Pragmatic frames as a tertium comparationis in translation

Frame semantics; translation; tertium comparationis; pragmatics; cognitive linguistics

Semantic frames, in the tradition of Charles Fillmore (Fillmore 1982), provide an approximation to a tertium comparationis in contrastive linguistics and translation (Boas 2013). A frame is a structured set of interrelated concepts, modelling the cognitive backdrop against which speakers understand word meanings. The primacy of frame model of translation (Czulo 2017), drawing on frame semantics and construction grammar, establishes the principle of maximum frame comparability between source and target text. The principle of choosing the semantically closest translation equivalent can be overridden by pragmatic factors relating to the function of the expressions at hand, e.g. considerations of information structure.

However, also the functional dimension of meaning can be represented by frames and in this way be integrated into the model. Pragmatic frames (Czulo, Ziem, and Torrent 2020) model "how we conceptualize what is going on between the speaker and the hearer, or between the author and the reader" (Fillmore 1982, 117), assuming a conventionalized relationship between a function and its formal realization. So far, this dimension is only marginally present in the frame semantic lexicographic resources.

This talk will present preliminary results of an ongoing PhD project that aims at developing new pragmatic frames to be included in the German FrameNet (REF) and using them in translation analysis. A bilingual corpus of German and English texts in two registers with a parallel and a comparable subcorpus is used as a testing ground to develop new frames and showcase their application in cross-linguistic analysis. The following questions are addressed: How is a communicative function realized in two languages and translations between them? Do we find patterns or tendencies comparing translated vs. original texts? Can (pragmatic) frames help to identify patterns or characteristics of texts in the two languages in contrast? The communicative functions studied include metacommunicative comments adding information how the speaker wants his utterance to be taken (1) and marking contrast (2) as well as other phenomena relating to speaker-hearer interaction, text and information structuring and stance-taking.

Within functional approaches to translation theory, several models developed for describing the pragmatically relevant features of a text and its situational setting (House 1997; Nord 2009) propose to derive individual translation choices from the functional characterisation of the text and the communication situation as a whole; the text being considered the primary unit of translation. The frame approach, in contrast, addresses pragmatic phenomena that are not necessarily derivable from the text level.

The application of frames as tertium comparationis in (machine) translation evaluation (Czulo et al. 2019), benefits from integrating the functional-pragmatic dimension. Adding pragmatic frames to FrameNets thus further improves the potential that these resources have for this and other computational applications.

Examples

(1) a. Also etwa die Frage <u>– lassen Sie es mich ruhig ad personam sagen:</u> Woher kommt denn dieser Herr Barroso?

<div align="right">European Parliament, Gerald Häfner, 22/11/2012, German original</div>

   b. My question – and it relates to one specific person – is this. Where did this Mr Barroso come from?

<div align="right">European Parliament, Gerald Häfner, 22/11/2012, English translation</div>

(2) a. Wie sie bemängelten, hatte die Studie nicht berücksichtigt, dass die Meeresoberfläche vor der Westküste Mexikos ungewöhnlich warm gewesen war. <u>Doch</u> gerade deshalb habe sich deutlich mehr Feuchtigkeit in der Atmosphäre befunden, wodurch die Menge an Niederschlag stieg.

<div align="right">Lois Parshley: Blame Game. Scientific American 06/2023, German translation</div>

   b. They said the study didn't consider warm sea-surface temperatures in Mexico, which Trenberth claimed added significant moisture to the atmosphere, increasing the total precipitation.

<div align="right">Lois Parshley: Blame Game. Scientific American 06/2023, English original</div>

References

Boas, Hans C. 2013. "Frame Semantics and Translation." In *Cognitive Linguistics and Translation: Advances in Some Theoretical Models and Applications*, edited by Ana Rojo and Iraide Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 125–58. Applications of cognitive linguistics volume 23. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Czulo, Oliver. 2017. "Aspects of a Primacy of Frame Model of Translation." In *Empirical Modelling of Translation and Interpreting*, edited by Silvia Hansen-Schirra and Oliver Czulo, 465–90. Translation and multilingual natural language processing 7. Berlin: Freie Univ. Berlin, FB Philosophie und Geisteswissenschaften.

Czulo, Oliver, Alexander Ziem, and Tiago Timponi Torrent. 2020. "Beyond Lexical Semantics: Notes on Pragmatic Frames." In *Proceedings of the International FrameNet Workshop 2020: Towards a Global, Multilingual FrameNet*, 1–7. Marseille, France: European Language Resources Association. https://aclanthology.org/2020.framenet-1.1.

Fillmore, Charles J. 1982. "Frame Semantics." In *Linguistics in the Morning Calm*, 111–37. Seoul, South Korea: Hanshin Publishing.

House, Juliane. 1997. *Translation Quality Assessment. A Model Revisited*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Nord, Christiane. 2009. *Textanalyse und Übersetzen: Theoretische Grundlagen, Methode und didaktische Anwendung einer übersetzungsrelevanten Textanalyse*. 4., überarb. Aufl. Tübingen: Groos.