

LANGUAGES IN CONTRAST

International journal for contrastive linguistics

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SPECIAL ISSUE

Pragmatic Markers and Pragmaticalization

Lessons from false friends

Edited by Peter Lauwers, Gudrun Vanderbauwhede and
Stijn Verleyen

Ghent University and University of Leuven / University of Leuven / University of
Leuven and Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO)

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Table of contents

Editors' note

Obituary: In memory of Stig Johansson (1939–2010)	125
---	-----

Introduction

How false friends give true hints about pragmatic markers <i>Peter Lauwers, Gudrun Vanderbauwhede and Stijn Verleyen</i>	129
---	-----

Articles

Semantic change: Evidence from false friends <i>Kate Beeching</i>	139
--	-----

Degrees of pragmaticalization: The divergent histories of 'actually' and <i>actuellement</i> <i>Tine Defour, Ulrique D'Hondt, Anne-Marie Simon-Vandenberghe and Dominique Willems</i>	166
--	-----

"You're absolutely right!!": A corpus-based contrastive analysis of 'absolutely' in British English and <i>absolutamente</i> in Peninsular Spanish, with special emphasis on the relationship between degree and certainty <i>Marta Carretero</i>	194
--	-----

The imperative of intentional visual perception as a pragmatic marker: A contrastive study of Dutch, English and Romance <i>Daniël Van Olmen</i>	223
---	-----

<i>É vida, olha...</i> : Imperatives as discourse markers and grammaticalization paths in Romance: A diachronic corpus study <i>Benjamin Fagard</i>	245
--	-----

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Reviews

Gaétane Dostie, <i>Pragmaticalisation et marqueurs discursifs: analyse sémantique et traitement lexicographique</i> . Reviewed by Thomas Van Damme	269
Karin Aijmer and Anne-Marie Simon-Vandenberg (eds), <i>Pragmatic Markers in Contrast</i> . Reviewed by Victorine Hancock	277
Richard Waltereit, <i>Abtönung. Zur Pragmatik und historischen Semantik von Modalpartikeln und ihren funktionalen Äquivalenten in romanischen Sprachen</i> . Reviewed by Steven Schoonjans	282
Contents of Volume 10	289

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EDITORS' NOTE

In this issue and the next we would like to remember Stig Johansson. Below is a short text written by Stig's long-time friend and colleague Karin Aijmer, followed by memories by other colleagues of his. The next issue will include a hitherto unpublished paper by Stig, as a tribute to his invaluable contribution to the contrastive linguistics field and to our journal. Finally, we suggest that those who loved Stig, and those who want to know more about his work, go back to the beautiful *wiki gratulatoria* that was set up by Jarle Ebeling, Signe Oksefjell Ebeling, Hilde Hasselgård, Knut Hofland and Diana Santos to celebrate Stig on his 70th birthday (<http://gandalf.uib.no/Stig>).

HA, SB

Obituary: In memory of Stig Johansson (1939–2010)

Stig Johansson died on 22 April 2010 at the age of 71. Stig was born in a small village in southern Sweden. He studied in Lund and then continued his studies in the US where he received his PhD in linguistics from the University of Indiana. He was appointed Professor of Modern English at the University of Oslo in 1976 where he was active until his death.

Stig was a pioneer in corpus linguistics who, from an early date, realized the potential of computerized corpora for language research. He was one of the founding fathers of ICAME (International Computer Archive of Modern and Medieval English), an international organization for linguists interested in using corpora which came into existence in 1977. Stig was also one of the linguists responsible for launching the Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen (LOB) Corpus, the sister corpus of the American Brown Corpus, which has been used by generations of corpus linguists. His interest in grammar and corpora is shown in his contribution to the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (1999), one of the first grammars to use a corpus-based approach.

Recently we have witnessed the creation and widespread use of bigger corpora of many different kinds. Stig's interest in contrastive studies resulted in the compilation of the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC) and a number of innovative studies developing a methodology for contrasting the two languages. Later on a number of new languages were added, thus making it possible to make comparisons across several languages with the Oslo Multilingual Corpus. Contrastive work had had a short time of glory in the 1960s, but had come up against problems

which led to its decline. The use of parallel corpora has placed contrastive studies on a firmer basis and led to a revival of interest in questions having to do with linguistic relativity and language universals. A parallel corpus based on translations between languages in two directions makes it possible to carry out fine-grained usage-based comparisons between languages. This has also been of inspiration to scholars in translation studies and for applied linguists with an interest in using corpora in their teaching. The articles collected in Stig's *Seeing through language. On the use of corpora in contrastive studies* (Benjamins) lay the foundation for contrastive research and will have a lasting impact on the field.

Stig's pioneering work on parallel corpora led to cooperation with other linguists interested in text-based contrastive studies. The ENPC model, for instance, inspired the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus, which was based on the same principles as its Norwegian sister corpus. Our common interest in contrastive studies led to close and fruitful cooperation between researchers in Norway and Sweden in the form of joint seminars and workshops. We are grateful for the inspiration we received from discussions with Stig about corpus matters.

Stig's interest in contrastive analysis also led him to accept the co-editorship of *Languages in Contrast* in 2002. The present form and the success of the journal are to a great extent due to his interest in the research of other scholars, his deep sense of the importance of the field, and his editorial experience.

Karin Aijmer

Below are some personal memories of Stig from colleagues who have also been involved with *Language in Contrast* in various capacities and at different stages over the last decade.

Our connection and friendship with Stig dates back to 1999, when we first met at a contrastive linguistics conference organised by Sylviane Granger at the Université Catholique de Louvain.

At the time, our research group at the University of Poitiers were relative newcomers to the world of corpus linguistics. We had recently begun compiling a parallel journalistic corpus, which was to develop into the 'PLECI' corpus, jointly with Sylviane's CECL in Louvain, and had introduced for the first time a corpus linguistics seminar into the syllabus of our Masters course. Stig's groundbreaking work on the ENPC, and the invaluable volume he had co-edited in 1998 on *Corpora and Cross-Linguistic Research* (Rodopi) were our first guidelines in the field, and remain so to this day.

In that same year, a visiting scholars' programme of the Maisons des Sciences de l'Homme network in France enabled us to invite Stig for a week's residence at our research centre in Poitiers. The lectures and seminars he gave, the discussions

with the members of our group, the experience and advice he brought to both colleagues and doctoral students made that short week a highpoint of which we all have fond memories, and gave us a great boost in the early stages of our research into multilingual corpora.

That occasion also marked Stig's first real contact with the French higher education system, and with French life in general. He really appreciated this opportunity to get to know each other better, and there were some moments to be treasured, both academically and otherwise, not least a memorable French meal at a colleague's house, lasting well into the afternoon, complete with a vast array of cheeses, wines, and political and philosophical argument!

Our meetings in the ten following years were too few and far between, but e-mail enabled us to keep in touch regularly, exchanging articles, examples, bits of corpora, and carrying on our discussions of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural matters. Stig's curiosity about the minutiae of language differences was boundless, and in his many articles he brought to light all kinds of contrasts that only the keenest eye (or ear) could be aware of, always applying the utmost care and accuracy to the observation of the language features he studied. He showed a keen interest in the work of other scholars, never failing to encourage young masters' or doctoral students, and showing a genuine appreciation of their research.

Not only was Stig a brilliant linguist and teacher, and a generous one, he was also a good friend, and it was a pleasure to share with him his interest in art, in culture, and in those peaceful places, Kråkstad and Backen, that were so dear to him. Our last and most treasured memories of Stig are of our stay with him at the end of one of our Norwegian holidays, in the summer of 2007: of the wonderful welcome he gave us, whether picking berries in the lanes around Kråkstad in the summer twilight, or visiting the museums and the university in Oslo in his company, or discovering his beautiful farm at Backen. Our regret is that we were not able to return his hospitality and introduce him to a region of France, the Lozère, that we believe he would have loved.

As a linguist, as a teacher and mentor, as a true humanist, and as a friend, Stig will be missed by all those who had the privilege to know him.

Hélène and Jean Chuquet

In this short passage, I will not review Stig's remarkable contributions to corpus linguistics in general or his pioneering work in multilingual corpora and contrastive and translation studies in particular; I will rather remember Stig as a role model and a helpful friend.

While I have known Stig for ten years, we talked only on a few occasions when we met at conferences. The last time we exchanged emails was in late 2009, when

I invited him to write a short review of my book *Using Corpora in Contrastive and Translation Studies* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), and when Silvia Bernardini and I invited him to give a keynote lecture at the conference of the *Using Corpora in Contrastive and Translation Studies* (UCCTS) series which we were jointly organizing at Edge Hill University and that was due to take place at the end of July 2010.

Although Stig's working capacity was (in his own words) "a bit reduced" after his retirement, he gladly accepted both invitations. In order to "write a few lines about the book" (interested readers can access Stig's brief review of the book at the following website: <http://www.c-s-p.org/Flyers/Using-Corpora-in-Contrastive-and-Translation-Studies1-4438-1755-4.htm>), he actually took pains to read "the whole manuscript" of 550 pages! I am deeply impressed by Stig's meticulous and rigorous scholarship as demonstrated on this occasion as well as in his usual work; I believe that he is an excellent role model for academics of later generations including myself.

When Stig accepted our invitation to be a keynote speaker at the UCCTS2010 conference, he was also careful enough to arrange for his colleague Hilde Hassebgård to step in for plan B, in case he would not be able to travel because of his health. He even remembered the conference at his sick bed and asked Hilde to contact us about plan B when he was hospitalized less than two months before his death. While I am indebted to Hilde for her willingness to help out, and plan B did treat the audience to a very fascinating and well-received keynote address, Stig was sadly missed at the UCCTS2010 conference.

Indeed, not just at the conference: Stig will always be missed and cherished by many as a good teacher, an excellent role model, and a helpful friend.

May he rest in eternal peace in heaven.

Richard Xiao