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Towards a Theoretical Foundation for Explicitation and Implicitation

Abstract

Explicitation and *implicitation* are two translation studies concepts that have given rise to a vast array of studies. These studies are, however, often difficult to compare, primarily because *explicitation* and *implicitation* have been interpreted differently, not rarely intuitively, by many translation studies researchers. This is due to the fact that the underlying concepts of *explicitness* and *implicitness* have not yet been satisfactorily defined for translation studies purposes. It is therefore the aim of this article to define *explicitness* and *implicitness*. This will be carried out from a relevance-theoretic perspective. Once *explicitness* and *implicitness* are defined, it is possible to define *explicitation* and *implicitation* and give both concepts the theoretical base they need. Then, the question is addressed if *explicitation* and *implicitation* can be distinguished from *addition*, *omission* and *substitution*. Finally, it is suggested that *explicitation* and *implicitation* are both applications of one more general *translation strategy* involving minimizing risk and maximizing relevance for the target text audience.

1 Introduction

A general problem within translation studies is the terminological vagueness surrounding its core concepts (cf. Mayoral 2001: 67, quoted in translation in Marco 2007: 66). Throughout the relatively young history of the discipline, various translation studies researchers have attributed different concepts to one term, or vice versa, one concept to different terms. This was convincingly argued by Gambier (2009: 78-79, 2010: 417). He illustrated the missing uniformity of the translation studies metalanguage by focusing on terminology used to refer to (a) decision-making processes at a macro level, (b) decision-making processes at a micro level, and (c) the observable outcome of those processes in the target text. Recalling military terminology, he suggested to use the terms *strategy*, *tactic* and *solution* respectively, in which he did not, unlike Chesterman (2005: 26), differentiate between *conscious* and *automatic tactics*.[1] As the distinction between *conscious* and *automatic processes* is not relevant for product-oriented, corpus-based translation studies,

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[1] Chesterman (2005: 26) used the terms *method*, *strategy*, *tactic* and *shift* for what Gambier (2009: 78-79, 2010: 417) called *strategy*, *conscious tactic*, *automatic tactic* and *solution*, respectively.

which will be the focus of this article, we will adhere to the terms suggested by Gambier, allowing for Chesterman's terminology to occur in quotations only.

The aim of Gambier's taxonomy was to strengthen translation studies as a discipline by making translation research more transparent through uniform terminology (Gambier 2009: 63). This is the intent of the present article, too. Its focus, however, is not on the concepts of *strategy*, *tactic* and *solution*, but on *explicitation* and *implicitation*, two concepts that have been part of translation studies ever since their introduction by Vinay and Darbelnet in 1958 (Vinay/Darbelnet 1958/1977: 9-10). Over a period of almost sixty years, *explicitation* and *implicitation* have developed into two of the most central subjects in corpus-based translation studies. Inspired by the *explicitation hypothesis* (Blum-Kulka 1986: 19), the *asymmetry hypothesis* (Klaudy/Károly 2005: 14) and named as possible *translation universals* in the search for universal characteristics of a translated text (Baker 1993: 243), *explicitation* and *implicitation* have given rise to a vast array of studies involving numerous languages and language pairs, an enumeration of which here would inevitably be incomplete. Paradoxically, the attention given to *explicitation* and *implicitation* has not been directly proportional to the understanding of what they refer to. On the contrary, studies on *explicitation* and *implicitation* are of a very heterogeneous nature, which has made it difficult, if not impossible to compare their findings and to come to conclusive insights into the meanings of *explicitation* and *implicitation* in and for translation and translation studies (cf. Kamenická 2007: 45; Becher 2010b: 3-4; Murtisari 2013: 315).

For this reason, the starting-point of this article is that both highly complex concepts have never been fully understood, nor satisfactorily defined in translation studies. Generally, *explicitation* is perceived as involving something being *more explicit* or *less implicit* in one text as compared to another text, and *implicitation* as involving something being *more implicit* or *less explicit* in one text as compared to another text. Variants of these rather roughly formulated definitions can be found throughout the translation studies literature, having in common the indeterminacy of one or both concepts of *explicit* and *implicit* (cf. Murtisari 2013: 315). This, we believe, can be attributed to a long-time missing theoretical foundation of what the features of *explicitness* and *implicitness* are and the translation aspects to which they are applicable. Hence, *explicitation* and *implicitation* have been interpreted rather intuitively in translation studies.

This intuitive approach to *explicitation* and *implicitation* might be explained from the fact that the words *explicit* and *implicit* and their dictionary equivalents in other languages are part of everyday language. Consequently, most language users have some intuitive idea of what *explicitness* and *implicitness* are. Compare, for instance, the following utterances (1-4):

(1)   I'm here.

(2)   I am standing on the corner.

(3)   I am now standing on the street corner.

(4)   I am now standing on the street corner where we were going to meet.

Given that utterances (1-4) refer to the same state of affairs when produced in a similar communicative situation, most people will intuitively agree that there is an *increase in explicitness* (hence: *explicitation*) from (1) to (4) and an *increase in implicitness* (hence: *implicitation*) from (4) to (1), even if they do not rely on a solid, theory-based definition of what *explicitness* and *implicitness* entail. Because many translation studies researchers, too, have relied on such intuitive understanding of *explicitness* and *implicitness* rather than a clear definition (cf. Becher 2010b: 4-8, 2011: 20-76), the interpretations and definitions of *explicitation* and *implicitation* remain vague and sometimes very divergent from one another.

Explicitation and *implicitation* have been conceived as *strategies*, as *tactics* or as *solutions* (cf. Pápai 2004: 145). Their application as *strategies* or *tactics* has been suggested to happen *consciously* or *automatically* (cf. Klaudy/Károly 2005: 15). *Obligatory*, *optional*, *pragmatic* and *translation-inherent* forms have been postulated (cf. Klaudy 1998/2008: 106-107). They have been claimed to be observable through *process-oriented research* (e.g. computer logging, eye tracking and concurrent or subsequent verbalization as in Englund Dimitrova 2005: 55-76 or Jakobsen 2003: 69-71, 2006: 103-104, 2011: 37-41) or through *product-oriented research* when, for instance, comparing a translation to its source text or to comparable non-translated texts (cf. Baker 1993: 243; Olohan 2004: 92-94). As we will show in sections 2 and 3 much terminology remains to be clarified when studying *explicitation* and *implicitation*. This article aims to contribute to this clarification.

The article is structured as follows: First, a brief overview will be given of the different concepts that can be related to *explicitation* and *implicitation* in translation studies (section 2). Then, recent definitions of *explicitness* and *implicitness* in translation studies will be discussed and relevance theory will be introduced (section 3). The main assumption underlying this article and the definitions that will be formulated is namely that translation is an act of communication, in which utterances rather than sentences are translated from one language into another; sentences are linguistically encoded constructs that can have many different meanings in as many contexts, whereas utterances are always part of a bigger unit that will limit their meaning possibilities. At the same time, *explicitation* and *implicitation* are relevant to translation, in that they refer to notions that are closely related to the translation process, and comparison of the level of *explicitness* of utterances is a translation studies research issue. We therefore want to argue that translation should be studied in the light of a *cognitive communication theory* (cf. Blum-Kulka 1986: 18; Gutt 1991/2000: 22-23; Pym 2005: 39; Alves/Conçalves 2003: 4; Murtisari 2013: 320). Relevance theory – already introduced into translation studies in 1991 by Gutt and further employed in Alvez and Conçalves (2003) – will be considered the most appropriate theoretical framework for *explicitation* and *implicitation*, mainly because of its cognitive and pragmatic approach (actions, characteristics and how they are perceived are fundamentally tied to individuals, to readers, writers and translators, and to the purposes pursued by the text). Importantly, relevance theory also provides an *explicit-implicit distinction* which directly lends itself to defining *explicitness* and *implicitness*.

Section 4 continues with definitions of *explicitness* and *implicitness*, after which defini-
tions of *explicitation* and *implicitation* in translation will be formulated (section 5). The
question will be addressed if *explicitation* and *implicitation* can be distinguished from
addition, *omission* and *substitution* (section 6). Finally, it will be argued that *explicitation*
and *implicitation* are both applications of one general translation strategy involving
minimizing risk and maximizing relevance for the target audience (section 7).

2 Explicitation and Implicitation in Translation Studies: Outlining the Scope

Explicitation and *implicitation* may refer to various concepts in translation studies. In this
section, we will briefly discuss this variety and highlight the concepts that we will focus
on in this article.

2.1 Strategies, Tactics and Solutions

Following the taxonomy suggested by Gambier (2009: 78-79, 2010: 417), *explicitation*
and *implicitation* may refer to *strategies*, *tactics* and *solutions* alike. As *strategies*,
explicitation and *implicitation* are decision-making processes possibly determined by a
translation commissioner or client in a translation brief, shaping the general nature of the
relation between source and target text (cf. Vermeer 2000: 229-232). For example, if a
tourist information leaflet is to be translated for a foreign audience, a *more explicit* target
text as compared to the source text may be required, whereas target audience preferences
may require translators not to be too *explicit* about, for instance, vulgar language in a
source text.

As *tactics*, be they *conscious* or *automatic*, *explicitation* and *implicitation* are decision-
making processes situated at the local level. For example, deciding to make certain
historical and cultural references *more explicit* in the translation of the touristic information
leaflet, or deciding to make vulgar language *more implicit* in translation can be considered
as *explicitation* and *implicitation tactics*, respectively. Because these processes are
going on in the "little black box" (Holmes 2000: 177) of the translator's mind, invisible for
the translation studies researcher, they must be reconstructed by triangulating data from
computer logging, eye tracking and concurrent or subsequent verbalization (cf. Englund
Dimitrova 2005: 55-76; Jakobsen 2003: 69-71, 2006: 103-104, 2011: 37-41).

As *solutions*, *explicitation* and *implicitation* are the observable outcome of the decision-
making processes, visible in the target text. They are often believed to be relatively easy
to observe and to count, which may account for their popularity as a research topic in
product-oriented (quantitative) corpus-based translation studies (cf. Baker 2004: 168-169).

For the remainder of this article, we will concentrate on *explicitation* and *implicitation*
as *solutions*, although *explicitation* and *implicitation* as *tactics* and as *strategies* will also
be briefly referred to.

2.2 S- and T-Explicitation and S- and T-Implicitation

When discussing *explicitation* and *implicitation* as solutions, it is necessary to differentiate further between what Krüger (2014: 157) called *S- and T-explicitation and -implicitation*.[2] Based on Chesterman (2004: 39), *S-explicitation* and *S-implicitation* are understood as characteristics of the target text as compared to its source text; *T-explicitation* and *T-implicitation* as characteristics of the target text as compared to non-translated text. These *T*-variants emerged after Baker (1993: 236-237, 242-243) introduced comparable corpora into translation studies, which led to a paradigm shift, causing the focus of translation studies to partly turn from the comparison of characteristics of source and target texts to the comparison of characteristics of translated and non-translated texts (cf. Olohan/Baker 2000: 35-36).

Although both *S- and T-explicitation* and *S- and T-implicitation* have co-occurred in corpus-based translation studies and given rise to interesting and insightful research, Krüger (2014: 164-167) convincingly argued that *T-explicitation* and *T-implicitation* are problematic for two reasons. First, studies comparing a target text with both its source text and a comparable non-translated text can generate contradicting results: if the target text is *more implicit* than its source text, one can claim that there is *implicitation*, whereas if that same target text is *more explicit* than the chosen comparable non-translated text, because, maybe by chance, the comparable text is *less explicit*, one can claim that there is *explicitation* (Krüger 2014: 164-166). Secondly, *T-explicitation* and *T-implicitation* can never be captured by translation process research, as there is no translation process between the target text and the comparable non-translated text. Thus, assuming the existence of *T-explicitation* and *T-implicitation* carries the risk of

> retrospectively attribut[ing] *explicitation* [and *implicitation*] decisions to the translator which he or she never made in the first place, since one of the comparison standards (the original target-language texts) falls completely outside the translator's cognitive reality and translational action. (Krüger 2014: 167)

Krüger therefore suggests to abandon the concept of *T-explicitation* and *-implicitation* and to replace it by the concept of *comparative explicitness*: "What comparable corpus studies such as Olohan and Baker's investigate is […] not explicitation but rather the comparative explicitness of translated and non-translated texts in the same language" (Krüger 2014: 170).

We agree with Krüger (2014) that the terms of *explicitation* and *implicitation* should only be used when comparing source and target texts, and not when comparing translated with comparable non-translated texts. For the former we will therefore use the terms *explicitation* and *implicitation* (without the capitalized prefix *S-*, which then becomes redundant); for the latter we will adopt the term *comparative explicitness*.

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2   Krüger (2014: 157-171) only discussed S- and T-explicitation. Implicitation was only mentioned in the margin of his article as the counterpart of explicitation (Krüger 2014: 165). Following Toury's view from 1987 already that "all shifts fall into dichotomous pairs" (Toury 2004: 23), we believe that what Krüger claimed for explicitation can also be claimed for implicitation. We will therefore continue to talk about S- and T-explicitation and S- and T-implicitation.

2.3 Obligatory, Optional, Pragmatic or Translation-inherent Explicitation and Implicitation

Explicitation and *implicitation* as characteristics of a target text when compared to its source text are traditionally divided into maximally four categories. For Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1977: 117), only lexicogrammatical differences between languages can prompt *explicitation* and *implicitation*, but with Nida (1964: 227-233), other differences triggering *explicitation* and *implicitation* were acknowledged as well: apart from differences in language systems, e.g. when the category of plural is obliged in one language but absent in another, Nida also discussed differences in language use, e.g. when a vocative is polite in one language but not in another, and which are triggered by differences in cultural background and world knowledge between audiences, e.g. when certain source cultural elements are (not) known in the target culture. These three categories were later labelled *obligatory*, *optional* and *pragmatic* respectively by Klaudy (1998/2008: 106-107).

A fourth category that was based on Blum-Kulka (1986: 19) and Séguinot (1988: 108) and firmly – though controversially – embedded in translation studies through Klaudy's (1998/2008: 106-107) taxonomy is that of *translation-inherent explicitation* and *implicitation*, which can be "explained by one of the most pervasive, language-independent features of all translational activity, namely the necessity to formulate ideas in the target language that were originally conceived in the source language" (Klaudy 1998/2008: 107). This fourth category resulted in numerous studies (cf. Becher 2011: 20-76 for an overview) and remained unchallenged until Becher revolted against what he called "a dogma in translation studies" (Becher 2010a: 1). Arguing that *translation-inherent explicitation* and *implicitation* had never been proven to exist, Becher suggested abandoning those notions (Becher 2010a: 7-16).

Following Becher, we want to go one step further in reducing the number of *explicitation* and *implicitation* categories. We will argue that Klaudy's *optional* and *pragmatic* categories both describe *explicitation* and *implicitation* due to language use and can thus be grouped together into a more general category, contrasting Klaudy's *obligatory* category that is due to differences in language systems. In other words, it is our opinion that all instances of *explicitation* and *implicitation* can be classified into, on the one hand, a *language systematic* category that is dictated by differences in language systems, and, on the other hand, a *pragmatic* category that is triggered by any other differences. With Englund Dimitrova, we also allow for the borderline between both to be fuzzy (cf. Englund Dimitrova 2005: 36). We believe this dichotomy to be clearer and more informative for translation studies purposes, since it refers to the two entities – language and its broader context – that play such an important role in translation practice.

3 Explicitness and Implicitness in Translation Studies

Having outlined the scope of *explicitation* and *implicitation* in translation studies, we have yet to define both notions. However, prior to definitions of *explicitation* and *implicitation*

are definitions of *explicitness* and *implicitness*. In recent years, awareness that under-standing of *explicitness* and *implicitness* is a prerequisite for understanding *explicitation* and *implicitation* has risen. Some translation studies researchers have indeed attempted to define *explicitness* and *implicitness* before defining *explicitation* and *implicitation*. In this section, we will discuss the works of four (groups of) translation studies researchers that have been influential in this domain.

3.1 Hansen-Schirra, Neumann and Steiner

Based on earlier work by Steiner (2005), Hansen-Schirra, Neumann and Steiner (2007) were among the first to apply *explicitness* and *explicitation* to corpus-based translation studies in a systematic manner. They related *explicitness* to *density* and *directness* and defined it as "a property of lexicogrammatical or cohesive structures and configurations in one text" (Hansen-Schirra/Neumann/Steiner 2007: 243). *Implicitness* referred to the feature of not being "lexicogrammatically [...] realized, but still part of the construction (unrealized participant roles, unrealized features in non-finite constructions […])" (Hansen-Schirra/Neumann/Steiner 2007: 242). In other words, *explicitness* and *implicitness* were conceived "as a property of encoding, not as a property of the communicative act as such" (Hansen-Schirra/Neumann/Steiner 2007: 246) and thus restricted to the linguistic level.

Explicitation, then, was considered "as a shift between source and target text, not as a comparison between comparable texts" (Hansen-Schirra/Neumann/Steiner 2007: 242). Unlike *explicitness* and *implicitness*, it was not described as a property of, but as "a process or a relationship between […] translationally related texts" (Hansen-Schirra/Neumann/ Steiner 2007: 243). More specifically, *explicitation* was defined as follows:

> We assume explicitation if a translation […] realizes meaning (not only ideational, but also interpersonal and textual) more explicitly than its source text – more precisely, meanings not realized in the less explicit source variant but implicitly present in a theoretically-motivated sense. The resulting text is more explicit than its counterpart. Note that this definition delib-erately excludes the indefinite number of possibilities through which meaning can simply be added to some text/discourse, without being in any motivated sense implicit in the source variant. […] What remains outside of our methodology is [thus] the simple 'addition' or 'omission' of meanings without any grammatical or cohesive relationships between variants.
> (Hansen-Schirra/Neumann/Steiner 2007: 243-244)

Given that the project for which these definitions were developed was a corpus-based study that relied on quantitative results derived from automatically annotated data, the focus on lexicogrammatical and cohesive features was motivated by the argument that

> a methodologically empirical project will not consist of high-level interpretations of utterances by human interpreters, but of text corpora with relatively low-level lexicogrammatical and cohesive categories captured in multi-level annotations. The data thus yield information about properties of encoding, rather than about high-level interpretations of such data by human interactants.   (Hansen-Schirra/Neumann/Steiner 2007: 243)

We acknowledge the value of the approach taken by Hansen-Schirra, Neuman and Steiner (2007), who restrict themselves to what can actually be observed and, hence,

restrict the notions of *explicitness*, *implicitness* and thus *explicitation* and *implicitation*. Nevertheless, we believe that neither their methodology nor the restricted focus necessitated by it do justice to the complex nature of translation. The reason is twofold. First, translators do not simply translate lexicogrammatical and cohesive features from one language into another, but they interpret the meaning of utterances and then reformulate this interpretation in the target language. It is therefore highly questionable to study translation without taking this interpretation process into account. Secondly, other elements than only those lexicogrammatical and cohesive features that are not realized in the construction can be felt to be part of the utterance, too, such as, for example, the cultural background knowledge in the above-mentioned tourist information leaflet.

3.2 Becher

Partly relying on the work by Steiner (2005), too, Becher (2010a, 2011) formulated his definitions of *explicitness*, *implicitness*, *explicitation* and *implicitation* as follows:

> Explicitation is observed where a given target text is more explicit than the corresponding source text.
> (Becher 2010a: 3)

> Implicitation is observed where a given target text is less explicit (more implicit) than the corresponding source text.
> (Becher 2011: 19)

> Explicitness is the verbalization of information that the addressee might be able to infer if it were not verbalized.
> (Becher 2010a: 3)

> Implicitness is the non-verbalization of information that the addressee might be able to infer.
> (Becher 2010a: 2)

To his definition of *implicitness*, Becher added:

> the definition deliberately avoids spelling out from where the addressee might infer the non-verbalized information. […] It is of course legitimate and highly relevant to ask for the inferential sources that are available to the addressee. But we do not want this question to make our definition unnecessarily complicated.
> (Becher 2010a: 3)

About his definition of *explicitness*, he said:

> To put it somewhat informally, explicitness means saying something that the addressee might have understood anyway. From this definition, it also becomes clear that explicitness often (but not necessarily) entails redundancy, i.e. the encoding of information by means of more linguistic material than is necessary.
> (Becher 2010a: 3)

We want to argue that these definitions are problematic for a number of reasons. First, *explicitness* and *implicitness* were defined as an *activity* ("[non-]verbalization", Becher 2010a: 2) and it is questionable whether this kind of activity can be observed let alone be measured in a written text, whether it is a source or a target text. Secondly, *explicitness* was explained as "the encoding of information by means of more linguistic material than is necessary" (Becher 2010a: 3), but it was left undecided when encoding could be considered as more "than is necessary" (Becher 2010a: 3) and thus as from which point one could say that *explicitness* occurs. In the same vain, it is unclear how information encoded by means of as much linguistic material as is necessary would be called, if it is

not called *explicit*. Thirdly, maintaining that *explicitness* entails *redundancy* becomes difficult when *explicitation* is defined as a characteristic that is "observed where a given target text is more explicit than the corresponding source text" (Becher 2010a: 3): why would it make sense to point out that something that is already encoded to a larger extent than necessary would become even more unnecessary? Fourthly and finally, the concept of *information* was deliberately left undefined, as was the possible source "from where the addressee might infer the non-verbalized information" (Becher 2010a: 3). While Becher avoided these specifications in order to prevent the definition from becoming "unnecessarily complicated" (Becher 2010a: 3), we notice that a theoretical foundation is missing, resulting in definitions that remain highly intuitive. We believe, however, that defining *explicitness* and *implicitness* within a theoretical framework does not overcomplicate matters.

3.3 Krüger

A theoretical foundation was suggested by Krüger (2013). He modelled *explicitation* and *implicitation* within a cognitive linguistic framework. Cognitive linguistics, he argued, could offer sufficient theoretical background to explain why and when information in the source and the target texts can be considered *implicit* or *absent*. This distinction has consequences for the assignment of the respective labels of *explicitation/implicitation* or *addition/omission* to certain differences between source and target texts (cf. Hansen-Schirra/Neumann/Steiner 2007: 244). Although Krüger admitted that cognitive linguistics may not have all the answers to explain all aspects of translation and could only explain *explicitation* and *implicitation* "in a more or less straightforward manner" (Krüger 2013: 309), he believed the theory to be sufficient to shed light on at least the linguistic dimension that translation undisputedly involves (Krüger 2013: 291). For this purpose, he combined Croft and Cruse's (2004) notion of *epistemic perspective*, Clark's (1996) notion of *common ground*, Pustejovsky's (1991) *qualia structure*, Fillmore's (1982) notion of *frame* and Langacker's (1987, 2008) notion of *domain* and model of linguistic *construal operations*.

Explicitness and *implicitness*, or at least "the view on *explicitness* and *implicitness* as adopted in the present article" (Krüger 2013: 296), were intuitively associated with concepts of Langacker's (2008) model of linguistic *construal operations*. In this model, linguistic meaning is conceived as "involving two components, a particular conceptual component and a specific way of construing this content" (Krüger 2013: 294), in which the conceptual component can be compared "to a scene and the construal of this content to a particular way of viewing this scene" (Krüger 2013: 294). The *construal operation* that Krüger linked to *explicitness*/*implicitness* is that of *specificity/schematicity*: construing or describing a scene in greater detail leads to more *specificity*, whereas reducing the number of details leads to more *schematicity*, as is illustrated in *construals* (5-8), in which (5) is *maximally schematic* and there is an *increase in specificity* from (5) to (8):

(5)   Something happened.

(6)   A person perceived a rodent.

(7)   A girl saw a porcupine.

(8)   An alert little girl wearing glasses caught a brief glimpse of a ferocious porcupine. (Krüger 2013: 296)

Krüger then linked explicitness to specificity and encodedness, implicitness to schematicity and contextually inferredness:

> From the microscopic perspective, specificity and explicitness would refer to that part of a given conceptual content that is overtly linguistically encoded while schematicity and implicitness refer to that part of the content which underlies the overtly encoded part as "conceptual substrate" (Langacker 2008: 42) and which needs to be contextually inferred to arrive at the full content to be communicated. (Krüger 2013: 296)

Krüger thus interpreted *explicitness* and *implicitness* in a broader way than Hansen-Schirra, Neumann and Steiner (2007): they are not restricted to lexicogrammatical and cohesive features of a construction, but involve the entire conceptual content as expressed by a construction. Based on this background, *explicitation* and *implicitation* were defined as follows:

> explicitation would occur when a given situation construed schematically in the source text is construed more specifically in the target text. In contrast, implicitation occurs when a situation described specifically in the source text is rendered more schematically in the target text. Explicitation and implicitation thus arise from a difference between the construal of a given source text and the construal of the corresponding target text and can therefore be characterized as cross-linguistic construal operations. (Krüger 2013: 297)

To explain why *explicitation* and *implicitation* occur and how they can be distinguished from *addition* and *omission* respectively, Krüger referred to Clark's (1996) notion of *common ground* between two people, which can be understood as "the sum of their mutual, common or joint knowledge, beliefs and suppositions" (Clark 1996: 93 quoted from Krüger 2013: 300). If information from the source text is not encoded in the target text, but is part of the *common ground* between writer and audience, this is an example of *implicitation*. If the same information is not part of the *common ground*, this is an example of *omission*. Vice versa, if information that is not in the source text is encoded in the target text, and if that information is part of the *common ground* between writer and audience, this is an example of *explicitation*. If the same information is not part of the *common ground*, this is an example of *addition* (Krüger 2013: 301, 306-309). However, this distinction, Krüger acknowledged, cannot be made entirely objectively (Krüger 2013: 310).

Promising as the cognitive linguistic approach as suggested by Krüger (2013) may seem, we have certain reservations. To start, we judge the framework to be very complex and not straight-forward, as it is a collage of different theories that is built around an intuitive interpretation of *explicitness* and *implicitness*: *explicitness* and *implicitness* are not inherently part of the framework, but are forced into it when associated with the

concepts of *specificity* and *schematicity* respectively without giving arguments in favour of this association. Also, the focus is too much on the conceptual content as carried by the linguistic construction, rather than on the multi-layered content of the utterance that goes beyond the linguistic construction and which is crucial to translators' process of interpretation and reformulation. Hence, Krüger's (2013) framework still approaches translation mainly as a linguistic act rather than an act of communication, although, by evoking the notion of *common ground* (a notion that was criticised by Sperber and Wilson (1995: 15-21)), the framework does acknowledge that communication plays an important part in translation. In certain aspects, the framework is reminiscent of relevance theory, which we believe to be a better, less intuitive and more cohesive candidate for explaining *explicitness*, *implicitness*, *explicitation* and *implicitation*.

3.4 Relevance Theory

At this point, an introduction to relevance theory is deemed necessary. According to relevance theory (Sperber/Wilson 1995), utterances are used to communicate thoughts verbally – relevance theory uses the term *assumptions* to refer to these "thoughts treated by the individual as representations of the actual world (as opposed to fictions, desires, or representations of representations)" (Sperber/Wilson 1995: 2). However, when people engage in verbal communication, they do not encode all assumptions or all aspects of an assumption, because that would result in nearly endless utterances. To be *optimally relevant*, that is, to communicate what one wants to communicate without being hopelessly verbose, verbal communication is, from the perspective of the addressee, a combination of *decoding*, *developing* and *inference*. This is summarized in Figure 1.
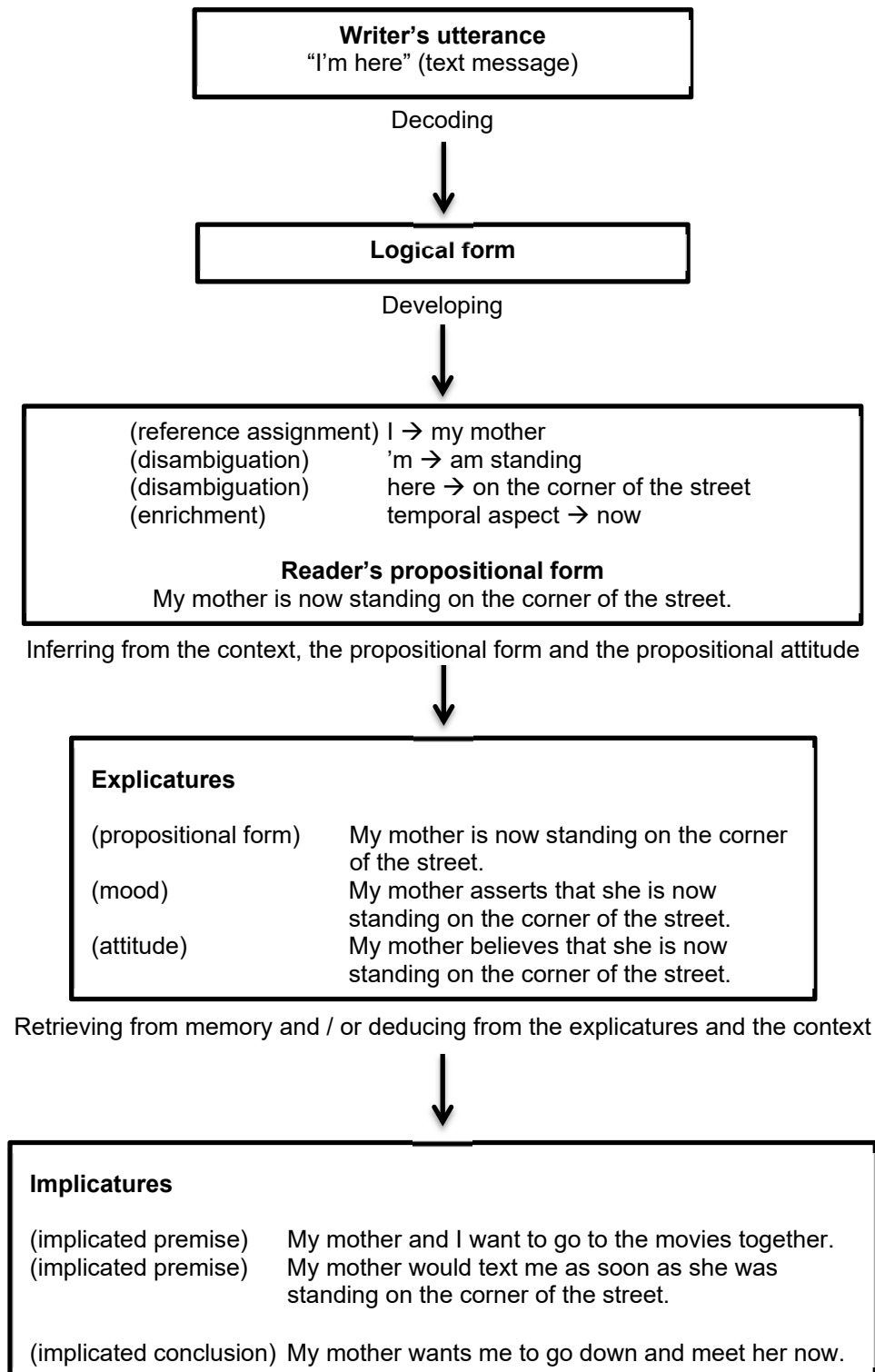
Writer's utterance
"I'm here" (text message)

Decoding

↓

Logical form

Developing

↓

(reference assignment) I → my mother
(disambiguation)   'm → am standing
(disambiguation)   here → on the corner of the street
(enrichment)   temporal aspect → now

Reader's propositional form
My mother is now standing on the corner of the street.

Inferring from the context, the propositional form and the propositional attitude

↓

Explicatures

(propositional form)   My mother is now standing on the corner
                        of the street.
(mood)   My mother asserts that she is now
                        standing on the corner of the street.
(attitude)   My mother believes that she is now
                        standing on the corner of the street.

Retrieving from memory and / or deducing from the explicatures and the context

↓

Implicatures

(implicated premise)   My mother and I want to go to the movies together.
(implicated premise)   My mother would text me as soon as she was
                        standing on the corner of the street.

(implicated conclusion) My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.

Fig. 1: Verbal communication according to relevance theory

Figure 1 is an illustration of the following imaginative situation: a mother and her daughter want to go to the movies. The daughter lives in a flat next to the movie theatre, but her doorbell is broken. Mother and daughter have agreed that the mother will send her daughter a text message as soon as she is standing on the corner of the street, after which the daughter is to go out to meet her mother, so they can go to the movies together. About half an hour before the beginning of the movie, the mother texts her daughter "I'm here."

As is shown in Figure 1, the daughter first reads the utterance, i.e. she decodes the graphic symbols into a *logical form*. Then, she assigns the utterance the right *propositional form* using *referent assignment*, *disambiguation* and *enrichment*. She further identifies the linguistic *mood* in which the utterance is expressed, as well as the *attitude* of her mother towards her utterance. These are three steps that relevance theory summarises as the *development of a logical form*, i.e. the process of assumption construction based on the *logical form* encoded by the utterance. The assumptions constructed in this phase of the communication process are all called *explicatures*. Finally, *implicated premises* are retrieved from memory, and from these *implicated premises*, the context and the *explicatures* the *implicated conclusion* is deduced. The *implicated premises* and the *implicated conclusion* are called *implicatures*.

There are thus two distinct kinds of assumptions that can be recovered from an utterance, as is shown in Figure 2: *explicatures* and *implicatures*. *Explicatures* are assumptions resulting from the *development of the logical form* and inferences from the immediate context. They are said to be *explicitly communicated*. *Implicatures* are assumptions that rely on information that is further remote from the immediate act of communication. These assumptions are only *implicitly communicated*. What is innovative in the relevance-theoretic *explicit-implicit dichotomy*, is "that no assumption is simply decoded, and that the recovery of any assumption requires an element of inference" since every "explicature is a combination of linguistically encoded and contextually inferred conceptual features" (Sperber/Wilson 1995: 182).
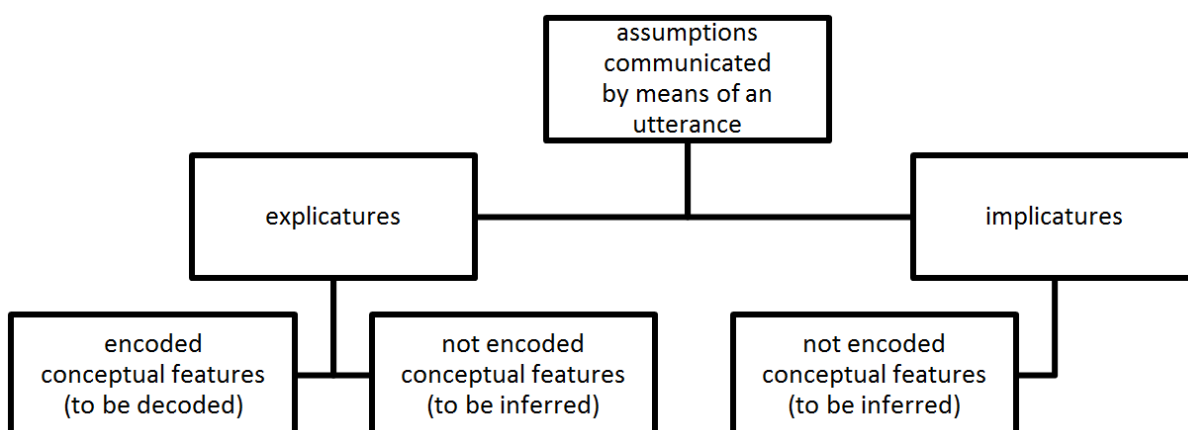

Fig. 2: Assumptions communicated by means of an utterance

3.5   Murtisari

The possibilities of relevance theory for the notions of *explicitation* and *implicitation* were acknowledged by Murtisari (2013). She indeed suggested to approach *explicitation* and *implicitation* from a relevance-theoretic perspective. Her actual application of relevance theory to *explicitation* and *implicitation*, however, suffers from one major shortcoming that influences the whole of her theory, but that is, in her defence, a recurrent problem in translation studies, that was already pointed out by Gambier (2009: 63, 2010: 412) and addressed by Toury as the import of concepts "from other fields of knowledge (which is quite understandable), but [with] very little adjustment to the specificities of their new setting (which is less understandable and much less forgivable)" (Toury 2012: 35). To understand what *explicit* and *implicit* entail, Murtisari quoted the relevance-theoretic definitions as formulated by Carston (2002: 377):

> An assumption communicated by an utterance U is explicit [hence an "explicature"] if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded by U. An assumption communicated by U which is not explicit is implicit [hence an "implicature"].
>
> <div align="right">(Carston 2002: 377 quoted by Murtisari 2013: 322)</div>

Relevance theory, Murtisari argued, could not only account for *translation solutions* applying information being translated from the *implicatures* of a source text to the *explicatures* of a target text and vice versa. It could also explain *translation solutions* which apply information from the *explicatures* only of the source text to the *explicatures* of the target text (Murtisari 2013: 329-340).

Although the relevance-theoretic definitions work well within relevance theory, their unchanged transfer to translation studies is deemed to be problematic for three reasons. Firstly, they are descriptions of assumptions, in which *explicitness* and *implicitness* are merely described as characteristics of those assumptions. Secondly, the definitions present *explicitness* and *implicitness* as classificatory or categorical notions: an assumption is *explicit* or *implicit*. This is problematic when *explicitation* and *implicitation* (for which she coined the term *de-explicitation* (Murtisari 2013: 333) – we will come back to this claim in section 4) are defined as follows, implying that *explicitness* is a gradable notion (and that *explicitness* and *implicitness* need to be seen as comparative notions):

> Explicitation: "shifts of meaning from the implicit to the explicit or simply to a higher degree of explicitness." <div align="right">(Murtisari 2013: 332)</div>

> De-explicitation: "to shift a particular meaning from the explicit to the implicit or to simply lower its degree of explicitness." <div align="right">(Murtisari 2013: 333)</div>

Although Murtisari refers to another quotation by Sperber and Wilson (1995: 182) saying that *explicitness* is indeed comparative, this cannot be found in their definitions of *explicit* and *implicit assumptions*. Thirdly, as *explicitness* and *implicitness* remain restricted to the level of assumptions, no link is made with utterances, which we believe should also be investigated in translation studies. In other words, where Hansen-Schirra, Neumann and Steiner (2007), Becher (2010a, 2011) and Krüger (2013) do not focus enough on meaning underlying an utterance, it seems that Murtisari (2013) solely focusses on

meaning, neglecting utterances. And while a theoretical framework that does not focus on utterances may well have its advantages, it cannot work for actual translation studies research. When Murtisari (2013: 330-332) conceptualises *explicitation* as a shift from the *implicature* to the *explicature*, or as a shift within the *explicature* to a higher level of *explicitness*, the result of the latter shift will not be observable in the utterance (see Figure 8 in the Appendix). Although we strongly support Murtisari's view that relevance theory is the theoretical framework that can help to define and explain *explicitation* and *implicitation* in translation studies, we believe that first and foremost the notions of *explicitness* and *implicitness* need redefining from within relevance theory and adjusting to translation studies.

4   Defining Explicitness and Implicitness

Relevance theory defines *explicitness*, we recall, as follows: "An assumption communicated by an utterance U is explicit if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded by U" (Sperber/Wilson 1995: 182). However, as we have already pointed out in section 3.5, what is presented as a definition of *explicitness* is actually a definition of an *explicitly communicated assumption*, i.e. an *explicature*, rather than one of *explicitness*. Furthermore, this definition suffers from *explicitness* being presented as a categorical notion rather than the comparative one needed in translation studies to compare a source text with its target text. If *explicitation* and *implicitation* are an issue in translation, it is up to the translation studies researcher to compare the level of *explicitness* of utterances. It also follows that the *explicitness* of utterances must be seen as a continuum and thus as a comparative notion: one utterance can be *equally*, *less* or *more explicit* than another.

Whereas the definition of *explicitness* as formulated by relevance theory is thus not applicable to translation studies, the explanation following that definition is:

> An explicature is a combination of linguistically encoded and contextually inferred conceptual features. The smaller the relative contribution of the contextual features, the more explicit the explicature will be, and inversely. Explicitness, so understood, is both classificatory and comparative: a communicated assumption is either an explicature or an implicature, but an explicature is explicit to a greater or lesser degree.   (Sperber/Wilson 1995: 182)

In other words, the smaller the relative contribution of the contextually inferred *conceptual features* and the higher the relative contribution of the linguistically encoded *conceptual features*, the *more explicit* the *explicature* will be. Inversely, the higher the relative contribution of the contextually inferred *conceptual features* and the smaller the relative contribution of the linguistically encoded *conceptual features*, the *less explicit* the *explicature* will be. It follows that contextually inferred *conceptual features*, on the one hand, and linguistically encoded *conceptual features*, on the other hand, can be compared to communicating vessels: the more *conceptual features* are linguistically encoded by an utterance U, the fewer *conceptual features* the inference of which is needed, and the more an utterance U can be said to have contributed to the *explicitness level* of its

assumptions. Inversely, the fewer *conceptual features* are linguistically encoded by an utterance U, the more *conceptual features* the inference of which is needed, and the fewer an utterance U can be said to have contributed to the *explicitness level* of its assumptions. However, since assumptions are cognitive entities, it is only the linguistically encoded *conceptual features* that are observable in an utterance U. Because *explicitness* is directly proportional to the linguistic encoding of an assumption's *conceptual features* by an utterance U, an utterance U can be said to determine an assumption's *explicitness level* by linguistically encoding the *conceptual features* of that assumption. Based on this reasoning, we now want to suggest the following definition of the *explicitness of an assumption*:

> **Explicitness** is the quality of an assumption as determined by the linguistic encoding of its *conceptual features* by an utterance U. This quality can be described as a continuum and is only observable at the utterance level.

Two important remarks need to be made. First, according to this definition, *explicitness* is not, nor could it ever be, a characteristic of an utterance. It remains a characteristic of an assumption, but it is observable in the utterance. *Explicitness* can thus be compared to temperature and the utterance to a thermometer. The fact that one can visualise temperature with a thermometer, does not make temperature a characteristic of that thermometer. Similarly, the fact that one can observe *explicitness* in an utterance, does not make *explicitness* a characteristic of that utterance. Like temperature, *explicitness* is described as a quality that lies on a scale, with on the one end *absolute explicitness* and on the other end the *absence of explicitness*. *Absolute explicitness* would mean that all conceptual features of an assumption are linguistically encoded. Although theoretically possible, this is impossible in praxis, as *absolute explicitness* would result in an endless utterance the understanding of which would not require any developing or inference at all. At the other end of the scale, any *explicitness* is absent.

The second remark concerns this absence of *explicitness*, or, as we want to call it, *implicitness*.

> **Implicitness** can be understood as negative *explicitness*: the more an assumption is said to be *explicit*, the less it is *implicit*, and vice versa.

This implies that we do not assume a clear cut-off point between *explicitness* and *implicitness*, allowing for the expressions *more explicit* and *less implicit*, on the one hand, and *less explicit* and *more implicit*, on the other hand, to be used interchangeably when comparing the *explicitness level* of the assumptions communicated by two utterances. This is visualised in Figure 3.
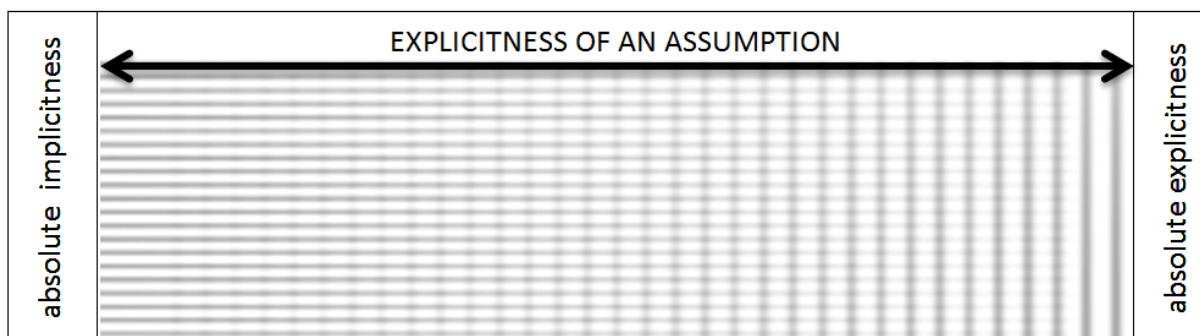
Fig. 3: Explicitness scale

Because *explicitness* is comparative according to our model, so is *implicitness*. This contradicts with relevance theory, in which *implicitness*, which is restricted to the *implicatures*, is only classificatory. It is in this context that Murtisari (2013: 333) suggested replacing the term *implicitation* by *de-explicitation*: according to relevance theory, an assumption cannot be made *more implicit*, only *implicit*. This is because Murtisari, like relevance theory, only considers the *explicitness* or *implicitness level* of assumptions, whereas our model focusses on the *conceptual features* of assumptions. Our view on *explicitness* and *implicitness* suggests that every assumption that is communicated verbally, be it an *explicature* or an *implicature*, may involve *explicitness* to a certain extent. In other words, *implicatures*, too, can be *partly explicit*, given that some of their *conceptual features* are encoded in the utterance, as is the case for utterance (2) and its *implicature* (9), in which for example 'standing' and 'corner' are *conceptual features* occurring in both the utterance and the *implicature*:

> (2)   I am standing on the corner.

> (9)   My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street.

All communicated assumptions balance between the two ends of the *explicitness scale*. The more conceptual features of the assumptions triggered by an utterance are encoded by that utterance (and the fewer conceptual features the inference of which is needed), the *more explicit* the assumption is, and inversely. When applying the framework to the examples given in the introduction, the intuitive *rise in explicitness* assumed from utterances (1-4) can now be theoretically motivated:

> (1)   I'm here.

> (2)   I am standing on the corner.

> (3)   I am now standing on the street corner.

> (4)   I am now standing on the street corner where we were going to meet.

Given that utterances (1-4) refer to the same state of affairs when produced in a similar communicative situation, utterance (2) encodes more *conceptual features* than utterance (1),

namely 'am standing' and 'on the corner', which are *conceptual features* from the *explicature* of utterance (1). Utterance (4) encodes more *conceptual features* than utterance (3), namely 'where we were going to meet', thus encoding *conceptual features* from the *implicature* of utterance (3). According to the definition of *explicitness*, the assumptions of utterances (2) and (4) are *more explicit* (*less implicit*) than those of utterances (1) and (3) respectively. Vice versa, utterances (1) and (3) encode fewer *conceptual features* than utterances (2) and (4) respectively, because of which their assumptions can be considered *less explicit* (*more implicit*).

Recalling that the general interpretation given to *explicitation* involves something being *more explicit* or *less implicit* than something else, and the general interpretation given to *implicitation* involves something being *more implicit* or *less explicit* than something else, it should be clear that the above discussion of differences in the *explicitness level* of utterances (1-4) paves the way to defining *explicitation* and *implicitation* within a relevance-theoretic framework, which is what we will do in section 5.

5   Defining Explicitation and Implicitation

5.1   Explicitation and Implicitation of Utterances

Based on the above discussion of differences in the *explicitness level* of utterances (1-4), we can define *explicitation* and *implicitation* as follows:

> **Explicitation** is the result of encoding developed or inferred *conceptual features* from the *explicatures* and/or *implicatures* of utterance A in a new utterance, thus producing utterance B, some of whose assumptions can be shown to be *more explicit* (*less implicit*) than the assumptions of utterance A, given that utterances A and B refer to the same state of affairs when produced in a similar communicative situation.

> **Implicitation** is the result of excluding some inferable *conceptual features* encoded in utterance A from a new utterance, thus producing utterance B, some of whose assumptions are *less explicit* (*more implicit*) than the assumptions of utterance A, given that utterances A and B refer to the same state of affairs when produced in a similar communicative situation.

To put it differently, *explicitation* means that a *conceptual feature* which is *absent* at utterance A level but included in an *explicature* or *implicature* of utterance A is expressed at utterance B level.[3] *Implicitation* means that a *conceptual feature* which is expressed at utterance A level is *absent* at utterance B level but included in an *explicature* or *implicature* of utterance B.[4] There is thus always a link between the utterance level and

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[3]   Note that if a conceptual feature which is absent at utterance A level but included in an explicature of utterance A is present at utterance B level, utterances A and B still have the same explicatures (see Figure 8 in the Appendix). However, if a conceptual feature which is absent at utterance A level but included in an implicature of utterance A is present at utterance B level, it is also present in the explicature of utterance B (see Figure 10 in the Appendix).

[4]   Note that if a conceptual feature which is present at utterance A level is absent at utterance B level but present in an explicature of utterance B, utterances A and B still have the same explicatures (see Figure 9 in the Appendix). However, if a conceptual feature which is present at utterance A level, and thus in

the assumption level. This can be schematized as follows (see Appendix for more elaborate schemata of the utterances and their assumptions):
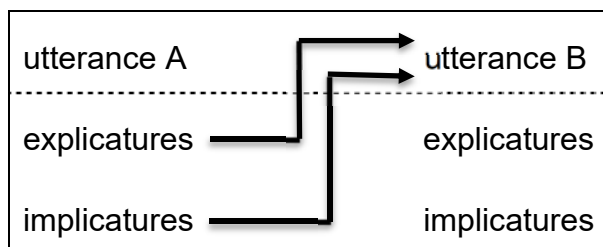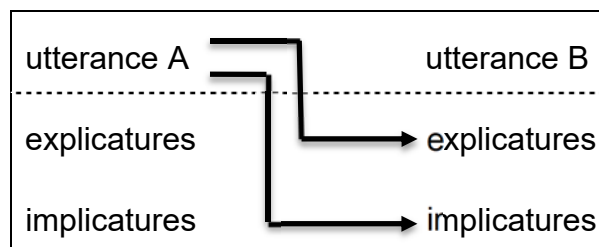

Fig. 6: Explicitation   Fig. 7: Implicitation

We want to stress that *explicitation* and *implicitation* are only said to be observable between utterances that refer to the same state of affairs when produced in a similar communicative situation. Through *explicitation* or *implicitation*, the state of affairs is not changed. What does change, is the focus: certain *conceptual features* that are communicated by utterance A can be highlighted or underexposed in utterance B, without, however, altering the state of affairs referred to by that utterance. This is of crucial importance. It makes it legitimate to call a translation from (1) into (2) an *explicitation*, because (2) encodes more *conceptual features* than (1) and both utterances refer to the same state of affairs when produced in a similar communicative situation. This is, however, not the case for utterances (1) and (10).

    (1)   I'm here.

    (2)   I am standing on the corner.

    (10)   The president of the committee praised the interpreter for her good work.

Although (10) undisputedly encodes more *conceptual features* than (1), (10) also refers to a completely different state of affairs than (1). Replacing (1) by (10), for whatever reason thinkable, will not be considered as an *explicitation* (see section 6).

    Note that the definitions of *explicitation* and *implicitation* are applicable both to monolingual communication and to translation; as soon as two utterances are compared, *explicitation* and *implicitation* may be observed. Suppose that the mother in our example texts (1) to her daughter, who is working very hard on her computer to meet a deadline and is not really thinking of anything else. If the daughter is confused by the message and replies with (11), the mother will probably encode more *conceptual features* into her utterance and answer with (12). Suppose now that the daughter, who is just too preoccupied with her work to think about what her mother is trying to make clear (because understanding an utterance requires effort, which not everyone wants to spend in every

---

an explicature of utterance A, is absent at utterance B level but present in an implicature of utterance B, it is also absent in the explicature of utterance B (see Figure 11 in the Appendix).

situation) asks (13), the mother can encode the *implicated conclusion* that she wants her daughter to deduce to the utterance level by answering with (14):

(1)   I'm here.

(11)   Where?

(12)   On the corner of the street ;-)

(13)   WDYM? [What do you mean?]

(14)   We wanted to go to the movies together. Please come down and meet me now.

In this example of monolingual communication, utterances (12) and (14) can be considered as involving *explicitation* of utterance (1).

Across languages, too, the *explicitness level* of utterances can be compared, since using a foreign word or expression for a similar concept does not necessarily change the conception of the concept itself. When comparing utterances across languages, the link with translation studies is easily established. Suppose that the conversation between the mother and her daughter is actually a dialogue in an English novel. Suppose further that this novel is translated into German, in which utterances (12) and (14) are translated by utterances (15) and (16) respectively. The difference between (12) and (15) can be called an *explicitation*, whereas the difference between (14) and (16) can be called an *implicitation*.

(15)   Ich stehe an der Straßenecke ;-) [I am standing on the street corner :-)]

(16)   Komm' bitte runter. [Please come down.]

5.2   Explicitation and Implicitation of Parts of Utterances

Up until now, we have focussed on whole utterances, but this focus on utterances might become challenging when actually doing corpus-based research, because utterances can be very long and complex; in fact, it can be questioned whether a translation of an utterance A into an utterance B will always (if at all) involve only *explicitation* or only *implicitation*. The issue actually already becomes more complex when an utterance is longer than a few words. Letters, speeches or even entire literary texts can be considered as one utterance, too. It only takes common sense to understand that a translation of such a long and complex utterance can never involve only *explicitation* or only *implicitation*. More likely, the verbal encoding of *conceptual features* of a source text utterance into a translated utterance will yield both a *higher and a lower degree of explicitness* simultaneously (see Figures 12, 13 and 14 in the Appendix). It is therefore necessary to conceptualize *explicitation* and *implicitation* as applicable to parts of utterances, too, which is common practice in corpus-based translation studies. Our definitions of *explicitation* and *implicitation* indeed allow for a focus on parts of utterances, too. Suppose that utterance (18) is a translation of utterance (17):

(17) I am standing on the corner where we were going to meet.

(18) Ich stehe an der Straßenecke. [I am standing on the street corner.]

Utterance (18) encodes the *conceptual feature* 'Straße' ('street'), that is part of one of the *explicatures* of utterance (17), thus yielding assumptions underlying utterance (18) that are *more explicit* than the corresponding ones underlying (17). Simultaneously, however, (18) does not encode the *conceptual features* of 'where we were going to meet', resulting in an utterance that only yields the corresponding part of utterance (17) at the *implicature level* of utterance (18), rendering this assumption *less explicit*. In other words, two contrasting *solutions* can be observed within one utterance, so that we need to see this translation as involving *a combination of explicitation and implicitation*.

6 Addition, Omission and Substitution

6.1 Addition and Omission

Having defined *explicitness*, *implicitness*, *explicitation* and *implicitation*, one last question remains that was raised by Hansen-Schirra, Neumann and Steiner (2007: 244) and Krüger (2013: 301,306-309): how can *explicitation* and *implicitation* be distinguished from *addition* and *omission*, respectively? The answer to this question will take recourse to the inferable *conceptual features* of an utterance. Given that utterances A and B refer to the same state of affairs when produced in a similar communicative situation, *addition* and *omission* can be said to have taken place where certain *conceptual features* are not in any way inferable from one of both utterances or their contexts. *Addition* and *omission* can thus be defined as follows:

> ***Addition*** is the result of encoding *conceptual features* that were not in any way inferable from utterance A or its context in a new utterance, thus producing an utterance B, given that utterances A and B refer to the same state of affairs when produced in a similar communicative situation.
>
> ***Omission*** is the result of excluding *conceptual features* of utterance A that are not in any way inferable from utterance B or its context from a new utterance, thus producing an utterance B, given that utterances A and B refer to the same state of affairs when produced in a similar communicative situation.

Where the difference between (2) and (18) involves *explicitation*, the difference between (2) and (19) involves according to our definition *addition*, because new meaningful *conceptual features* 'vor dem Café' ('in front of the café') that were not in any way inferable from (2) or its context are added in (19). Similarly, where the difference between (20) and (21) involves *implicitation*, because the aspect 'military' can be inferred, the difference between (20) and (22) involves *omission*, given that the kind of salute is not in any way inferable from the context of utterance (22) (it might be a salute with a ceremonial sword).

(2)   I am standing on the corner.

(18)   Ich stehe an der Straßenecke. [I am standing on the street corner.]

(19)   Ich stehe vor dem Café an der Ecke. [I am standing in front of the café on the corner.]

(20)   The soldier raised his hand in a military hand salute.

(21)   Der Soldat hob seine Hand zum Grüßen. [The soldier raised his hand to salute.]

(22)   Der Soldat grüßte. [The soldier made a salute.]

6.2   Substitution

While *explicitation* and *implicitation*, on the one hand, and *addition* and *omission*, on the other hand, are only observable between utterances that refer to the same state of affairs when produced in a similar communicative situation, *substitution* can be said to have taken place where the state of affairs in utterance B is different from that in A, as in (23) and (24). Through *substitution*, *conceptual features* such as action/event/state, person, time, place, or reason are deleted and added simultaneously; *substitution* is, therefore, *a combination of addition and omission*, which can be defined as follows:

> Given that utterances A and B are produced in a similar communicative situation, **substitution** is the result of producing an utterance B that refers to a different state of affairs than an utterance A, by omitting one or more meaningful *conceptual features* from utterance A that are not in any way inferable from utterance B or its context and replacing these by one or more meaningful *conceptual features* that were not in any way inferable from utterance A or its context.

(23)   Heathrow is the biggest airport of the capital.

(24)   Tegel ist der größte Flughafen der Hauptstadt. [Tegel is the biggest airport of the capital.]

When describing translation solutions in corpus-based translation studies, we believe it to be necessary to distinguish not only between *explicitation* and *implicitation*, but between *addition*, *omission* and *substitution*, because these five solution possibilities are closely related yet very distinct from one another.

7   Beyond Definitions: Explaining Why

Having identified and defined five important translation solutions, one may still wonder why translators would sometimes be *more or less explicit* about certain *conceptual features* from a source text utterance in their target text utterance, or why they would sometimes even change the state of affairs referred to by the source text utterance.

Becher argued that the reason for *explicitation* in translation relates to the cultural distance between the source text author and the target text reader and to the risk of

miscommunication that this cultural distance involves. To bridge the cultural gap and to minimize communicative risk, the translator may decide to insert *explicitation*s into the translation, because the choice of the *more explicit* option will less likely lead to a "communicative breakdown" (Becher 2010a: 20) than that of the *less explicit* option. Becher claimed that being *too explicit* only carries the risk of wasting energy and paper, whereas being not *explicit* enough carries the "risk of not being understood" (Becher 2010a: 20), which should be avoided at all costs. With this argument, Becher motivated the preference for *explicitation* over *implicitation* as assumed by the *asymmetry hypothesis* (Klaudy 2001 quoted from Klaudy/Károly 2005: 14), but "allowing for exceptional cases where cultural distance is insignificant and/or communicative risk is low. In these cases, we do not expect explicitations to outnumber implicitations" (Becher 2010a: 22).

There are three problems with this view. In the first place, it does not offer any explanation for the presence of instances of *implicitation*: why a translator should opt for a translation that is *less explicit*, is not discussed. In addition, and contrary to what Becher claimed, we believe that being *too explicit* may carry a similar risk of communicative breakdown. For example, when presenting information in such a way that it is felt to be too superfluous and irrelevant, the audience might be inclined to stop communication altogether. Thus, being *too explicit* carries a similar risk of communicative breakdown. Finally, within a relevance-theoretic framework, the occurrence of *implicitation*, too, can be linked to minimizing risk and maximizing relevance.

The latter was acknowledged and explained by Pym, who modelled *explicitation* and *implicitation* within a risk-management framework. He defined risk as "the probability of an undesired outcome", in which "undesired outcomes are those that restrict cooperation between the communication partners; desirable outcomes are those that enhance the potential for cooperation" (Pym 2005: 34). Translation, Pym stated, "involves communication into a context with fewer shared references, it involves greater risks than non-translation [… and] where there are greater risks, there are greater opportunities for risk minimization" (Pym 2005: 41). To avoid or at least reduce these communicative risks, translators may opt for *explicitation* or *implicitation*: rendering source text utterance *conceptual features more or less explicit* in the target text may avoid complications and miscommunication between the source text author and the target text reader, depending on the translation situation, a view that could "gain credence from an application of relevance theory" (Pym 2005: 39).

Indeed, for Gutt *translation strategies, tactics* and *solutions* could be connected with meeting the assumed needs of the target text audience. In addition, all *translation strategies, tactics* and *solutions*, Gutt argued, could be unified into only one true *translation strategy* (which he called a *principle*), namely doing:

> what is consistent with the search for optimal relevance. What differs [between strategies, tactics and solutions] are the specific applications of this principle that take into account differences in cognitive environment that may change the accessibility of particular pieces of contextual information and hence may affect the relevance of the text or utterance in that context.
>   (Gutt 1991/2000: 124)

Minimizing risk and maximizing relevance for their envisaged audience can thus be considered as the overriding *translation strategy* that leads translators to be strongly aware of the *relevance principle*, perhaps more strongly so than monolingual communicators – a hypothesis that can be linked to Baker's (1993) investigation in *comparative explicitness*. *Explicitation*, *implicitation*, *addition*, *omission* and *substitution*, too, can thus be understood as five possible applications of this general *strategy*: if optimal relevance is believed to be best achieved through *explicitation*, for example by encoding cultural background in the translation of a tourist information leaflet, then *explicitation* is opted for. If optimal relevance is believed to be best achieved through *implicitation*, for example by making certain vulgar language *more implicit* in translation, then *implicitation* is opted for. And finally, if optimal relevance is believed to be best achieved through *addition*, *omission* or *substitution*, for example by changing the reference to 'Heathrow' in an English source text to 'Tegel' in its German translation, then these *solutions* are opted for.

8   Conclusion

This contribution presents a set of new definitions for the concepts of *explicitation* and *implicitation*, which have been mentioned and researched so frequently in translation studies history but never fully understood, nor satisfactorily defined. We have argued that the reason for this can be found in the fact that the concepts of *explicitness* and *implicitness*, which are a prerequisite for understanding *explicitation* and *implicitation*, have mainly relied on intuition rather than on theory and never been thoroughly defined in translation studies either.

Starting from the assumption that translation is an act of communication and should therefore best be studied in the light of a cognitive communication theory, we follow Murtisari's (2013) idea to adopt relevance theory as a suitable framework for the definitions of *explicitation* and *implicitation*, because the *explicit-implicit dichotomy* underlying relevance theory lends itself to defining *explicitness* and *implicitness*. Unlike Murtisari, however, we have adapted the definition of *explicitness* as formulated by relevance theory and redefined *explicitness* and *implicitness* as comparative concepts. We have also established a link between utterances, *explicatures* and *implicatures*. Then, we have defined *explicitation* and *implicitation* and have illustrated that they are not restricted to translation, but can be found in monolingual communication as well. We have argued that *explicitation* and *implicitation* can and should be distinguished from *addition*, *omission* and *substitution*. Finally, we have agreed with Gutt (1991/2000) and Pym (2005) that *explicitation*, *implicitation*, *addition*, *omission* and *substitution* appear in translation because it is an act of communication involving much communicative risk. *Explicitation*, *implicitation*, *addition*, *omission* and *substitution* may be ways to reduce the amount of risk, depending on the translation situation. They help the translator obtain optimal relevance for the target text audience.

In conclusion, we have argued that translation studies in general and corpus-based translation studies in particular can greatly benefit from an application of relevance theory when it comes to defining and understanding two of its core concepts: *explicitation* and *implicitation*.

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Appendix: Utterances and Their Assumptions

Explicitation means that a *conceptual feature* which is absent at utterance A level but included in an *explicature* or *implicature* of utterance A is expressed at utterance B level. *Implicitation* means that a *conceptual feature* which is expressed at utterance A level is absent at utterance B level but included in an *explicature* or *implicature* of utterance B.

	A	B
utterances	**I'm here.**	**I am on the corner.**
explicatures	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street.	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street.
implicatures	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.

Fig. 8: Explicitation involving conceptual features from the explicature

	A	B
utterances	**I am on the corner.**	**I'm here.**
explicatures	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street.	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street.
implicatures	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.

Fig. 9: Implicitation involving conceptual features from the explicature

	A	B
utterances	**I'm here.**	**I'm here. Will you come down and meet me?**
explicatures	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street.	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her.
implicatures	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.

Fig. 10: Explicitation involving conceptual features from the implicature

	A	B
utterances	**I'm here. Will you come down and meet me?**	**I'm here.**
explicatures	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her.	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street.
implicatures	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.

Fig. 11: Implicitation involving conceptual features from the implicature

	A	B
utterances	**I'm here.**	**I am on the corner. Will you come down and meet me?**
explicatures	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street.	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her.
implicatures	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.

Fig. 12: Explicitation involving conceptual features from the explicature and the implicature

	A	B
utterances	**I am on the corner. Will you come down and meet me?**	**I'm here.**
explicatures	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her.	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street.
implicatures	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.

Fig. 13: Implicitation involving conceptual features from the explicature and the implicature

	A	B
utterances	**I'm here. Will you come down and meet me?**	**I am on the corner.**
explicatures	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street and asks me if I want to come down now and meet her.	My mother is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother asserts that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother believes that she is now standing on the corner of the street. My mother intends to communicate that she is now standing on the corner of the street.
implicatures	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.	*Implicated premises* My mother and I want to go to the movies together. My mother would text me as soon as she was standing on the corner of the street. *Implicated conclusion* My mother wants me to go down and meet her now.

Fig. 14: Explicitation and implicitation involving conceptual features from the explicature and the implicature respectively

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