Harry Potter and the Battlefield of the Perfects
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(Internship for Research Project: Time in Translation)

INTRODUCTION
- Perfect: Unknown linguistic status (tense, aspect, gram)
- Most European languages have similar morphological make-up (HAVE past participle) (Dahl & Vélayollai, 2013)
- Focus on ‘Present Perfect’ (Perfect)
- Predetermined Perfect uses in literature centered around English (Portner, 2003 among others):

Limitations of the Perfect in English not consistent cross-linguistically:
- Perfect is not comparable with past time adverbials
1a) Maria er wakker om zes uur. (English)
1b) Maria er wakker om zes uur. (Dutch)
1c) Maria s é ows us (French)
- Perfect cannot be used as a narrative tense (Lindstedt, 2000)
2a) He just said ‘Harry’s gone after him, hasn’t he?’ (English)
2b) Il nous dit ‘Harry est allé le retrouver?’ (French)
2c) Hij is net aangekomen ‘Harry is achter hem aan, hè?’ (Dutch)

Research Questions
- How can the cross-linguistic variation of the Perfect use be explained?
- Where are there instances where the Perfect is licensed cross-linguistically?

METHODOLOGY
- Why Harry Potter?
  a) Source with available translations
  b) Contemporary use of natural language
  c) Narrative & dialogue contexts
- Data collection through manual annotation
- 7 Languages: (a) Greek, (b) English, (c) German, (d) French, (e) Dutch, (f) Italian, (g) Spanish
- Visualization of data: Multidimensional Scaling (Wälchli & Cysouw, 2012): generate a cartographic visualization of groups of tense uses in context. The algorithm is based on similarities between verb forms to regroup contexts in a two-dimensional space. Clusters in the semantic map indicate cross-linguistic similarity regarding tense use.
- Corpus annotation

RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Perfect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>German</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Total Perfect Instances per Language

OBSERVATIONS (DOMAIN vs Tense)
- PERFECT: between past & present, instances with Perfect in most languages
- Perfect found in past (French) and in present (English), but mostly in PERFECT
- Perfect vs Aorist/Perfective Past: Aoristic drift of the Perfect (French) vs Perfect drift of the Aorist (Greek)
- Present is more stable compared to past and perfect
- Use of imperfect and present is consistent
- Almost one-to-one correspondence of English Perfect to the PERFECT domain

CONCLUSIONS
- Check agreement between corpus data and native speaker intuitions (web survey)
- Explore the pragmatic use of the Perfect in the non-narrative discourse context (speech acts, assertion/non-assertion)
- Look at contextual factors for each language in regards to Aorist vs Perfect interchangeability (e.g. Greek)

FURTHER RESEARCH

MORE INFO ON THE PROJECT
Time in Translation group: (Henriette de Swart, Bert Le Bruyn, Martijn van der Klis) Visit time-in-translation./un at for the latest on the project.