Anglo-German discourse crossings and contrasts: introduction to the special issue

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Despite the growing amount of crosslinguistic research, studies in Contrastive Linguistics have been focusing predominantly on morphology and syntax and rarely ventured beyond the boundary of the sentence to discourse. The bourgeoning fields of Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis have similarly remained largely unilingual, and despite a steady stream of theoretical and methodological innovations in recent years, crosslinguistic and cross-cultural discourse studies continue to be scarce (Chilton 2011). This is both problematic and challenging. It is problematic because a lack of crosslinguistic perspectives restricts the analysis to one angle and prevents more a comprehensive view of the object in question. In this sense, unilingual discourse analysis is reminiscent of the Indian folktale "The Blind Men and the Elephant": using their sense of touch, the blind men try to identify what an elephant is, and as each touches a different part of the animal, he is convinced that this part constitutes the only true representation of the elephant. Bringing together and comparing the different parts of the discursive elephant can help linguists to better understand the phenomenon under study and avoid the risk of unwarranted universalism or overgeneralisation. As Partington et al. (2013: 12) remind us: "we are not deontologically justified in making statements about the relevance of a phenomenon observed to occur in one discourse type unless, where it is possible, we compare how the phenomenon behaves elsewhere." At the same time, looking elsewhere in discourse analysis presents a challenge for at least three reasons: because it involves getting out of the comfort zone of one's own language and culture, because of the extra effort required to gather data or compile corpora in a different language, and because of the thorny issue of crosslinguistic equivalence (McEnery, Xiao and Tono, 2006). Finding corresponding items, discursive contexts and data sets for crosslinguistic comparison remains tricky but, as the papers in the present special issue suggest, ultimately leads to a rewarding variety of original perspectives and solutions.

With this special issue we seek to address some of the issues and challenges of crosslinguistic discourse studies by bringing together six papers that analyse selected aspects of discourse in English and German (and in one instance also Polish). Apart from combining the crosslinguistic and the discourse-analytic, all the papers are corpus-based (Tognini-Bonelli 2001) or corpus-assisted (Partington et al. 2013), while also representing a broad

variety of approaches to discourse. The special issue begins with papers investigating phenomena of "small-d discourse" (Gee 2014), expanding the established focus of Contrastive Linguistics to include cross-sentential phenomena such as lexical chains, topic continuity and coordination, and subordinating relations (Hützen and Serbina, this issue; Speyer and Fetzer, this issue). Another subset of papers is specifically inspired by the sociolinguistic concept of *language crossing* as proposed by Rampton (2005, first published in 1995; also Rampton 1997). Generally defined as "the use of a language which isn't generally thought to 'belong' to the speaker" (Rampton 1997: 1), "crossing" phenomena have so far been studied primarily as interactional practices giving rise to a variety of performative effects. As the papers in the special issue show, they also occur in written genres, in which they are strategically deployed for creative, rhetorical and ideological effects and can be seen as contributing to "big-D" as well as small-d discourse (Gee 2014). One such type of discourse crossing involves loanwords such as historical Germanisms which carry a special indexical value in the host language due to their historical significance and associations (Schröter/ Leuschner 2013). Once in the host language, the borrowed item may then cross further into more distant discourse domains, where its dual indexicality may be reinforced or downplayed depending on context and topic (Jaworska and Leuschner, this issue; Schröter this issue). In cases, the crossing involves ways of stereotyping the other country in national discourses, be it primarily by metaphorical means (Musolff, this issue) or through the selection and arrangement of items in news reporting (Mattfeldt, this issue).

The special issue begins with a contribution by **Nicole Hützen and Tatiana Serbina**, who examine lexical chains and topic continuity in popular scientific writing in English and German. Adopting mainly quantitative methods, the authors identify considerable differences in the way topics are developed in this genre in both languages. Whereas popular scientific writing in English tends to deploy more lexical chains and a wider range of sense relations, German counterparts rely on shorter chains and make greater use of repetition, introducing variation through the use of different modifiers.

The contribution by **Augustin Speyer and Anita Fetzer**, too, focuses on discursive relations, but in the context of personal narratives. Drawing on Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT), the articles investigates in depth the overt and non-overt linguistic realisations of discourse relations (DRs) in a smaller corpus of narratives produced by German and British students. Although the ratio of marked DRs is high in both data sets, differences can be detected in the pragmatic functions of DRs: whereas the coordinating relations of Contrast and Result and the subordinating relation of Explanation are marked

overtly throughout the English data, this is less the case in the German data, where Narration and Elaboration tend to be marked. The results signal different language- and genre-sensitive preferences for the coding of coordinating and subordinating relations and thus for establishing discursive cohesion in the two languages. The research represented by Hützen and Serbina on the one hand and Speyer and Fetzer on the other hand could significantly contribute to the fields of second language learning and teaching, the study and practice of translation and interpreting, and the theory of intercultural communication.

Focusing on adversative and concessive connectors, the contribution by **Anna Mattfeldt** examines the contribution of small d-discourse features to big D-Discourse, viz. the representation of conflict in German and Scottish media reporting on the Scottish independence referendum of 2014. Using a corpus of articles from major Scottish and German newspapers and a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques, Mattfeldt is especially interested in identifying the conflictive hotspots or agonal centres of the debate. The results show a number of similarities and differences in the way the Scottish referendum and related issues were portrayed in the two contexts. While both the Scottish and the German media prioritise conflicting views regarding the economy, the German reporting tends to filter the representations through a lens of stereotypes and romantic views about Scotland, which, as Mattfeldt argues, might limit the understanding of the other European nation's concerns and hinder the creation of a European public sphere.

In the subsequent contribution, **Andreas Musolff** seeks to establish the extent to which Wilhelm II's infamous 'Hun Speech' of 1900 contributed to the dissemination of the *Hun* stereotype in British and German popular memory. By scrutinising a range of historical and contemporary sources including media data, Musolff reconstructs the conceptual and discursive developments of the *German-Hun*-analogy from its apparent beginnings in 1900 to contemporary uses and discursive crossings from English to German and shows how the original analogy, which built on perceived similarities in barbaric warfare, had been turned into a national Other-stereotype indexing a highly negative ethical and political judgement.

Following the theme of national stereotypes, **Melani Schröter**'s paper examines in detail the frequencies and discursive functions of Nazi vocabulary in English. Schröter does so by investigating all the 718 lemmas indexed in the dictionary of Vocabulary of National Socialism by Schmitz-Berning (2007) in a large web corpus of English. The analysis shows that only a small proportion of the items listed in the dictionary occur in English. However, those that do cross to English undergo a number of interesting and often problematic

discursive appropriations and transpositions, as Schröter demonstrates in a close analysis of selected items such as *Lebensraum* and *judenrein*.

Adopting a trilateral approach and the method of corpus-assisted discourse analysis, the final contribution by **Sylvia Jaworska and Torsten Leuschner** examines the discursive uses of the historical germanism *Kulturkampf* (lit. 'culture struggle' or 'cultural battle') in the donor language German and the host languages Polish and English. Based on the analysis of large corpora of general language use on the Internet and smaller specialised media corpora drawn from national newspapers, the analysis reveals the different ways and degrees to which the original meaning of the term has been discursively extended to perform ideological work in three different cultural contexts. This includes differences between general and newspaper usage, but above all divergences in the role played in contemporary public discourse by the original, 19th-century historical reference, as the latter continues to be influenced by the status of *Kulturkampf* as an intimate borrowing in Polish and a cultural borrowing in English.

The papers collected for this special issue thus address the topic of discourse crossings and contrasts through the prism of concepts and tools developed in fields such as text, contact, media and corpus linguistics, including in some cases diachronic perspectives. By examining a variety of small-d and big-D Discourse phenomena and adopting combinations of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, this special issue seeks to contribute to a better understanding of discursive contrasts, crossings and trajectories in the context of Anglo-German relations. With it, we hope to stimulate, not only further crosslinguistic, discourse-analytical research in other cultural and linguistic contexts, but also debate on such issues as the discourse-analytic usefulness of the sociolinguistic concept of *crossing* (Rampton 2005), the role of crosslinguistic comparison under various approaches to (critical) discourse analysis, and the place of discourse analysis in contrastive linguistics (cf. König 2012), including its relationship with approaches seeking to link crosslinguistic discourse analysis to the ever controversial notion of *culture* (Czachur 2013).

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