

Viewpoint in translation. The role of epistemic modal and evidential markers in a literary text

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As Ikegami (2008) has pointed out, Japanese has a preference for subjective construal, i.e. for a perspective on events where the perceiving subject stays implicit (cf. also Uehara 2006, 2011). At the same time, however, this implicit subject is not looking at the event 'from a distance' (like in Langacker's notion of subjective construal), but is present in the middle of the event, experiencing it. This is reflected in Japanese novels, where a character is often more directly involved in what is taking place than in literature from other traditions. This raises the question, in how far this type of perspective (being present and absent at the same time) is 'language bound'. One way to study this question is to look at translations and to analyze, in how far the translations preserve the Japanese type of perspective or rather tend to shift to more objective construals.

It would go too far to claim that western languages like English lack techniques for subjective construal that comes close to the Japanese type. Dancygier (2012a: 103-104), for example, shows that English has techniques which produce "a simulation of experiential on-line conceptualization". Such techniques are part of the repertoire of linguistic means that are available for indicating viewpoint, shift in viewpoint and (inter)subjectivity (Nuyts 2012) in literary texts, see Dancygier (2012a, 2012b). One such technique is the use of epistemic modal and evidential markers, see, for example, Harris & Potts (2009), Eckardt (2011/2012).

In this paper, we analyze the first chapter of Yasunari Kawabata *Beauty and Sadness* (first published in 1965 in Japanese). We will show that the narrator's viewpoint sometimes merges with the viewpoint of the main character ('viewpoint compression' in Dancygier's terms). In those cases, the experiencing subject perspective becomes relevant. But sometimes, the narrator seeks an alliance with the viewpoint of the reader, which leads to an intersubjective perspective, excluding the perspective of the main character. We will pay particular attention to the role of evidential and modal markers and observe that they are not always translated in the Dutch, English and German versions. We will analyze the impact of the differences with the original text on the degree of (inter)subjectivity of the text.

Key words: translation, (inter)subjectivity, viewpoint, epistemic modality, evidentiality

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