





Microlinguistic Contrastive Analysis


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This chapter and Chapter five are concentrating on the **practical matter** of executing CAs. In this chapter (4) focus on the **traditional practice** of microlinguistic CAs on the three levels of **phonology, lexis, and Grammar**. Microlinguistic is studied well but it is still controversial area while the new direction in macrolinguistic analysis has risks. In spite of that, the writer tries to explore them equally.



James describes the principle of CA, where he says, **analysing the whole language is neither feasible nor desirable because linguistics is not yet in position to describe a language as a whole**. There are tries to make globally such as the Chicago series. James supports the idea of analysing two selected languages as a whole rather than global attempt.



There was a tradition Constructivist view, especially those working within the **Audiolingual movement** of foreign-language pedagogy, attempted to execute CAs which would serve the principles of selection and grading advocated by that movement: they singled out areas of L1: L2 contrast which would present major learning obstacles in the early stages, but would become less difficult as the learner's knowledge of the L2 increased.



In a nut shell their assumption is **like** "... learn a new language...one bit at a time".

But this view is criticized by Newmark , Halliday, McIntosh , Strevens and Reibel.



There are two general principles to executing a CA which are (1) **description** and (2) **comparison**.

Corder (1973) sees another one in Applied Linguistics which is 'order of application'. Also Fries (1945) advocates those two principals, where he puts

*" ... the most effective materials (for teaching an L2) are those based upon a **scientific description** of the language to be learned, **carefully compared** with a parallel description of the native language of the learner. "*



James suggest that, requirement of ' parallel description ' should be described through the same model of description.

Why, we may ask, must the two descriptions be framed in the same model? Because the models can describe certain features of language more successfully than other models.


(we have three models ; **Structural** or ' **Taxonomic** ' Model , **Contrastive Generative Grammar**, and **Case Grammars**).

So why it should not be in different models? Because the description is going to be data-induced contrasts rather than description-induced.



That's why Harries (1963) said ;


"since any differences between these descriptions will not be due to differences in method used by the linguists, but to differences in how the language data responded to identical methods of arrangement".




Another reason supports the question (why should we use the same models?)

because there are **models can describe one language feature better than others**, as we know human languages fall into several types according to which **grammatical, phonological or lexical features** for example; that TGG, a product of American Linguistics, describes English better than it describes other languages


another example' that Applicative Generative grammar, a model devised by the Soviet linguist Shaumjan (1965) is eminently better suited to describe Russian.



In addition to the reasons above of using the same model , there are good theoretical reasons for using the same model for yielding the descriptions of L1 and L2 but on the other hand there are equally cogent practical reasons why this is undesirable. So we have two ways to solve this dilemmas.

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- (1)- Describe L1 and L2. data independently and
 - (2) abandon the requirement that the two descriptions need to be equally exhaustive.

Sciarone (1970) suggests that less attention needs to be paid to the L1 than to the L2. since it is the latter which must be learnt also Slama Cazacu has the same suggestion.



The second step in CA is **the comparison** ; in this approach , We compare '**types**' rather than '**tokens**' , we do not compare these two sentences as strings of sound or graphic substance, but their structures.



Grammatical CA

James said that grammatical analysis concerns itself with types rather than with their physical manifestations or to-kens. In other words, the grammarian studies the functional patterning of classes of linguistic units, not individual words and morphemes as physical entities.

Comparison steps;

STEP 1: Assemble the data exhibiting the relevant systems in each language.

STEP 2: For each language, state the realisations of each grammatical category pertinent to the CA being done.

STEP 3; Supplement the data: since our interest has been aroused for the ways


(in which feminine head nouns in such sentences in Portuguese influence the forms of the article and adjective, we add two further sentences to our corpus, together with their translation equivalents).

STEP 4: Formulate the contrasts which have been identified by the analyses of Steps 2 and 3.



4.3 Phonological CA

4.3. 1 Contrastive Phonetics and Phonology




The phonetician is concerned with three types of physical reality when he studies the sounds of language:

i) "He is interested in the way in which the **air is set in motion**, in the movement of the speech organs This whole area of interest is generally known as **articulatory phonetics**"

(O' Connor, 1973: 16).

ii) "He is interested in the way in which the air vibrates between the mouth of the speaker and the ear of the listener. . . . This is the domain of **acoustic phonetics**" (ibid.) .

iii) "He is interested in the hearing process... in the sensation of hearing, which is brain activity This is the domain of **auditory phonetics.**" (ibid.).



A division of the phonetic sciences into these two main branches immediately poses a problem for the contrastivist: is he to do **Contrastive Phonetics** or **Contrastive Phonology?** involve him in making detailed descriptions of the sounds of a pair of languages and then somehow equating certain of these sounds interlingually for purposes of comparison.




The first approach to phonetics CA, therefore, is in the comparison of L1 and L2 **sounds** with a shared articulatory basis.

A second approach is **physical** rather than physiological, and is associated with the acoustic properties of speech sounds.



The third type of phonetics **is auditory phonetics**:

it is concerned with what **'message' the ear transmits to the brain**. To take a simple unilingual example: it can be shown that the first and second consonantal segments in English **/pit/** and **/spit/** respectively are different: in the former /p/ is aspirated, but not in the latter.

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- Nevertheless, the English ear does not send to the English brain any instruction to register this phonetic difference: auditorily, and mentally, [p] and [p'] are perceived as the same phoneme /p/.
 - Notice that we are now speaking of two allophones being tokens of the same type, as having equal functions in the economy of English.



Thank You