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P R O C E E D I N G S / 6

TRANSLATING AND COMPARING LANGUAGES

Corpus-based Insights

Sylviane Granger & Marie-Aude Lefer (eds)

Translating and Comparing Languages

Translating and Comparing Languages: Corpus-based Insights

Selected Proceedings of the Fifth *Using Corpora
in Contrastive and Translation Studies* Conference

Sylviane Granger & Marie-Aude Lefer (eds)

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A rather interesting topic: A contrastive study of English rather, Dutch eerder and French plutôt

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Abstract

This paper presents a qualitative contrastive study of English *rather*, Dutch *eerder* and French *plutôt*, originally temporal adverbial markers which have developed attested contrastive uses and degree uses. Analysis of data from combined corpus research allowed us to (i) put to the test the proposed subjectification/grammaticalization pathway moving from temporal over contrastive to degree meaning; (ii) come to a better understanding of the different language-internal uses of *rather*, *eerder* and *plutôt*; and (iii) assess the degree of intertranslatability of the three adverbs, by analysing the similarities and differences in usage and frequency in original and translated text, and by studying possible translation effects.

1. Introduction

In Germanic and Romance languages, originally temporal constructions have developed attested contrastive uses and degree uses. In the Germanic languages this is the case for English *rather*, Dutch *eerder* and German *eher*. French *plutôt* and Italian *piuttosto* are Romance examples. All these adverbial forms have developed from comparative forms of temporal or speed adjectives

(OE *hraeþ-er*, DU *eer-(d)er*, GE *e-(h)er*, FR *plus-tôt*, IT *piu-tosto*). Despite the remarkable crosslinguistic morphosyntactic and pragmatic-semantic similarity of these forms, to our knowledge no thorough comparative study of these expressions has been carried out so far. This paper aims to go some way toward filling this gap and reports on the synchronic study of three of these adverbial markers – English *rather*, Dutch *eerder* and French *plutôt*.

The a, b, and c examples in (1) to (3) illustrate their (obsolete) temporal, contrastive and degree uses respectively. Today, Dutch *eerder* is the only adverb to still have temporal uses (2a). *Rather* lost its temporal use in the Middle English period (Rissanen 2008). In French, the unverbated form *plutôt* generally only expresses contrastive and degree meanings. The temporal meaning is restricted to the comparative two-word construction *plus tôt* ‘more early’. The *Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé* (TLFi) does mention instances in which *plutôt* is used with a temporal meaning, as in (3a), but lists them as ungrammatical or incorrect uses.

(1) English (EN)

- a) *I sawe the Heauen and the Starres..neither **rather** or later to rise or go downe.* (OED, s.v. *rather* I.2.a)
- b) *Unfortunately, this adequacy was a reminder that his problem has not been his lack of style but **rather** his abundance of insincerity* (Rissanen 2008: 357)
- c) *Sachs understood that she was playing with him but he **rather** enjoyed the way she went about it.* (OED, s.v. *rather*, 6b)

(2) Dutch (DU)

- a) *Waarom werd dat niet **eerder** aan de orde gesteld?* (DBNL)
‘Why wasn’t this matter brought up sooner?’
- b) *Maar ik noem dat geen fatalisme, ik zie er **eerder** een vorm van verweer in.* (DBNL)
‘But I wouldn’t call it fatalism. I’d rather see a kind of defence in it’
- c) *En hoewel de Zweden van nature uit een **eerder** stijf en nauwgezet volk zijn kan men er dan ook in elke krantenkiosk, en gewoon tentoongesteld, tijdschriften zien met foto’s die onze zedenmeesters de kolieken zouden doen krijgen.* (DBNL)
‘And even though the Swedes are by nature a rather stiff and meticulous people one can find displayed in every newspaper

stand magazines with pictures that would give our moralists the gripes’

(3) French (FR)

- a) *Arriver plutôt ou plus tard.* (TLFi, s.v. *plutôt*, adv. A.1)
 ‘To arrive sooner or later.’
- b) *Il ne peut plus supporter cette présence, ce mystère derrière la porte; plutôt la mort tout de suite, si c’est elle, que l’angoisse de l’inconnu.* (TLFi, s.v. *plutôt* B.1)
 ‘He can no longer bear this presence, this mystery behind the door; rather death right now, if that is what it is, than the anxiety of the unknown.’
- c) *Une personne plutôt jolie.* (TLFi, s.v. *plutôt* C.1)
 ‘A rather pretty person.’

Traugott & König (1991: 203-204) argue that *rather* and *plutôt* developed along a pathway leading from temporal to ‘preferential’ or contrastive meaning. For English, Rissanen (2008) argued that in the Modern English period the preferential or contrastive reading made way for the degree reading, constituting a pathway from the Old English temporal meaning to contrastive meaning to degree modifying reading. For French, Mokni (2008) posits a shift from temporal to contrastive only, making no mention of the degree modifying use.

Our synchronic study on EN *rather*, DU *eerder* and FR *plutôt* is based on both multilingual comparable and parallel corpora. The monolingual English corpus used is the *WordbanksOnline* corpus (550m words), of which we queried the British books section, containing fictional and non-fictional books from the period 1990-2005¹. For Dutch, we queried the twentieth century texts of the *Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren* ‘Digital Library of Dutch Literature’ (DBNL) (2.3m words), and for French, *Frantext* (251m words) was used to extract data from 38 fictional texts from the period 2010-2013. For all three languages, the query was simply the lemma *RATHER/EERDER/PLUTÔT* to draw in all instances of the forms, with and without *than/dan/que*. For Dutch the query returned 414 hits, for French and English matching samples of 450 hits were analysed. The translation data were extracted from the bi-directional *Dutch Parallel Corpus* (DPC), a 10-million-word parallel corpus comprising texts in Dutch, English and French with Dutch as a pivotal

¹ Unlike for French and Dutch, the English data are not restricted to fictional text as the *Wordbanks* books subcorpus does not allow to deselect non-fiction.

language. The data obtained are given in Table 1. They were extracted from the source texts only.

<i>Dutch Parallel Corpus (DPC)</i>	Exhaustive data sets	
EN – DU	59 hits	(all fiction)
DU – EN	138 hits	(9 fiction + 129 non-fiction)
FR – DU	174 hits	(11 fiction + 43 non-fiction)
DU – FR	110 hits	(9 fiction + 35 non-fiction)
TOTAL	481 hits	

Table 1. Data sets of the parallel corpus study

Thanks to this combined corpus design (cf. Johansson 2007) we can come to a better understanding of the different language-internal uses of *rather*, *eerder* and *plutôt*, see how intertranslatable the constructions are, and hypothesize on the grammaticalization pathway. The study elaborates on the synchronic English-Dutch contrastive study by Ghesquière & Brems (2017) by including French *plutôt* and drawing up typologies of the different uses of these three adverbial markers, comparing them both in terms of their semantics/pragmatics and their structural behaviour.

2. Monolingual study

Figure 1 gives an overview of the functional analyses of *rather*, *eerder* and *plutôt* in the comparable data sets. First, as will be discussed in Section 2.1, the data confirmed that only DU *eerder* (*dan*) still has temporal uses. All three items studied do have both degree and contrastive uses. As degree modifiers, *rather*, *eerder* and *plutôt* typically function as compromisers, placing the degree of the modified property somewhere in the middle region of an open-ended scale. As contrastive markers, all three items can express the same quite wide variety of contrastive uses – reformulation, replacement, preference and antithesis – yet in different proportions.

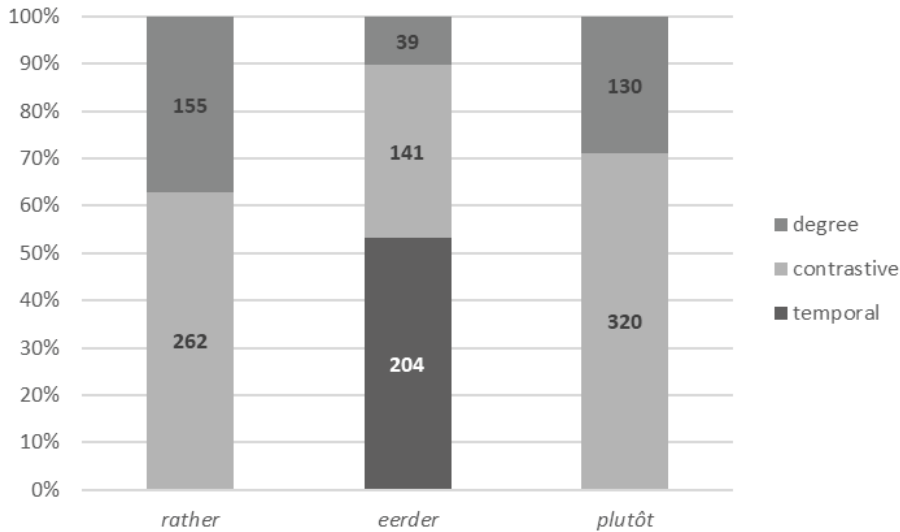


Figure 1. Semantic-pragmatic uses of *rather*, *eerder* and *plutôt*

2.1. Temporal uses

The monolingual analyses confirm that the temporal use is now only attested for DU *eerder*. Temporal *eerder*, which can easily be translated by other adverbial temporal markers such as *before*, *earlier* and *sooner*, as illustrated in (4) and (5), takes up 53.13% (204 instances) of all uses of *eerder*.

- (4) *Eerder dan 15 november had hij er ditmaal ook niets aan kunnen doen.* (timm004tims01)
 ‘Before 15 November he couldn’t have done anything either this time’
- (5) *Hoe meer je rookt, hoe eerder krijg je de geit terug.* (timm004tims01)
 ‘The more you smoke, the sooner you’ll get the goat back.’

The persistence of the temporal meaning in Dutch might be explained by the frequency and degree of entrenchment not only of *eerder* but also of *eerst* (e.g. *Was van ‘52 tot ‘54 in dienst bij de huzaren, eerst als huzaar, later als korporaal* ‘Served in the hussars from ’52 to ’54, first as a hussar, later as a corporal’). While the base form *eer* is now archaic, the superlative form *eerst*, like comparative *eerder*, has a highly frequent temporal use, which might explain or reinforce the persistence of the temporal meaning of *eerder*. In French and

English there are no such uses with base forms *tôt* or *rath* corresponding to Dutch *eerst*.

There are, however, signs that the temporal meaning is under pressure even in Dutch. In 18.6% of the cases temporal *eerder* is accompanied by an additional temporal adverb meaning ‘already’, such as *al* (6) or *reeds* (7), which might indicate that the temporal meaning of *eerder* needs some kind of reinforcement and that it is in fact bleaching.

- (6) *Ik heb het al eerder gezegd, de literatuur behoort tot het terrein van de verbeelding.* (rogg003bero05)
 ‘I’ve already said it before, literature belongs to the field of imagination.’
- (7) *Dit is niet dezelfde schoenmaker over wien ik reeds eerder schreef.* (haan008inru01)
 ‘This is not the same shoemaker about whom I already wrote before.’

2.2. Contrastive uses

Rather (than), *eerder (dan)* and *plutôt (que)* all have contrastive uses. For the analysis of these uses, our starting-point was Quirk *et al.*’s (1985: 638-639) classification of the textual relations expressed by contrastive conjuncts, including reformulation, preference, replacement and antithesis.

Reformulatory constructions, as in (8) to (10), offer a more precise formulation when a less precise formulation is mentioned explicitly in the context. They were noted to often contain a disjunctive connective such as *or* in English or *ou* in French.

- (8) *I think they felt that the fates had decreed that this was to be England’s summer, or rather Botham’s summer to be more precise.* (WB)
- (9) *Het moeilijkste moet het voor De Haan geweest zijn dat hij in literaire kring weinig steun vond, ja **eerder** verzet.* (haan008pijp01)
 ‘The most difficult thing for De Haan must have been that he found little support in literary circles, yes resistance rather’
- (10) *Cocktail chez Paul Morand **ou** plutôt ce que sa femme appelle un “cocktail”* (Frantext)
 ‘Cocktail at Paul Morand or rather what his wife calls a “cocktail”’

Preferential uses of *rather* (11), *eerder* (12) and *plutôt* (13) point to a preferred option, in explicit (or sometimes implicit) contrast with a less preferred option. These uses typically co-occur with a verb of preference such as EN *would rather* (Salkie 2014), DU *verkiezen* ‘prefer’ and FR *préférer* ‘prefer’, *opter* ‘opt’ or *choisir* ‘choose’.

- (11) *and when I am ill-used, I will leave my lover **rather than** deceive him.* (WB)
- (12) *Je vermijdt onder de titel van je boeken de bepaling ‘roman’ te plaatsen, maar je noemt ze **dan eerder** ‘een feuilleton’, ‘een multiepel’; of ‘een doorkijkroman’ (rogg003bero04)*
 ‘You avoid putting the label ‘novel’ under the title of your books, but you rather call them ‘a serial’, ‘a multiple’ or ‘a see-through novel.’
- (13) *Il préfère se taire **plutôt que** de faire du bruit avec des paroles creuses.* (Frantext)
 ‘He prefers to keep quiet rather than to make noise with empty words.’

Replacive constructions “withdraw an item to replace it by a more important one” (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 639). They are often used with the meaning ‘more X than Y’. The original option or term is valid, but there is a more relevant or more important one. The escape plan in (14), for instance, is said to likely lead to a riot which is judged to be the more important aspect. Similarly, in (15), the limitation will ultimately lead to enrichment, which is most important; and in (16), Fedora’s smile is more a reason for concern about her bad inclinations than for relief at her seeming approval.

- (14) *He wanted to know how it was an escape plan, **rather than** the blueprint for a riot.* (WB)
- (15) *Het is een beperking, die eigenlijk geen beperking is wat mij betreft, maar **eerder een verrijking**.* (rogg003bero04)
 ‘It is a limitation, that is not actually a limitation as far as I am concerned, but rather an enrichment.’
- (16) *Fedora a souri, ce qui a été interprété comme valant approbation de sa part, là où il y avait **plutôt** matière à s’inquiéter de ses mauvais penchants.* (Frantext)
 ‘Fedora smiled, which was interpreted as a sign of approval on her part, where there was more reason to be concerned about her bad inclinations.’

Finally, antithetical uses “introduce a direct antithesis” (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 639), which is typically explicit in the context (always in Dutch and French). These

uses can be paraphrased by ‘not X but Y’, e.g. not narrowed but worsened (17), not integrating but isolating (18), not a soldier but a student who was working on his course (19).

- (17) *It worsened **rather than** narrowed the gap between the rich and poor* (WB)
- (18) *ik geloof namelijk dat overdreven aandacht voor welk verschijnsel ook, zo’n verschijnsel **eerder isoleert** (en dus steriliseert) **dan integreert*** (auwe002geen01)
I believe that excessive attention for whatever phenomenon, isolates (and hence sterilizes) rather than integrates such a phenomenon’
- (19) *Honoré, lui, n’était pas un soldat, **plutôt un étudiant qui travaillait son cours**.* (Frantext)
Honoré, he was not a soldier, rather a student who was working on his course’

Figure 2 shows that these four contrastive uses appear in the three languages under study. The most pronounced difference between the three data sets is that English proportionally has most antithetical uses, followed by Dutch and then French. This might be linked to French being perceived as ‘softer’ (cf. Lundquist 2005), in the sense of displaying more hedging than Dutch or English.

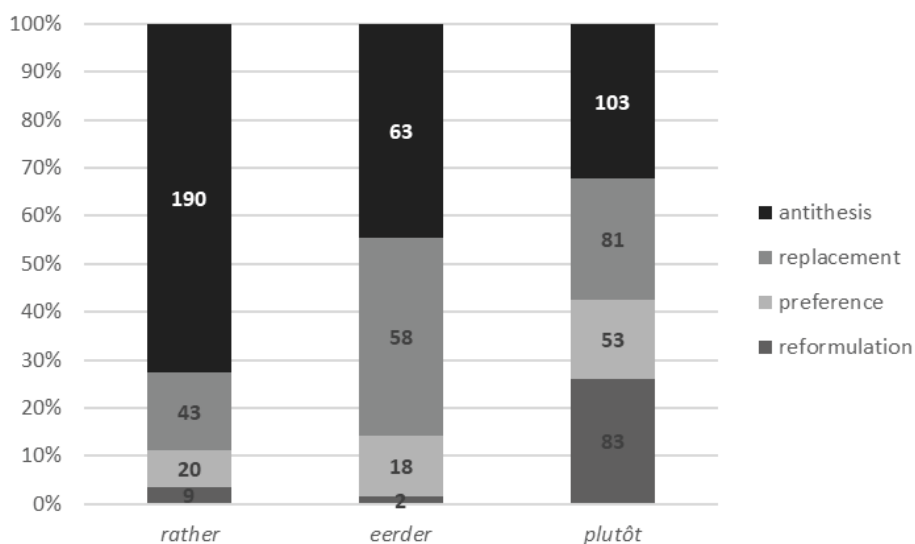


Figure 2. Contrastive uses of *rather*, *eerder* and *plutôt*

Syntactically, there is a predominance of simple *eerder* in Dutch for all uses ('X,/. *eerder* Y'), but when it combines with *of* 'or', *dan* 'than' or *maar* 'but', there is a preference for split constructions ('*eerder* X *dan* Y'). In similar cases English and French prefer non-split constructions in the reformulatory and anti-thetical uses ('X *rather than* Y' or 'X *plutôt que* Y'), while the preferential and replacive uses show a wider variety of constructions.

2.3. Degree uses

As degree modifiers or intensifiers *rather*, *eerder* and *plutôt* function as compromisers and typically modify unbounded properties. Unbounded properties are construed as degrees or regions on an open-ended scale (cf. Paradis 2001; Ghesquière & Davidse 2011; Ghesquière 2014). With such unbounded properties, it is very difficult to determine whether the compromisers engage in either downscaling or upscaling (cf. OED, s.v. *rather* II, 6). The perceived mild downscaling or upscaling effect seems "mainly to be due to context and rhetorical effects such as using understatement to convey upscaling" (Davidse *et al.* *forthc.*). Although Quirk *et al.* (1985: 466) classify compromisers as downtoners which "have a general lowering effect", we would like to argue that with unbounded adjectives compromisers, including *rather/eerder/plutôt*, locate qualities and quantities roughly in the middle region of an open scale, indicating their presence to a moderate degree, be that slightly below or above a certain norm.

Degree modifiers *rather/eerder/plutôt* can modify different types of words and constituents, e.g. noun phrases (20-22), adjectives (23-25), adverbs (26-28) and verbal and prepositional phrases (29-31).

- (20) *I'm beginning to find all this **rather** a bore.* (WB)
- (21) *dat is bij mij **eerder** een zeldzaamheid.* (rogg003bero03)
'that is rather a rarity for me'
- (22) *Can ... il est **plutôt** bel homme.* (Frantext)
'Can ... he is rather handsome'
- (23) *These unfortunate constables ... looked **rather** comical as they crawled up precarious ladders.* (WB)
- (24) *Men heeft daarna gezegd ... dat dit **eerder** zeldzaam is op toneel.* (rogg003bero06)
'They said afterwards ... that this is rather rare on stage.'

- (25) *J'étais très réservée, plutôt solitaire* (Frantext)
'I was very reserved, rather lonely'
- (26) *Churchill rather feebly responded that 'He would not join France in asking for terms; but if he were told what the terms offered were, he would be prepared to consider them'* (WB)
- (27) *Het is alles eerder toevallig tot stand gekomen.* (rogg003bero04)
'It has all developed rather accidentally'
- (28) *Le public rameuté applaudissait plutôt faiblement* (Frantext)
'The gathered audience applauded rather weakly'
- (29) *I said that the Church today seemed to me rather like a very old grandmother who sat by the chimney breast muttering to herself, ignored by the rest of the family and out of touch with its culture.* (WB)
- (30) *Het deuntje begon overnieuw, ... wat eerder leek op het kabbelen van water* (wit_001orph01)
'The tune started anew, ... which rather resembled the rippling of water'
- (31) *La villa ressemblait plutôt à un pavillon de banlieue.* (Frantext)
'The villa looked more like a suburban lodge.'

The degree use is never predominant for any of the three items under scrutiny, yet English degree *rather* was most frequent (37.17%), followed by *plutôt* (29.89%) and finally *eerder* (10.16%). The small proportion of degree uses of *eerder* might be influenced by prescriptive grammar, which advises to use *veeleer* instead of *eerder* in that use and only use *eerder* temporally (Smedts 2000).

3. Translation study

The translation data in Table 2 show that the three constructions are most often translated, contrary to what has been observed for other markers such as FR *en effet* 'indeed', *en fait* 'in fact', *en réalité* 'in reality', *de fait* 'de facto' and their equivalents in Dutch (Lamiroy & Vanderbauwhede 2016), as well as FR *par ailleurs* 'furthermore', *d'ailleurs* 'moreover' and their equivalents in Dutch (Vanderbauwhede & Lamiroy 2019). This might indicate that *rather/eerder/plutôt* are perceived as sufficiently meaningful from a semantic-pragmatic point of view to be translated.

DPC	Instances not translated or reformulated	
EN <i>rather</i> → DU	11 out of 59	18.64%
DU <i>eerder</i> → EN	15 out of 138	10.86%
DU <i>eerder</i> → FR	16 out of 110	14.55%
FR <i>plutôt</i> → DU	19 out of 174	10.92%

Table 2. Instances of *rather*, *eerder* and *plutôt* which are not translated or reformulated in the DPC

3.1. Temporal uses

The translation data confirm that only Dutch still has temporal uses (32.69%) and that *eerder* is never translated by *rather* or *plutôt*. Tables 3 and 4 show that it is translated by other constructions with a temporal meaning, such as *earlier*, *before*, *already* in English and *plus tôt*, *précédemment*, *antérieurement*, *au préalable* in French. In French, the original comparative construction *plus tôt* is used, yet perhaps not as often as we had expected.

DU <i>eerder</i> → EN		
<i>earlier</i>	12	40.00%
<i>before</i>	7	23.33%
<i>already</i>	3	10.00%
<i>above</i>	2	6.67%
NONE	2	6.67%
<i>aforementioned</i>	1	3.33%
<i>early</i>	1	3.33%
<i>first</i>	1	3.33%
PARAPHRASE ²	1	3.33%

Table 3. Translations of temporal *eerder* into English in the DPC

2 One temporal use was translated freely using a pragmatically equivalent yet non-temporal paraphrase:

- (a) *De 'Golden Sixties' (1955-1974) zorgden voor een nooit eerder geziene groei en navenante stijging van de levensstandaard.*
 (lit. a growth never seen before)
The 'Golden Sixties' (1965- 1974) saw unparalleled growth accompanied by an increase in the standard of living.

DU <i>eerder</i> → FR		
NONE	7	13.21%
NONE + <i>déjà</i>	7	13.21%
<i>plus tôt</i>	6	11.32%
<i>précédemment</i>	5	9.43%
<i>antérieur / antérieurement</i>	4	7.55%
<i>au préalable / préalable / préalablement</i>	4	7.55%
<i>très peu de temps après</i>	4	7.55%
<i>auparavant</i>	3	5.66%
? (insufficient context)	2	3.77%
<i>jamais de leur vie / vu(e)</i>	2	3.77%
NONE + <i>jamais</i>	2	3.77%
<i>par le passé</i>	2	3.77%
<i>avant</i>	1	1.89%
<i>prévu</i>	1	1.89%
<i>succède</i>	1	1.89%

Table 4. Translations of temporal *eerder* into French in the DPC

Here are some examples of temporal *eerder* with their English (32-34) and French (35-37) counterparts from the DPC.

- (32) ... *de dialecten waren er eerder dan het Algemeen Nederlands.*
... *the dialects were around before Standard Dutch.*
- (33) *De 'Golden Sixties' zorgden voor een nooit eerder geziene groei en navenante stijging van de levensstandaard.*
The 'Golden Sixties' saw unparalleled growth accompanied by an increase in the standard of living.
- (34) *Daarna duwde hij een paar mensen opzij om eerder bij de boerenkool te komen.*
Then he pushed a few people out of the way to get to the mashed potatoes.
- (35) *Waarom heb je daar niet eerder aan gedacht?*
Pourquoi tu n'y as pas pensé plus tôt?
'Why haven't you thought about that before?'
- (36) *de onbegrijpelijke terugkeer van Roland Louf, die in een eerder verleden de club absoluut niks bijbracht*

l'incompréhensible retour de Roland Louf qui, par le passé, n'avait rien apporté au club

'the incomprehensible return of Roland Louf, whom in a previous past taught the club absolutely nothing'

- (37) *Een andere mogelijkheid is, zoals eerder aangehaald, om Brussel een speciaal statuut te verlenen, net als Washington DC in de Verenigde Staten.*

Une autre variante serait, comme évoqué antérieurement, de permettre à Bruxelles de jouir d'un statut spécial, comme Washington D.C. aux États-Unis.

'Another possibility, as mentioned earlier, is to give Brussels a special status, just like Washington DC in the United States.'

3.2. Contrastive uses

Table 5 provides a qualitative overview of the attested translations for contrastive *eerder*, based on the quantitative data. It shows that contrastive *eerder* is typically translated by its English and French equivalents. Only in English is replaceive *eerder* more often translated as *more* than as *rather*, in line with its function 'more X than Y'.

	DU <i>eerder</i> → EN	DU <i>eerder</i> → FR
Reformulation	/	/
Preference	<i>rather</i> NONE + <i>tend</i> ^b	<i>plutôt</i>
Replacement	<i>more</i> <i>rather</i>	<i>plutôt</i> <i>X plutôt que Y</i> <i>X plus que Y</i> <i>X davantage que Y</i> <i>mais plutôt</i>
Antithesis	<i>rather</i> (+ <i>tend</i>) <i>in fact</i> <i>more</i>	<i>X plutôt que Y</i>

Table 5. Translations of contrastive *eerder* into English and French in the DPC

3 Preferential *eerder* is sometimes translated by means of the modal *tend*, as in:

- (b) *Men suggereert dat het lokaal cultureel beleid hiervoor verantwoordelijk zou zijn, maar gesprekken met de lokale autoriteiten brengen eerder andere oorzaken aan het licht. It was suggested that local cultural policy may be responsible for this, though discussions with local authorities tended to point to other causes.*

No reformulatory uses of *eerder* were found in the DPC data, only preferential (38, 41), replacive (39, 42) and antithetical (40, 43) uses.

- (38) *Daardoor legt dat beleid de bestaande conflicten eerder vast dan er een oplossing voor te bieden.*
This means that the policy tends to consolidate the existing conflicts rather than providing a solution for them.
- (39) *Diversiteit en identiteit kunnen actief ondersteund worden ... door de bestaande verschillen... eerder te beschouwen als een kans dan als een bedreiging*
Diversity and identity can be actively supported ... by considering the existing differences ... more as an opportunity than as threat
- (40) *Het tegendeel is eerder waar.*
In fact, the opposite applies.
- (41) *Al is het initiatief dat hij in zijn bedrijf lanceerde, eerder bedoeld om de arbeidsomstandigheden te verbeteren dan om de werkprestaties te monitoren.*
Et ce même si l'initiative qu'il a lancée dans son entreprise s'inscrit davantage dans un contexte d'amélioration des conditions de travail que dans une logique de mesure de la performance pure.
 'Although the initiative he launched in his company is intended to improve working conditions [rather than] monitor work performance'
- (42) *Al onder hertog Hendrik I hadden de edelen zich eerder geprofileerd als heersers over hun gebied dan als vazallen van de keizer.*
Dès le règne de Henri I^{er}, les princes avaient régné plus en souverains territoriaux qu'en vassaux de l'empereur.
 'Already under Duke Henry I the nobility profiled themselves as rulers of their area [rather than] vassals of the emperor.'
- (43) *Eerder duwen dan trekken*
Plutôt pousser que tirer
 'Pushing [rather than] pulling'

Contrastive *rather* and *plutôt* were found to be most often translated by *eerder*, but translators quite often seem to resort to other constructions that more explicitly convey the relevant type of contrast (Table 6).

	EN <i>rather</i> → DU	FR <i>plutôt</i> → DU
Reformulation	<i>beter gezegd</i>	<i>of liever</i>
Preference	<i>liever</i>	<i>X eerder dan Y</i> <i>X liever dan Y</i>
Replacement	<i>eerder dan</i>	<i>X eerder dan Y</i> <i>X veeleer dan Y</i> <i>X liever dan Y</i> <i>meer Y dan Y</i> <i>niet Y maar eerder Y</i>
Antithesis	<i>eerder</i> <i>in plaats van</i>	<i>X in plaats van Y</i> <i>niet X maar Y</i> <i>X en niet Y</i>

Table 6. Translations of contrastive *rather* and *plutôt* into Dutch in the DPC

Whereas *eerder* is the preferred translation for replacive *rather* (46), it is never used by the translators to express reformulation. They prefer to use *beter gezegd* ‘better said’ (44). Similarly, to express preference, the translators use more explicit expressions of preference with *liever* (45). The same holds for the expression of antithesis, where the translators use more explicitly antithetical constructions such as *X in plaats van Y* ‘X instead of Y’ or *X en niet Y* ‘X and not Y’ (47). In conclusion, according to the explicitation and disambiguation universal posited by Baker (1993), translators into Dutch seem cautious in using *eerder*, often opting for semantically less vague or less multifunctional constructions.

- (44) *About a man who gives lessons in love, or **rather**, lessons in seduction.*
*Over een man die lessen geeft in de liefde, of **beter gezegd** lessen in verleiding.*
- (45) *Elle préfère taxer les juifs **plutôt que** de les chasser.*
*Zij zou de joden **liever** belasten **dan** verjagen.*
‘She prefers to tax Jews [rather than] drive them away.’
- (46) *A vague signal that would awaken curiosity **rather than** call attention to itself.*
*Een onduidelijk teken, dat **eerder** de nieuwsgierigheid **dan** de aandacht zou wekken.*
- (47) *Récupération des matières premières **plutôt qu**’élimination des déchets*
*Terugwinnen van grondstoffen **in plaats van** het weggooien*
‘Recovery of raw materials [rather than] waste disposal’

3.3. Degree uses

As to the degree uses of the three markers under study, the translation data summarized in Tables 7 to 10 show that degree uses are not translated in one out three cases, as in (48) and (49). When they are translated it is typically by their counterpart construction, as in (50) and (51), or by another compromiser, as in (52) and (53). Only in some instances is a booster used by the translators. These findings may be explained by a simplification or no-risk policy (cf. Pym 2015). As it is not always possible to determine whether *rather/eerder/plutôt* downscale or upscale (see Section 2.3), translators might prefer not to translate these markers or, in any case, not to translate them by a degree modifier that might be too strong (cf. simplification as a translation universal, Baker 1993).

DU degree eerder → EN	
Compromisers: <i>e.g. rather, quite, somewhat</i>	31.7%
Boosters: <i>e.g. greater, mainly</i>	31.6%
NONE / NONE + <i>tend</i> ⁴	31.6%

Table 7. Translations of degree *eerder* into English in the DPC

DU degree eerder → FR	
Compromisers: <i>e.g. plutôt, assez</i> ‘quite’, <i>généralement</i> ‘usually’	75.0%
NONE	25.0%
Boosters	0.0%

Table 8. Translations of degree *eerder* into French in the DPC

4 Like preferential *eerder*, degree *eerder* is sometimes not translated directly but the mitigating meaning is conveyed through the addition of modal *tend*, as in the following example.

(c) *De ministeries van onderwijs en cultuur werken eerder afzonderlijk en hoewel CANON Cultuurcel deze kloof tracht te overbruggen, zijn er in de praktijk weinig voorbeelden van samenwerking.*

The ministries of education, culture and communication tend to work separately and even though the CANON Cultuurcel has tried to bridge this gap, in practice there are few instances of joined-up thinking.

EN degree <i>rather</i> → DU	
Compromisers: e.g. <i>tamelijk</i> 'rather', <i>vrij</i> 'quite', <i>nogal</i> 'rather'	58.1%
NONE	29.0%
Boosters: e.g. <i>aanzienlijk</i> 'considerably', <i>flink wat</i> 'considerably'	12.8%

Table 9. Translations of degree *rather* into Dutch in the DPC

FR degree <i>plutôt</i> → DU	
Compromisers: e.g. <i>eerder</i> 'rather', <i>vrij</i> 'quite', <i>nogal</i> 'rather', <i>min of meer</i> 'more or less'	61.0%
Boosters: e.g. <i>veeleer</i> 'more', <i>vooral</i> 'mainly', <i>meestal</i> 'mostly', <i>veelal</i> 'often', <i>zelfs</i> 'even'	23.7%
NONE	15.3%

Table 10. Translations of degree *plutôt* into Dutch in the DPC

- (48) *Well, it is **rather** marvelous what one may catch, from one's carriage, if one is quick and keen and patient.*
Nou, het is geweldig wat je zoal ziet vanuit je koets, als je snel, alert en geduldig bent.
- (49) *FM Brussel, TV-Brussel en de stadskrant Brussel Deze Week groeiden uit van **eerder** kleinschalige initiatieven tot onmisbare informatiekkanalen.*
Les initiatives d'une envergure limitée, comme FM Brussel, TV-Brussel et le journal de la ville Brussel Deze Week, sont devenues des canaux d'information indispensables.
 'FM Brussels, TV Brussels and the city newspaper *Brussels This Week* grew from [rather] small-scale initiatives into indispensable information channels.'
- (50) *We zijn er ons wel van bewust dat dit beleidsdomein ... **eerder** oppervlakkig behandeld wordt.*
*We are aware that this policy area ... is treated in a **rather** superficial way.*
- (51) *Ze komen hier **eerder** intuïtief aan bod en worden nog niet uitgewerkt.*
*Ces notions y sont traitées de manière **plutôt** intuitive sans être examinées en détail.*
 'They are discussed here [rather] intuitively and are not yet elaborated upon.'

- (52) *You seem **rather** sure of me – but you know nothing about me!*
*U lijkt **nogal** zeker van me – maar u weet niets van me!*
- (53) *La maman de Laetitia avait déjà collaboré avec lui par le passé, mais c'est **plutôt** par coïncidence que nous nous sommes mis à travailler ensemble, explique Alain Low.*
*Zij had al met hem samengewerkt. Toch hebben we elkaar **min of meer** toevallig gevonden, legt Alain Low uit.*
 'Laetitia's mother had already collaborated with him in the past, but it is [rather] by coincidence that we started working together, Alain Low explains.'

Interestingly, English degree *rather* (54) and French degree *plutôt* (55) are almost never translated by Dutch *eerder*. This might be surprising at first, but as discussed in Section 2.3, this low number of degree *eerder* in the translated texts might be influenced by prescriptivism, which advises not to use *eerder* to convey degree (Smedts 2000).

- (54) *He painted a third building on a **rather** smaller scale, his own former home, the four-square, prosperous-looking Nuenen vicarage ...*
*Een derde gebouw, dat hij op **iets** kleinere schaal schilderde, was de welvarend aandoende, solide pastorie te Nuenen ...*
- (55) *Ces maisons sont louées à un prix excessif à des habitants **plutôt** pauvres, faibles et vulnérables.*
*Deze woningen worden tegen een te hoge prijs verhuurd aan **vooral** arme, zwakke en kwetsbare bewoners.*
 'These houses are rented at an excessive price to [rather] poor, weak and vulnerable inhabitants.'

3. Conclusions

This study has looked into the present-day functional diversity of *rather*, *eerder* and *plutôt*. The comparable and translation data confirm that the original temporal meaning has persisted only for DU *eerder*, not for EN *rather* and FR *plutôt*. This may suggest that the English and French constructions have progressed further in terms of the grammaticalization pathway hypothesized in the literature, in the sense that their source meanings have disappeared. All three items are now predominantly used as textual markers expressing different types of contrast – reformulation, preference, replacement and antithesis. Interestingly, the three items express these different types of contrast to differing proportions and it seems to be possible to draw up a pragmatic scale of contrast

leading from English over Dutch to French, with *rather* most easily expressing stark contrast and *plutôt* still being used more to express weaker meanings of preference and reformulation. As contrastive markers, the three items are mostly translated by each other, with the exception of translations into Dutch for which the translators prefer to opt for semantically more precise constructions which more explicitly convey the relevant type of contrast than multifunctional *eerder*. Similarly, for the degree uses of *rather* and *plutôt* the translators also seem to prefer to use other degree markers than DU *eerder*, yet they do opt for items that are semantically equally vague. As such the English-Dutch translation data hint to both explicitation and simplification strategies. Whereas for the contrastive uses the translators seem confident enough to use explicit, even more precise translations that clearly indicate the type of contrast evoked, for the degree uses they seem more cautious and, although avoiding DU *eerder*, tend to go for equally vague and, hence, ‘safe’ options to express degree. The translators’ choice not to use degree *eerder* also fits in with the observation that in the monolingual data degree uses are less frequent in Dutch than in the other two languages and with the prescriptivist advice to avoid using *eerder* as a degree marker.

This study, although synchronic in nature, does provide a window onto the developmental paths followed by *rather/eerder/plutôt*. As to the pathway of grammaticalization proposed in the literature leading from temporal over contrastive to degree, the data studied point towards English *rather* being most advanced in that it no longer shows temporal uses and has the highest frequency of degree uses. Similarly, Present-day French *plutôt* also no longer has temporal uses and, in addition, it also has degree uses, albeit fewer than English but more than Dutch. Dutch *eerder* still has temporal uses and has the lowest number of degree uses, indicating that of the three items studied it is the least grammaticalized.

Future research will have to look more closely into the diachrony of *rather*, *eerder* and *plutôt* to be able to make solid claims about their development. Also, the degree uses and, more specifically, the upscaling or downscaling function of the items merits closer attention.

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Dictionaries

OED: *Oxford English Dictionary online*, <http://www.oed.com/>

TFLI: *Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé*, <http://atilf.atilf.fr/>

Van Dale <https://www.vandale.be/>

Corpora

DBNL: *Digital Library of Dutch Literature*, <https://www.dbnl.org/>

DPC: *Dutch Parallel Corpus*, https://www.kuleuven-kulak.be/nl/onderzoek/Onderzoeksdomeinen/copy_of_itec/projects/research-focus/dpc

Frantext, <https://www.frantext.fr/>

WB: *Collins Wordbanks Online*, <https://wordbanks.harpercollins.co.uk/>

CORPORA AND LANGUAGE IN USE

The present volume contains selected proceedings from the fifth edition of the *Using Corpora in Contrastive and Translation Studies* (UCCTS) international conference held at the University of Louvain in September 2018. It brings together thirteen chapters that all make use of electronic comparable and/or parallel corpora to inform contrastive linguistics, translation theory, translation pedagogy, translation quality assessment and multilingual terminology. The volume is structured in five thematic sections, devoted to learner-focused descriptive translation studies, corpus use in translator training, studies of translated and edited language, contrastive linguistics, and terminology. Together, the contributions in the volume reflect recent developments in corpus-based cross-linguistic studies, such as the compilation and analysis of learner translation corpora to identify the typical features of learner translated language and inform translator training, the comparative analysis of translation and other forms of mediated communication, such as editing, the compilation of new multilingual corpora and the analysis of under-researched linguistic phenomena, such as punctuation. The volume also testifies to the growing cross-fertilization between contrastive linguistics and translation studies, both in terms of methodology (e.g. the combined use of different types of corpora and the exploration of corpus-driven methods) and theory (e.g. the role played by source language influence and cross-linguistic contrasts in translation).

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