



UiO : **University of Oslo**

The bidirectional contrastive method in theory and practice

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Outline

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"Contrastive analysis is the systematic comparison of two or more languages, with the aim of describing their similarities and differences."

(Johansson 2007: 1)

"Language comparison [...] reveals what is general and what is language specific and is therefore important both for the understanding of language in general and for the study of the individual languages compared."

(Johansson & Hofland 1994: 25)

After a period when contrastive analysis was rejected by many, there has been a revival, in large measure connected with the new possibilities of contrasting languages using multilingual electronic corpora.

(Johansson 2007: xv)

The English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus

- Contains a fiction and a non-fiction part (only the former will be used for the purpose of the *bring/bringe* study).
- ENPCfiction holds text extracts of 10,000-15,000 words from 30 contemporary novels in each of the two languages. These have been aligned at sentence level with their respective translations in the other language.
- In total, ENPCfiction amounts to 1.6 million running words, distributed across four components, or sub-corpora:
 - English originals (EO), English translations (ET), Norwegian originals (NO) and Norwegian translations (NT).
- The fact that the sub-corpora are equal in size makes a more or less direct comparison of raw frequencies possible and valid.

(see e.g. Johansson 2007; Johansson *et al.* 1999/2000).

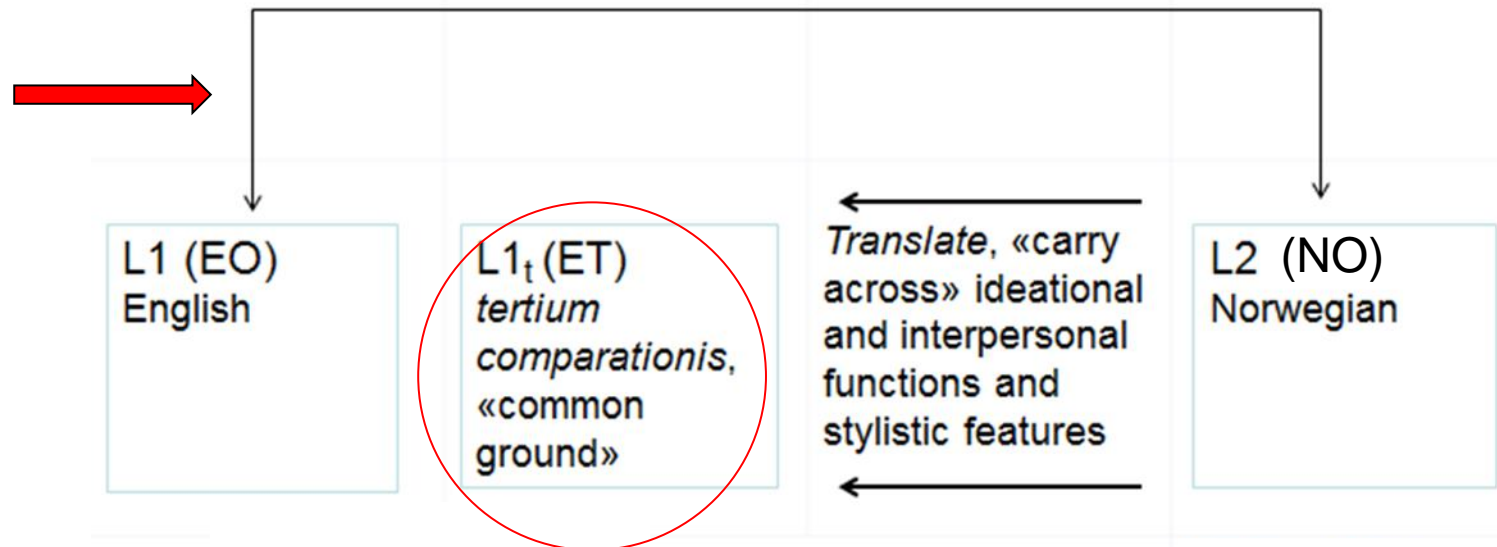
CA on the basis of translations

- Translation as the best available *tertium comparationis* (James 1980, Altenberg 1999, Johansson 1998, 2007)
- Translation correspondence as
 - perceived similarity (Chesterman 1998, 2007);
 - measure of degree of similarity: Mutual Correspondence (Altenberg 1999)
- Johansson's (2007) bidirectional parallel corpus model

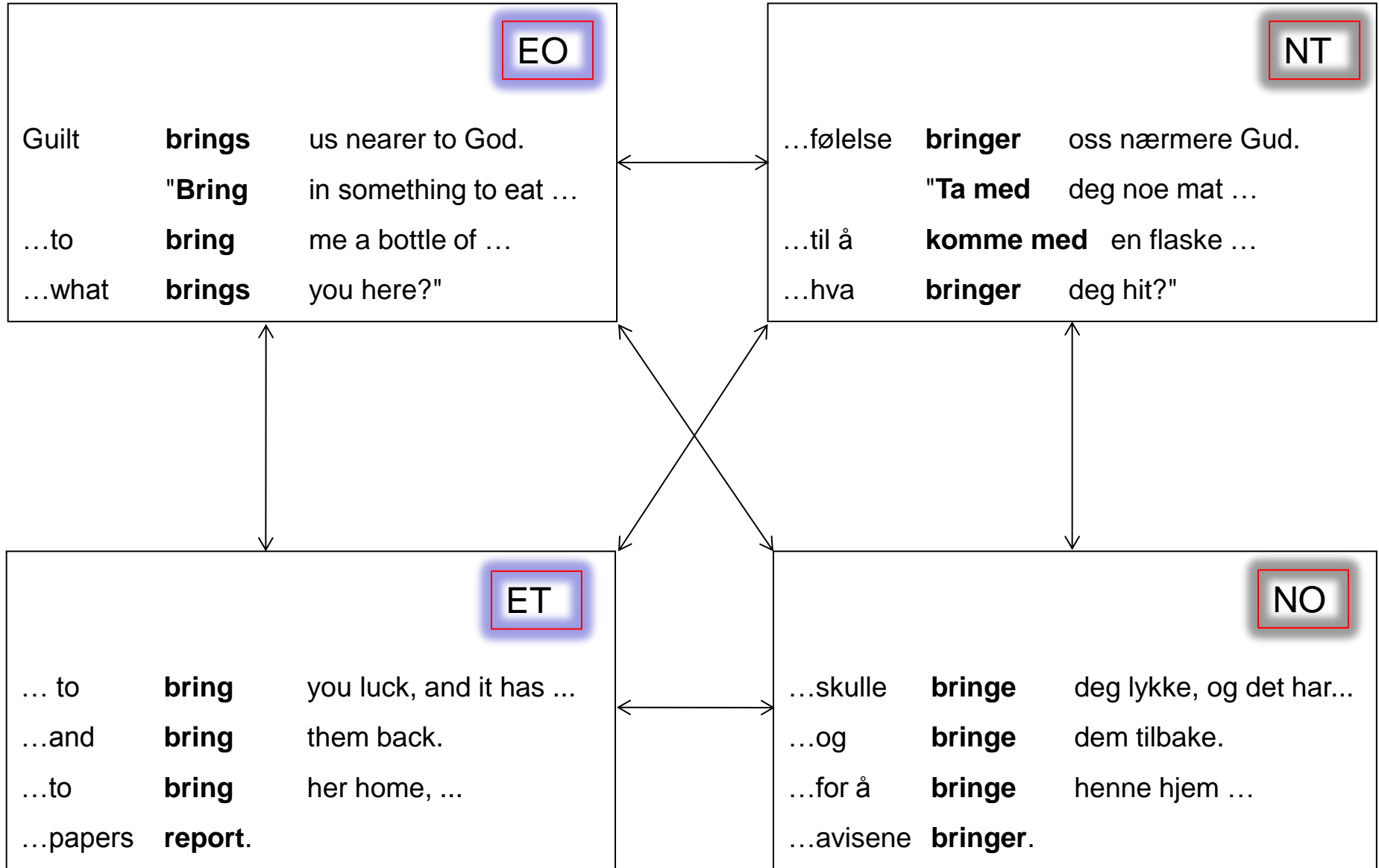
The corpus can be said to lend an element of empirical intersubjectivity to the concept of equivalence, especially if the corpus represents a variety of translators.

(Altenberg & Granger 2002: 17)

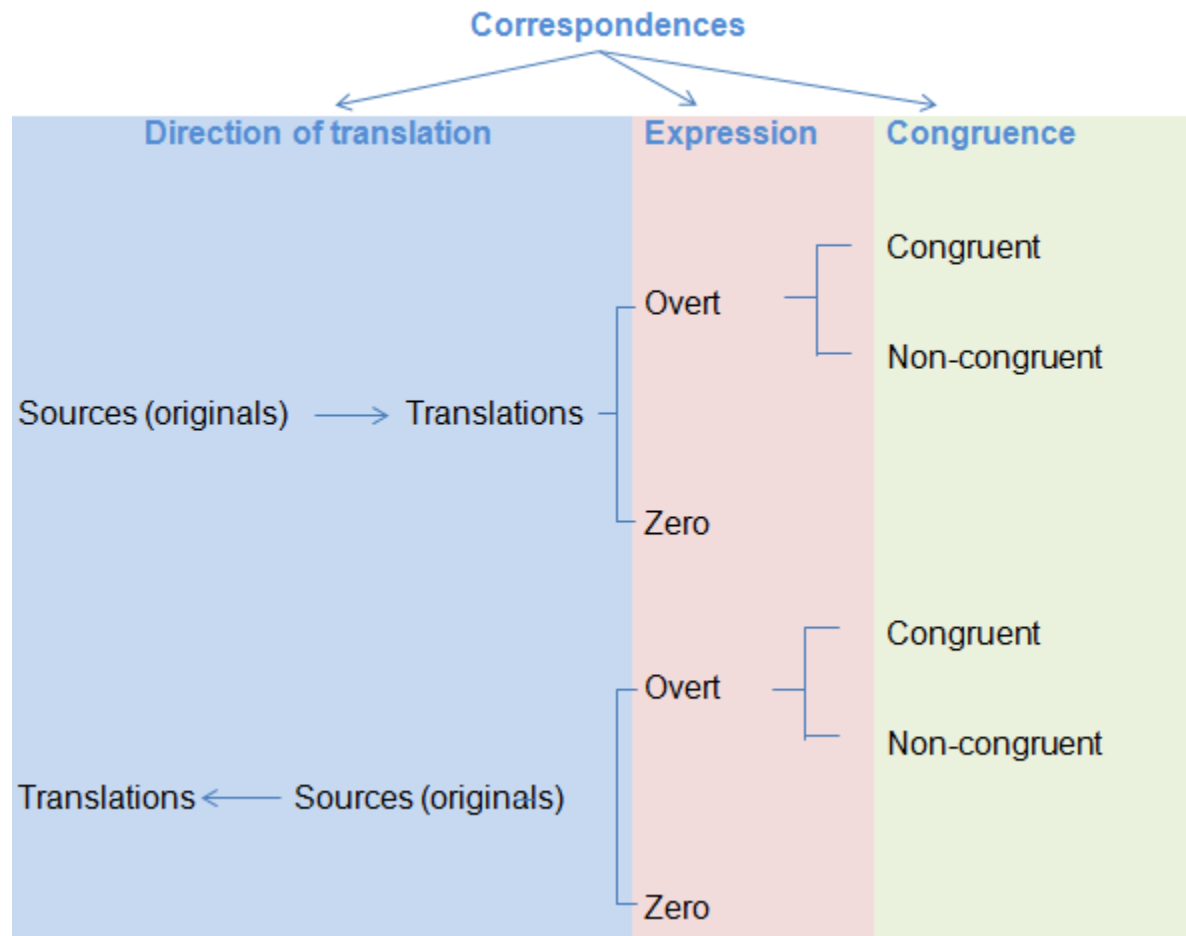
Contrastive Linguistics : un-/discover systematic differences and similarities between languages



Schematic layout of the procedure of doing contrastive analysis based on translation corpora (Ebeling & Ebeling 2017: 33)



Framework of correspondence



Correspondences

Overt congruent translation

- (1) En dag, det var en torsdag, **brakte** budet to pakker. (JW1)
One day, a Thursday, the messenger **brought** two cartons. (JW1T)

Overt non-congruent translation

- (2) Aila understood everything, even the things he didn't intend to **bring up** all at once;... (NG1)
Aila forstod alt, også ting han ennå ikke hadde tenkt å **si**. (NG1T)
Lit.: ... also things he yet not had thought to say

Overt non-congruent source

- (3) "Since you 're going anyway, **bring** me a little water." (EH1T)
"Sidan du først går, **ta med** litt vatn til meg." (EH1)
Lit.: ... take with little water to me

Zero correspondence (omission in the translation)

- (4) He went to fetch the scattered crutch and **brought** it back. (DF1)
Han hentet den vekksparkede krykken [Ø]. (DF1T)
Lit.: He fetched the awaykicked crutch

Congruent or non-congruent?

- (5) He couldn't **bring** himself to accept any fault within her, ...
(GN1)
Han kunne ikke **få** seg til å godta noen svakhet ved henne, ...
(GN1T)
Lit.: He could not get himself to accept

Congruent according to Johansson's definition (verb = verb)

Non-congruent for the purpose of this study

- Congruent: *bring* = *bringe*
- Non-congruent: *bring* ≠ *bringe*

Mutual Correspondence (MC)

The frequency with which different (grammatical, semantic and lexical) expressions are translated into each other. (Altenberg 1999)

Expressed as a percentage
by means of the formula:

$$\frac{(A_t + B_t) \times 100}{A_s + B_s}$$

In the case of *bring* and *bringe*

$$(18 + 28) \times 100 = 18.5\%$$

$$202 + 46$$

A_t and B_t = The number of times the compared items (A and B) are translated by each other

A_s and B_s = The total number of occurrences of the compared items in the source/original texts

Reverse Mutual Correspondence (rMC)

The frequency with which different (grammatical, semantic and lexical) expressions have each other as source. (Ebeling & Ebeling 2015)

In the case of *bring* and *bringe*

$$(28 + 16) \times 100 = 18.8\%$$

$$187 + 47$$

- The (r)MC suggests that *bring* and *bringe* have a low degree of similarity, i.e. they are far from perfect cross-linguistic matches.
- The (r)MC gives us a starting point for exploring under what circumstances they tend to match.

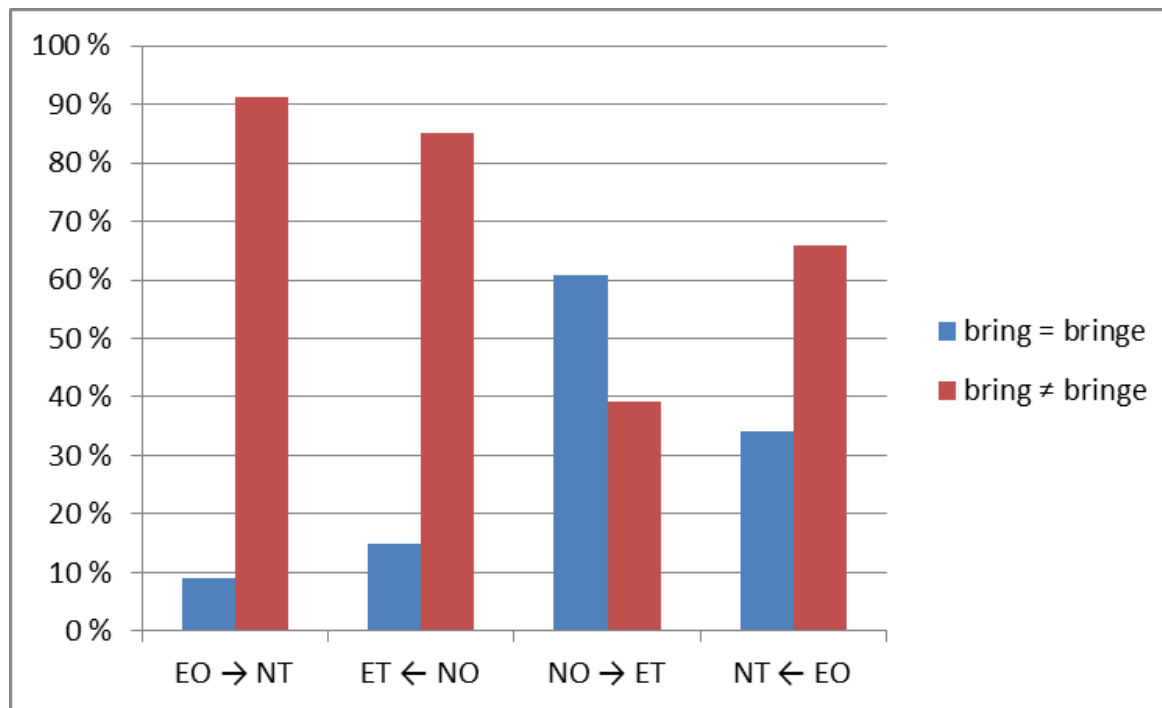
Case study: *bring* and *bringe*

- The study takes two cognates (perceived similarity) as its starting point in order to show the potential of a bidirectional translation corpus in cross-linguistic studies.
- Although intuitively perfect cross-linguistic matches of each other, the English verb *bring* and the Norwegian verb *bringe* seem to have different conditions of use.
- Using the BCM we will be able to establish
 - how the lemmas are used in the two languages;
 - when they overlap in meaning and use, and when they do not;
 - the extent to which they correspond to each other in translation and what other correspondences they may have (i.e. overview of range and degree of similarity).

Bring/bringe in the ENPC

Lemma	EO	ET	NO	NT
<i>bring/bringe</i>	202	187	46	47

Congruence	Direction of translation			
	EO → NT	ET ← NO	NO → ET	NT ← EO
<i>bring = bringe</i>	18 (8.9%)	28 (15%)	28 (60.9%)	16 (34%)
<i>bring ≠ bringe</i>	184 (91.1%)	159 (85%)	18 (39.1%)	31 (66%)
Total	202	187	46	47



MC = 18.5% - Translation bias 8.9% EO-NT vs. 60.9% NO-ET
 rMC = 18.8% - Translation bias 15% ET-NO vs. 34% NT-EO

Patterns of use

Syntactic pattern	Direction of translation			
	EO → NT	ET ← NO	NO → ET	NT ← EO
Monotr.	4/87 (4.6%)	10/91 (11%)	12/16 (75%)	3/9 (33.3%)
Ditr.	3/16 (18.8%)	4/21 (19%)	5/5 (100%)	2/3 (66.7%)
Complex tr.	11/93 (11.8%)	14/72 (19.4%)	10/22 (45.5%)	11/32 (34%)
Fixed phrase	0/6 (0%)	0/3 (0%)	1/3 (33.3%)	0/3 (0%)
TOTAL	18/202 (8.9%)	28/187 (15%)	28/46 (60.9%)	16/47 (34%)

Congruent correspondences in the syntactic patterns

Monotransitive

- (6) ... for amulets of a pine tree struck by lightning **bring** luck to newborn Diné. (SH1T)
For amuletter av furutre som rammes av lynet **bringer** lykke til nyfødte dinéer. (SH1)

Ditransitive

- (7) “Dette århundre har **bragt** oss damp, elektrisitet og gass. (EFH1)
“This century has **brought** us steam, electricity, and gas. (EFH1T)

Complex transitive

- (8) This time he wants to capture the animals and **bring** them back. (MN1T)
Denne gangen vil han fange dyrene og **bringe** dem tilbake. (MN1)

Phrasal verb (monotrans.)

- (9) ... he was a Party apparatchik to his bootstraps, one of those **brought in** by the present Soviet leader when he had been Chairman of the KGB. (FF1)
Han var Parti-apparatsjik til støvlesålene, en av dem den nåværende Sovjet-lederen hadde **brakt inn** da han var formann for KGB. (FF1T)

MC & rMC of the complex transitive pattern

Mutual correspondence of complex transitive *bring* and *bringe*

		EO → NT		NO → ET	MC
Target	11 x 100	11.8%	10 x 100	45.5%	19.1%
Source	93		22		

Reverse MC of complex transitive *bring* and *bringe*

		ET → NO		NT → EO	rMC
Source	14 x 100	19.4%	11 x 100	34%	24%
Target	72		32		

Low MC

- Generally, low MC scores could suggest a lexical gap between languages, or low (lexical) importance of the items compared (Altenberg 1999: 255).
- Neither of these explanations seems likely in the case of *bring/bringe*.
- What the measures do suggest, however, is that English *bring* has a correspondence paradigm that is more varied than that of *bringe* and we need to probe further into the actual correspondences of the verbs to gain more knowledge regarding the nature of these.

Correspondences of simplex *bringe*

English corresp.	NO → ET	NT ← EO
<i>Bring</i>	27	16
<i>Take</i>	6	4
Zero	3	-
Other	7*	23*
TOTAL	43	43
	* 7 different verbs	*20 different verbs

Correspondences of simplex *bring*

Norwegian corresp.	EO → NT	ET ← NO
<i>Bringe</i>	17	28
<i>Ta med</i> (REFL) 'take with (REFL)'	32	12
<i>Komme med</i> 'come with'	27	18
<i>Ha med</i> (REFL) 'have with (REFL)'	13	21
<i>Få</i> 'get'	9	9
<i>Ta</i> 'take'	8	3
Zero	12	9
Other	50*	64*
TOTAL	173	164
	* 40 different verbs	*33 different verbs

Overview of phrases and phrasal verbs with *bring*

Phrasal verb	No.	Phrase	No.
<i>Bring about</i>	1 (EO)	<i>Bring an end to</i>	1 (EO)
<i>Bring down</i>	2 (EO); 1 (ET)	<i>Bring to an end</i>	1 (ET)
<i>Bring in</i>	2 (EO); 3 (ET)	<i>Bring to court</i>	1 (EO)
<i>Bring on</i>	1 (ET)	<i>Bring to heel</i>	1 (ET)
<i>Bring out</i>	2 (EO)	<i>Bring to life</i>	2 (EO); 1 (ET)
<i>Bring up</i>	16 (EO); 15 (ET)	<i>Bring to mind</i>	1 (EO)
		<i>Bring up short</i>	1 (EO)
TOTAL	23 (EO); 20 (ET)	TOTAL	6 (EO); 3 (ET)

- (10) Who **brought** him **up**, and what were they and what did they believe ... (RDA1)
Hvem **oppdro** ham, og hva stod de for og hva trodde de på ...(RDA1T)
Lit.: Who upraised him ...
- (11) Aila understood everything, even the things he didn't intend to **bring up** all at once;... (NG1)
Aila forstod alt, også ting han ennå ikke hadde tenkt å **si**. (NG1T)
Lit.: ... also things he yet not had thought to say

Conclusion: Case study

- This investigation has gone some way towards explaining the discrepancy in frequency between *bring* and *bringe*.
 - *Bring* seems to be the more favoured of the two because of its broader area of use, including its more frequent use in fixed phrases (cf. Sinclair 1999). *Bring* also appears to be less restricted in terms of level of formality, as it readily corresponds to typically less formal options, i.e. phrasal verbs.
- The verbs show similar preferences in terms of syntactic pattern, but English *bring* is much more frequent overall. Monotransitive *bringe* seems to be restricted to non-human objects of a special kind.
- The study has revealed some clear correspondence tendencies, notably the fact that Norwegian in many contexts prefers a multi-word verb to cover the meaning of *bring*. The study thus illustrates how the same event is encoded by different patterns in two closely related languages

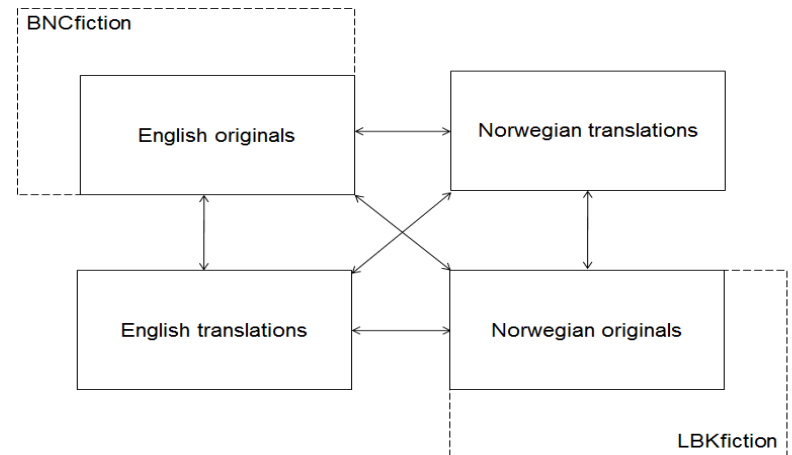
- The broad network of verbs corresponding in one way or another to *bring/bringe* attests to the spectre of meanings covered by the core and general "bring" verbs, given the right context (and English *bring* in particular).

- (12) ... and the headmaster **brought** him to his auntie's in his car because there was no one at home in his own house. (RDO1)
... og overlæreren **kjørte** ham til tanta hans i bilen sin fordi det ikke var noen hjemme hos Liam. (RDO1T)
Lit.: ... and the headmaster drove him to his aunt in his car

Further research

- A systematic investigation of the correspondences of the most frequently observed translations other than *bring/bringe* (i.e. what are the English correspondences of *ta med/ha med/komme med*? Cf. Dyvik's (1998) "inverse *t*-image").
- A large-scale monolingual investigation of *bring/bringe* (and the whole semantic network of "bring" verbs in the two languages).

- An expansion of the contrastive dimension of the study by adding more languages to gain a broader cross-linguistic perspective.
- A more detailed discussion of the immediate context and actual collocates of *bring* and *bringe*.
- An investigation of *bring* and *bringe* in other text-types.



Concluding remarks

- The bidirectional contrastive method ensures a systematic and well-defined procedure of identifying and comparing items/units in a cross-linguistic perspective.
- It thereby contributes to a better understanding of how lexico-grammatical patterns, idiomaticity and native-like selection work across languages.
- This is in line with the Idiomaticity project's aim of producing "new knowledge about how words are co-selected to form idiomatic lexico-grammatical patterns across languages".

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Corpus

English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC). <http://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/services/omc/enpc/>