

Translation of “and” in a parallel TedTalk corpus of English, Czech, Hungarian, Lithuanian and French: functions and omissions

Introduction

This is a multilingual corpus study focusing on the functions of *and* in English and its translations into Czech, French, Hungarian and Lithuanian, in a selection of TedTalks.

Research questions

- (1) What is the functional spectrum of *and* in English TedTalks?
- (2) How is *and* translated in Czech, French, Hungarian and Lithuanian? Are specific functions of *and* associated with specific translations?
- (3) Which uses of *and* tend to be omitted in the translations?

Examples 1.

A striking regularity observed cross-linguistically is the use of *and* for topicalization of the previous focus (in the relation of addition):

En *There'd be a huge spread in her scores. [And] [actually] it's this spread that counts.*

Cz *V jejím hodnocení by byl velký rozptyl. [A] [právě] na tomto rozptylu záleží.*

Hu *Nagy lesz a szórása a pontoknak. [És] ez az a szórás, ami számít.*

Li *Jos balai būtų visiškai pasiskirstę. [Ir] [išties], svarbus būtent tas pasiskirstymas.*

Fr *omission of the discourse connective*

Our annotation scheme: Crible & Degand's revised taxonomy with cross-domain functions (2017)

Ideational	Rhetorical	Sequential	Interpersonal
[addition]	[alternative]	[cause]	[closing]
[concession]	[condition]	[consequence]	[contrast]
[enumeration]	[opening]	[punctuation]	[resuming]
[temporal]	[topic-shift]	[specification]	

Examples 2.

And is regularly used in many languages as means of expressing temporal succession of two events:

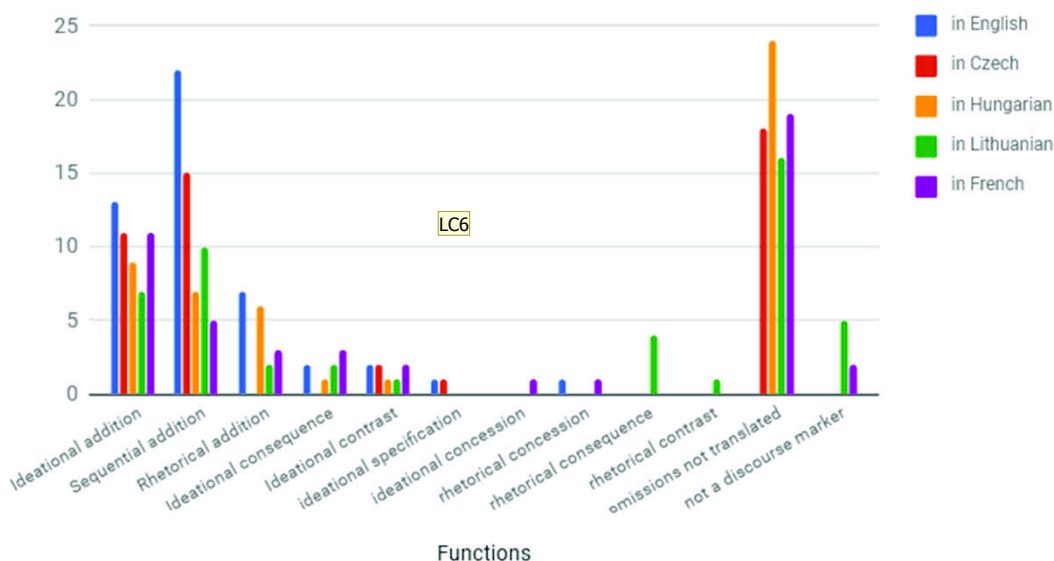
En *We give a little bit of time to play the field, get a feel for the marketplace or whatever when we're young. [And] then we only start looking seriously at potential marriage candidates once we hit our mid-to-late 20s.*

Cz *Dopřejeme si čas na hraní a průzkum toho, co je k máni, dokud jsme ještě mladí. [A] vážný konkurz na kandidáty pod čepec zahájíme až po pětadvacítce.*

Li *Leidžiam sau šiek tiek išsilaikyti, kol esam jauni, leidžiam suprasti, kas yra rinkoje, ar panašiai. [Ir] tuomet vėlesniame dvidešimtmetyje pradėdame įvedybų kandidatus žiūrėti rimtai.*

Hu, Fr *omission of the discourse connective*

Functions and languages



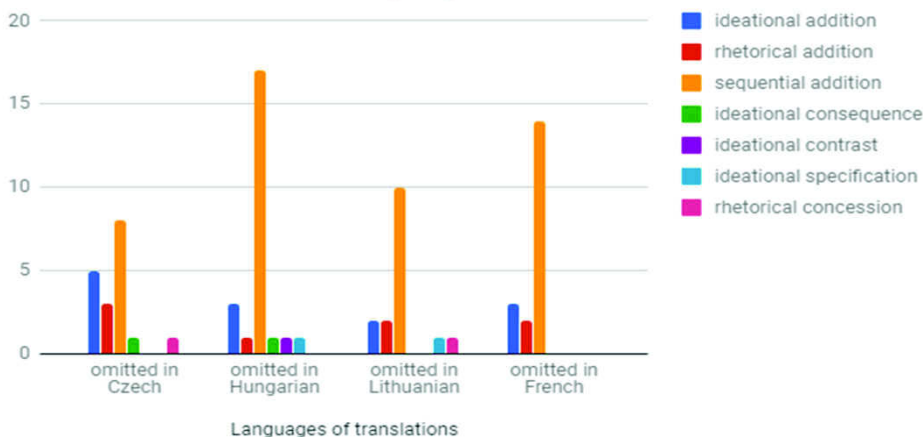
Findings 1. Functions

The DM “and” expresses a very wide functional spectrum, much larger than simply “addition”. The functions from the original English are not necessarily the same in the translations. As a result, the functional spectrum of the translation equivalents of “and” in CZ, HU, LIT and FR differ in terms of the types of functions/domains and their proportions.

In the annotated sample, the DM *and* with its counterparts in CZ, HU, LIT and FR is mainly used in the ideational domain, connecting factual information, and in the sequential domain, representing the structuring of local and global units of discourse, and less often in the rhetorical domain which is related to the speaker's subjectivity.

In Lithuanian the rhetorical domain uncovers a number of differences. Here we find rhetorical contrast rendered into the Lithuanian by *o* which could represent both addition and contrast. Rhetorical consequence is also observed which is mostly related to the whole argument. The reason could be the nature of the domain since it is related to the speaker's subjectivity.

Omissions in individual languages



Findings 2. Omissions

Another striking feature is frequent omissions in the translations of the discourse marker *and*. Cross-linguistically, the uses of *and* in the sequential domain are the most frequently omitted, whereas *and*'s operating in the ideational domain are usually preserved. SEQ-ADD is the basic continuation function and does not bring a lot of information, whereas IDE-ADD really signals a true semantic addition like a “plus” sign, so we lose less information by removing SEQ-ADD than IDE-ADD.

Some *and*'s are maintained (to avoid juxtaposition) and some are removed (due to constraints of the translation by subtitles).

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