to J City where her mother was, explicated as Chongup as we saw in the last example, all the while thinking that she had not seen her mother for almost two seasons. We note two omissions in the target text: "P City" and "where Mom's house was." This is a clear example of implicitation functioning as a mirror process to addition. Why did the translator take them out? In terms of informativity, the most likely explanation is that she processed the level of informativity of the two elements as first-order, meaning trivial or redundant, and decided not to carry them over to the target text. In other words, through the use of implicitation, she shifted the level of informativity in the target text to second-order. Stating that the narrator left from Pohang should be uninformative to readers because they should already know from the immediate context of the story that she was in a fish market in Pohang when she took the taxi. The translator must have decided that they did not need to be told of something so obvious. Similarly, describing Chongup as a place where the mother's house was should also be old information to careful readers because,

at this point in the narrative, that fact has already been mentioned four times (Shin 2011: 4, 5, 18, 24). Even for casual readers, however, the narrative context and the implication of the second sentence, that the narrator is on her way to see her mother, should render the description of Chongup as mother's hometown trivial or redundant. Once more, the justification for such shift or its actual effect on readers is a separate question. The translator made the decision to "implicitate," to leave out certain information in the target text, and her motivation was most likely informativity control. Let us call this type-c implicitation (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Type-c implicitation for changing informativity



The two examples from *Please Look after Mom* that we have just covered are mirror processes like the pair we examined in section 4.2. In one process, the translator decided that the source text content would be disruptive for target readers and downgraded its informativity using explicitation, and in the mirroring process, she decided the content would be trivial or redundant for target readers

and upgraded its informativity using implicitation. Common to both is the translator's decision to change the source text content. Let us classify these strategies as type-c processes, which are used to change the level of informativity in translation.

4.4. Type-m Process versus Type-c Process

One immediate effect of distinguishing type-m and type-c processes is the realization that they are actually opposing tendencies. In a type-m process, regardless of whether it is explicitation or implicitation, what the translator is trying to do is remain faithful to the source text. In a type-c process, however, what she is doing is to change the content of the source text. Perhaps this betokens a lack of respect for the source text, or perhaps a greater power wielded by or pressure applied to the translator. In any case, such contrast would allow us to make some predictions, which are discussed in the next section.

The identification of the two contrary processes could also clarify some of the issues regarding contrasting translation styles. A scholarly translation pursuing "formal equivalence" (Nida 1964), for example, may discourage explicitation for the sake of preserving accuracy but the level of informativity in the target text can increase as a result, making the reading more difficult than it should be. This is a criticism often voiced by those favoring the "sense-for-sense" or functionalist approach. On the other hand, when a translation style is being criticized for its deforming or domesticating tendencies (Berman 1985/2000; Venuti 2000), it could be that the criticism, upon closer examination, applies mainly to type-c and not type-m processes. For example, Berman's criticism of deformations resulting from "rationalization" certainly seems to be a criticism of that kind, and

while criticizing the deforming tendencies of “clarification,” Berman also differentiates the “fecund” type of explicitation, citing Heidegger, from the negative type of explicitation that clarifies “what does not wish to be clear in the original” (2000: 288-289). Dynamic/functional equivalence (Nida 1964; Waard and Nida 1986) would be identifiable with type-m but not with type-c processes, which may hang better with an adaptive or “free” translation style, or perhaps with producing a version rather than a translation (House 1997: 73).

The distinction between type-c and type-m processes should play a significant role in literary translation as well. In non-literary translation, where the sole function of the text is to communicate a set of information, a brief reflection should tell us that both type-m and type-c processes are to be viewed always as positive strategies. The primary focus in such translation situation is on communicating facts or “semantic transfer” of content (Berman 2000: 285), and it is difficult to imagine how a strategy of making the text easier to understand (explicitation) and getting rid of any unnecessary information (implicitation), thus increasing clarity and readability, could ever be considered bad form. In literary translation, however, the picture becomes less clear. With a literary text, the author may intentionally want certain passages to remain obscure or ambiguous as Berman noted above, or even redundant for stylistic purposes, in which case the translator should also maintain that level of informativity and not downgrade or upgrade it. Then while type-m processes may continue to be viewed with approval in such situation, type-c processes may come under suspicion, and distinguishing them could become crucial in matters of literary translation strategy and criticism.

4.5. Predictions

Viewing explicitation as informativity control allows us to draw conclusions which seem trivially true and are noncontroversial. For example, the frequency of its occurrence will be affected by such factors as linguistic and cultural similarities and differences between the source and the target texts, and whether the direction of translation is toward a dominant or peripheral culture. But it could also be hypothesized that more type-m processes would occur moving from dominant to peripheral cultures while more type-c processes would occur going in the opposite direction, because the level of respect accorded the source text originating from the peripheral culture would be lower. This distinction could, in turn, be used as an indicator for which culture stands dominant or peripheral in relation to other cultures.

Similar predictions could be made for studies by Weissbrod (1992) and Saldanha (2008) that we reviewed in section 2.6. Weissbrod compared translations of “canonized” and “non-canonized” literature and found more occurrences of explicitation in the latter. It would be interesting to revisit that study to analyze the occurrences of type-m and type-c processes. Intuitively, translations of “canonized” literature should also have fewer occurrences of type-c processes than “non-canonized” literature because translators would be more reluctant to change the contents of more established texts. Saldanha’s study of translations done by Margaret Jull Costa and Peter Bush could also be revisited. Saldanha identified Bush as being more resistant to using explicitation than Costa, but knowing their differing attitudes toward translation, we could predict that if we compared the same number of occurrences of explicitation in both translators, there would be a much lower percentage of type-c occurrences in Bush’s

translations than in Costa's.

Again, intuitively, academic translations of classical literary texts would severely discourage any type-c processes, whereas type-m processes should be more tolerable. It would be interesting to see if type-m processes occur just as often in scholarly translations as in non-scholarly translations, but there should definitely be fewer occurrences of type-c processes in the former. For example, it would be unimaginable for any serious translation of the Bible to utilize type-c processes. At the other end of the scale, commercial translations of contemporary literary texts such as popular fiction, where the aim is to sell as many copies as possible, would very likely make liberal use of type-c processes.

These predictions rising out of the distinction made between type-m and type-c processes are intuitively satisfying and seem almost trivially true. Of course, it could be that the predictions will be contradicted by further research, but then such negation would itself be more interesting because it would be so unexpected.

4.6. Rethinking Informativity in Translation

Informativity control in translation can be a bit disorienting. For example, we have so far only considered cases of implicitation where first-order informativity is shifted to second-order (see sections 4.2. and 4.3), but in translation we can imagine a situation where informativity can be shifted from second-order to third-order. This, too, should be considered implicitation. Consider a phrase such as "rice with only kimchi as panchan" from Chapter 3 of *Please Look after Mom* (2011: 140), where 'panchan' means side dish. A straight-forward translation should have produced "rice with only kimchi as side dish," but the translator in this instance has chosen to

maintain the Korean word instead. As a result, to a reader who does not know or remember what panchan is, this could present an occurrence of third-order informativity.[11] We thus have a move by the translator to increase the level of informativity, perhaps as a strategy of exoticization (Baker and Saldanha 2009: 67), which should be identified as an instance of type-c implicitation. If we think of this as an instance of informativity upgrading, however, that could cause some confusion because when it is used in text linguistics, upgrading always occurs in the context of moving from first-order to second-order, never from second to third as that would be nonsensical. Here, then, is a situation unique to translation setting that pushes against the concept of informativity as used in text linguistics. Or rather, it shows that the concept is being utilized differently in translation. In text linguistics, informativity downgrading and upgrading describe cognitive processes that occur while reading a text, always tending toward the default middle, the second-order. In translation, however, we could say informativity also serves a meta-textual function that allows the translator to control the relationship between the source text and the target text. In this latter capacity, informativity upgrading from second-order in the source text to third-order in the target text can make sense.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we reviewed the concepts of explicitation and informativity, and reconceptualized explicitation as a form of informativity control. Informativity can change during translation and shift to a higher or lower level, which means every act of translation can potentially produce three different outcomes: informativity can be

maintained, raised or lowered. In other words, it enjoys a one-to-many relationship in translation. Explicitation can be viewed as a means of controlling that relationship. Once we make this functional identification, we can further associate explicitation with downgrading and implicitation with upgrading informativity, and distinguish the way both processes try to either maintain or change the informativity level of the source text, calling them type-m and type-c processes. This finer distinction should help translators to formulate more sensitive translation strategies, provide evaluators and critics with deeper insight in their analyses, and enable scholars to discuss the phenomenon of explicitation and related issues, such as asymmetry hypothesis and translation-inherent process, with more discrimination and greater explanatory power.

NOTES

1. The studies were selected from a longer list of works reviewed by Becher (2011: 48-55).
2. This is a partial presentation of Saldanha's Ph.D. thesis (2005) on translation style.
3. Referring to Beaugrande and Dressler's work, Nord (1988/2005: 15) identifies informativity as one of the text-centered notions, but this seems to be a misreading.
4. J. M. Coetzee also seems to have thought something similar when he said, "All reading is translation, just as all translation is criticism" (1992: 90).
5. In Murtisari, 'chicken' explicated as 'chicken breast' is given as an example of "scalar explicitation," implying increased informativity, but this should be seen as a downward shift in informativity.
6. Saldanha's argument against the first assumption seems to be a definitional issue, and we have already noted that different scholars hold different opinions on this matter (see section 2.2).
7. The official Revised Romanization spelling for Chongup (정읍) is Jeongeup, hence its abbreviation to J City in Korean.
8. Pym's citation of the Eton example is more extensive and for a different purpose; the argument he critiques is Hönig and Kussmaul's "principle of the necessary degree of precision" (Pym 2010: 52-54).
9. Kafka's main character in *The Castle* (2009) is simply 'K,' and in Kafka's very short story "A Common Confusion," 'H' refers to the residence of a character named 'B' (1971: 471).
10. Unlike J City standing for Jeongeup, the official Revised Romanization spelling for

Taejon (대전) is Daejeon, which seems completely unrelated to L City in the source text.

11. 'Panchan' is explicated as side dishes in chapter 1 (p.26) but in passing, and a casual reader may not remember the word by the time it occurs again in chapter 3.

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