

Continuative and contrastive discourse relations across discourse domains: Cognitive and cross-linguistic approaches

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The goal of this workshop is to investigate the linguistic realization of continuative and contrastive discourse relations across discourse domains, considering in particular cognitive and cross-linguistic perspectives.

Discourse relations (also known as coherence relations or rhetorical relations) have been examined with regard to their signalling across various theoretical frameworks, such as Rhetorical Structure Theory (Mann & Thompson 1988) or Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (Asher & Lascarides 2003). Discourse relations may be signalled explicitly in order to ensure speaker-intended interpretation, or they may be left implicit (i.e. non-signalled) and therefore would need to be inferred by the reader/hearer from the discourse context (see Taboada 2009). The focus of previous research has been on the explicit signalling of discourse relations by means of discourse connectives and their discourse-relation-specific functions across numerous languages (see, e.g., Crible 2018; Das & Taboada 2018; Degand 2019; Gast 2019; Sanders & Noordman 2000). As regards the construal and negotiation of discourse coherence, discourse connectives can also be conceptualized as carriers of “discursive glue” (Fetzer 2018: 18-20), guiding language users in their inferencing processes to retrieve the relevant speaker-intended implicatures to connect the constitutive parts of discourse into a meaningful whole.

Building on the results obtained for the semantics and pragmatics of discourse connectives, this workshop focuses on two of the most cognitively salient kinds of discourse relations, i.e. continuative and contrastive discourse relations, which differ in their functions with regard to how they convey how the flow of discourse is to proceed locally (see also Fetzer 2018; Lewis 2017; Murray 1997). Continuative discourse relations (e.g. Continuation, Elaboration and Explanation) do not indicate a local halt in the flow of discourse or a local shift in perspective, but rather indicate that the ongoing discourse is proceeding as ‘planned’ in spite of additional elaborations or explanations on the current discourse topic. Upcoming discourse units are expected to be causally congruent with preceding discourse units, and they are expected to proceed in a temporally and logically ordered manner. Contrastive discourse relations indicate a local change as regards discourse topic continuity, and thus a local halt in the flow of discourse which requires a local sequential re-organization. Fully contrastive discourse relations require full local re-organization with respect to the discourse topic or some of its constitutive parts, while for contrastive elaborations – or concessive relations – only the non-congruent part(s) requires re-organization.

From a cognitive perspective, continuative and contrastive discourse relations have been shown to vary with regard to their production and interpretation. Given that language users by default expect upcoming discourse units to be temporally, logically and causally continuous

with respect to the preceding discourse (see Murray 1997; Sanders 2005; Segal et al. 1991), continuative discourse relations do not seem to require additional signalling and therefore would be expected to be easier to process than contrastive discourse relations. This is also reflected in the linguistic realization of these two types of discourse relations in that contrastive discourse relations are signalled more frequently by means of discourse connectives (e.g. *but* or *however* in English; *allerdings* or *jedoch* in German etc.) than continuative discourse relations, which in turn are more often conveyed implicitly (see, e.g., Asr & Demberg 2012; Hoek & Zufferey 2015; Zufferey & Gygax 2016).

The submissions to this workshop aim to answer the following research questions:

- How are continuative and/or contrastive discourse relations linguistically realized?
- To what extent do continuative and contrastive discourse relations differ with regard to their overt signalling (e.g. by means of discourse connectives)?
- Are there cross-linguistic and discourse-domain-specific differences with regard to the signalling of continuative and/or contrastive discourse relations?
- To what extent do continuative and contrastive discourse relations show differences with regard to their signalling in spoken and written discourse?
- How can the production and processing of continuative and contrastive discourse relations in context be accounted for?

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