Transformations in Discourse:
Interplay between DRDs, Coreference and Bridging

Ekaterina Lapshinova-Koltunski, Saarland University, Germany,
e.lapshinova@mx.uni-saarland.de
Kerstin Anna Kunz, Heidelberg University, Germany, kerstin.kunz@iued.uni-heidelberg.de
Anna Nedoluzhko, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, nedoluzko@ufal.mff.cuni.cz

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of the present study is to analyse the interplay between connectives or discourse-relational devices (DRDs) and other discourse-related phenomena, i.e. coreference and bridging in German, English and Czech. DRDs express logico-semantic relations between propositions, such as contrast, time, addition and others). Coreference serves the task of linking identical referents and events (i.e. complex anaphors), whereas bridging expresses near identical relations between referents, linking them with semantic meanings. All these devices contribute to the construction of meaningful discourse. These phenomena exist in all the three languages under analysis. However, their realisations depend on the different preferences these languages have (both systemic and context-based). The knowledge of these preferences is important for translation, as translators have to be aware of the full range of linguistic options that exist in both source and target language. We aim at describing these preferences for German, English and Czech. For these, different transfer patterns will be extracted from a parallel corpus.

Design/methodology/approach – Our approach is corpus-based: we use a trilingual parallel corpus that contains English original texts and their translations into German and Czech. For our analysis, we select a set of parallel sentences (along with a preceding sentence), whose German part contains a pronominal adverb, a combination of the referential adverb *da* or *hier* and a prepoposition such as 'damit, darüber, hierfür, hierüber'.
Some pronominal adverbs can be ambiguous. They occur as either DRD or as coreference device, as in example (1), where *dafür* could either be considered as a referential item that refers to the preceding utterance or as a causal DRD – or both.

Doch praktisch wird es dazu nicht kommen - <u>dafür</u> ist in Deutschland die Bereitschaft zur Solidarität, der Glaube an das "für alle" zu groß.

We extract all instances of pronominal adverbs along with the aligned sentences in English and Czech and analyse them manually to obtain various transfer patterns into these two languages. We define the interplay between the three discourse-related phenomena (DRD, coreference and bridging) in terms of switches that occur in the process of translation.

Findings – We expect to find less switches and hence more similar patterns in the German-Czech language pair than in the English-German or English-Czech, since pronominal adverbs are archaic in English, but (in different extent) exist both in German and Czech.

Research limitations/implications – The dataset has some limitations, as the English sentences are originals and the other two are translations and not comparable originals. This means that the results are prone to influence of the translation process, e.g. explicitation (Blum-Kulka, 1986) – the general tendency of translations to use a more explicit linguistic construction, which might also lead to a higher number of switches between non-translated and translated texts. However, this information would also be interesting from the point of view of both translation and contrastive studies.

Practical implications – We believe that our results provide systematic information about the linguistic options for realizing coherence between stretches of discourse. It is therefore valuable for translation scholars, language learners and linguists. We hope we can also contribute to the studies for MT.

Originality/Value – This is an innovative study design and to our knowledge, there are no studies on the interplay between different kinds of discourse phenomena across languages on parallel texts.

Keywords (3-5): translation, DRD, coreference, bridging, corpus, multilingual analysis
Research type (choose one): research paper, case study.