

Diachronic Change in Causal Cohesive Devices in Translated and Non-Translated German Business Articles

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3rd Corpora in Contrastive and Translation Studies

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Objectives of the talk

DIACHRONIC CHANGE IN GERMAN CAUSAL COHESIVE DEVICES

Introduction

Research outline

Previous research

Hypotaxis &
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Methodology & data

Hypotaxis to Parataxis?

English- German convergence?

Translational variety

Pragmaticisation of
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Conclusion

- 1 Have German causal clause complexes in translations of business articles become more paratactic over time?

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- 1 Have German causal clause complexes in translations of business articles become more paratactic over time?
- 2 Can this be construed as a case of convergence with the source language English?

Talk summary

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Study to be replicated:

Covert Translation project^a

- Genre: Popular science
- Corpus: 1978–1982 and 1999–2002
- Size: 300,000 words in total

^akranich12.

‘Can translation as a classic case of language contact act as a trigger for convergence and divergence phenomena between two languages?’

Previous research

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Becher¹:

- In German concessive clause complexes, parataxis has become more frequent than hypotaxis
- The same happened in the comparable corpus, but at an earlier stage

¹Viktor Becher (2011). "Von der Hypotaxe zur Parataxe: Ein Wandel im Ausdruck von Konzessivität in neueren populärwissenschaftlichen Texten". In: *Satzverknüpfungen. Zur Interaktion von Form, Bedeutung und Diskursfunktion*. Ed. by Eva Breindl, Gisella Ferraresi, and Anna Volodina. Berlin: de Gruyter. pp. 181-209.

Research hypothesis

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Hypothesis to be tested:

In contexts where the English source text allows a choice between parataxis and hypotaxis for the German translations of causal clause complexes, translators choose paratactic constructions more frequently now than they did a few decades ago.

Hypotaxis and parataxis in German

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‘I recognised the town because I had been there.’

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Hypotaxis and parataxis in German

‘I recognised the town because I had been there.’

Hypotactic Translation

S V AkkO S V
Ich *kannte* den Ort, da ich dort bereits *war*.

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Ich *kannte* den Ort, da ich dort bereits *war*.
⇒ V2 , verb-final

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‘I recognised the town because I had been there.’

Hypotactic Translation

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Ich **kannte** den Ort, da ich dort bereits **war**.
⇒ V2 , verb-final

Paratactic Translation

S V AkkO S V
Ich **kannte** den Ort, denn ich **war** bereits dort.

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Combining corpus linguistics and translation studies
⇒ Diachronic translation corpora

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Research Method

Combining corpus linguistics and translation studies
⇒ Diachronic translation corpora

Two-step corpus study

- Diachronic comparison of translation choices in parallel translation corpus
- Compare findings with non-translated German texts in comparable corpus

Corpus Data

Corpus details

Genre Business and management articles

Source *Harvard Business Review* and *Harvard Business Manager*

Objects Causal conjunctions (*because, since, for, as*)

Time periods 1982–3 and 2008

Corpus size

	1982–3	2008
Translation Corpus	497,489	518,850
Comparable Corpus	145,715	88,312

Findings: translation corpus

Frequencies of tactic causal conjunction types in the TC

	1982-3			2008		
	n	f	p	n	f	p
Hypotaxis	373	151.4	82%	248	95.3	63%
Parataxis	41	16.6	9%	83	31.9	21%
Other	42	17.0	9%	64	24.6	16%
Total	456	185.1		395	151.8	

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- 19pp decrease in hypotaxis

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Total	456	185.1		395	151.8	

- 19pp decrease in hypotaxis
- 12pp increase in parataxis

Findings: comparable corpus

Frequencies of tactic causal conjunction types in the CC

	1982-3			2008		
	n	f	p	n	f	p
Hypotaxis	251	172.3	79%	120	135.9	60%
Parataxis	68	46.7	21%	80	90.6	40%
Total	319	218.9		200	226.5	

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Findings revisited: translation corpus

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Total	456	185.1		395	151.8	

- 7pp increase in 'other constructions'

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Constructions classed as ‘other’

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- (1) [...] simply **because** they never even knew those rights existed.

*Und zwar nur **aus dem einfachen Grund, dass** ihnen
and indeed only for the simple reason that to-them
die Existenz dieser Rechte nicht bekannt war.
the existence of-these rights not known was*

Constructions classed as ‘other’

- (2) It's easy to misjudge the role of the chief strategy officer, in part **because** the title itself is misleading.

*Viele haben eine falsche Vorstellung davon, was ein
many have a wrong impression of-that which a
Chief Strategy Officer eigentlich ist. **Daran ist die**
chief strategy officer actually is in-this is the
missverständliche Bezeichnung nicht ganz unschuldig.
misleading title not entirely blameless*

Variety as resistance?

House²:

- In many English genres, ‘a fixed set of routine formulas tends to be preferred’

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²Juliane House (2011). “Linking Constructions in English and German Translated and Original Texts”. In: *Multilingual Discourse Production: Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives*. Ed. by Svenja Kranich et al. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 163–182.

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 - TT 2008 conjunctions: *because* (120.6 i/httw), *since* (21.1 i/httw), *as* (9.6 i/httw)

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- Users of German prefer ‘situation-anchored, ad-hoc formulations’ as well as ‘a great variety of expressions adapted *in situ* to the respective contexts and co-texts’.

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- Maintaining this in translation → ‘resistance to Anglophone discourse conventions and preferences’

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‘Risk’ of using ad-hoc formulations rather than *weil* ⇒ Evidence against convergence with English?

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Detailed results

Frequencies of causal conjunctions (Translation Corpus)

	1982-3		2008	
	n	f	n	f
<i>weil</i>	313	127.1	137	52.6
<i>da</i>	60	24.4	111	42.6
<i>denn</i>	28	11.4	50	19.2

Frequencies of causal conjunctions (Comparable Corpus)

	1982-3		2008	
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<i>weil</i>	118	81.0	67	75.9
<i>da</i>	133	91.3	53	60.0
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Diachronic development of the proportional frequency of *da*, *weil* and *denn*

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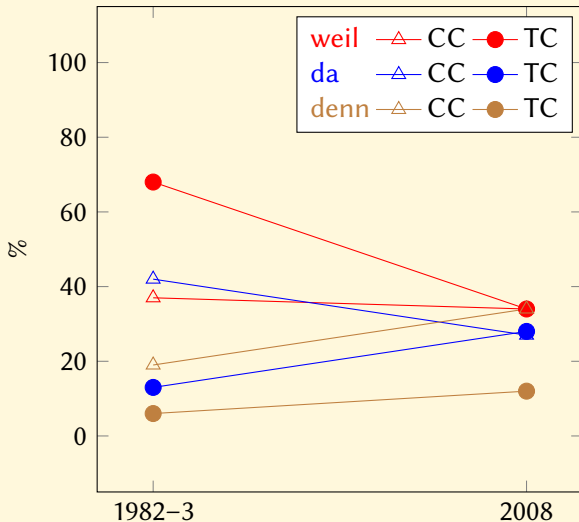
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Pragmatic differences among German conjunctions

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Köller³ (based on Pasch⁴): semantic differentiation⁵
factual (‘sachthematisch’), ‘real-world causality’

epistemic (‘reflexionsthematisch’), deductive inference

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⁴Renate Pasch (1989). “Adverbialsätze—Kommentarsätze—Adjungierte Sätze. Eine Hypothese zu den Typen der Bedeutungen von *weil*, *da* und *denn*”. In: *Wortstruktur und Satzstruktur*. Ed. by Wolfgang Motsch. Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, pp. 141–158.

⁵English terms and examples from Eve Sweetser (1990). *From Etymology to Pragmatics: Metaphorical and Cultural Aspects of Semantic Structure*. Cambridge: CUP.

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Köller³ (based on Pasch⁴): semantic differentiation⁵

factual (‘sachthematisch’), ‘real-world causality’

- John probably came back because he loved her.
- John kam wahrscheinlich zurück, weil (?da) er sie liebte. / ?denn er liebte sie.

epistemic (‘reflexionsthematisch’), deductive inference

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factual (‘sachthematisch’), ‘real-world causality’

- John probably came back because he loved her.
- John kam wahrscheinlich zurück, weil (*?da*) er sie liebte. / *?denn er liebte sie*.

epistemic (‘reflexionsthematisch’), deductive inference

- John didn’t love her, because he didn’t come back.
- John liebte sie nicht, da (*?weil*) er nicht zurückkam. / denn er kam nicht zurück.

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Why do *weil* and *da* each behave differently in TC and CC?

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Proposed diachronic changes

- 1 *weil* and *da* have become differentiated pragmatically in business writing

weil factual use

da/denn epistemic use

- 2 *denn* (paratactic) replaces *da* and *weil* (hypotactic)

German translations Currently undergoing step 1—further evidence against convergence with English

Why do *weil* and *da* each behave differently in TC and CC?

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- 1 *weil* and *da* have become differentiated pragmatically in business writing

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German translations Currently undergoing step 1—further evidence against convergence with English

German non-translations step 1 completed, currently undergoing step 2?

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- 2 Can this be construed as a case of convergence with the source language English?
 - Some evidence that there is no German–English convergence in this genre

Thank you!

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Thank you for your attention!

For more information, see

Mario Bisiada (2013). “Changing Conventions in German Causal Clause Complexes: A diachronic corpus study of translated and non-translated business articles”. In: *Languages in Contrast* 13.1, pp. 1–27

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