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Issue Article

Dilfuza Muminovna Teshabaeva
Uzbekistan State World Languages University
DSc, Professor

PARALLEL CORPORA AND THEIR AREA OF USE

Abstract: *In applied linguistics and in translation, an interesting application is the development and usage of parallel electronic corpora of texts of different genres. Such developments in the world are still under development, although parallel texts have long been used for comparative analysis. In the tasks of translation teaching parallel corpora texts can be considered as abstract information and provide examples of professional translation when studying the techniques and methods of translation. In the tasks of foreign language teaching such corpora allow to select possible equivalents of the studied vocabulary, to trace its meanings and functions in certain contexts.*

Key words: *corpus, parallel, electronic, computer, machine, translation, contrastive, comparable, text.*

Language: *English*

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Introduction

The creation and use of parallel corpora seems appropriate both from a practical point of view and from the point of view of the development of corpus linguistics - one of the most promising linguistic trends. The corpus of parallel texts can be effectively used in various linguistic studies of comparative nature, as well as in studies of translation theory, comparative literature, cultural studies, and automatic text processing.

The comparison of statements with similar content is not an innovation in modern linguistics. It is, in a sense, a tradition that goes back to the comparison of canonical biblical texts and their translations into European languages, such as the works of E. Gutter and E. Gusher and the works on universal grammar of the XVII-XVIII centuries. This tradition is continued in modern linguistics. The most developed and widely used method of parallel texts is in the works of the Austrian linguist M. Wandruschka and his followers[1].

Converting parallel texts into electronic form and organising them as an electronic corpus has positive effects (large volume of material, diversity of styles and genres, efficiency of quick analysis and searching for examples of the constructions analysed, etc.).

“The use of parallel corpora obviously has a positive effect on the learning process of translation. Due to the multiple occurrence of translation variants of a lexical unit or phrase of interest, the tendency to equate them with a single equivalent in the target language is reduced. A parallel corpus can also bring clarity to the choice of translation techniques”[2] .

Parallel texts are indispensable "assistants" in teaching translation, and in fact no practical textbook on translation practice can do without them (e.g. textbooks by V.V. Kabakcha and T.A. Kazakova). A set of exercises is mainly directed at comparing the source and target texts in order to identify certain translation techniques and evaluate their effectiveness. In particular, students are encouraged to give a detailed analysis of the lexical and grammatical content of the source text in comparison with the target text.

[1] Соснина Е.П. Параллельные корпусы в обучении языку и переводу. – http://ling.ulstu.ru/linguistics/resourses/literature/articles/corpus_education_ translation/

[2] Teubert, Wolfgang. The role of parallel corpora in translation and multilingual lexicography. (2002). 10.1075/scl.7.14teu.

By using a corpus, bilingual dictionary compilers acquire a very simple and effective tool for collecting material and empirically testing their hypotheses about inter-lingual equivalence. The value of this tool is determined by the fact that in linguistics, the material collection phase is the most time-consuming and the least creative and the corpus of parallel texts saves considerable time and effort for the creative phase of the work.

In addition, in a practical sense, translation should focus on post-editing possibilities, comparing and evaluating different strategies and interpretations within the context. A translator (especially a beginner) needs resources that can act as benchmarks for translation and evaluation of translation in certain "standard" contexts. According to some reports, about 50%, and in the initial stage of learning, up to 80% of translation time is spent on referring to abstract information, e.g. dictionaries. Electronic parallel corpora and linguistic computer technology reduce this time expenditure considerably and provide examples of professional translation when learning the techniques and methods of translation.

Areas of use

Many language-related disciplines, including contrastive linguistics, translation studies, computational linguistics and its numerous applications, translation process and language teaching are interested in parallel corpora. Granger notes that although the two fields continue to have different goals, they have recently become more closely related due to their shared reliance on parallel and comparable corpora as important sources of primary data that are mined through the employment of similar approaches[3]. Translation academics are interested in the translation process and its outcomes, as opposed to contrastive linguistics, which seeks to pinpoint similarities and differences between languages.

Contrastive linguistics

Parallel multilingual corpora are largely considered as playing a significant, though controversial, part in the rebirth of contrastive linguistics in the 1990s. The huge amount of empirical material provided by parallel corpora is invaluable for contrastive linguistics.

Although the original text and the translation process are bound to influence the target text, introducing some degree of distortion that affects the reliability of the findings, the ability to draw on a wide variety of texts translated by a variety of translators provides a useful means of testing hypotheses and confirming (or disproving) contrastive statements based on intuitions and a small number of examples.

Translation research

The importance of parallel corpora for translation studies resides in the amount of data they give access to, much like contrastive linguistics does. Practitioners consult parallel corpora as a source of information and ideas to solve translation issues. Moreover, translation researchers use them for translation research. They are now a vital component of many modern training programs.

The value of parallel corpora for practitioners is obvious: by using parallel corpora, translators can research how a certain translation difficulty has been handled by others and get ideas from it[4].

Comparable corpora can also help with translation by giving translators a greater knowledge of the terminology used in the source text, identifying and assessing probable target language analogues, and creating appropriate target language phraseology. These benefits are particularly helpful to translators working with language pairings without parallel corpora and/or in domains that are rapidly expanding, where terminology is likely to be changing all the time.

Language learning

The corpus of parallel texts has several characteristic didactic properties which distinguish this type of corpus from other corpora and condition the methodology of students' lexical skills formation on its basis. These didactic properties include: a) multilingualism; b) contextuality of search results; c) the possibility of limiting the scope of language use. Thus, unlike other types of corpora, the distinctive didactic property of parallel corpora is multilingualism. This will allow to build on it the vocabulary skills of the learners on the basis of translation.

Multilingual corpus of parallel texts can be used to build learners' vocabulary skills through translation. The contextualization of the search results allows for a more precise definition of the meanings of new words and shows the patterns of usage in real-life language situations. The possibility to limit the scope of language use in a search query allows to define more precisely the meanings of new words and to show the word usage in the specific field of communication requested. This feature allows the use of parallel text corpora to build learners' vocabulary skills when learning a foreign language for specific purposes.

Characteristics of a corpus of parallel texts that can be used to teach students professional vocabulary

[3] Granger, S. 'The Corpus Approach: A Common Way Forward for Contrastive Linguistics and Translation Studies', in S. Granger, J. Lerot and S. Petch-Tyson (eds) Corpus-based Approaches to Contrastive Linguistics and Translation Studies. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003, - pp. 17–29.

[4] Baker M. Corpus Linguistics and Translation Studies: Implications and Applications / M. Baker // Text and Technology: In Honour of John Sinclair. –Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1993. – pp. 233-250.

include the following: the corpus uses professional written texts; the corpus uses original texts in one language and their translations in another; the corpus can translate both from the target language into the native language and vice versa; the corpus contains texts of exclusively professional orientation for students; the corpus contains texts of the scientific genre; access to corpus resources may be open or restricted; the learning process should use "illustrative" corpora that clearly show the usage of professional vocabulary in the target language; contemporary professional texts should be included; both full-text and fragment-text corpora may be used in the learning process.

Machine translation

Special place must be given to machine translation, where parallel corpora have played a crucial role in a (partial) paradigm shift from rule-based approaches to statistical and example-based approaches to machine translation since around 1990. Other applications of parallel and comparable corpora include lexicography, knowledge engineering, terminology extraction, and the building of terminology databases and bilingual reference tools. Comparatively, example-based machine translation looks for similar phrases in earlier translations and pulls out the target language fragments that correspond to the source language fragments. Statistical machine translation basically involves computing the probability that a target language string is the translation of a source language string based on the frequency of their co-occurrence in the corpus. The authors write that "both methods make substantial use of large bilingual corpora, but where statistical machine translation is based exclusively on statistical correlations, example-based machine translation applies both statistical techniques and linguistics-based methods similar to those of earlier rule-based machine translation approaches"[5]. In either scenario, parallel corpora serve as a crucial supply of sets of examples for the development, training, and testing of systems to enhance their performance. When data mining expands to comparable corpora, it once more makes use of techniques that take advantage of word frequency correlations across languages to find word mappings.

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