CHAPTER I: PRINCIPLES AND TRENDS OF CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS

1.1. Contrastive studies in the practice and science

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)

1.1.1. 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 raison d'etre 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.

(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) 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.

1.1.2. **Contrastive studies in practical daily 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.

1.1.3. **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).

1.1.4. Contrastive linguistics

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.

1.2. **Trends of contrastive studies**

1.2.1. **Contrastive studies in perspective of linguistic levels and discourse**

Now considering 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 research 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.

On the other hand, exponents of bilingual/multilingual grammars or bilingual/multilingual morphosyntactic aspects are presented in many contrastive studies.

Work has also mushroomed regarding the nature of semantic diversity among the planet’s languages and the implications of semantic diversity for general linguistic theory. Here the big issue seems to be the testing of the Semantic Universals Hypothesis (SUH), that is, the question whether the semantic systems of the world’s natural languages share (at least) some common properties. Broadly, while the first authors focus on contrastive sentential semantics, Wierzbicka’s group moves a step beyond and argues for the existence of a “universal semantic common measure” founded on empirically established universal human concepts and their universal combinatory properties which - they say - can provide an effective basis for CL.

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.

1.2.2. 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" (Krzeszowski: 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. The seven types of equivalence and the related tertia comparationis
characterizing various types of contrastive studies are presented in Figure 1.1. Each of the seven types of contrastive studies has its own hierarchy of Immediately Relevant *tertia comparationis*, which have to be stated and described relative to the Ultimately Relevant *tertium comparationis* and to the factual data that undergo comparisons.

*Figure 1.1: Typology of contrastive studies (Adapted from Krzeskowski: 34)*

We do not distinguish between pedagogically oriented and pure contrastive studies since we believe that this distinction is irrelevant. Whether directional or adirectional, contrastive studies may yield results relevant to teaching or other fields of application, but the potential implementations of contrastive studies do not, as a matter of principle, determine the course and the direction of the analysis. Modern studies of language and of particular languages (especially the recently flourishing cognitive approaches) offer a very broad perspective within which language is described, not as a set of semanto-syntactic objects called sentences - the area roughly corresponding to items (4) and (5) in Fig. 1.1 - but as a symbolic organization entrenched in human experience and human society. Conducted in this broad perspective, contrastive studies yield results which are naturally relevant to teaching and other practical domains.
Contrastive studies in intralingual and interlingual perspectives

Contrastive studies can be conducted intralingually or interlingually, on a synchronic or diachronic basis, and they can be distinguished: synchronic intralingual and diachronic intralingual comparison, synchronic interlingual and diachronic interlingual comparison, which could be illustrated in Figure 1.2.

*Figure 1.2: Contrastive studies in synchronic and diachronic perspectives*

*(Adapted from Jia Hongwei & Tian Jiafeng: 2271)*

Contrastive Analysis

(intralingual comparison) —> interlingual comparison

Diachronic intralingual comparison refers to the comparison of constituents on the levels of sound (phonetic and phonological), words (lexical), structure (grammatical) and meaning within a language through history to determine what changes of the given constituents occurred, which is in the area of philology, mainly adopted by linguists in linguistic history, etymology, etc. while synchronic intralingual comparison refers to the comparison of constituents on the same levels within a particular language during a given period.

Diachronic interlingual comparison is so-called comparative historical linguistics, which mainly focused on comparing historically related forms (especially sound) in different languages to reconstruct the proto-language while synchronic interlingual comparison is developed lately and most complicated, which focuses on comparing two or more languages or dialects to determine the differences and similarities and to find out the implications of the differences and similarities for language universals, linguistic typology, language teaching and other language-related areas as mentioned above.

Contrastive (both intralingual and interlingual) 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).

(3) Composite contrastive model

According to Кашкин (2007) the universal elements in linguistic systems include individual and social (i / s), intralingual and interlingual (e / d), synchronic and diachronic contrasts.

The pair of individual and social (i / s) contrasts is associated with linguistic system inside the mind of an individual, idiolect, and with linguistic system of communities, groups of individuals and integral individual.

The pair of intralingual and interlingual (e / d) contrasts is connected with the possibility to combine the two systems into a class and/or a domain, which, of course, is relative and depends on the scope of the study.

Language contact occurs when two or more languages or varieties interact. When speakers of different languages interact closely, it is typical for their languages to influence each other. Language contact occurs in a variety of phenomena, including language convergence, borrowing, and relexification. The most common products are pidgins, creoles, code-switching, and mixed languages. Language contact can also lead to the development of new languages, and the change as a result of contact is often one-sided.

Language contact leads to improvement social and individual language competence and the (competence of) language becomes dynamic. This is the case of learning second language.

All the above contrastive linguistic models can be taken at every level of linguistic structure: speech sounds, written symbols, word-formation, word meaning, collocation, sentence structure and complete discourse and occur in learning and teaching foreign-language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing and thinking).

1.3. Methods and procedure in contrastive studies

1.3.1. 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 un-aspirated /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), ‘má’ (tomb), ‘mâ’ (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

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<td>- When did she leave ↔</td>
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Adjunct/WH- finite actor process

In English interrogative sentences, WHEN (Adjunct) is at the begining of the sentences in various tenses, and the first place after it is the finite. But in Vietnames, the structure of the questions is the same as the structure of a statement, and interrogative words (BAO GIỜ, LÚC NÀO, KHI NÀO) can occur at the beginning or at the end of the sentences. Their positions depend on their temporal functions in the sentences.

(3) Across functional domains

In specific cases, contrastive studies are based on ‘signified’, the generalizations across functional or conceptual domains, and the aims is 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.

1.3.2. Procedure

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 non-native 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.

1.4. 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.

1.4.1. 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.

1.4.2. 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.

1.4.3. 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) \( X_{Li} = X_{Lj} \)

when item \( X \) in \( L_i \); may be identical in some respects with an equivalent item in \( L_j \).

(b) \( X_{Li} \neq X_{Lj} \) when item \( X \) in \( L_i \), may be different in some respects from an equivalent item in \( L_j \).

(c) \( X_{Li} = \emptyset_{Lj} \)

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:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{I} & \text{we} \\
\text{you} & \text{you} \\
\text{he/she/it} & \text{they}
\end{array}
\]
The equivalent Vietnamese system looks as follows:

con/cháu/em/anh/chị/bố/me/ông/bà...  cũng con/chúng cháu/ông bà/...

ông/me/con/bạn/cậu  các bác/các chị/mỗi người...

anh ấy/bố em/me 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 L₁; has no equivalent in L₂ 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**

| 1. | 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.

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

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Contrastive linguistics definition.
2. Multilingual/multicultural and intra-linguistic/cultural aspects that polyglots face in their communication.
3. Methodology in contrastive studies.
4. Procedure of contrastive studies.
5. Your own contrasts in learning, teaching second language(s) and translation.

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