WS 2004/05
Contrastive Linguistics
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more in:

more on: http://www.tu-chemnitz.de/phil/english/chairs/linguist/independent/kursmaterialien/contrli/index.html

Introduction to contrastive linguistics

0.1. Historical development

- 1950’s: based on structuralism
- to make foreign language teaching more effective
- on the assumptions that:
  - Foreign language learning is based on the mother tongue
  - Positive transfer: similarities facilitate learning
  - Negative transfer/Interference: differences cause problems
- Via contrastive analysis: problems can be predicted and considered in the curriculum

CL seen as an applied branch of linguistics
- Serving practical purposes in foreign and second language teaching
- Expectations were not met
- Interest in CL declined especially in the US
- In Europe, interest continued; large contrastive projects in the 1970s
- since 1990s corpus-based
- Expanding field; theoretical and methodological interest
- Internationalisation increasingly demands cross-cultural competence, translation, foreign language teaching etc.

0.2. Methodological steps in CL

1. Description:
   - Selection of items to be compared
   - Characterisation of items in terms of some language independent theoretical model
2. Juxtaposition
   - Search for and identification of cross-linguistic equivalents
3. Comparison:
   - Specification of degree and type of correspondence between compared items

0.3. Problems

- *Tertium Comparationis*:
  - Lg a and Lg b differ in structure
  - translation equivalence:
    - meaning of structure a > structure b
    - meaning structure a = meaning structure b?
      - Das gefällt mir
      - I like this
      - Cela me plait / J’aime cela
      - gefallen = to like = plaire = aimer...?
    - Similar: Present Perfect vs. Perfekt vs. passé composé
  - norm, standard?
  - language independent model?
0.4. Levels of description

- **Phonology**
- **Morpho-Syntax / Grammar**
- **Lexis**
- **Pragmatics**
- **Text/Discourse**
- ‘Culture’

0.5. Terminology

- **Contrastive Analysis**
- **Transfer** positive and negative
- **Interference**
- **Hypercorrection**
- **Error Analysis <> predicting errors**

1.1. Contrastive typology E – G: morph-syn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- more grammatical morphology</td>
<td>less grammatical morphology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- more word order freedom</td>
<td>less word order freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- less semantic diversity of GRs</td>
<td>more semantic diversity of GRs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One unifying generalization; surface forms of German are in a closer correspondence with their associated meanings:
- greater ambiguity/vagueness in English
- destruction of semantic clause structure in English

1. Contrastive typology: English and German

**Overview**

- **Grammatical morphology**
- **Word order**
- **Grammatical relations and their semantic diversity**
- **The position of the verb**

**Contrastive typology E - G**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>less raising</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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- what is raising?
- what is extraction?
- How are raising and extraction evidence for the destruction of semantic clause structure?
### Raising in English and German

- **Subject-to-subject raising**, e.g.:
  - John seems to be ill.
  - John scheint krank zu sein.

- *happen, continue, cause, …*

- German: more restricted, e.g.:
  - John scheint krank zu sein.
  - geschehen, fortfahren, aufhören: no raising

### Causes and consequences of the contrasts in raising

- Two causes of the greater productivity of raising and tough movement (Hawkins 1986: 82-84) in English:
  1. Semantic diversity of English grammatical relations is taken one step further; also: Old English already included the possibilities Modern German has (Er glaubte sich betrogen, Er scheint krank zu sein, Das Buch ist leicht zu lesen), so the pattern existed already.
  2. All clause-external movements are more productive in English than in German (cf. extractions).

### Extraction in English and German

- Extraction out of an infinitival object complement of a two-place predicate: in both E and G:
  - Example: The man who I have tried to kill was your friend.
  - Der Mann, den zu töten ich versucht habe, war dein Freund.

- With three-place predicates?
  - Example: Who has he requested you to marry?

- BUT: less “good” in German when sentence more complex, e.g.,
  - Die Unterlagen verdächtigt man ihn unterschlagen zu haben.

### Causes and consequences of extraction

- Generalization: in all cases German permits less trespassing of an argument into a clause in which it contracts no semantic relation with its immediate predicate.
- Raising: part of the semantic diversity of grammatical relations in English, which is attributable to the loss of case.
- Same with extraction.
- German NPs: much more reluctant to leave their dominant phrasal categories (when governed, i.e., case-marked).
- Other languages with case, e.g., Russian: similar behavior to that of German.
- Other languages with lost case, e.g., Danish: similar behavior to that of English.

### Consequences

- Semantic consequences: related to what we’ve seen before (E: greater ambiguity by collapsing semantically diverse things into less forms).
- Conservation of logical structure at the surface (predicate, arguments): yes in German, no in English.
A general correlation

- complexity of form $\leftrightarrow$ simplicity with which meanings can be derived from that form
- few, simple forms $\Rightarrow$ ambiguity, more work in decoding
- many, complex forms $\Rightarrow$ semantic transparency, less work in decoding
- a continuum
- languages strike a balance at different points

2. Tense
2.0. Issues
conglomerate tense & aspect & aktionsart:
- Difficult categories
- Terminological and conceptual confusion
  - Joan was singing vs. John is singing: TENSE
  - Joan was singing vs. John sang: ASPECT

2.0.1. Time concepts and language
- Conceptualisation of time
  - Culture-specific
  - Time arrow / straight time line vs. cycle
  - Impact on or relevance for grammatical categories?
- All human languages have ways of locating in time

2.0.2. Expressions of time
- Expressions can be divided into three classes:
  - Lexically composite expressions
    - Largest set, potentially infinite
    - Last year, five minutes after he left...
  - Lexical items
    - Finite set
    - Now, today, yesterday, …
  - Grammatical categories: TENSES
    - Finite set
    - Present, past, …
2.0.3. Grammaticalisation vs. lexicalisation

Grammaticalisation:
- Integration into the grammatical system of a language
- Obligatory expression
- Morphological boundness
- Juan runs, Juan ran

Lexicalisation:
- Integration into the lexicon of a language without effect on the grammatical structure
- Non-obligatory
- Free lexical items
- Now, yesterday…
- Borderline cases, continuum:
  - Auxiliaries, preverbal markers…
  - Diachronic developments

2.1. Approaches to tense
2.1.1. Definitions

„Tense relates the time of the situation referred to to some other time, usually the moment of speaking.“ (Comrie)

Grammaticalised location in time

Commonest tenses cross-linguistically:
- **Present**: situation described is located temporally as simultaneous with the moment of speaking
- **Past**: situation described is located prior to the moment of speaking
- **Future**: situation described is located subsequent to the moment of speaking

2.1.2. Absolute tenses vs. relative tenses

Absolute tenses relate the time of the situation described to the present moment, i.e. present moment = deictic centre
- E.g.: Finite verb forms in English

Relative tenses relate the time of a situation to the time of some other situation
- E.g.: Non-finite verb forms in English
  - When walking down the road, ….
  - … I often meet Harry
  - … I often met Harry

2.2. Present tense

- Tense is almost always indicated on the verb
- Verb morphology
- Grammatical words (e.g. auxiliaries) adjacent to the verb
- Tense is a deictic system
- Deictic centre (usually present moment of speaking but cf. below for relative tenses)

Many languages use the present tense to refer to habitual situations
- Joan goes to work at eight o’clock (every day)
- Johanna steht (jeden Tag) um sieben Uhr auf.

Contradiction to definition of basic meaning?
- Reference to a habit and not to a sequence of situations
- The habit does hold at the present moment
- Habituality also aspectual (see below)
- Present tense = universal tense?
  - Cows eat grass
  - Interpretation of universal truth on the basis of factors beyond the basic meaning of present tense => implicature
2.3. Past tense
- Absolute tense
- Basic meaning: location of a situation in time prior to the present moment
  - Situation may occupy
    - a single point
    - at seven o'clock yesterday J. promised to give me ten pounds
    - an extended time period prior to the present moment
    - J. lived in Manchester from 1962 to 1982
    - or the whole period up to the present moment
  - Basic meaning does not include any reference to whether the situation continues to the present or even into the future!
  - Conversational implicature that past tense does not continue to or beyond the present

2.4. Future tense
- Absolute tense
- Basic meaning: location of a situation at a time subsequent to the present moment
- Tense or mood?
  - Mood: a grammatical category which expresses the degree or kind of reality as perceived by the speaker
    - Speculative
    - Prediction
    - Realis vs. irrealis
  - Many languages have a clear grammatical distinction between past and non-past (i.e. present and future time reference)
  - Distinction between future and non-future is less distinct; in particular between future and present

2.5. Absolute-relative tense
- Some verb forms can combine absolute time location of a reference point with relative time location of a situation
- As with pure relative tense, the reference point is given by the context
- Example: English Pluperfect
  - Meaning: there is a reference point in the past (before the present moment) and the situation referred to is located prior to that reference point; establishment of the reference point is done by the context

In many languages, present tense the normal verb form used to indicate future (German, Finnish):
- German:
  - ich gehe morgen ...
  - ich werde morgen gehen
- Also possible in English for scheduled situations:
  - The train leaves tomorrow
  - It rains tomorrow

Binary tense systems
- Future vs. non-future
- Past vs. non-past
- Present tense can always be used with future time reference (Finnish, German)
- Severe constraints on the use of present tense to refer to time (English)

John had already left when Mary emerged from the cupboard

- Interpretation as 'remote past' is an implicature
  - Temporal location does not have to be remote
    - This particle had been created 2 seconds before this other particle was created 1 second ago.
  - Intervening reference point is always necessary
    - They had built the Great Wall of China.
  - Similar: Future perfect
    - Reference point is in the future (anterior to present moment)
2.6. Perfect

- Formal similarities between perfect and absolute-relative tenses
- Location in time prior to a reference point which in this case is simultaneous with the present moment
- Thus: locates a situation prior to the present moment = past tense
- Perfect differs from past but not with regard to time location
- Perfect in English cannot collocate with time adverbials which refer to a specific point or period in the past (≠ past and ≠ pluperfect and future perfect)

3. Aspect

3.1. Approaches

- „Aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation.“ (Comrie 1976:3)
- Characterisation of the internal structure of an event
  - Suzanne lisait quant j’entrai.
  - Background vs. event
  - No reference to the beginning or the end vs. presentation of totality of the situation

3.2. Perfective vs. Imperfective

- Aspect insists on oppositions; for example:
  - Perfective aspect: looks at the situation from the outside, without distinguishing any of the internal structure of the situation
    - External focus
  - Imperfective aspect: looks at the situation from the inside, is crucially concerned with the internal structure of the situation; can look backwards towards the start, or look forward to the end of the situation
    - Internal focus
3.3. Classification of aspectual oppositions

- **Perfective**
  - Joan worked here
- **Imperfective**
  - Joan used to work here
  - Joan worked here

**Habitual**
- Joan used to work here
- Joan worked here

**Continuous**
- The Eifel Tower stands in Paris
- Joan was working

**Nonprogressive**
- The Eifel Tower stands in Paris
- Joan worked here

**Progressive**
- Joan was working


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### 3.4. Meaning and form

- **Lexicalisation**
  - German
    - gerade, im Buch
- **Inflection**
  - Spanish
    - leyó vs. leía
- **Periphrasis**
  - English
    - she was reading

Very often combination of aspect and tense:
- Spanish: leía combines imperfective meaning with past time reference

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### 3.5. Perfect

- Different type of aspect
- No information about the internal temporal constitution of a situation
- Reference to a past situation which has present relevance
- Indication of continuing present relevance of a past situation

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### 4. Aktionsart

#### 4.1. Approaches

1. A distinction of **aspect** which is expressed lexically, rather than grammatically: eat, nibble, devour.
2. A distinction of aspect which is expressed by derivational morphology (e.g. Russian).
   (Trask, *Dictionary of Grammatical Terms in Linguistics*)

A situation may be either static or dynamic, punctual or durative
normally expressed in the lexical meaning of the verb and its arguments
6.2. Aktionsart categories

- Best known verb categorisation by Zeno Vendler (1967)
- States: love, hate
- Activities: run, walk
- Accomplishments: run a mile, read a book
- Achievements: win a race, recognize

7. Word order

- Constituent order?
- Free vs. strict word order
- Diachronic development
  - Case vs. word order
- Word order freedom?
  - Clause external: crossing clause boundaries
  - Clause internal: within clause boundaries

6.1. Basic principles of word order

- German has clause-internal word order movement rules which do not exist in English
- German and English have a number of similar clause-internal movement rules but these are more productive in German

6.1.1. Examples

- \{Peter\} \{gab\} \{zu Weihnachten\} \{dem Bruder\} \{das Buch\}.
- \{Peter\} \{gave\} \{the book\} \{to his brother\} \{for Christmas\}.
- 24 possible relative orderings of the four constituents?
- Degrees of grammaticality?
- Effects of stress?
German

i. *Dem Bruder gab zu Weihnachten das Buch Peter.
ii. *Dem Bruder gab das Buch zu Weihnachten Peter.
iii. *Zu Weihnachten gab dem Bruder das Buch Peter.
iv. *Zu Weihnachten gab das Buch dem Bruder Peter.
v. *Zu Weihnachten gab das Buch Peter dem Bruder.
vi. *Das Buch gab dem Bruder Peter zu Weihnachten.

English

- *Peter gave for Christmas (to) his brother the book.
- *To his brother Peter gave for Christmas the book.
- *To his brother gave the book Peter for Christmas.

6.1.2. Results

- Effect of stress?
- German examples:
  - Without stress: 8 ungrammatical sentences and 16 grammatical
  - With appropriate stress, all 24 were judged grammatical in an experiment carried out by Bierwisch (1963)
  - Varying degrees of grammaticality
- English examples:
  - Only 10 sentences judged as grammatical
  - Fixed word order replaces morphologically encoded grammatical relation
- Pragmatic consequences?
6.1.3. Pragmatic consequences

- Ambiguity of English constructions with respect to pragmatic functions
- Pragmatic differences are syntactically encoded in German
- Theme (‘old information’) and Rheme (‘new information’)
- Examples:
  - Ich habe ein Kleid an den Kleiderhaken gehängt.
  - Ich habe den Kleiderhaken ein Kleid gehängt.
  - I hang a dress on the clothes-hanger.

6.2. Basic verb position

- The order of subject, verb and object plays a major role in the typological classification of languages
- Major contrast in basic sentence structure between English and German
- English basic word order: SVO
- German: complex situation with SVO in main clauses and SOV in subordinate clauses

**English: examples**

- John saw the boy (S V O)
- John has seen the boy (S Aux V O)
- I know that John saw the boy (S V O)
- I know that John has seen the boy (S Aux V O)

**German: examples**

- Johann sah den Jungen. (S V O)
- Johann hat den Jungen gesehen. (S Aux O V)
- Ich weiß, dass Johann den Jungen sah. (S O V)
- Ich weiß, dass Johann den Jungen gesehen hat. (S O V Aux)

**Examples**

- Johann hat gestern in Leipzig ihrem Freund das Buch gegeben.
- ..., (weil) Johann gestern in Leipzig ihrem Freund das Buch gegeben hat.
6.3. Verb-final

6.3.1. Verb-final in German
- German assumed to be a verb-final (SOV) language
- Examples with finite and non-finite verb forms
  - ..., dass Johann den Jungen sah.
  - Der Mann, der die Frau vor einigen Tagen besuchte, ... 
  - Ich freue mich darauf, heute nach Hause zu fahren.
  - Der Versuch, im Haus einen passenden Schlüssel zu finden ...

Fronting rule for the finite verb into second or first position in main clauses
- Johann sah den Jungen.
- Sa, Johann den Jungen?
- Mein Vater ist vor einigen Tagen nach London gefahren.
- Vor einigen Tagen ist mein Vater nach L. gefahren.
- Abends kann ich in der Wirtschaft ein Bier trinken.

Non-finite verb forms in main clauses remain in final position
- Mein Vater ist vor einigen Tagen nach London gefahren.
- Ist mein Vater vor einigen Tagen nach L. gefahren?

6.3.2. Verb-final in English
- In PDE, we do not find verb-final sentence structures
- Diachronic development
- In PDE, verb-final patterns in compounds:
  - lion-hunter, quick-drying, ....

6.4. Differences in information structure
- German:
  - Ich weiß, du bist ein intelligentes Mädchen.
  - Ich weiß, dass du ein intelligentes Mädchen bist.
  - Ich bin keineswegs überzeugt, du bist ein intelligentes Mädchen.
  - Ich bin keineswegs überzeugt, dass du ein intelligentes Mädchen bist.
- Main vs. subordinate clause

English:
- I know, you are an intelligent girl.
- I am by no means convinced, you are an intelligent girl.
- You are an intelligent girl.
- Comma intonation
- Greater ambiguity in English

6.4. Differences in information structure
- German:
  - Ich weiß, du bist ein intelligentes Mädchen.
  - Ich weiß, dass du ein intelligentes Mädchen bist.
  - Ich bin keineswegs überzeugt, du bist ein intelligentes Mädchen.
  - Ich bin keineswegs überzeugt, dass du ein intelligentes Mädchen bist.
- Main vs. subordinate clause

German alternations
- The following alternations are unacceptable in English:
  - Schließe mir ja heute abend die Haustür.
  - Dass du mir ja heute abend die Haustür schließt.
  - Close the front door for me this evening.
  - That you close the front door for me this evening.
- In German, verb position is sufficient to indicate the subordinate status of a clause and thus to carry the associated pragmatic meaning.
7. Relative clauses

- Problem variables?
  - animacy, juncture (restrictive/necessary), case

- who – which
- whose – of which
- which – that /0
- who – whom?

8. Non-finite clauses

- infinitives
  - for N postmodification: a man to watch
    - D: relative

- participles
  - for N postmodification: the man watching us
    - D: relative

- gerunds
  - clause initiating: By doing so, the achieved wonderful results.
    - D: subordination + conjunct indem