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Contrastive Analysis: General-Linguistic or Pedagogical Relevance

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Contrastive analysis is considered today to be primarily an aid to teaching foreign languages. However, the theoretical basis for contrastive analysis and contrastive linguistics existed long before the terms themselves began to be used. Thus, several linguists have commented on the contribution of contrastive analysis to purely linguistic investigation. This article reviews a number of instances from the author's research to support this contention. Specific examples from various languages are discussed and it is shown that contrasting two linguistic systems can throw light on some subtle distinctions in each. In the conclusion the author argues for accepting contrastive analysis not only as a practical discipline but also as a theoretical approach to analyzing linguistic problems in general.

1.1. Contrastive analysis is today frequently considered part of applied linguistics. It began to be widely appreciated when it started to be used in the field of foreign language teaching. Its usefulness is then limited to pedagogical application, i.e. an applied discipline with value to teachers in the classroom. Therefore it is more and more often called applied contrastive analysis.

1.1.1. Its pedagogic value comes out: a) in new foundations for foreign language teaching materials, b) in the organization of the materials, i.e. the order in which individual items are taken up in teaching, and c) in the organization of the classes themselves, i.e. the amount of time to be devoted to introducing and reviewing various points.

1.1.2. The above aims can be achieved through CA whose findings are checked and completed by the findings of Error Analysis. The results of such organized research are: a) a new "contrastive grammar" of the target language based on the learner's mother tongue, b) various types of "pedagogical grammars" written on the basis of the contrastive grammar, c) a "compromise system" worked out for any two languages on the basis of error analysis, and d) "pedagogical materials" written using the results of both CA and EA.

1.2. The Yugoslav Serbo-Croatian-English Contrastive Project has always considered that the results of CA could and should have applied pedagogical as well as theoretical value. The general-linguistic value of CA can be brought out more clearly by considering how this subdiscipline differs from comparative linguistics and what its role is in linguistic description. Comparative linguistics seeks to determine genetic relationships between languages, whatever their present state; contrastive linguistics considers corresponding and conflicting features of two (or more) languages, whether these languages are genetically related or not.¹

1.3. If we want to illustrate and prove the general-linguistic value of CA, as opposed to its practical, applied, pedagogic value, the best way seems to be to look for such proof in the contrastive projects dealing with CA of two languages. Therefore I propose to review the work and results of various contrastive projects to see whether the general-linguistic value of CA is revealed there.²

¹ Filipović, R. (1967), "Contrastive Analysis of Serbo-Croatian and English", *Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagradiensia*, No. 23, pp. 5—27, Zagreb.

² HECAP (Budapest) = Hungarian — English Contrastive Analysis Project
PAKS (Stuttgart) = Projekt für angewandte kontrastive Sprachwissenschaft
PECAP (Poznań) = Polish — English Contrastive Analysis Project
RECAP (Bucharest) = Romanian — English Contrastive Analysis Project
YSCECP (Zagreb) = Yugoslav Serbo-Croatian — English Contrastive Project
ZESCCP (Zagreb) = Zagreb English — Serbo-Croatian Contrastive Project

1.4. But even before organised CA projects began their work, and before CA was established as a category of linguistic analysis and given its modern name — contrastive, the value of CA to general linguistics was recognised by, if we may say so, a precursor of CA.

1.5. Furthermore, in two rather distant periods (the nineteen twenties and the nineteen sixties) two linguists, V. Mathesius³ and Ch. A. Ferguson,⁴ made nearly identical statements about its general linguistic value. They both saw in CA (Mathesius called it “analytical comparison”) a very useful tool for reaching two of the fundamental goals of linguistics: the development of a general theory of human language behaviour and the development of appropriate procedures for the full characterization of any language.

1.6. According to Mathesius a “systematic analysis of any language can be achieved only on a strictly synchronic basis and with the aid of: 1) analytical comparison, i.e. comparison of languages of different types without regard to their genetic relations”, and 2) “a profitable use of foreign comparative material”. Ferguson believes that CA is basic to all linguistics since only by this approach can a general theory of language, ‘language universals’, be constructed and only with at least implicit CA can a particular language be fully characterized. Therefore Ferguson applies two kinds of CA in the study of child language development and finds out that the use of CA in this study may be of value for linguistics proper. He notes that in applying CA in this way he discovered a number of things about English which he had not known before.

1.7. Among various contrastive projects organised in the sixties there were two which directly distinguished two separate values of CA. They are the Yugoslav Serbo-Croatian-English contrastive project and the Poznań Polish-English contrastive project. Both projects from their very beginning recognized the general-linguistic and pedagogic values of CA.

³ Mathesius, V. (1936), “On Some Problems of the Systematic Analysis of Grammar”, *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague*, VI, pp. 95—107.

⁴ Ferguson, Ch. A. (1968), “Contrastive Analysis and Language Development”, *Monograph Series on Language and Linguistics*, No. 21, pp. 101—112, Georgetown University Press.

1.8. The methodology formulated for two contrastive projects in Zagreb, the YSCECP⁵ and the ZESCCP,⁶ and research carried out in both of them aimed at the binary approach to CA and the results achieved so far can well prove the purely linguistic contribution of CA.

1.9. The Polish-English contrastive project distinguishes two basic types of contrastive studies: 1) *General theoretical contrastive studies*; 2) *General applied contrastive studies*.⁷ The former are defined as a part of typological linguistics and are basic to *specific theoretical contrastive studies* which should produce "an exhaustive account of the differences and similarities between a given pair of languages". Zabrocki⁸ had examined "certain methodological aspects of STC studies" and come to two important conclusions which agree with the statements of Mathesius and Ferguson: a) STC studies differ from other branches of descriptive linguistics in that they do not aim at creating any original explanatory theory; b) the consideration of contrastive data might suggest solutions to various linguistic problems, especially those which cannot be solved without the analysis of evidence taken from more than one language.

2.1. In order to support my thesis concerning the general-linguistic value of CA I will give a brief survey of the findings of various contrastive projects. They produced an abundance of data which I have classified into five groups and for which I have compiled a table with the following headings:

⁵ Filipović, R. (1971), "Problems of Contrastive Work". (The Yugoslav Serbo-Croatian — English Contrastive Project so far), *SRAZ*, 29—32 pp. 19—54, Zagreb.

⁶ Filipović, R. (1975), "Objectives and Initial Results of the Zagreb English — Serbo-Croatian Contrastive Project", *Contrastive Analysis of English and Serbo-Croatian*, Vol. I, pp. 4—46, Zagreb.

⁷ Fisiak, J. (1971), "The Poznań Polish — English Contrastive Project", *Zagreb Conference on English Contrastive Projects, 7—9 December 1970. YSCECP: Studies 4*, pp. 87—96, Zagreb.

⁸ Zabrocki, T. (1976), "On the so-called 'theoretical contrastive studies'", *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics*, Vol. IV, pp. 97—110, Poznań.

⁹ HECAP = Hungarian — English Contrastive Analysis Project
PAKS = Projekt für angewandte kontrastive Sprachwissenschaft

PECAP = Polish — English Contrastive Analysis Project

RECAP = Romanian — English Contrastive Analysis Project

Table of Selected Contributions to General Linguistics by Contrastive Projects^a

I Universals	II Language Typology	III Formation of Models and Theory	IV Psycholinguistics	V Sociolinguistics
a) General approach PECAP 1.	k) General approach HECAP 1.	p) Universal model of language description PAKS 3.	v) Language acquisition RECAP 9.	z) Conversational strategy — address forms RECAP 8.
b) Universal model of language description PAKS 3.	l) Types of transformation RECAP 2.	q) Explanation and argument PECAP 8.	w) Language regularisation RECAP 7.	
c) Rule formation RECAP 7.	m) Scope of rule application PECAP 6.	r) Testing linguistic theory PECAP 1, 3, 5.	x) Learning characteristics RECAP 6.	
d) Ordering of rules PECAP 5.	n) Intra-linguistic typology and semantics PECAP 2.	s) Syntactic motivation of semantic categories PECAP 9.	y) Child language development PAKS 1.	
e) Semantic categories PECAP 9.	o) Classification of verbs PAKS 2.	t) Translation PECAP 2.		
f) Semantic structures RECAP 5.		u) Hierarchy of errors RECAP 1.		
g) Principles of maximum contrast — Priority of melody PAKS 1.				
h) Passive RECAP 4.				
i) Phonology PECAP 4.				
j) Intonation and emphasis PECAP 7.				

1. Universals,¹⁰ 2. Language Typology,¹¹ 3. Formation of Models and Theory,¹² 4. Psycholinguistics,¹³ 5. Sociolinguistics.¹⁴

¹⁰ I UNIVERSALS

- a) PECAP 1:
Sharwood Smith, M. (1973), "Contrastive studies in two perspectives", *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics*, Vol. II, pp. 5—10, Poznań.
- b) PAKS 3:
Ribbe, J. (1973), "Programmatische Überlegungen zur zweiten Arbeitsphase von PAKS", *PAKS, Arbeitsbericht Nr. 7*, pp. 1—13, Stuttgart.
- c) RECAP 7:
Slama-Cazacu, T. (1974), "Theoretical Interpretation and Methodological Consequences of Regularization", *Further Developments in Contrastive Studies*, pp. 5—36, Bucharest.
- d) PECAP 5:
Rubach, J. (1974), "Low Phonetic Voice Assimilation with Obstruents in Polish and English", *PSCL*, Vol. III, pp. 125—140, Poznań.
- e) PECAP 9:
Krzyszowski, T.P. (1974), *Contrastive Generative Grammar*, Theoretical Foundations, p. 41, Łódź.
- f) RECAP 5:
Mírza, C. (1972), "Investigating Semantic Structures of Languages (On Contrastive Analysis in the Semantic Structure of Languages)", *The Romanian — English Contrastive Analysis Project: Studies*, pp. 225—230, Bucharest.
- g) PAKS 1:
Kühlwein, W. (1969), "The Development of Vocabulary in a Czech Child — Reconsidered in the Light of Some Contrastive German Data", *PAKS, Arbeitsbericht Nr. 3/4*, pp. 84—92, Stuttgart.
- h) RECAP 4:
Dutescu, T. (1972), "The Contrastive Analysis of the 'Passive' in Romanian and English: Definitions and Methodology", *RECAP: Studies*, pp. 103—120, Bucharest.
- i) PECAP 4:
Gussmann, E. (1974), "How do phonological rules compare" *PSCL*, Vol. III, pp. 113—124, Poznań.
- j) PECAP 7:
Marek, B. (1974), "Intonation and emphasis in Polish and English" *PSCL*, Vol. III, pp. 159—166, Poznań.

¹¹ II LANGUAGE TYPOLOGY

- k) HECAP 1:
Hungarian English Contrastive Analysis Project, Publications: Volumes 1—7.
- l) PECAP 2:
Theban, L. (1971), "On the Theoretical Basis of Contrastive Syntax", *PECAP: Reports and Studies*, pp. 81—90, Poznań.
- m) PECAP 6:
Rubach, J. (1974), "On contextual modifications of plosives" *PSCL*, Vol. III, pp. 141—158, Poznań.
- n) PECAP 2:
Bańczerowski, J. (1973), "Some Contrastive Considerations about Semantics in the Communication Process", *PSCL*, Vol. II, pp. 11—32, Poznań.

- o) PAKS 2:
Wagner, K. H. (1970), "The Relevance of the Notion 'Deep Structure' to Contrastive Analysis", *PAKS, Arbeitsbericht Nr. 6*, pp. 2—42, Stuttgart.
- ¹³ III FORMATION OF MODELS AND THEORY
- p) PAKS 3:
Ribbe, J. (1973), "Programmatische Überlegungen zur zweiten Arbeitsphase von PAKS", *PAKS, Arbeitsbericht Nr. 7*, pp. 1—13, Stuttgart.
- q) PECAP 8:
Sysak-Boronska, M. G. (1974), "Some remarks on the spatio-relative system in English and Polish", *PSCL, Vol. III*, pp. 185—208, Poznań.
- r) PECAP 1, 3, 5:
Sharwood Smith, M. (1973), "Contrastive studies in two perspectives", *PSCL, Vol. II*, pp. 5—10, Poznań.
Ozga, J. (1973), "Stress in English and Polish — An introduction to a contrastive analysis", *PSCL, Vol. II*, pp. 123—136, Poznań.
Rubach, J. (1974), "Low Phonetic Voice Assimilation with Obstruents in Polish and English", *PSCL, Vol. III*, pp. 125—140, Poznań.
- s) PECAP 9:
Krzyszowski, T. P. (1974), *Contrastive Generative Grammar. Theoretical Foundations*, p. 41, Łódź.
- t) PECAP 2:
Bańcerowski, J. (1973), "Some Contrastive Considerations about Semantics in the Communication Process", *PSCL, Vol. II*, pp. 11—32, Poznań.
- u) RECAP 1:
Slama-Cazacu, T. and Dumitru Chițoran (1971) "Report of the Working group of 'Psycholinguistic Research' stage of: Establishing the hierarchical System of Errors", *RECAP: Reports and Studies*, pp. 31—48, Bucharest.
- ¹³ IV PSYCHOLINGUISTICS
- v) RECAP 9:
Slama-Cazacu, T. (1975) *The Psycholinguistic Approach in the Romanian — English Contrastive Analysis Project*, I, 199 pp., Bucharest.
- w) RECAP 7:
Slama-Cazacu, T. (1974), "Theoretical Interpretation and Methodological Consequences of Regularization", *Further Developments in Contrastive Studies*, pp. 5—36, Bucharest.
- x) RECAP 6:
Nemser, W. and Ileana Vincenz (1972). "The indeterminacy of semantic interference", *RECAP: Studies*, pp. 269—304, Bucharest.
- y) PAKS 1:
Kühlwein, W. (1969), "The Development of Vocabulary in a Czech Child — Reconsidered in the Light of Some Contrastive German Data", *PAKS, Arbeitsbericht Nr. 3/4*, pp. 84—92, Stuttgart.
- ¹⁴ V SOCIOLINGUISTICS
- z) RECAP 8:
Golopentia-Eretescu (1974), "Towards a Contrastive Analysis of Conversational Strategy", *Further Developments in Contrastive Studies*, pp. 79—132, Bucharest.
Loring Taylor, R. (1974), "On the Distribution of Address Forms" *Further Developments in Contrastive Studies*, pp. 133—144, Bucharest.

The table does not necessarily exhaust the possibilities of classifying the contributions of contrastive projects to general linguistics. Additional categories, no doubt, could be established and other arrangements are possible. Some contributions, however, are very general and some of them by their scope belong to more than one of our classifications.

2.2. To illustrate the purpose of the table let us look at the first column: *Universals*. The contributions within this column have been subdivided into several categories. For instance one article presents a general approach to universals, one article discusses a universal model of language description, two articles deal with the universal concept of rule ordering and rule formation and so on.

2.3. Two Zagreb contrastive projects offer similar examples. I will only mention one field of special interest of the YSCECP. This is the theory of translation to which we have made some contributions.¹⁵ In order to illustrate the procedure of CA as applied in examining a general linguistic feature I will analyse one topic from the ZESCCP, i.e. verbal aspect, as a specific example showing how contrasting two linguistic systems can throw light on some subtle distinction in each.

2.4. We start from the following assumptions:

- a) the verbal category of aspect is present in Slavic languages as a separate verbal category;
- b) in other non-Slavic languages such a separate verbal category may exist, or it may not;

¹⁵ Ivir, V. (1969), "Contrasting via Translation: Formal Correspondence vs. Translation Equivalence", *YSCECP: Studies 1*, pp. 13—25, Zagreb.

Spalatin, L. (1969), "Approach to Contrastive Analysis", *ib.*, pp. 26—35. Cf. also: Spalatin, "Formal Correspondence and Translation Equivalence in Contrastive Analysis", *ERIC*, ED-025 766, 7 pp.

Ivir, V. (1970), "Remarks on Contrastive Analysis and Translation" *YSCECP: Studies 2*, pp. 14—26, Zagreb.

Liston, J. L. (1970), "Formal and Semantic Considerations in Contrastive Analysis", *ib.*, pp. 27—49.

Ivir, V. (1976), "Contrastive Analysis at the Lexical Level", *Proceedings of the Fourth International Congress of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 2, pp. 151—163, Stuttgart.

Ivir, V. (1976), "The Semantics of False Pair Analysis", *2nd International Conference of English Contrastive Projects*, pp. 117—124, Bucharest.

Ivir, V. "Contrastive Linguistics and Translation", *YSCECP: Studies 7*, in press.

- c) Slavic speakers do not realize the systemic independence of this category before they begin formal study of the language, or before they come into: 1) direct contact with a non-Slavic language when they have to find an equivalent of aspect in it; 2) indirect contact observing mistakes made by non-Slavic speakers when learning or speaking a Slavic language.

2.5. The best way of illustrating the difference between languages having aspect as a category and those lacking it, would be a CA of their verbal system. For example, the English progressive can be called an aspect on the basis of its similarity to the S-C imperfective, while the perfect in English can be called an aspect only by greatly extending the definition of aspect, since the English perfect shows nothing or very little in common with the S-C perfective aspect.

2.6. If we look at English we can see a category expressed morphologically which can be called aspect. But if we look at two languages (E. and S-C.) and define aspect as relating to the totality of an action then it becomes difficult if not impossible to fit the English perfect, as expressing a past act with current relevance, into our definition of aspect based on the verbal system of Slavic languages. What emerges as an important consideration in comparing two unlike categories is the context which is itself difficult to compare. In our work in the ZESCCP we discovered that CA of the English progressive and S-C imperfective was quite straightforward, while a comparison of the English perfect and S-C perfective was very difficult on the basis of those two categories alone.

3. I do not wish to give the impression that contrastive methods are used in contrastive projects alone. A cursory review of the "Squibs and Discussion" section of *Linguistic Inquiry* revealed several instances in which a comparison of English data with those of another language lead to the refinement of a principle which had been based originally on English examples alone. I cite here just three cases without entering into the problem of the theoretical status of these principles:

1. For Postal's "Dragging Restrictions", the use of English and Japanese data;¹⁶

¹⁶ Haraguchi, S. (1973), "Dragging' Reconsidered", *Linguistic Inquiry*, Vol. IV, No. 1, (Winter 1973), pp. 95-97, Cambridge, Mass.

2. For the notion of "Identity of Constituents", the use of English and German examples;¹⁷

3. For Ross' concept of Bounding, the use of English and German data.¹⁸

Further support for my thesis can be found in various contributions to linguistic conferences, e.g. in the contrastive linguistics papers presented at SLE, AILA and FIPLV conferences.

4.1. Another field of linguistic research in which the general linguistic value of CA is clearly seen is the field of languages in contact or linguistic borrowing. One of the basic principles of the methodology of linguistic borrowing says that contacts between languages cannot be studied successfully unless both systems have been described equally well. This principle relates especially to those languages which are genetically different.

4.2. The method of investigation in the study of language contacts requires, apart from the above mentioned fixed description of the systems of two languages in contact (under investigation), an analysis of the systemic differences between the giving language and the receiving one.

4.3. CA by its definition meets both requirements and seems to be the most appropriate way of achieving such descriptions and of discovering these differences. Therefore when I was formulating the theory and method of my project "The English Element in European Languages"¹⁹ I put special stress on the applicability of the CA of the two languages in contact (English and L_x) in the analysis of the process of the

¹⁷ Eisenberg, Peter (1973), "A Note on 'Identity of Constituents'", *Linguistic Inquiry*, Vol. IV, No. 3 (Summer 1973), pp. 417-420, Cambridge, Mass.

¹⁸ Kohrt, M. (1975), "A Note on Bounding", *Linguistic Inquiry*, Vol. IV, Nr. 3 (Winter 1975), pp. 167-171, Cambridge, Mass.

¹⁹ Filipović, R. (1966), "The English Element in the Main European Languages", *SRAZ*, 21-22, pp. 103-112, Zagreb.

Filipović, R. (1972), "Some Problems in Studying the English Element in the Main European Languages", *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, IV, 1-2, pp. 141-158, Poznań and in *English Studies Today 5*. Papers read at the 8th conference of the International Association of University Professors of English held at Istanbul, August 1973, pp. 25-52.

Filipović, R. (1974), "A Contribution to the Method of Studying Anglicisms in European Languages", *SRAZ*, 37, pp. 135-148, Zagreb.

adaptation of a model into a replica on the phonological and the morphological levels. Our experience in the Project has proved so far that the results of the CA of the two systems in question are the best guides in evaluating linguistic changes taking place in the process of adaptation. This is why I propose to add this application of CA to those which concern its general-linguistic value.

5.1. While at the 19th Georgetown University's Annual Round Table (1968)²⁰ which discussed "Contrastive Linguistics and its Pedagogical Implications" it was possible to ask (Lotz) whether contrastive studies belong to pure linguistics or to applied linguistics,²¹ today it seems quite obvious that CA belongs to both. Since 1968 the former has been proved directly in various contrastive projects and the latter can be seen indirectly in a number of investigations based on the method and principles of CA.

5.2. The pedagogical value of CA has been challenged several times: doubts have been cast upon its value for language teaching (by transformationalists, psychologists and many others) and attempts have been made to restrict its application or even to classify it as a subcategory of error analysis.²²

The general-linguistic value of CA has never been tested or challenged; on the contrary, in this article its value has been revealed and, I hope, proved not only for applied linguistics investigations, but also for pure linguistics research.

²⁰ Alatis, J. E. (ed.), *Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics, 19th Annual Round Table, Contrastive Linguistics and Its Pedagogical Implications, Nr. 21*, Georgetown University Press 1968.

²¹ Lotz, J. (1968), "Introductory Remarks", *ib.*, pp. 9—10.

²² Svartvik, J. (1973), "Introduction", *Errata, Papers in Error Analysis*, p. 8, Lund.

KONTRASTIVNA ANALIZA: NJEZINA PRIMJENA U OPĆOJ LINGVISTICI I NASTAVI JEZIKA

Danas se često ukazuje na vrijednost i primjenu kontrastivne analize u nastavi stranih jezika, pa je se često naziva primijenjena kontrastivna analiza. Kombinirana s analizom pogrešaka kontrastivna analiza daje vrijedne rezultate koji se mogu uspješno primijeniti u nastavi stranih jezika. Neposredni rezultati istraživanja baziranog na kontrastivnoj analizi jesu: a) »Kontrastivna gramatika« stranog jezika osnovana na sistemu učenikovog materinskoga jezika; b) Različiti tipovi »pedagoških gramatika« koje se pišu na osnovi kontrastivne gramatike; c) »Kompromisni sistem« izgrađen na analizi pogrešaka i d) »Pedagoški-nastavni materijali« bazirani na kontrastivnoj analizi i analizi pogrešaka.

Autor ističe da kontrastivna analiza ima svoju vrijednost i primjenu i u općoj lingvistici. Analiza rezultata mnogih kontrastivnih projekata potvrđuje autorovu tvrdnju, a citirani primjeri dobro je ilustriraju. Autor pokazuje da se u nekim slučajevima upravo s pomoću kontrastiranja dvaju jezičnih sistema može ukazati na neke osobine tih sistema koje bi bez toga ostale nezapažene i neobrađene. Stoga autor zaključuje da kontrastivna analiza ima vrijednu primjenu i u općoj lingvistici.