

Discourse markers and their functional equivalents in English and Portuguese: a contrastive study.

Key words: discourse markers, translation method, English, Portuguese, stand-up comedy.

Abstract: Although there is no clear consensus about what is delimited by the term discourse markers, most current published research (Aijmer 2004, Blakemore 2002, Brinton 2008, Cuenca 2008, Fischer 1998, Fraser 1999, Lopes & Sousa 2014) indicate that a DM has a core semantic meaning and a context-dependent pragmatic function. The problem, however, arises when it comes to translation. Even if it is plausible to pick up a DM with a semantic core meaning and find an appropriate correspondence in the target language, the corresponding item with the same semantic meaning may perform different pragmatic functions. Thus, it is polyfunctionality of DMs that presents the main challenge for the investigators, especially in a multilingual study.

As a possible solution to the problem, Aijmer (2003, 2004) proposed translation as a methodology for studying pragmatic markers, which has been adapted for the purposes of this paper. She argues that the translation method helps to specify how markers function across languages, how they relate to each other both semantically and pragmatically. The proposal of this methodology was illustrated by the analysis of markers, belonging to the semantic field of expectation (*actually*, *in fact* and *really*) in English and their pragmatic equivalents in Swedish and Dutch on the basis of the English–Swedish Parallel Corpus for English/Swedish and of the Triptic Corpus for English/Dutch. According to this methodology, translations allow establishing a more explicit type of relationship between the items. In other words, setting up semantic fields based on translations contributes to a better understanding of credibility and appropriateness of established crosslinguistic equivalents. The ultimate goal of the methodology is to develop a semantic map based on translations.

Thus, the objective of the present study is to identify Portuguese functional equivalents of English DMs *well*, *you know*, *I mean*, using COMPARA corpus. COMPARA is an open corpus of English and Portuguese texts aligned with their corresponding Portuguese and English translations. Since this paper is a small part of a larger research on functioning of DMs in Portuguese and English (more specifically, in *stand-up comedy*), the reflections over the results will allow (re)establishing the units of the analysis in Portuguese corpus and contributing to a better understanding of functionality of Portuguese DMs in the corpus under investigation.