



ENG 812

CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS

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MODULE 1: Definition and Historical Background

Learning Objective

At the end of this module, you should understand what contrastive linguistics is all about, the historical background of contrastive linguistics, and the importance of contrastive linguistics to our various endeavours in life.

Unit 1 Definition

This course is basically an introduction to contrastive linguistics which is generally believed to be the synchronic study of two or more languages, with the aim of discovering their differences and similarities, while placing more emphasis on the differences, and applying these discoveries to related areas of language study and practice. It discusses the principles and methods, and contrasts English with various languages at phonological, lexical, grammatical, textual, and pragmatic levels, focusing more on the useful insights contrastive analysis provides into real-world problems in fields such as applied linguistics, translation and translation studies.

As a corollary to the above definition, Study Moose postulates that Contrastive Linguistics (CL) can be regarded as a branch of comparative linguistics that is concerned with pairs of languages which are 'socio-culturally linked'. Two languages can be said to be socio-culturally linked when (i) they are used by a considerable number of bi- or multilingual speakers, and/or (ii) a substantial amount of 'linguistic output' (text, discourse) is translated from one language into the other. According to this definition, contrastive linguistics deals with pairs of languages such as Spanish and French, but not with Latin and (the Australian language) Dyirbal, as there is no socio-cultural link between these languages. More broadly defined, the term 'contrastive linguistics' is also sometimes used for comparative studies of (small) groups (rather than just pairs) of languages, and does not require a socio-cultural link between the languages investigated. On this view, contrastive linguistics is a special case of linguistic typology and is distinguished from other types of typological approaches by a small sample size and a high

degree of granularity. Accordingly, any pair or group of languages (even Latin and Dyirbal) can be subject to a contrastive analysis.

The ‘objective of applicability’ is also reflected in the fact that contrastive studies focus on the differences, rather than the similarities, between the languages compared.

1.2 Brief Historical Background

This course specifically aims to provide you with a wide perspective on this field of linguistic analysis, and also with the tools you need to be able to establish comparisons and to contrast English with other languages of the world. Contrastive Linguistics (CL) is therefore, a discipline of Applied Linguistics that first emerged in the United States in the mid-50s, under the influence of structuralism, and as a result of a renovated interest in the teaching of foreign languages. Initially, it sought to contrast pairs of languages in order to determine similarities and differences between them. The hypothesis postulated within this framework was that the systematic analysis of two languages should help predict the difficulties that learners of a foreign language (FL) will encounter when acquiring it. This premise of CL is grounded on the idea, suggested by Robert Lado (1957), that it is possible to identify areas of difficulty for the learners of a foreign language by contrasting their mother tongue (L1) with the language they are learning (L2). The analysis proposed by this author in his influential work (*Linguistics across Cultures: Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers*) always involved the analysis of at least two languages, that is, a target language (TL) and a source language (SL), even though more languages could be contrasted if required. Difficulties are expected to appear in those areas in which the two languages differ. For that reason, special attention must be paid to difficulties; similarities, on the other hand, are expected to facilitate the learning process.

Lado’s work is important because in it he suggested the techniques for contrasting languages. For example, he proposed to search for features of the L1 that do not exist in the L2 at the phonological or morphological levels, in order to create teaching materials that would make students aware of them. At the lexical level, he proposed to study the problems between pairs of words in both languages, taking into account the similarities and the differences in both form and meaning.

The concept known as *Tertium Comparitionis* is core to Contrastive Linguistics. Making a comparison between two linguistic properties or features, regardless of the language level you are contrasting, presupposes the existence of a common feature that becomes the basis for the comparison. This common feature is called *Tertium Comparitionis* in CL.

CL faced a decline for several reasons (for a more profound account see Antenberg & Granger 2002). Nevertheless, in the last decades there has been a resurgence of CL as an area of interest in linguistic research. According to Antenberg and Granger (2002:3), there are several interrelated factors that can explain this revival. On the one hand, the integration of European countries in a ‘multilingual and cross-cultural’ space has created a real need for comparing and contrasting languages and cultures. Intercultural communication has become the focus of intensive research. On the other hand, from a methodological point of view, there has been a shift in the way languages are currently studied. The most important one is the emergence, in the 1980s, of the empiricist approach to linguistic analysis (i.e. Corpus Linguistics), which implied a revolution in the way data is approached and collected.

1.3 Importance and uses of Contrastive Linguistics

As a supplementary definition, Contrastive Linguistics is a sub-discipline of linguistics which is concerned with the comparison of two or more (subsystems of) languages. It has long been associated primarily with language teaching. Apart from this applied aspect, however, it also has a strong theoretical purpose, contributing to our understanding of language typology and language universals. The study of two languages in contrast, here called **contrastive analysis**, has been referred to by a variety of names, not all of which mean the same to all writers. One can find the following terms used: contrastive studies, contrastive language studies, contrastive linguistics, applied contrastive studies, contrastive description and others. Contrastive analysis investigates the differences between pairs (or small sets) of languages against the background of similarities and with the purpose of providing input to applied disciplines such as foreign language teaching and translation studies. With its largely descriptive focus contrastive linguistics provides an interface between theory and application. It makes use of theoretical findings and models of language description but is driven by the objective of applicability.

Contrastive studies mostly deal with the comparison of languages that are 'socio-culturally linked', i.e. languages whose speech communities overlap in some way, typically through (natural or instructed) bilingualism . Much progress has been made in classifying the languages of the earth into genetic families, each having descent from a single precursor, and in tracing such developments through time. The result is called "comparative linguistics." Of even greater importance for the future technology of thought is what might be called "contrastive linguistics." This plots the outstanding differences among tongues - in grammar, logic, and general analysis of experience. A major influence on the development of the contrastive analysis approach has been the interest shown in it by language teachers and learners, and much CA has been undertaken with language teaching rather than translation in mind. One can prevent development of errors through a prior contrastive analysis and error analysis, leading to the development of appropriate teaching materials to reinforce correct language learning.

The relevance of Contrastive Linguistics to translation:

The emphasis of much of the work on CL on teaching and language learning raises questions about its relevance to translators. At a practical level, it is probably most useful in pointing out areas where direct translation of a term or phrase will not convey accurately in the second language the intended meaning of the first. At a global level, it leads the translator to look at broader issues such as whether the structure of the discourse for a given text-type is the same in both languages. Furthermore, although Contrastive Analysis is widely practised, there are a number of theoretical and practical problems in its application, all of which must affect judgements as to its usefulness in preparing or evaluating translations. There is some overlap between these problems, but they can nevertheless be related to specific difficulties of identifying a common ground for comparison, comparing descriptions of different languages, taking account of psycholinguistic and sociocultural factors, and taking account of extra- textual and inter-textual factors.

Identifying a common ground for comparison.

All comparisons require that there be a common ground against which variation may be noted, a constant that underlies and makes possible the variables that are identified. Formal similarity is unreliable for several reasons. In the first place, a particular grammatical structure in one

language may be a requirement while in another it may be one choice amongst several; in the second place, the choice represented by a grammatical structure in one language may have a different significance in that language from the choice represented by an apparently equivalent structure in another language .in the third place, in one language a particular structure may be unmarked while in another it may be marked. A pair of sentences might be semantically and/or pragmatically equivalent but have widely varying likelihoods of occurrence in the languages from which they are drawn. A simple example of all these points is that of the Portuguese expression "muito obrigado/a and the English expression much obliged. These are syntactically and semantically comparable but have a different likelihood of occurrence, muito obrigado/a being the normal way of thanking in Portuguese and much obliged being a rare and more restricted usage than thanks a lot (and other related expressions) in English.

Comparing Descriptions of Different languages.

Apart from the real but unavoidable problems arising out of comparisons of descriptions that utilize different linguistic models, there are problems that arise even between descriptions that utilize the same categories and theoretical framework. Understanding between and among disparate cultures has challenged mankind throughout history; and clearly, communication, intercultural communication, is a key element in achieving understanding. We believe a disciplined, linguistic approach to the study of intercultural communication, an approach that includes the building of linguistic corpora, research in contrastive rhetoric, and practical, real life application of the best practices learned, can provide valuable insights toward achieving understanding among cultures.

Relationship between Contrastive Linguistics and Translation

The relationship between CL and translation is bidirectional. On the one hand, the translation of specific pieces of text may provide the data for CL On the other, CL may provide explanations of difficulties encountered in translation. The crucial factors here are what size of language sample has been chosen for translation, whether it is naturally occurring or fabricated for the purpose, and whether the translation is the analyst's own. Though the focus of CL may continue to shift towards pragmatics and discourse analysis, its use in translation is not inevitable. It is however unlikely that it can be dispensed with completely either in the training of translators or in the

assessment of translations, even in its more traditional lexico-grammatical manifestations; CL has arisen as a result of the needs of the language teaching profession and this proposition is no exception in that one of its major objectives is to provide teachers with assistance in the use of parallel concordancing in the classroom. It gives valuable evidence for translators on the transferability of certain collocations and colligations from one language to another. The future of CL's use in translation may well lie in tangible and feasible projects which are capable of providing with equal facility explanations of past translating decisions and guidance as to prospective ones.

As a Useful Language Learning Tool:

Knowledge and understanding of languages is increasingly important, and this course focuses on how such knowledge can be applied. It helps learners know more clearly and finding similarities and differences between them, thereby detecting errors, which bilingual learners often make, and how to fix such errors. Indeed, contrastive linguistics gives a comparative method to translate a learner's thinking in an informed way - Giving structure to his/her intuitive relationship to the language. This bilingual approach in cl saves the students' infinite time and labour. It has been proved that students learn faster and more effectively using such approach. Since it is our nature to compare, Contrastive Linguistics is the technique that clarifies our understanding of the language. For learners, similarities between languages cause no difficulties, while differences cause interference to learning. Through Contrastive Linguistics we can target and resolve the typical difficulties and common mistakes of students. We can examine aspects that would not normally be noticed without such comparison. Bi-lingual comparative courses overlap in fruitful collaboration with other approaches. They clear away students' deep-rooted mistakes and empower teachers with the answers to many of their students' doubts.

Contrastive Linguistics in Language Teaching:

The change that has to take place in the language behavior of a second or foreign language student can be equated with the differences between the structure of the student's native language and culture and that of the target language and culture. The task of the linguist is to identify these differences. The task of the writer of a foreign language teaching program is to develop materials which will be based on a statement of these differences; the task of the foreign language teacher

is to be aware of these differences and to be prepared to teach them; the task of the student is to learn them.

Importance of CL due to growing demand

There is a growing demand from both public and private sectors for professionals combining excellent language skills and sound linguistic theory and methodology. You study linguistic theory, description and methodology with a particular focus on corpus approaches and a strong multilingual component with high relevance for language professionals, especially in the field of foreign/second language learning, teaching (and testing), linguistics focusing on usage-based models and methods in language research and their applications, especially in multilingual contexts. It help students acquire the ability to read, write, speak, and understand world languages reach maximum capability with respect to communications, effective reasoning, and analytical thinking; to educate students for living and working in a competitive global society.. As the field of linguistics became more accepted as a discipline, other scholars from different fields began to incorporate language-related topics into their work. Contrastive Linguistics found its way into sociology, anthropology, language arts, foreign language learning and teaching. It helps the translators to analyse the basic meaning and gist of the second language giving them an edge in interpretation jobs .

The Preoccupation of Contrastive Analysis

The goal of contrastive analysis is basically to predict linguistic difficulties experienced during the acquisition of a second language; as formulated by Lado (1957), it suggests that difficulties in acquiring a new (second) language are derived from the differences between the new language and the native (first) language of a language learner. In this regard, errors potentially made by learners of a second language are predicted from interference by the native language. Such a phenomenon is usually known as negative transfer. In error analysis (Corder, 1967), this was seen as only one kind of error, interlanguage or interference errors; other types were intralingual and developmental errors, which are not specific to the native language (Richards, 1971). Subsequently, contrastive analysis of numerous studies of different language pairs have already been carried out, in particular focusing on learners of English as a second or foreign language. Duskoṽ a (1969) investigated Czech learners' of English in terms of various lexical and

syntactical errors; Light and Warshawsky (1974) examined Russian learners of English (and French learners to some extent) on their improper usage of syntax as well as semantics; Guilford (1998) specifically explored the difficulties of French learners of English in various aspects, from lexical and syntactical to idiosyncratic; and Mohamed et al. (2004) targeted grammatical errors of Chinese learners in English. Among these studies, commonly observed syntactic error types made by non-native English learners include subject-verb disagreement, noun-number disagreement, and misuse of determiners. There are many other studies examining interlanguage errors, generally restricted in their scope of investigation to a specific grammatical aspect of English in which the native language of the learners might have an influence. To give some examples, Granger and Tyson (1996) examined the usage of connectors in English by a number of different native speakers – French, German, Dutch, and Chinese; Vassileva (1998) investigated the employment of first person singular and plural by another different set of native speakers – German, French, Russian, and Bulgarian; Slabakova (2000) explored the acquisition of telicity marking in English by Spanish and Bulgarian learners; Yang and Huang (2004) studied the impact of the absence of grammatical tense in Chinese on the acquisition of English tenseaspect system (i.e. telicity marking); Franck et al. (2002) and Vigliocco et al. (1996) specifically examined the usage of subject-verb agreement in English by French and Spanish, respectively.

1.4 Differences between Micro-contrastive linguistics and Macro-contrastive linguistics

Macro-linguistics and micro-linguistics are both fields of study of linguistics that focus on language and its form and meaning and the changes that occur to that form and meaning due to other factors. According to the microlinguistics view, languages should be analysed for their own sake without reference to:

- Their social function
- The manner in which they are acquired by children
- The psychological mechanisms that underlie the production and reception of speech
- The literary and aesthetic or communicative function of language, etc.

In contrast, macrolinguistics embraces all of these aspects of language. Various areas within macrolinguistics have been given terminological recognition:

- Psycholinguistics
- Sociolinguistics
- Anthropological linguistics
- Dialectology
- Mathematical and computational linguistics
- Stylistics
- Discourse analysis

Subsequently, macro-contrastive linguistics takes a broad view of linguistic phenomena of the languages being compared or contrasted, studying the contexts in which the languages are used and their development over time, while micro-contrastive linguistics focuses on the details of the languages being compared, including their sound features, grammatical structures, syntax, and meanings.

Summary

In this module we have learnt the various definitions and historical development of contrastive linguistics. We also studied the various important ways that contrastive linguistics impact our lives as we attempt to learning language and improve on our communicative skills.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Discuss the importance of contrastive linguistics in contemporary language studies.
2. How would you distinguish between macro-contrastive and micro-contrastive linguistics?
3. What do you understand by the term “*Tertium Comparitionis* “?

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MODULE 2

PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

This module is adapted from <https://tuongld.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/> because it contains fundamental pieces of information that will make the understanding of the module clearer and more incisive. There are a few modifications in the content to reflect the realities of the study of English as a second language in Nigeria.

Unit 1: Contrastive studies in Theory and in Practice

Contrary to what is often believed, most of the world's population is multilingual, multicultural, though multilingualism is not always recognised by public institutions. Living in these communities, human beings need a tool to communicate with each other, and to carry on human and social affairs. They seem know that "However many languages a person knows, that's how much a person is worth". (Croatian folk saying)

Some terminological issues

The label contrastive has been used in linguistic inquiry mainly to refer to inter-linguistic and inter-cultural comparisons; it has, however, also been used for comparisons within languages/cultures. The reason for contrastive investigations is to compare (or contrast) linguistic and socio-cultural data across different languages (cross-linguistic/cultural perspective) or within individual languages (intra-linguistic/cultural perspective) in order to establish language-specific, typological and/or universal patterns, categories and features.

2.1 Contrastive Studies, Contrastive Analysis, and Contrastive Linguistics

An astonishingly varied assortment of collocations and corresponding areas of study emerge when considering the various head nouns such adjectives as contrastive or comparative most readily co-occur with in the literature. Thus, depending on what particular authors feel to be the most appropriate description for the issue under discussion, we find such labels as (Applied) Contrastive (Language) Studies, Contrastive Linguistics, Comparative (Historical or Typological) Linguistics, Contrastive (Interlanguage) Analysis, Contrastive (Generative) Grammar, Comparative Syntax, Contrastive Lexicology/Lexicography, Contrastive Pragmatics, Contrastive Discourse Analysis, or Contrastive Sociolinguistics, to mention but a few. Behind this terminological profusion there seems to exist a difference of scope with regard to the three

main collocations the aforementioned terms tend to cluster around, namely: (i) contrastive studies (CS), (ii) contrastive analysis (CA), and (iii) contrastive linguistics (CL). It would seem that CS names the most general field, embodying both the linguistic and the extralinguistic (e.g. cultural, ethnographic, semiotic, etc.) dimensions of contrastive research. By contrast, CA is a way of comparing languages in order to determine potential errors for the ultimate purpose of isolating what needs to be learned and what does not need to be learned in a second-language-learning situation. It, though frequently used interchangeably with the other two collocations, seems to more accurately name the third of the three steps involved in classical contrastive procedure: description, juxtaposition and comparison (Jaszczolt 1995b; Krzeszowski 1990:35). Description includes the selection and preliminary characterisation of the items under comparison in the framework of a language-independent theoretical model. Juxtaposition involves a search for, and identification of, cross-/intra-linguistic/cultural equivalents, while the comparison proper evaluates the degree and type of correspondence between items under comparison. Lastly, CL could be said to restrict its domain to just contrastive linguistic research, whether theoretical, focusing on a contrastive description of the languages/cultures involved, or practical/applied, intended to serve the needs of a particular application, as will be discussed in turn.

2.2: Language Contact and Multilingualism

Language changes and its important source is contact between different languages and resulting diffusion of linguistic traits between languages. Language contact occurs when speakers of two or more languages or varieties interact on a regular basis. Multilingualism is likely to have been the norm throughout human history, and today, most people in the world are multilingual. Before the rise of the concept of the ethno-national state, monolingualism was characteristic mainly of populations inhabiting small islands. But with the ideology that made one people, one state, and one language the most desirable political arrangement, monolingualism started to spread throughout the world. When speakers of different languages interact closely, it is typical for their languages to influence each other. Through sustained language contact over long periods, linguistic traits diffuse between languages, and languages belonging to different families may converge to become more similar. In areas where many languages are in close contact, this may lead to the formation of language areas in which unrelated languages share a number of linguistic

features. Multilingualism is the use of two or more languages, either by an individual speaker or by a community of speakers. Multilingual speakers outnumber monolingual speakers in the world's population. Multilingualism is becoming a social phenomenon governed by the needs of globalization and cultural openness. Owing to the ease of access to information facilitated by the Internet, individuals' exposure to multiple languages is becoming increasingly frequent, thereby promoting a need to acquire additional languages. A multilingual person is someone who can communicate in more than one language, either actively (through speaking, writing, or signing) or passively (through listening, reading, or perceiving). More specifically, the terms „bilingual“ and „trilingual“ are used to describe comparable situations in which two or three languages are involved. A multilingual person is generally referred to as a polyglot. Multilingual speakers have acquired and maintained at least one language during childhood, the so-called first language (L1). The first language (sometimes also referred to as the mother tongue) is acquired without formal education, by mechanisms heavily disputed.

Contrastive studies in everyday life

"Making comparisons is a very human occupation. We spend our lives comparing one thing to another, and behaving according to the categorizations we make. Patterns govern our lives, be they patterns of material culture, or patterns of language. Growing up in any society involves, in large measure, discovering what categories are relevant in the particular culture in which we find ourselves" (Dienhart 1999: 98). "When the child produces an utterance containing an erroneous form, which is responded to immediately with an utterance containing the correct adult alternative to the erroneous form (i.e. when negative evidence is supplied), the child may perceive the adult form as being in CONTRAST with the equivalent child form. Cognizance of a relevant contrast can then form the basis for perceiving the adult form as a correct alternative to the child form." (Adapted from Gass: 357). Language contrast happens in human daily life and language exists due to the contrast in its nature and elements. "Things are classified as the same, similar or different, and we construct mental „boxes“ in which to put objects which „match“ in some way. However, the number of new boxes we create diminishes rapidly as we grow older. We become „fixed“ in our perceptions, and the world, once fresh and new, loses its ability to surprise as we become increasingly familiar with the objects it contains, and increasingly adept at placing the objects encountered today into boxes created yesterday" (Dienhart 1999: 98).

Second language learners, teachers of foreign languages, translators, travelers, businessmen, etc in nature are polyglots. They determine both interlingual and intralingual (dis)similarities in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, semantics and discourse. They are practical contrastists. Polyglots do contrast in their listening, speaking, writing and reading. Second language learners, travelers, business men, translators, etc, in nature, teach themselves second language. In the case, they do contrast languages (on the levels of phonetics, phonology, lexis, grammar and meaning in listening, speaking, reading and writing): they are contrastive „naive“ linguists.

Contrastive studies in science

The origins of CL as a regular linguistic procedure can be traced back to the middle of the 15th century, and the appearance of the first contrastive theories to the beginning of the 17th century (cf. Krzeszowski 1990). In the 19th century comparative investigations used an empirical, historical methodology to discover genetic links and language families; while in modern linguistics, J. Baudouin de Courtenay's comparative studies of Slavic and other Indo-European languages were continued by the Prague Circle, whose members also spoke about analytical comparison, or linguistic characterology, as a way of determining the characteristics of each language and gaining a deeper insight into their specific features. But it was not until after World War II that the discipline reached its heyday. From its beginnings till the 1970s, CL basically served practical pedagogical purposes in foreign and second language teaching/learning. It was mainly synchronic - in fact, some would exclusively use the term comparative linguistics to refer to the diachronic study of genetically related languages - interlingual or cross-linguistic (rather than intralingual), involved two different languages (rather than more than two languages/cultures), adopted a unidirectional perspective (taking one of the two languages as frame of reference, usually English), focused on differences, and was directed to foreign language teaching/learning.

Now, in a time when we speak about the world as a global village, when there exists a greater recognition of intra-/cross-linguistic/cultural variation, a growing awareness has emerged of the need for multilingual/multicultural and intra-linguistic/cultural competence and research. In addition, and as a side effect of this, there has been a change of focus in linguistic research, which has shifted away from speculative autonomous theorizing in the direction of a more dynamic and practical view of language processing and interaction.

This trend towards expansion was foreseen by Trager (1949), who suggested that CL should move beyond structurally-oriented views - predominant in the United States throughout the 50s and 60s - and extend its scope so as to describe the differences, as well as the similarities between two or more linguistic systems, both cross-linguistically and intralinguistically, and both synchronically and diachronically. Thus, on the diachronic level, issues regarding the phylogenetic development of languages are high on the agenda of CL, as well as the ontogenetic development of individual language acquisition claims that in order to account for an individual's communicative competence, the goal of inquiry in CL must also include discourse analysis, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics, a position also endorsed by Kühlwein (1990), among many others, who argues for the integration of structural and processual CL, the latter entailing the analysis of systems of knowledge and knowledge about structural systems. Likewise, Liebe-Harkort (1985), following Lado's (1957) position, adds that languages cannot be compared without comparing the cultures in which they are spoken. The same idea is insisted upon by Kühlwein (1990), who is particularly interested in culturally differentiated semiotic systems that serve as the starting point for social and language interaction. But in addition, he emphasizes the relevance of CL for foreign language teaching, given its growing recognition of performance errors, interlanguage, transfer (i.e. the interference of L1 in L2), and the interaction of cognition and discourse processes. An extreme form of this trend is represented by a recent view of contrastive literature that reduces the key task of CL to predicting and thereby obviating learners' errors, while this procedure is openly criticized by other authors such as Garrudo Carabias (1996).

Originally, all contrastive studies were pedagogically motivated and oriented. In recent years, however, distinctions have been drawn between "theoretical" and "applied" contrastive studies. According to Fisiak Theoretical CS give an exhaustive account of the differences and similarities between two or more languages, provide an adequate model for their comparison, determine how and which elements are comparable, thus defining such notions as congruence, equivalence, correspondence, etc. Applied CS are part of applied linguistics. Drawing on the findings of theoretical contrastive studies they provide a framework for the comparison of languages, selecting whatever information is necessary for a specific purpose, e. g. teaching, bilingual analysis, translating, etc. (Fisiak 1981: 9).

“Applied contrastive studies” are sufficiently distinct from “theoretical contrastive studies”, the former, as part of applied linguistics, especially when related to teaching, must necessarily depend not only on theoretical, descriptive, and comparative linguistics but also on other disciplines relevant to teaching; among them are psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, didactics, psychology of learning and teaching, and possibly other areas which may be important in ways difficult to evaluate at the present moment.

Finally, some comments are needed about terminology. Although the word “contrastive” is used most frequently with reference to cross-language comparisons of the sort described above, various authors have been trying to replace it with other terms, such as “cross-linguistic studies”, “confrontative studies”, and some even more esoteric terms, for example, “diaglossic grammar”, which enjoyed but a brief existence. The word “contrastive” is likely to outlive all the competing terms since it appears in titles of monographs and collections of papers on the subject (cf. James 1980; Fisiak 1984).

1.3: Contrastive Linguistics: Theoretical Background

Contrastive linguistics is dependent on theoretical linguistics since no exact and reliable exploration of facts can be conducted without a theoretical background, providing concepts, hypotheses, and theories which enable the investigator to describe the relevant facts and to account for them in terms of significant generalizations. But contrastive linguistics is also dependent on descriptive linguistics since no comparison of languages is possible without their prior description. In brief, then, contrastive linguistics is an area of linguistics in which a linguistic theory is applied to a comparative description of two or more languages, which need not be genetically or typologically related. The success of these comparisons is strictly dependent on the theory applied. As will be seen later, in extreme cases, the linguistic framework itself may preclude comparison. Therefore, contrastive linguistics imposes certain demands on the form and nature of the linguistic theory which is to be “applied” in such comparisons. In many less extreme situations the results of comparisons are strictly dependent on the theoretical framework adopted in the comparisons.

Contrastive linguistics is a subfield of linguistics under the guidance of linguistic philosophy, having its aim to determine language universals, large (bilingual or multilingual) text corpora

and computer search tools, which can open up new fronts of research in the fields of linguistic description (at all levels), computational linguistics, machine translation or information retrieval. Contrastive linguistics has often been linked to aspects of applied linguistics, e.g., to avoid interference errors in foreign-language learning, to assist interlingual transfer in the process of translating texts from one language into another, and to find lexical equivalents in the process of compiling bilingual dictionaries.

Polyglots (people in multicultural and multilingual environment) including second languages students, tourists, language teachers, translators, linguists, etc are the agents of contrastive studies. They are „naive“ or professional contrastive linguists.

Contrastive descriptions can occur at every level of linguistic structure: speech sounds (phonology), written symbols (graphology), word-formation (morphology), word meaning (lexicology), collocation (phraseology), sentence structure (syntax) and complete discourse (textology). Various techniques used in corpus linguistics have been shown to be relevant in intralingual and interlingual contrastive studies.

Contrastive linguistic studies can also be applied to the differential description of one or more varieties within a language, such as styles (contrastive rhetoric), dialects, registers or terminologies of technical genres.

2.4: Trends in Contrastive Studies

Contrastive studies in perspective of linguistic levels and discourse

When we carefully consider the different levels of linguistic description, most contrastive phonetic studies focus on articulatory and acoustic comparisons between two languages; while other investigations run the full gamut of contrastive phonological issues.

Moving on to lexical CL (LCL), this unit concentrates on cross-/intra-linguistic comparisons of “lexical items”, i.e. stable (multi)word pairings of form and meaning, considering grammatical, semantic and pragmatic information involved in the interdependence between lexical choice and contextual factors.

Contrastive Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Contrastive Pragmatics (CP) are two partially overlapping labels referring to contrastive research that goes beyond clause/sentence level to explore the (textual features of) language in use under the assumption that the relations between texts and contexts are mutually reflexive - texts not only reflect but also shape their contexts. Wider in scope, CDA covers such issues as: (1) discourse particles, (2) rhetorical relations and rhetorical transfer across languages/cultures (e.g. hedging and metadiscourse, generic conventions, author's and addressee's intentions, responsibility for textual clarity, etc.), in addition (3) genre studies and information packaging across languages and/or text-types, as well as their side effects in terms of coherence and cohesion. CP, in turn, has been committed since its beginnings to studying certain phenomena (often with a philosophical slant) such as: (1) conversation from a speech act/implicature point of view, (2) deixis, (3) politeness; and other pragmatically oriented aspects of speech behaviour. Nevertheless, it would appear that these studies have not yet provided a systematic account of the contrastive implications of face-to-face interactions.

Also close to or overlapping with CP and CDA, the field "Contrastive Sociolinguistics" (CSL) is similar in the ascendant. The latter claims that contrastive sociolinguistics should aim at the systematic comparison of sociolinguistic patterns and the development of a theory of language use, defining the field as "a systematic juxtaposition of linguistic items as they are distributed in the multi-dimensional (multi-parameter) social space". However, it would seem that this definition leaves out all the phenomena associated with the sociology of language in which principle should also concern CSL. For this reason current definitions and developments in the field argue for more comprehensive views, in which CSL is regarded as a branch of sociolinguistics and aims at providing comparison of cross-/intra-/multi-cultural sociopragmatic data along such research lines as multilingualism, language planning and language politics.

Now turning to the area of computational linguistics, efforts have been devoted to, for example, the creation of different types of electronic dictionaries or the design of computer tools for cross-linguistic research, especially in translation enquiries and machine translation, where the results have been disappointing, partly due to the limitations of computational resources, but mainly owing to the complexity entailed in translation processes.

Lastly, contrastive linguistics could be said to restrict its domain to just contrastive linguistic research, whether theoretical, focusing on a contrastive description of the languages/cultures involved, or practical/applied, intended to serve the needs of a particular application. The purpose of contrastive investigations is to compare (or contrast) linguistic and socio-cultural data across different languages (cross-linguistic/cultural perspective) or within individual languages (intra-linguistic/cultural perspective) in order to establish language-specific, typological and/or universal patterns, categories and features.

2.5 Models of contrastive studies

(1) Typology of contrastive studies and Ultimately Relevant *tertia comparationis* The taxonomy of contrastive studies is "based on the assumption that various kinds of contrastive studies can be distinguished in a strict relation to various *tertia comparationis* adopted and, consequently, to various kinds of equivalence" (Krzyszowski: 25). The first level includes text-bound and systematic contrastive studies.

Text-bound studies are comparisons of texts in two (or more) languages and analysis primary linguistic data found in texts in order to grasp and formulate generalizations about various aspects of the compared languages.

Systematic contrastive studies (*Contrastive Generative Grammar*) involve comparisons of constructions, systems, and rules.

Contrastive studies are based on statistical equivalence, translation equivalence, system (system equivalence), constructions (semanto-syntactic equivalence), rules (rule equivalence), phonological and lexical contrastive studies (substantial equivalence) and pragmatically equivalent texts.

Methods and procedure in contrastive studies

Methods

As a research, a contrastive study is a systematic process of inquiry consisting of three components: a question/problem or hypothesis, data, and analysis and interpretation of data. One of the well-known methods of research in linguistic studies, in teaching, learning foreign

languages and translation is contrastive method, which is used to compare (or contrast) linguistic and socio-cultural data across different languages (cross-linguistic/cultural perspective) or within individual languages (intra-linguistic/cultural perspective) in order to establish language-specific, typological and/or universal patterns, categories and features. This may be used facts taken from two or more languages. The term method refers to the way of theoretical research or practical implementation of something.

The basic techniques of contrastive studies are to establish basis of question/problem/project, contrastive interpretation. They are illustrated as in the followings.

(i) Establishing the basis of the study is to determine object of the contrast, its nature, types of similarities and differences. Basis of the study is established:

- One of the languages is chosen as the target, which deals with the aim(s) of the study or the language competence of the researcher. The other(s) is source one, that sometime is the researcher's native, sometime is social language.

- Determine contrastive features: base of contrasts is some phenomenon of the target language, its characteristics.

(ii) Contrastive interpretation is performed by parallel analysis. The important thing of a contrastive study is to define the principles and methods of interpretation of contrastive materials of two or more languages.

The contrastive studies can be based on form, on both form and function, and/or across functional domains.

(1) Based on form (signifier) A typical example of comparison based on form is provided by contrastive analyses in the domain of phonology.

Let us consider the consonant “t” of English and Vietnamese for illustration. Vietnamese unaspirated /t/ is written as “t” and aspirated /th/ is written as “th”, but English un-aspirated /t/ and aspirated /th/ are both written as “t”.

Un-aspirated /t/ and aspirated /th/ are both written as “t”.

English and Vietnamese are different in pitches. Vietnamese is a tonal language that has 6 tones. The way the voice goes up and down during the production of a vowel is encoded in the word. So 'ma' (ghost) can change into 'má' (mother), 'mà' (but), 'mả' (tomb), 'mã' (horse), or 'mạ' (rice seed). It depends on the pitch of the 'a'. In contrast, the English word 'man' can be said with a downward or upward pitch and this would not affect the meaning of the word or point to a different word.

(2) Based on form and function (signifier and signified) Contrastive studies that can be based on form and function are tense categories, the passive voice, prepositions, etc. in English and Vietnamese.

A typical example of the kind of the study is the questions with interrogative word „when/bao giờ“ dealt with various tenses in English and Vietnamese. - When will she leave ↔ - Bao giờ chị ấy đi - When will she leave ↔ - Khi nào chị ấy đi - Lúc nào chị ấy đi

(3) Across functional domains In specific cases, contrastive studies are based on „signified“, the generalizations across functional or conceptual domains, and the aim is to define their (dis)similarities in two languages in particular linguistic events. The examples of the domains are the „process of thinking“, the function of Beneficiary, the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY, etc. in English and some particular language.

2.6 Procedure for Analysis in Contrastive Linguistics

Actually contrastive studies are not always clearly distinguished among the numerous investigations of contrastive nature, which is often reflected in the terminology. Apparently, contrastive studies focus on specific features of the compared languages on the basis of a set of general linguistic phenomena.

Methodological framework for a contrastive study comprises the following main stages:

- 1) Collecting primary data against which hypotheses are to be tested. Primary data involve all instances of language use, utterances that speakers of the languages in question produce;
- 2) Establishing comparability criteria based on a perceived similarity of any kind;
- 3) Defining the nature of similarity and formulating the initial hypothesis;

4) Hypothesis testing: determining the conditions under which the initial hypothesis can be accepted or rejected. This process will normally include selection of a theoretical framework, selection of primary and additional data and use of corpora, appeal to one's own intuition or other bilingual informants, even the results of error analysis of nonnative usage;

5) Formulating the revised hypothesis;

6) Testing of the revised hypothesis, and so on.

Those contrastive formulations can be successfully tested by finding them in a corpus or checking the behaviour of speakers. The real task for the contrastivist is to specify the conditions under which the formulations are valid, which is essentially in traditional contrastive studies known as the contrastive rule. Depending on the comparability criterion, these conditions can be syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, stylistic, contextual, etc.

Three steps in “classical” contrastive studies

A classical contrastive analysis consists of three steps, not always clearly distinguishable in the analysis itself but always tacitly assumed: (1) description; (2) juxtaposition; (3) comparison, i. e., contrastive analysis in the strict sense.

Description

No comparison is possible without a prior description of the elements to be compared. Therefore, all contrastive studies must be founded on independent descriptions of the relevant items of the languages to be compared. The fundamental demand on such descriptions is that they should be made within the same theoretical framework. It will not do to describe one language in terms of transformational grammar and another language in terms of, say, relational grammar and then to attempt to compare them. The results of such descriptions will be incompatible and incomparable.

Not all linguistic models are equally well suited as foundations of cross-language comparisons. It seems that those models which make explicit references to universal categories are more suitable than those which are connected with language isolationism, inherent in many variants of structuralism.

Juxtaposition

This step is crucial in deciding what is to be compared with what. In classical contrastive studies, this step was based on intuitive judgments of competent bilingual informants, who determined the material to be compared. This sort of “bilingual competence”, i. e., the knowledge of two languages, enables one to make decisions about whether or not element X in one language is equivalent with element Y in another language.

Juxtapositions based on formal criteria alone, though naturally possible, are ill-conceived and must be discarded in contrastive studies.

In classical contrastive studies, the investigator himself often acts as the bilingual informant and decides what to compare on the basis of his own knowledge of the two languages. Unless more explicit criteria constraining the data are applied, such a procedure often leads to arbitrary decisions, which seriously undermine the rigour required in scientific investigations.

Comparison proper

We distinguish three basic areas of comparisons:

1. Comparisons of various equivalent systems across languages, such as pronouns, articles, verbs, and in phonology consonants, vowels, as well as subsystems, such as nasals, laterals, etc., depending on the degree of “delicacy” of the grammar.
2. Comparisons of equivalent constructions, for example, interrogative, relative, negative, nominal phrase, etc., and in phonology clusters, syllables, diphthongs, and various distributions of sounds.
3. Comparisons of equivalent rules (in those models where the concept of rule appears), for example, subject raising from the embedded sentence, adjective placement, interrogative inversion, passivization, etc., and in phonology assimilation, dissimilation, metathesis, etc.

In each area of comparison one of three possible situations may arise:

(a) $XL_i = XL_j$

when item X in L_i may be identical in some respects with an equivalent item in L_j .

(b) $XL_i \neq XL_j$ when item X in L_i , may be different in some respects from an equivalent item in L_j .

(c) $XL_i = \emptyset L_j$

when item X in L_i ; has no equivalent in L_j .

The words “in some respects” are very important. In cross-language comparisons, the relative character of identity must be remembered. Compared items can only be identical with respect to some selected property or properties which they share. For example, the systems of number of nouns in English, French, Polish, and many other European languages are in one respect identical, viz., they are all based on the dichotomy “oneness” vs. “more-than-oneness”. Other, more subtle distinctions can also be made by means of numerals and quantifiers, but the grammatical systems of those languages provide morphological means to express just this dichotomy. In many other languages, the system of number is in the same respect different.

In Vietnamese, nouns have no plural inflection at all, and any concept of plurality is expressed, if necessary, by means of quantifiers and numerals. In contrast with any language in which nouns are inflected for number, Vietnamese represents the third possibility, i. e., situation (c), distinguished above in which no equivalent form can be attested.

Beginning with comparisons of systems, we isolate a system in L_1 and, having described it, we look for an equivalent system in L_2 , providing there is an available suitable description of the system. Suppose we set about comparing the systems of personal pronouns in English with the equivalent system in Vietnamese. The English system consists of the following items:

I	we
you	you
he/she/it	they

The equivalent Vietnamese system looks as follows:

con/cháu/em/anh/chị/bố/mẹ/ông/bà...

chúng con/chúng cháu/ông bà/...

ông/mẹ/con/bạn/cậu

các bác/các chị/mọi người...

anh ấy/bố em/mẹ tôi/

họ/các chị ấy/các cháu...

Comparing the two systems, we immediately notice that in some respects they are identical; namely, in both, distinctions are made between the first, second, and third person pronouns. These grammatical distinctions are based on the semantic distinctions between speaker, hearer, and the rest of the world. Furthermore, in both, distinctions in the systems are made between singular and plural pronouns, although here we also notice some differences. Finally, we also note that in the third person singular, distinctions are made between masculine, feminine, and neuter pronouns. This is where the similarities between the two systems end. We then proceed to look for differences, which are also quite conspicuous. They involve the lack of distinctions in English between singular and plural second person pronoun you in contrast to the distinction made in Vietnamese between the singular con and the plural các con. Another difference consists in the distinction between virile and non-virile gender in the third person plural in Vietnamese, which contrasts with the lack of the parallel distinction in English.

From the methodological point of view, situation (c) described above, in which an item X in L_i has no equivalent in L_j presents a problem: if there is no equivalent to compare, is it still possible to compare? The problem arises most sharply in the comparison of systems. Such is the case with English articles, which cannot be juxtaposed with any single system in a number of languages. In order to see what articles can be compared with, we have to resort to the examination of construction equivalents to see through what other means, if any, the semantic content of articles is expressed. Without going into detail, let us assume that the basic semantic distinction that the English articles express is that between definiteness and indefiniteness. (In fact the problem is much more complex, but for the sake of illustration of the methodological problem in contrastive studies, we will take this simplified view of the semantics of English articles).

SUMMARY

Contrastive linguistics is a branch of linguistics under the guidance of linguistic philosophy, focusing on all the aspects of theoretical and applied linguistics, which aims at contrastive study of two or more languages in order to describe their differences and similarities, and explicate both of them in terms of the relationship between human languages and their spiritual activities for building and developing general linguistics, promoting the understanding between cultures and civilizations, including learning and teaching languages, translation, compiling bilingual dictionaries.

Agents of contrastive studies are polyglots (people in multicultural and multilingual environment) including second languages students, tourists, language teachers, translators, linguists.

Methods of contrastive linguistics include some techniques: (i) Contrastive studies can be between two (or more) languages including the target and the source(s), and can be parallel. (ii) The contrastive studies can be based on form, on both form and function, or across functional domains.

The methodological framework comprises the following main stages:

- * Collecting primary data against which hypotheses are to be tested. Primary data involve all instances of language use, utterances that speakers of the languages in question produce;
- * Establishing comparability criterion based on a perceived similarity of any kind;
- * Defining the nature of similarity and formulating the initial hypothesis;
- *Hypothesis testing: determining the conditions under which the initial hypothesis can be accepted or rejected. This process will normally include selection of a theoretical framework, selection of primary and additional data and use of corpora, appeal to one's own intuition or other bilingual informants, even the results of error analysis of non-native usage;
- * Formulating the revised hypothesis;
- * Testing of the revised hypothesis, and so on.

The framework consists of three steps, not always clearly distinguishable in the analysis itself but always tacitly assumed: i) description, ii) juxtaposition and iii) comparison.

Contrastive studies can be described at every level of linguistic structure: phonology, lexicology, grammar and discourse or text, and in the perspectives of interlingual, intralingual, individual and/or social contact, of linguistic contact or dynamics.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. How would you define Contrastive linguistics?
2. Discuss the multilingual/multicultural and intra-linguistic/cultural aspects that polyglots face in their communication.
3. What do you understand by methodology in contrastive studies?.
4. Discuss the procedure of contrastive studies.
5. How would you distinguish between learning/teaching second language(s) and translation.

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Unit 2: Some Fundamental questions on the Basic Assumptions and Hypotheses

Underlying Contrastive Analysis

What are the assumptions of contrastive analysis?

Its basic assumption is that certain errors in learner performance are the result of native language transfer. Error Analysis disproves the predictions of theory lying behind the comparison of native language and target language. It is an experimental technique for validating the theory of transfer.

What is the psychological hypothesis that is underlying contrastive analysis studies?

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis states that the structure of the learners' L1 affects the acquisition (the two terms acquisition/learning interchangeably) of their L2, in the sense that whenever there are similarities the L2 learning is facilitated, and whenever there are differences the learning process is difficult.

What are the strong and weak versions of contrastive analysis?

The strong version predicts greatest difficulty where the difficulty is apparently least, and the weak form predicts no difference in level of difficulty where there is a highly significant difference. These results point to an “interference” factor rather than just “not- knowing” (i.e., “padding”).

Why is the strong version of the contrastive analysis hypothesis criticised?

In its strongest formulation, the contrastive analysis hypothesis claimed that all the errors made in learning the L2 could be attributed to 'interference' by the L1. ... The prediction is based on the premise that similarities in languages create confusion for learners.

What are the shortcomings of contrastive analysis?

Contrastive analysis suffers from **under prediction and over prediction**. It cannot find out the errors which are committed by the learners due to overgeneralization. CA is inadequate to predict the interference problems of a language learner. No uniformity is evident in Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis.

What is the Predictive power of contrastive analysis?

Contrastive analysis yields two types of prediction:

- (i) second language learners will transfer their isomorphic L1 structures into the second language and thus produce correct target constructions, and
- (ii) they will transfer the anisomorphic structures of their mother tongue thus producing erroneous structures which reflect those of their mother tongue.

MODULE 3: Definition, Origin and Levels of Contrastive Analysis

Unit 1.

Definition and origin

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis states that the structure of the learners' L1 affects the acquisition (the two terms acquisition/learning interchangeably) of their L2, in the sense that whenever there are similarities the L2 learning is facilitated, and whenever there are differences the learning process is difficult. The term Contrastive Hypothesis implies the theory itself, while the term Contrastive Analysis implies the methodology. Hence, the term Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis implies both theory and methodology.

CAH came into existence in the 1960's. It originated from Lado's *Linguistics across Cultures*:

The plan of the book rests on the assumption that we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and the culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student (1957, p. VII).

CAH is based on the assumption that second language learners tend to transfer L1 features to L2 utterances as stated by Lado (1957):

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture (p. 2).

Accordingly, Ellis (1965) suggested that the psychological foundation of CAH is transfer theory. In fact, CA's assumption that L1 interferes with the learners' L2 acquisition/Learning leads us to the notion of transfer; be it positive or negative. Transfer refers to the application of native language knowledge when trying to speak the target language. Positive Transfer (facilitation) occurs when the structure of the two languages is the same; hence no errors will crop up. However, negative transfer (interference) occurs when the structure of the languages is different, and here errors will crop up and so the difficulties in tackling the target language. All in all, the more the similarities the more the learning process is facilitated, and the more the differences the more the learning process will be difficult. The aforementioned statement reflects linguists'

belief that a comparison of learners' L1 and L2 will reveal problematic areas for L2 students, as stated by Lado (1957):

In the comparison between native and foreign language lies the key to ease or difficulty in foreign language learning. Those elements that are similar to (the learner's) native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult. (p. 1-2)

The linguistic framework of the CAH is structuralism which assumes that language is a finite structure which can be compared with structures of other languages.

Additionally, Skinner's behavioural psychology is the basis of the CAH, specifically, the idea that learning is a habit formation process that takes place by reinforcement. Language acquisition consists of the acquisition of a set of habits; errors in second language were seen as the result of the first language habits interfering with the acquisition of the habits of the second.

Unit 3: Levels of Analysis

Contrastive analysis can be conducted at different levels of language, for example it can be carried out at the phonological level, grammatical level, as well as the lexical level.

Phonological Contrastive Analysis

When comparing the sound system of two languages, the contrastive analyst has to go through four basic steps. Firstly, he should draw up the phonemic inventory (describe and compare vowels and consonants) of the two languages under study. Secondly, the contrastive analyst should compare the phonemes in the two languages interlingually. At this stage, the contrastive analyst should apply the minimal pair test. Here is an example of the minimal pair test between the phonemes /k/ and /g/ in English and Arabic:

English: came /Keim/ vs. game /geim/

Arabic: /kelb/ ‘dog’ vs. /gelb/ ‘heart’

In Algerian Arabic /q/ and /g/ are phonemes and allophones:

/gern/ ‘horn’ vs. /qern/ ‘century’ â†’ phonemes

/gma:r/ ‘moon’ vs. /qma:r/ ‘moon’ â†’ allophones

Thirdly, the contrastive analyst should state the allophones of each phoneme of the two languages being compared. And fourthly, he should state the distribution restrictions of the phonemes and allophones of both languages.

Grammatical Contrastive Analysis

In a grammatical contrastive analysis, the contrastive analyst compares and contrasts between the grammatical systems of two languages. The comparison may take different forms, for example, in English; word order is used to differentiate between an affirmative sentence and an interrogative one: you are a teacher/are you a teacher? In Spanish, however, the same distinction is indicated via the use of intonation; while in Arabic, the same distinction is expressed through the addition of functional words like ‘Ù†Ù,,’ at the beginning of sentences. Another kind of grammatical contrastive analysis may investigate how a given linguistic category functions in two different languages, such as the case of adjectives in English and French. In English, adjectives tend to be pronominal, however, in French; they tend to be post nominal, for example: The narrow door – La porte étroite.

Lexical CA

Contrastive lexicology is carried out between the vocabulary system(s) of two languages. It is concerned with the way lexical items in one language are expressed in another language. This can be done through identifying both the semantic fields and the semantic properties in order to specify the divisions and sub-divisions of the lexicon. Lexical CA may result in complete, partial, or nil equivalence between languages.

Towards the Classification of Contrastive Studies

Contrastive studies can be divided into various subdivisions according to many criteria. Jacek Fisiak distinguished between theoretical contrastive studies and applied contrastive studies as stated in the following quote:

Theoretical CS give an exhaustive account of the differences and similarities between two or more languages provide an adequate model for their comparison, determine how and which elements are comparable, thus defining such notions as congruence, equivalence, correspondence, etc. Applied CS is part of applied linguistics. Drawing on the findings of theoretical contrastive studies they provide a framework for the comparison of languages, selecting whatever information is necessary for a specific purpose, e.g. teaching, bilingual analysis, translating, etc. (Fisiak, 1981, p. 9)

He claims that theoretical contrastive studies “do not investigate how a given category present in language A is represented in language B. Instead they look for the realization of a universal category X in both A and B” (Fisiak et al. 1978: 10). Whereas, applied contrastive studies “are preoccupied with the problem of how a universal category X, realized in language A as y, is rendered in language B”. (Fisiak et al., 1978, p. 10), as illustrated below:

X X

A B A(y) B(?)

Figure 2. a) Theoretical CAs b) Applied CAs

Hence, a theoretical contrastive study provides us with exhaustive descriptions of the languages being compared and contrasted. Also, it highlights the main points of convergences and divergences between the languages in question. A worth emphasizing point is that there are no claims to be made as to whether the results are applicable for other purposes or not. An advantage of theoretical contrastive analyses is that they make reference to the universal tertium comparationis X; whereas applied contrastive analyses do not make such a reference. Additionally, theoretical contrastive studies contribute to the establishment of language universals. Also, they are language independent and non-directional.

It should be mentioned that theoretical contrastive studies insist on the descriptive neutrality between the two languages under study, which is why attention should be drawn to some problems of terminology. In contrastive studies, terms like SL vs. TL, L1 vs. L2, and NL vs. FL occur and re-occur. However, the avoidance of these terms is highly required in theoretical contrastive studies, simply because the languages under study have an equal status.

Applied contrastive studies draw on the findings of theoretical contrastive studies. Their aim is not merely linguistic but also applicable to other domains like: language teaching, translation, bilingual education, etc. Traditionally speaking, applied contrastive studies have been concerned with setting out the possible problematic areas in the learners' target language, i.e., providing reliable prediction of the learners' difficulties (James, 1980, p. 181-7).

It should be mentioned that Applied contrastive studies devote more attention to surface representations since these are what the learners/translators have a more immediate access to and what language teaching has always been concerned with.

Despite the fact that applied contrastive studies draw on the findings of theoretical contrastive studies, still they do not deal only with differences but also they give importance to the similarities. Hence, the teacher should point out the similar forms, so that learners will not guess them, because very often, an element of a foreign language is similar to what one has in his own language.

Notice that the first contrastive studies were predominantly theoretical (Grandgent, 1982; Vietor, 1894; Passy, 1912; J Baudouin de Courtenay, 1912; Bogorodickij, 1915). Still, the applied part of CA was not completely neglected (e.g. Vietor, 1903), but it was of little importance. Also, the aim of developing pedagogical materials was more visible in the US, while Europe was more interested in the theoretical dimension.

The other classification of contrastive studies is based on the linguistic model applied when describing the languages involved. Since contrastive analysis can be carried out in different linguistic frameworks, there are the structural, transformational, stratificational, or systemic contrastive studies.

A third taxonomy is the one provided by Di Pietro (1971). He divided contrastive studies into Autonomous vs. Generalized and into Taxonomic vs. Operational. In autonomous contrastive studies, no reference is made to any universal which may be shared between the languages compared. Each language is described independently from the other. However, in generalized contrastive studies, reference is made to the shared features/structures which exist between the compared languages, not only because of their typological or genetic similarities but because of the universal grammar which underlie all human languages.

Concerning the Taxonomic vs. Operational contrastive studies, the former states the similarities and differences across languages, the latter seeks to formulate “a series of conversions performed on the source language in order to produce the forms of the goal language” (Di Pietro 1971, as cited in Krzeszowski, Tomasz, 1990, p. 24).

