

STSM scientific report

April 2015, University of Fribourg

The collaboration with Sandrine Zufferey during my short-term scientific mission at the University of Fribourg revolved around two major axes: on the one hand, Dr. Zufferey helped me achieve the three goals that I had set for my research stay. On the other hand, Sandrine Zufferey and I launched a new collaborative research project that we hope will lead to a joint publication.

In the letter of motivation that I wrote for my STSM application, I explained that I intended to address three main issues during my stay in Fribourg: questions pertaining to my classification of contrastive relations; questions relating to the list of cohesive markers of contrast that I have compiled in view of my corpus analyses; and finally issues encountered during the disambiguation of some of my data. All three questions were fruitfully addressed during my stay. Sandrine Zufferey approved of most of my taxonomy of contrastive relations, but also offered some valuable advice regarding issues that remained unaddressed, such as the relevance of including exception in my definition of contrast. The discussions that we had on this topic were complemented by those organised in the framework of the COST meeting organised in Fribourg at the beginning of my stay. All in all, I left Switzerland with a lot of food for thought on how to improve my classification of contrastive relations. Secondly, Sandrine Zufferey provided me with some illuminating insights into my lists of markers, suggesting that the most efficient way to deal with borderline markers such as *du moins*, *tout compte fait* or *at least* was with the support of my data, in order to better determine whether the meaning of these markers was consistent with my own definition of contrast. Thirdly, Sandrine Zufferey helped me establish firmer criteria for the disambiguation of ambiguous markers such as *still* or *while*, which will ensure increased consistency during the crucial disambiguation stage of my work. Finally, in addition to providing answers to the questions that I had prepared for my stay, Sandrine made helpful suggestions concerning my PhD project, contributing some extremely relevant new perspectives in order to deepen some of my research objectives.

During my research stay in Fribourg Sandrine Zufferey and I also lay the bases of a collaborative research project in contrastive corpus linguistics that is both relevant and complementary to my PhD project. The main objective of our study is to analyse and compare the translations of four English and four French concessive connectives (i.e. English *yet*, *however*, *nevertheless*, *nonetheless*; French *pourtant*, *cependant*, *néanmoins*, *toutefois*) across three language registers (i.e. newspaper articles, parliamentary debates and TED talks) for which we have sentence-aligned parallel corpora at our disposal. Based on a preliminary analysis we expect that the

translations of these adverbs might vary across registers. We would like to test this hypothesis on a large empirical basis, also integrating some reflections on the meaning of concession and the semantic specificities of each concessive connective to our analyses. This study situates itself in a recent trend of contrastive linguistics that advocates a better integration of register studies in contrastive research (see e.g. Lefer & Vogeleer 2013, Lefer & Vogeleer 2014).

In conclusion, my research stay in Fribourg was extremely fruitful in that it both provided answers to the questions that I had and broadened my research horizons, opening up my perspectives to questions that I would not have considered on my own.

References

Lefer, M.-A. & S. Vogeleer. 2013. *Interference and Normalization in Genre-Controlled Multilingual Corpora*. Special issue of *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 27.

Lefer, M.-A. & S. Vogeleer. 2014. *Genre- and Register-related Discourse Features in Contrast*. Special issue of *Languages in Contrast* 14(1).