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CONTRASTIVE TYPOLOGY OF TOUGH-MOVEMENT CONSTRUCTIONS

After a period of stagnation of contrastive studies, there has recently been a revival of interest in contrastive research which can be related, among other factors, to a tendency towards a cross-fertilization of contrastive linguistics and typological linguistics. This emerging typological-contrastive approach combines the strength of both disciplines, i.e. concentrates on fewer languages and provides an in-depth study of a given phenomenon while retaining the typological methodology and pursuing more general objectives. The present paper demonstrates how this contrastive-typological approach may complement and refine the results of the classical contrastive analysis by taking a look at tough-movement constructions in English and its correspondents in German, Croatian and Hungarian.

1. On contrastive typology

It is common knowledge that there was a period of time when contrastive analysis fell into disrepute and was considered to be surpassed for good. This is due not only to the fact that the hopes that contrastive analysis would prove a cure-all for problems encountered in language teaching were soon shattered but also to the failure of contrastive analysis on a more general descriptive level.

They were only too literally contrastive analyses, i.e. they simply took apart their subject matter, resulting in a series of more or less isolated contrastive statements. If any sort of synthesis was attempted at all, it invariably boiled down to some pedagogically-oriented predictions, a considerable amount of which, if not actually falsified by error analyses, turned out to be either trivial or irrelevant for second/foreign language teaching. What was lacking in many of these classical

contrastive undertakings is some sort of unifying descriptive and explanatory account that would justify contrastive approach and the choice of a particular area as a real linguistic problem.

There has recently been a revival of interest in contrastive studies. The responsibility for this new development can hardly be ascribed to a single factor, but it is certainly related to a tendency towards a cross-fertilization of contrastive linguistics and typological linguistics.

Contrastive linguistics is typically concerned with a detailed comparison of two languages. Language typology, on the other hand, devotes itself to an investigation of a broader range of facts from a number of languages, and normally cannot go into details.

It is, however, as Comrie (1986:1155ff) points out, possible to envisage a compromise approach, combining the strength of both approaches, i.e. concentrating on fewer languages and providing an in-depth study of a given phenomenon while retaining the typological methodology and pursuing more general objectives. This emerging typological-contrastive approach has a number of advantages, as demonstrated in a number of studies by Hawkins (1986a and b) and Comrie (1986).

It enables us to relate a number of logically independent similarities and differences to a more general framework unifying the observed facts. Contrasts, i.e. both similarities and differences, are interpreted holistically in two ways. Firstly, contrastive facts observed within an individual language may be related to other facts in that same language, so as to show how various subcomponents interact in shaping the system. Secondly, contrastive facts can be related to a number of facts from the other language(s). It is also possible to focus first on plotting contrastive facts against each other on various levels, and then to point out how they overlap cross-linguistically. Comparison can thus proceed in any direction we find rewarding, and in the end present its results from a bird's eye point of view, i.e. adirectionally, enabling us to see the general pattern of the contrastive wood, while still paying due attention to individual contrastive trees.

Unlike the classical contrastive analysis, contrastive typological approach enables a synthesis. This means that all the facts are ultimately related to each other and placed in a wider perspective. This in turn provides a double kind of motivation Firstly, the phenomenon that was studied is motivated, i. e. shown to be a relevant topic. Secondly, the whole picture that results in the end makes sense, i. e. it is motivated insofar as various facts may fall into place like pieces of a mosaic or a puzzle, showing language to be underlyingly a flexible but coherent and orderly system. On an even higher level, contrastive enterprise itself is motivated, i. e. vindicated as a non-trivial type of research.

The tenet of the present paper is to demonstrate how the contrastive typological approach may complement and refine the results of the classical contrastive analysis by taking a look at one construction type in English and its correspondents in German, Croatian and Hungarian.

On tough-movement constructions

English has a number of constructions exhibiting an anomalous semantic relationship between predicates and their arguments. One of them, the so-called *tough-movement* construction, is illustrated in (1–2):

(1) *The Zambesi had been hard enough to sail into at all,...*

(2) *This paper is heaven to work on.*

Tough-movement or Object-Raising is just one among several raising transformations that have been postulated within the paradigm of Transformational- -Generative Grammar. This putative operation we are concerned with here was claimed to raise the object of the embedded clause and promote it into the subject of the matrix clause. The term 'object' is used here quite liberally, it is extended to cover prepositional complements subcategorized by certain verbs as well.

This construction was a favourite testing ground for successive models developed within the generative framework at its heyday. But this construction is equally suitable to vindicating contrastive enterprise today by demonstrating in a realistic way its potential, virtues and drawbacks. A comparison of this construction with its counterparts in other languages can, broadly speaking, be organized either with formal aspects as the guiding principle, or, on the other hand, start from a functional point of view and then consider its formal aspects.

Any classical contrastive analysis would no doubt establish the fact that the construction is quite spread in English, while it leads very dubious existence in German, and particularly in Croatian, Hungarian apparently exhibiting no such construction at all.

The list of adjectival and nominal predicates found to be partaking of this construction in English comprises among others:

(3) a. *amusing, awkward, bad, beautiful, boring, convenient, cumbersome, dangerous, desirable, difficult, easy, entertaining, expensive, fine, fragrant, good, graceful, hard, impossible, instructive, interesting, loathsome, marvelous, melodious, nice, odd, painful, precious, pretty, rare, safe, sensible, simple, slippery, soft, tasty, tedious, thin, tough, tricky, unhealthy, useless;*
b. *angel, bastard, bitch, delight, fun, heaven, joy, pigsty, pleasure, prince.*

A preliminary comparison with German, Croatian and Hungarian

According to an early but detailed discussion of *tough*-movement counterparts in German in König (1971: 88f), the number of German adjectives found to enter this construction is considerably lower than in English. The list comprises *leicht, einfach, schwer, schwierig* and *interessant*:

(4) *Die Frage ist leicht zu beantworten.*

(5) *Das Buch ist interessant zu lesen.*

(6) **Linguistik ist langweilig zu studieren.*

It has often been claimed that the closest Croatian can come to *tough*-movement is a construction with a preposition *za* followed by a deverbal noun:

(7) *Knjiga je laka za čitanje.*

There is, however, in colloquial Croatian one more, structurally much closer, correspondent where the matrix subject is in the nominative case, and the predicative adjective that agrees in gender and number with the subject is followed by a prepositional infinitive (introduced by *za*):

(8) *? Knjiga je laka za čitati.*

(9) *? Vijest je ugodna za čuti.*

Examples such as (10) make it clear that Hungarian has no *tough*-movement construction, properly speaking:

(10) a. *Könnyű volt ezt   a   könyvet   olvasni.*
        easy   was this-ACC DEF book-ACC read-INF
        'It was easy to read this book'

 b. **Ez a   könyv könnyű volt olvasni.*
        this DEF book easy   was read-INF
        'The book was easy to read'

 c. *Ezt   a   könyvet   könnyű volt olvasni.*
        This-ACC DEF book-ACC easy   was read-INF

A second point of divergence, noticed first by König (1971) and Ebert (1975) for English and German, but equally conspicuous in case English is compared with Croatian, concerns the fact that in English the phenomenon is not restricted only to direct objects of transitive verbs. Even with the few items functioning elsewhere as *tough*-movement-triggers in German, or in Croatian, any construction where the putatively raised constituent does not function as the semantic direct object of the embedded verb is violently ungrammatical:

(11) a. *It is relatively easy to convince him.*

 b. *He is relatively easy to convince.*

(12) a. *Es ist verhältnsmäßig leicht, ihn zu überzeugen.*

 b. *Er ist verhältnsmäßig leicht zu überzeugen.*

(13) a. *Teško je čitati knjigu.*

   b. *Knjiga je teška za čitati.*

(14) a. *It is not easy to live with her.*

   b. *She is not easy to live with.*

(15) a. *Es ist nicht einfach, mit ihr zu leben.*

   b. **Sie ist nicht einfach zu leben mit.*

(16) a. *Lako je našaliti se s time.*

   b. **To je lako za našaliti se sa.*

Motivating the contrasts and similarities

A classical contrastive analysis would probably satisfy itself with such a constatation and not probe the issue further. Taking, however, a broader perspective on the nature of basic grammatical relations such as subject and object in the four languages respectively and then cross-linguistically, it is easy to see that there emerges a pattern. The relations between predicates and their arguments are most transparently coded in Hungarian and Croatian, most opaquely in English (cf. Brdar 1994: ch. 2). Consequently, both subjects and objects are semantically more diverse in English than in German, and far more diverse in English or Hungarian. English has not only patient and beneficiary/recipient objects but also instrumental, locative, associative, eventive objects, etc. Consider the following sets of data illustrating the semantic diversity of objects in English:

(17) a. *John baked Mary a cake.*

   b. *John handed Mary the book.*

   c. *The girl sat twiddling (with) her hair.*

   d. *He swam (across) the Channel.*

   e. *Boston played (against) Chicago yesterday.*

   f. *Mary divorced Peter last year.*

   g. *Montag grinned the fierce grin of all men singed and driven back by flame.*

The other three languages may of course exhibit such constructions as well, but not all of them, there are only infrequently two alternative ways of rendering the same state of affairs (e.g. *play* vs *play against*, *spielen mit/gegen/*ACC*, *igrati protiv nekoga / s nekim*). Instead of derived, secondary direct objects, German, and particularly Croatian and Hungarian, make use of secondary, derived predicates with different valency frames, one of them often being derived from the other by means of an affix (*plivati* vs *preplivati*). This is in keeping with the generally observable tendency in inflectionally richer languages to code semantic relationship between predicates and their arguments more transparently:

(18) a. *Das Mädchen saß und spielte *(mit) ihrem Haar.*
     b. *Marija se razvela od Petra.*

Thirdly, a classical contrastive analysis would certainly establish the fact that the correspondents of English *tough*-movement constructions in the other three languages are often mono–clausal. Performing a classical horizontal contrastive analysis of a single pair of languages, we would not be able to reach a more interesting generalization concerning mono–clausal correspondents, which in a further step may be linked with the above observed lexicalization patterns.

In addition to making use of *tough*-movement-like constructions such as (19) a., German may also resort to constructions like (19) b.:

(19) a. *Die Frage ist leicht zu beantworten.*
     b. *Die Frage läßt sich leicht beantworten.*

Note that in (19) b. we have a complex predicate of the *lassen*-type with a reflexive pronoun and *leicht* leicht 'lowered' to the adverb status. The whole construction is somewhere on the boundary between a biclausal and a monoclausal one. German often makes use of the same lexicalization strategy in the area that is in English lexicalized by means of middle/ergative verbs.

This strategy is also found in Croatian:

(20) a. *Na pitanje se može lako odgovoriti.*
     b. *Na pitanje se lako odgovara.*

Again, we find a pseudo–reflexive construction with the correspondent of easy 'lowered' to the adverb status. The whole is clearly monoclausal. Another monoclausal correspondent in Croatian is the Croatian construction in which the correspondent of *easy* is an adjective followed by a prepositional phrase containing a deverbal noun, i. e. the counterpart of the English embedded infinitive is nominalized:

(21) *Knjiga je laka za čitanje.*

There is in Hungarian too a construction that could be used to shift the semantic focus of the predicate in a way comparable to German 'modal infinitives', or pseudo–reflexive constructions in both German and Croatian. This can be achieved by means of a string of suffixes. In the first step the 'modal suffix' *-hat/-het* is added to the verbal stem. Hungarian being a rather strict vowel harmony language, the actual allomorph to be used depends on the quality of the vowel in the verb stem, i. e. whether the stem is 'light' or 'dark'. Finally, the transpositional suffix *-ő/-ó*, the choice again depending on the predominant vowel, is added to the complex verbal form. The resulting complex form is comparable to English adjectives in *-able/-ible*, German adjectives in *-bar*, or Croatian adjectives in *-(lj)iv*. This process is extremely productive in Hungarian, i. e. it is practically unrestricted as far as the verb takes an accusative object. We thus have examples like:

(22) *A   lenyelhető   formában »csomagolt«...*
DEF swallow-able form-in   packaged

(23) *Es amint az sejthető   volt,...*
and as   it surmise-able was

These forms seem to be adjectival, they occupy both attributive and predicative position and take inflections for comparatives and superlatives, but they are nevertheless in traditional handbooks of Hungarian called *ható/hető-igek* 'ható/ hető verbs'. It will have been noted that in the above examples the NPs that are semantically objects of the verbs that serve as the basis for the complex verbo- -adjective are coded in the nominative case. These complex forms can also appear as correspondents of infinitives in TM-structures in Hungarian: their semantic object functions as subject and is coded in the nominative, while the Hungarian counterpart of the English predicative adjective appears as an adverb modifying the action described by the verbo-adjective. As in Croatian, it is quite clear that they are adverbs since they are marked by the adverb-deriving suffix *-(V)n.*

(24) *hogy a   »Kanada« szó   könnyen összetéveszthető*
that DEF Canada   word easily   confusable

a   huron-indián ösnyelvkincs   »kamad« szavával...
DEF Huron Indian original language kamad   word-with

»that the word *Kanada* is easy to confuse with the Huron ancient word kamad«

We are now able to formulate three generalizations, two involving German, Croatian and Hungarian, and one involving Croatian and Hungarian.

First, the three language quite often exhibit adverbial disguise for the counterparts of English *tough* adjectives, which is in accordance with what may be observed with correspondents of English subject-to-subject-raising constructions. Cf. the following set of examples:

(25) *He is certain to come.*

(26) *Er wird sicher kommen.*

(27) *Sigurno će doći.*

(28) *Biztos fog jönni.*

Secondly, we observe a systematic reluctance in German, Croatian and Hungarian to use, morphologically speaking, one and the same predicate with different valency frames. They rather modify the predicate somehow, either by making it (pseudo)-reflexive, or by using derivational morphology. This can be observed at a general level, almost regardless which area of morphosyntax we contrast.

Finally, Croatian and Hungarian, in making their correspondents monoclausal, often choose to make the correspondents of English infinitives quite non-finite, i. e. either use a nominalization or adjectivalization. This is again in keeping with

a generally observable tendency in these two languages to go to extremes when replacing infinitival complements either by very finite means (dependent clauses) or by very non-finite means, particularly when argument structures containing objects are involved.

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Kontrastivna tipologija konstrukcija s podizanjem objekta

Sažetak

U prilogu se ukazuje na čimbenike i okolnosti koje su dovele do toga da kontrastivna istraživanja nakon duljeg perioda stagnacije, posljednjih godina u kombinaciji s tipološkim ponovo ožive. Na primjeru engleskih konstrukcija s podizanjem objekta i njihovih ekvivalenata u njemačkom, hrvatskom i mađarskom pokazuje se prednosti takvog pristupa koji omogućuje motiviranje barem dijela opaženih međujezičnih razlika i sličnosti.