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Introduction

Within comparative linguistics, contrastive analysis can be regarded as the complement of language typology: While typological studies usually compare a large number of languages with respect to a single variant property (e.g. word order, the expression of possession, tense, modality, etc.), contrastive linguistics deals with very few languages (typically only two), but considers a larger number of parameters. The objectives of each discipline are, accordingly, different: While it is the ultimate goal of linguistic typology to determine the invariants of language as a system of communication, contrastive linguistics is concerned with the more fine-grained aspects of cross-linguistic comparison and also takes dependencies between grammatical subsystems (e.g. morphology, syntax) into account. Moreover, contrastive analysis often serves a specific purpose (e.g. implications for teaching/learning, translation, the study of bilingualism), even though such applied aspects of language comparison are no longer its primary concern.

The contributions to this special issue are written in this spirit, striving for fine-grained analyses that are informed by findings from language typology and linguistic theory. Even though most of the papers focus on English and German, evidence from other languages is also occasionally taken into account.

Günter Rohdenburg analyzes a topic at the interface of lexical semantics and syntax that presents serious difficulties not only to learners of English or German but also to professional translators, as is shown by serious mistakes in authorized translations. Adjectival measure phrases of the type *four metres long* exist in both English and German, but there are subtle differences. One of the major stumbling blocks for learners and translators is a difference in the number specification of such expressions. For instance, measure phrases such as Germ. *meterdicke Mauern* are often erroneously rendered as *metre-thick walls* in English. In addition to providing a detailed comparison of the domain under investigation, Rohdenburg points out that the area of adjectival measure phrases provides further support for the 'explicitness theory' put forward in work done by John Hawkins.

Carsten Breul's contribution is concerned with a central contrast between English and German in the domain of (morpho-)syntax: While in English copular sentences of the form *A is B* the preverbal constituent is always the subject and the postverbal constituent the predicative nominal, in German the choice of the

subject is sensitive to the featural specification of the constituents involved. For instance, first person pronouns invariably function as subjects when they occur in the type of sentence under study (*Der Gewinner bin/*ist ich, Ich bin/*ist der Gewinner*), in cases where English allows alternative structures (*The winner is me, I am the winner*). Breul's analysis makes use of featural economy as a factor constraining syntactic derivations and also takes more general differences between English and German clause structure into account.

Florian Haas explores the trade-off between lexicon and grammar in the verbal domain on the example of the verb *meet* and its German equivalents in different contexts and uses. He shows that, even though Engl. *meet* corresponds to a variety of German verbs (*[an]treffen, erwidern, unterstützen*, etc.), ambiguity arises only rarely because diathesis assumes a disambiguating function: Specific uses tend to occur in the active voice while other uses are typically associated with the passive voice. In this way, English (partly) makes up for the lack of lexically more specific verbs like those of German.

The contribution by Volker Gast deals with a topic from the area of word formation, namely V-N compounding (e.g. *whetstone/Schleifstein*). It is shown that central contrasts can be formulated in terms of the endocentric/exocentric distinction. While endocentric V-N compounds are more widely distributed in German than in English, exocentric ones only exist in English (e.g. *breakwater*). The observed contrasts are partly attributed to aspects of external language history (language contact), but language-internal factors are also taken into account (e.g. the presence/absence of conversion).

Lutz Gunkel and Gisela Zifonun provide a fine-grained comparative analysis of 'relational adjectives' such as *departmental* and *medical* in English, German and French. They show that the distribution of these adjectives in German differs from their distribution in English and French, esp. with respect to the type of semantic relation holding between the head of a noun phrase and the noun within a relational adjective. For instance, relational adjectives combining with deverbal nominalizations may be object-related in English (*colonial administration*) but not in German (**koloniale Verwaltung*). These generalizations are interpreted against the background of relevant typological findings, and functionally motivated explanations for the observed patterns are proposed.

Finally, Ekkehard König's contribution deals with temporal prepositions in English and German. Starting from the observation that German speakers of English often have difficulties in correctly using the temporal prepositions *by* and *until* in English (e.g. *Let me have you abstract by next Monday, Let me have your bicycle until next Monday*), König explores the domain of temporal prepositions along several dimensions of meaning such as *deictic* vs. *non-deictic*, *anaphoric* vs. *non-anaphoric*, etc. He shows that *by* and *until*, which correspond to a single preposition in many other languages (e.g. Germ. *bis*), form a dual pair and can be paraphrased in terms of each other by using negative operators with appropriate scope. This analysis explains both the common core meaning underlying the two prepositions and the difference between them.