

Workshop 3: Interlocking Multilingual Corpora and Register(s): Diversity and Innovation

ABSTRACTS

Karin Aijmer (University of Gothenburg) 'please' as a requestive marker: Contrasting its use and functions in English and Swedish comparable blog corpora

The aim of the present study is to contribute to the study of the comparability of genres across languages by comparing the uses and functions of the requestive marker *please* in English and Swedish blog corpora. *Please* has been studied earlier in conversation (e.g. Wichmann 2004, 2005). Taking a cross-linguistic genre-based perspective means paying attention to how the characteristic features of the blogs can explain formal and functional properties of the expression across the compared languages.

Methodologically, the study is based on comparable corpora of English blogs (the Birmingham Blog Corpus (<https://wse1.webcorp.org.uk/home/blogs.html>) and Swedish blogs (included in the Korp Corpus <https://spraakbanken.gu.se/korp/>). Blogs are an emergent genre of internet communication sharing with informal conversation the feature of social interactiveness although the addressee (or addressees) is not physically present.

Two hundred occurrences of *please* with a function in the speech act of requesting are extracted from the two corpora and investigated in detail with respect to their syntax (position), type of sentence form and pragmatic function. *Please* in the Swedish blogs has been borrowed from English. A comparison will be made between *please* (in the Swedish blogs) and the distribution and use of the domestic *snälla* ('kind') in the blogs (cf. Ohlander 1985).

The preliminary findings based on a small number of examples indicate that *please* was used differently with regard to its position in the utterance and pragmatic function in the English and in the Swedish blogs. What characterizes the examples of *please* in the English blogs is that there is no indication that the blogger is personally involved or has a recipient for the blog in mind. *Please* was mostly placed in initial position (followed by an imperative) emphasizing the force of the request in a 'ritual' context where the blogger performs certain routine tasks (*please visit my website, please e-mail me*) in a situation where the rights and obligations of the blog user are clearly defined (cf. Kádár and House 2020). In the Swedish blogs *please* occurred most frequently in final position after many different syntactic types of requests (including single noun phrases) with the interactive function of making an appeal. The appeal may be to 'others', 'somebody', 'the weather gods' to give support, help or to comply with the blogger's request. The preliminary findings indicate that *please* and *snälla* are used in similar ways but differently than *please* in the English blogs.

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Niall Curry (Manchester Metropolitan University) *What's in a title? A corpus-based contrastive analysis of titles in parascientific texts in English, French, and Spanish*

Typically, a title is a reader's first introduction to a text. Across a range of texts and contexts, spanning newspaper headlines (Ifantidou, 2023), titles in novels (Martinez et al., 2016), and titles in academic research articles (Soler, 2009), research has shown that readers will often make the decision as to whether or not they will read a full text after reading its title. This readerly behaviour coupled with the metric-driven neoliberalisation of contemporary academia has greatly influenced how academics write, with more and more academics making use of so-called 'catchy' titles to engage readers and stand out amid the vast sea of research produced in our global publish or perish culture (Haggan, 2004). As such, in academic discourse research there has been a proliferation of studies centring on titles across a range of languages. These studies typically investigate the form and function of titles in well-established genres, such as research articles (e.g., Soler, 2009) with a view to better understanding how academics from different cultural backgrounds and disciplines engage their readers.

In academic discourse studies, for example, titles in soft science English language research articles have been found to make use of non-finite verbs and colons to create short and clear titles containing pre- and post-modifiers (Gómez et al., 1998). Conversely, titles in French academic research articles have been found to be ambiguous or unclear, impacting, for example, their categorisation in large international bibliographic databases (Alès et al., 2016), while Spanish titles in research articles appear to correspond to some degree with their English counterparts (Soler, 2009, 2011).

While titles in research articles have received much attention, the same cannot be said for titles in emerging parascientific genres, such as podcasts or blogs. This is somewhat surprising, as academics who produce blogs, for example, typically do so with the express purpose of disseminating research to a wider readership, often in different languages. Therefore, arguably, reader-engaging titles in blogs are of even greater importance when compared to research articles, which typically have a more captive audience. As such, from an academic discourse perspective, there is a need to better understand blog titles.

Notably, the genre of the academic blog remains somewhat unfixed and fuzzy (Curry & Pérez-Paredes, 2021), and there is an evident dearth of literature on academic blogs from cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, and cross-disciplinary perspectives. To shed light on how titles are used to engage readers in blogs written by academics and scientists, this paper presents a corpus-based contrastive analysis of titles in academic blogs in English, French, and Spanish. Using a corpus of academic blogs from the Conversation UK, France, and Spain, the study offers a taxonomical description of title forms and functions in blogs in English, French, and Spanish. Overall, the findings offer insights into titular variation across discipline and language, highlighting cultural variation in how writers engage readers through titles in parascientific texts.

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Signe Oksefjell Ebeling (University of Oslo) A cross-linguistic cross-register study of the verb phrase in English vs. Norwegian face-to-face conversation and fictional dialogue

This paper investigates the verb phrase in English and Norwegian real (face-to-face) dialogue and fictional dialogue with the aim of establishing to what extent fictional dialogue “resembles real-life conversation” (Nykänen & Koivisto 2016: 3) in the two languages. The study is inspired by previous cross-register contrastive studies between English and Norwegian (e.g. Ebeling & Ebeling 2020; Ebeling Forthc.), as well as studies on the language of fiction vs. conversation (e.g. Biber et al. 1999; Leech & Short 2007; Jucker 2021). Such studies have uncovered differences (and similarities) both within and across languages and registers; however, the two registers of interest here have yet to be examined in an English-Norwegian contrastive perspective.

In a study of “features of orality” in the language of fiction, e.g. discourse and hesitation markers, Jucker (2021) found that such features, typical of face-to-face interaction, were more prominent in performed fiction (soap operas, movies and TV shows) than in written fiction. These findings inspired the current investigation of a more general linguistic feature in written fiction compared to face-to-face conversation, namely the verb phrase. Thus, the study focuses on a linguistic unit not considered a typical feature of orality. To make the comparison to conversation as fair as possible, only dialogic passages in written fiction will be consulted.

Against this backdrop, the study addresses the following research questions:

- To what extent are verb phrases in English and Norwegian formally similar in the two types of dialogue?
- To what extent do the two types of dialogue opt for semantically similar main verbs in the two languages?

The material is drawn from two sources: the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC) for fictional dialogue and from the International Comparable Corpus (ICC) for face-to-face conversations. To get a homogeneous and balanced dataset, ten VPs from each of the 20 (original) general fiction texts in the ENPC are extracted and analysed, along with ten VPs from each of 20 randomly selected conversations from the English and Norwegian components of the ICC. The main verbs in the 800 VPs are registered and classified semantically and the full VPs are classified according to their formal complexity, involving features such as tense and finiteness, aspect, voice and modality. Example (1) from English fiction shows a complex VP with the main verb TELL in the present perfect, while example (2) from Norwegian conversation shows a simple VP with the main verb VÆRE ‘be’ in the present tense.

- (1) "I've told Jill to lie down," (ENPC-EN – fiction: AB1)
- (2) det er jo vi vi er jo en ganske forskjellig type folk da (ICC-NO – conversation: S1A-021)
‘it is of course we we are of course quite different types of people you know’

Preliminary observations suggest that both English and Norwegian mainly use relatively simple verb phrases, and slightly more so in conversation than in fiction, while semantically richer verbs tend to be used more frequently in fiction than in conversation in both languages. Norwegian conversation, in particular, seems to rely heavily on the semantically more basic lexical verb *VÆRE* 'be' (in 67 out of the 200 instances). Thus, this initial, and far from complete, analysis of the data suggests that even a general and essential linguistic element like the VP may serve as a distinguishing feature between fiction dialogue and conversation, and that writers only to a limited degree seem to aim (or manage) to imitate the verb phrase behaviour of spontaneous conversation in their fictional dialogues. To some degree these tentative results also corroborate previous cross-linguistic, cross-register findings in that register seems to be a more decisive factor than language (alone) regarding lexico-grammatical behaviour, at least between two closely related languages such as English and Norwegian.

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Lobke Ghesquière, Gudrun Vanderbauwhede & Simon Copet (University of Mons) A corpus-based contrastive and translation study of EN 'absolutely', FR 'absolument' and DU 'absoluut'

Our paper presents a synchronic contrastive and translation study of the English adverb *absolutely* and its French and Dutch counterparts *absolument* and *absoluut*, respectively. Whereas EN *absolutely* has already received considerable attention, both from a monolingual (Aijmer 2016, Núñez Pertejo 2013, Partington 2004, Tao 2007) and a contrastive perspective (Aijmer 2020 on English and Swedish, Bardas 2008 on English and Norwegian, Carretero 2010 on English and Spanish), the French and Dutch adverbs have been less popular an object of study. Exceptions are Klein (1998), who analysed *absoluut* and other degree adverbs in Dutch, and Molina (2014), who discussed the French adverb *absolument* in his study on the negation of adverbs in *-ment*.

The aim of our study is twofold. Analysis of monolingual corpus data will allow fine-grained description of the pragmatic-semantic and syntactic features of the different uses of these adverbs in the three languages, English, Dutch and French, while analysis of parallel corpus data will enable identification of the strategies used by translators to render these adverbs in the other languages. As such this study aims to build on and extend the existing literature on these adverbs by widening the scope to less researched languages and by including translation data.

Monolingual data are drawn from the spoken component of the BNC2014 corpus, the Orféo corpus and OpenSoNaR. Parallel data are extracted from the sentence-aligned English, French and Dutch subcorpora of the Europarl-direct corpus (Cartoni et al. 2013), using SketchEngine (Kilgariff et al. 2014). We have chosen to use spoken data (or written-to-be-spoken for the parallel data) as this allowed us to find both (sub)modifier and independent uses of the adverbs.

Written corpora are less likely to, for instance, contain occurrences of these adverbs as answers to questions (Tao 2007).

The qualitative analysis of the data is based on pragmatic, semantic and syntactic parameters. At the pragmatic level, register and context are analysed, which according to Tao (2007) and Núñez Pertejo (2013) influence the use of *absolutely* when it is used alone. At the semantic level, for instance, the adjectives modified by *absolutely*, *absolument* and *absoluut* are categorized following Lorenz (1999) and Bardas (2008). The polarity of the adjectives is also taken into account, as it could influence the translation choices made. At the syntactic level, following Tao (2007) and Carretero (2010), the nature of the word modified by the adverb is also tagged for. Cross-referencing of the data from the parallel corpora allows us to identify translation trends and confirm or refute our hypotheses.

Preliminary results seem to indicate that English *absolutely* behaves quite differently from its Dutch and French counterparts. Unlike *absoluut* and *absolument*, *absolutely* is not found in the data sets as a modifier of a negation markers (*not/no*). Moreover, whereas the French and Dutch adverbs are found to modify both epistemic and deontic modal auxiliaries, *absolutely* is not. In the English data sets, we also observe far less modification of elements conveying a modal meaning (e.g. *necessary*) and no instances even were found of *absolutely* modifying an element conveying volition. Finally, in terms of the polarity of the modified element, *absolutely* seems to have no clear preference for either positive or negative meanings, whereas *absolument* and especially *absoluut* have a clear preference for negative collocates.

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Hilde Hasselgård (University of Oslo) *Temporal catenatives in English and Norwegian (fiction, “non-fiction” and academic prose)*

The proposed study concerns what may be called temporal catenatives, such as *begin* and *continue* complemented by a verb. The most important selection criteria are that the two verbs should (i) share their subject, and (ii) be perceived as denoting a single action, as in (1) and (2); see Halliday & Matthiessen (2014: 567).

- (1) It had *started to rain*. (BOE1)
Det hadde *begynt å regne*. (BOE1T)
- (2) Jeg har *sluttet å spørre* for lenge siden. (EFH1)
I *stopped asking* a long time ago. (EFH1T)

The cross-linguistic comparison concerns English and Norwegian, as manifest in three registers: fiction, “non-fiction” and academic prose. The material comes from the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC) and the KIAP corpus (Cultural Identity in Academic Prose). The non-fiction part of the ENPC contains a mix of registers whereas the register of the KIAP subcorpus used is more homogenous, namely published research articles within economics. The ENPC is used primarily as a comparable corpus of original texts, but translations will be used to illuminate cross-linguistic differences in the use of catenatives as a component of the verb phrase.

The following questions are addressed:

- Do English and Norwegian use similar temporal catenatives, and with similar frequencies?
- Are temporal catenatives used differently across the three registers under study?

The catenatives were identified by searching for patterns in both languages: Verb + *to* and Verb + *-ing* participle in English, and Verb + infinitive in Norwegian, which uses only this verb form after catenatives (Holmes & Enger 2018). The resulting set of temporal catenatives denote the beginning, continuation and end of activities (temporal phase, according to Halliday & Matthiessen 2014; aspect constructions in Egan 2008), e.g. English *begin, start, continue, keep, stop, cease* and Norwegian *begynne, starte, fortsette, slutte, stoppe, holde på (med)*.

As Norwegian lacks a grammaticalized progressive aspect, an initial hypothesis was that Norwegian might favour temporal catenatives to mark continuation. This turned out not to be the case, however. Both languages use temporal continuatives mostly for inception/inchoation, particularly the cognates *begin* and *begynne*. Catenatives marking the end of an activity are least frequent in both languages, and less frequent in Norwegian than in English. Generally, the registers seem to differ more than the languages. As hypothesized, temporal catenatives are more common in fiction than in academic prose, and the mixed-register ENPC non-fiction is somewhere in between. Further analysis will also consider textual variation in order to find out how consistent the use of catenatives is across the registers.

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Rosa Rabadán and Noelia Ramón (University of León) *English-Spanish promotional texts and essays: Verbal use as a register marker?*

Variation across registers has been investigated in detail, focusing on different aspects of discourse (Biber 1995; Zhang 2016; among others). Most of these studies have dealt with differences between spoken and written registers (Biber 1988) or have paid attention to particular registers, including academic writing (Hyland 1998, 2005). However, register differences across languages have not received the same attention. This paper investigates verbal use in two registers in English and Spanish: promotional discourse in the field of food and drink (specialized language) and essays (non-specialized language). The contrast is both intra- and cross-linguistic and has two aims: a) identify verb use similarities and differences between registers in the same language (Biber and Zhang 2016, 2018; Biber and Egbert 2018; Biber and Seoane 2021; Pontrandolfo 2021; Biber and Egbert 2023; Calvi et al. 2023) and across languages (Rabadán 2006, 2009, 2023), and b) check whether the findings qualify as register markers.

Our data come from three corpora: English (772,953 w) – Spanish (776,100 w) comparable CLANES, which contains original promotional texts in the food and drink industry (2015-2023) <https://actres.unileon.es/wp/es/corpus-comparables/>. For the non-specialized register, we use the English essays subcorpus in P-ACTRES 2.0 (514,786 w) <https://actres.unileon.es/wp/es/corpus-paralelos/>, and a Spanish corpus of essays built from CORPES XXI resources (492, 244 w) <https://www.rae.es/corpes/>. Both corpora feature contemporary materials. In the case of Corpes XXI, three field areas have been chosen to make it as similar as possible to the Essay contents in P-ACTRES 2.0: Current topics, Social Sciences, and Science and technology.

We focused on past and present tenses, imperatives, and modal verbs/ periphrases to obtain empirical data for this study. We used high-frequency lexical verbs for each of the corpora. In the specialized comparable corpus we queried *make, use, add, heat* and *serve/ hacer, añadir, tener, dejar*, and *poner*. In the non-specialized subcorpora, we queried *make, see, get, take*, and *go/ tener, ir, hacer, decir*, and *ver* for tenses and the imperative mood. English modal verbs and the conjugated Spanish modal periphrases (*poder, deber + inf*) were processed separately. The chi-square statistic was used to compute statistical significance at $p < .05$ in the two registers of the same language and cross-linguistically.

Preliminary results show that, in English, present tenses and imperatives are significantly more common in promotional discourse. By contrast, past tenses occur more often in essays than specialized texts. In Spanish, our data show that imperatives are also significantly more common in promotional discourse; present and past tenses occur more frequently in the non-specialized register.

Cross-linguistic preliminary results show that only the past tense does not present statistically significant differences in the specialized corpus. This means that past forms do not qualify here as register markers. The difference in the use of modal auxiliaries/periphrasis is statistically significant between the two registers in both Spanish and English, being more frequent in the non-specialized register.

These tentative results suggest that some tense and mood choices may be suitable markers to characterize registers grammatically. The procedure can be replicated with other registers to characterize them grammatically.

Keywords: register variation, promotional discourse, essays, corpora, English-Spanish.

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Jenny Ström Herold & Magnus Levin (Linnaeus University) *Extended premodifiers in English and German fiction and non-fiction*

This contrastive, corpus-based register study explores the frequencies and forms of extended premodifiers in English and German fiction and non-fiction. We here define extended premodifiers (German ‘erweiterte Attribute’, cf. Magnusson 1995: 172) as consisting of an adjectival or participial head, having one or many ‘extensions’, which may function as arguments or adjuncts:

- (1) a *relatively shady* area (LEGS, non-fiction)
- (2) ein *mit Backpapier ausgelegtes* Blech [‘a with wax-paper lined baking-pan’] (LEGS, non-fiction)

Dean (1971:230) suggests that “the extended premodifier, at least in the traditional sense of the term, is definitely German, not English”. For German, Fagan (2009:125) gives the example *ein in der amerikanischen und europäischen Wirtschaft inzwischen weit verbreitetes Instrument* [‘an in the American and European economy meanwhile widely spread instrument’], showcasing their potentially high complexity. Nevertheless, extended premodifiers are occasionally – albeit briefly – addressed in English grammars as well. For instance, according to Huddleston & Pullum (2005: 119), adverb extensions seem to be common in English (*extremely hot day*), but other categories may also occur – prepositional phrases (*an in some respects good idea*) and noun phrases (*two hours long trip*). While the German extended premodifier is fairly well described and researched (e.g., Solfjeld 2004; *Duden, die Grammatik* 2009: 563–566; Ström Herold & Henriksson 2022), this is not the case for English.

Contrastive German-English studies on this construction type are almost non-existent, a rare exception being Fabricius-Hansen (2010). Her mostly introspective study indicates that German has a greater tolerance for extended premodifiers than English, English mainly being limited to adverb extensions (see example (1)). On a more general level, studies have shown that German is less inclined to using postmodification than English (e.g., Teich 2003: 183) but also that premodifiers are more common in “expository registers” (i.e., newspapers and academic) – rather than fiction and conversation – in English (Biber et al. 2021 [1999]: 591).

The data for our study come from two different corpus collections. The non-fiction material was collected from the Linnaeus University English-German-Swedish corpus (LEGS), and the fiction material comes from the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC) and the Oslo Multilingual Corpus (OMC). The LEGS data consists of, e.g., popular science and self-help books from the 2010s, while the sampled parts of the ESPC and OMC comprise English and German original fiction from the 1980s and 1990s.

Based on the above-mentioned studies, it is reasonable to assume that these constructions are more common, more complex and varied in German and in the non-fiction register than in English and fiction. These hypotheses gain some preliminary support from our pilot data: the rank order of frequencies for the registers follows the expected pattern, with extended premodifiers being the most frequent in German non-fiction and the least in English fiction. Also, the English instances identified are of the “minimal” kind with adverb extensions in both fiction (*a very low rent*) and non-fiction (*newly acquired resources*). Less evident, however, are at present the differences between the German registers, both as regards frequency and complexity. The frequency does not differ very much, and more complex instances, such as (3) below, which contains two extensions – a prepositional phrase (*mit dem Messer*) and an adverb phrase (*scharf*) – are not much rarer in fiction than in non-fiction:

- (3) *der wie mit dem Messer scharf geschnittenen* Haaransatz [‘the as with the knife sharply cut hairline’] (OMC, fiction)

It remains to be seen whether this is due to the relatively small material sampled so far, or perhaps a difference in time periods for the registers, the OMC fiction data being about 30 years older than the LEGS non-fiction data.

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Faye Troughton (University of Mons) *Mirativity in exclamative constructions: A cross-linguistic and cross-register approach*

This study provides a comparison of mirativity in English and French exclamative constructions in parliamentary discourse and written fiction. Exclamative constructions in English and French are generally accepted as including instances such as (1) to (6). Exclamative constructions are fronted by interrogative words and, in matrix position, are distinguishable from interrogatives by the absence of subject-auxiliary inversion. These constructions are understood to appear in independent, verbless, and embedded realizations. Pragmatically, they are characterized by their conveying of presupposed content, subjectivity, high degree, and mirativity (denoting surprise or exceeded expectations) (cf. Michaelis & Lambrecht 1996; Delancey 1997; Michaelis 2001; Rett 2008, 2011; Krawczak & Glynn 2015; Unger 2019). It is this final characteristic that concerns this study.

- (1) *Oh, my word, what a sight she is!* (WB Brbooks)
- (2) *Oh God, how terrible.* (WB Brbooks)
- (3) *You've no idea how good it is to see a friendly face.* (WB Brbooks)
- (4) *Mais quelle idiote je suis, pense-t-elle à présent.*
But what idiot I am thinks.O.she at present.
'But what an idiot I am, she now thinks.'
(PORTANTE Jean, *Mrs Haroy ou la mémoire de la baleine*, 1993)
- (5) *Que de drames humains!*
That of drama human
'So many human tragedies!' (Europarl-direct, Speaker ID 66, Martin, Hugues, PPE-DE)
- (6) *Je remarquai combien son sourire un peu cruel*
I remarked how.much their smile a little cruel
était séduisant.
was seductive.
'I noticed how seductive his slightly cruel smile was.'
(GRACQ Julien, *Le Rivage des Syrtes*, 1951)

Krawczak & Glynn's (2015: 354) operationalization considers mirativity the simultaneous instantiation of "conceptual incongruity" and "functional performativity", and a scalar phenomenon, which is the line taken here. Conceptual incongruity concerns the degree to which an event or situation is incongruent or surprising and considers the immediacy of the surprise along with other contextual factors (Krawczak & Glynn 2015: 361). Functional performativity is the "enactment of the state of incongruity", or how this is portrayed through elements of language. This may include capitalization, punctuation, and more generally other elements of language that make an utterance more emotive: repetition, interjections, and elements that heighten "addressee-orientation" (Krawczak & Glynn 2015: 363). It is considered here that, specifically in the case of exclamatives, the realization of the construction may come into play as well. Neveux (2018: 205) argues that "a completed exclamative structure loses in expressivity what it gains in analysis, that the essence of exclamation rests in the beginning of the structure, in the *Wh*-phrase". If a sense of "surprise" is part of this expressivity, this would imply mirativity is stronger in verbless exclamative constructions, less so in the independent yet full exclamatives, and weak or absent in embedded exclamatives.

This study compares the conceptual incongruity, functional performativity, and clause variation (independent, embedded, or verbless) across English *what* and *how* and French *quel*, *combien (de)*, *que (de)*, and *comme* exclamatives in two registers: written fiction and parliamentary discourse. For the former, samples of 100 were taken from both the Wordbanks British books (HarperCollins 2009) and Frantext RL-1950+ (ATILF) subcorpora, and for the latter,

exhaustive extractions were made from the Europarl-direct directional subcorpora (Cartoni & Meyer 2012). While all exclamatives show low mirativity generally, French exclamative constructions indicate higher mirativity across both registers.

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