

CH 7 PEDAGOGICAL EXPLOITATION OF CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

issues of contention

Applied CA

- What will we do with the finished product ?
- Wilkins(1972) considers the relevance of linguistic for language teaching .
- This leads to the question of “ what is Applied linguistics?”
- the information from linguistics acts directly in teaching language.

- Linguistics provides **insight** and carries **implication** for teaching (less direct)
- Insight : “linguistics notion that increase one’s understanding of the notion of language and consequently of the nature of language learning”

- Implications : “guideline for material production based on the general observation of how language is learned”
- Linguistics has little to offer in the practical problems

Carl James suggests two kinds of CA

Theoretical	Applied
Fasiak et al: “look for the realization of universal category X in both A and B”	“preoccupied with the problem of how a universal category X, realized in language A as y, is rendered in language B”
Static	Unidirectional
contains information about both directionalities of learning, and offers a measure of economic	lose sight of the contact between X and (?)
makes constant or recurrent reference to the universal <i>tertium comparationis</i> X	

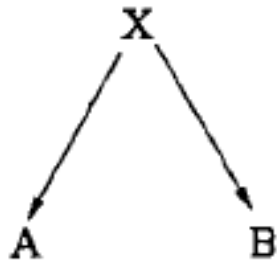


Fig. a): Theoretical CAs

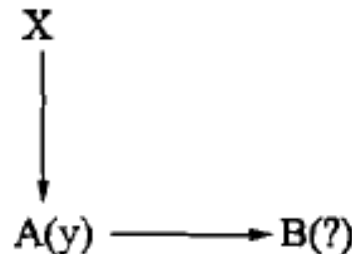


Fig. b): Applied CAs

whether applied CAs should be based upon or independent of a theoretical CA is undecided?

- Carl James' view is that “ an applied CA executed independently is liable to lose its objectivity that is, its predictions will tend to be based on teachers' experience of learners' difficulties rather than derived from linguistic analysis”
- this is an accusation that has been leveled at the English - Spanish CA of Stockwell et al.
- Applied CAs. therefore, are interpretations (of theoretical CAs) rather than independent executions.

- Disadvantage of theoretical CA that it tends to be done by target-language linguists with little interest of learners' L1
- This results a bias description neutrality between L1&L2

- The form of “insight” and “implication” of Wilkins has been ‘background’ reading for teacher rather than pedagogical materials for student. (University of Chicago CA Series)

The Poznan Project

- issuing its *Introductory English-Polish Contrastive Grammar*
- is a theoretical CA and not a pedagogical grammar.
- "entirely neutral towards any type of application"
- "designed primarily to meet the needs of students of English at Polish universities"
- it is a compendium of 'insights'

'issues of contention'

- Proponents of Applied CA either justifying or modifying.
- The critics of CA are encouraged by Behaviourism in learning psychology and with it the Theory of Transfer upon which classical CA is predicated

- emergence of Cognitive psychology has been seen as having removed the very foundations of CA
- Interference has been dubbed outdated concept
- the Ignorance Hypothesis proposed as a stronger alternative: "the cure for interference' is simply the cure for ignorance: learning"

- Hok (1972) invoked Koestler' s (1964) notion of **bisociation** as a link: "all learning - whether it be sensori, motor or cognitive - is at some stage habit learning in the sense that **once performed it can more easily be performed again....** Thus, readymade at our disposal for cognitive teaching-learning is subject matter organised in such a way that the elements to be learned and the system of their relationships are presented as such in the format we receive from the descriptive-contrastive linguists"

- Sharwood Smith in his account of 'psychologically respectable' (1978)
- " ... one of the two basic principles that are broadly accepted by ,cognitivists of whatever persuasion... that *new knowledge* is to a greater or lesser degree acquired via *old knowledge*"

- Corder (1978) seems now to be prepared to accommodate the notion of L2 learners having recourse to their L1. In his recent paper he proposes as a weak version of his hypothesis of the **built-in syllabus** :

"that the developmental sequence [of L2 acquisition] is conditioned by the nature of the mother tongue".

- Corder is rejecting the notion of L1 interference “ ‘failure to facilitate’ is not equivalent to ‘interfere’ or ‘inhibit’ ”.
- "It is perfectly logical to propose that the nature of the L1 may make passage along the built-in syllabus faster when it bears a similarity to the L2, but simply has **no effect** when it is different"

- Corder proposed two dichotomy :

1- facilitation

2- zero effect

- Osgood's Paradigm C (SI - R1 : S2 – R2) also allows for the possibility of *zero transfer*, but under different conditions than those Corder proposed

- Kellerman (1977) support Corder's notion
- in that learners have aprioristic intuitions about what L1 lexical items are likely to be transferable or not to L2 usage
- why **positive transfer** should be amenable to **Behaviourist** explanation

While **zero transfer** has to be accommodated by **Cognitive psychology**

- Corder claims that where L1 and L2 forms are different the learner has to figure out the nature of the L2 rules "**with his own unaided cognitive capacities**". Of course he must, ultimately, if he is to learn the L2 rules.
- but these are not grounds for denying that the **learner's initial tendency is to transfer from L1**.

Traditional Applications of CA

- We should mentioned the traditional of pedagogical application of CA in three :
- **predicting**
- **diagnosing** a proportion of the L2 errors committed by learners with a common LI,
- and in the **design of testing instruments** for such learners.

1- Prediction

- Lado (1957) states , in his Preface, that “we can predict and describe the patterns [of L2] that will cause difficulty in learning and those that will not cause difficulty”.
- Oller (1971) speaks on CA " .., a device for **predicting** points of difficulty and some of the errors that learners will make"

There are 3 that CA can predict

- It can predict : in the sense of 'pre-identify'
 1. what aspects will *cause problems*
 2. *Difficulty*
 3. *Errors*

Carl James suggest 4th

4. *the tenacity of certain errors*

- In predicting Error is not clear if it predict that will be error or the type of error. Constructivist tend to predict either/or type(that is the type of error either Yor X)
- Wilkins (1968) refers to "unpredictable alternation between two potential substitutions"
- For example : french speakers tend to substitute /s/ and/z/ with /θ/ and /Θ/.

- **Not all errors are result from interference: there are :**
- **interlingual errors**
- **Errors from 'non-contrastive' origin which include**
 - a) **the effects of target-language asymmetries (intralingual errors)**
 - b) transfer of training
 - c) strategies of L2 learning
 - d) **L2 communication strategies**

- Tran-Thi-Chau (1975) found
- 51 % to be **interlingual** (L1-induced)
 - 29 % **intralingual**,
- Richards (1971) who suggested
 - 53 % **interlingual**
 - 31 % **intralingual**.
 - Mukattash (1977) found
 - 23 % of the syntactic errors in English of his Jordanian students to be cases of L1 (Arabic) interference.
 - Grauberg (1971) found
 - L1 English learners of German "interference from English... can be observed in 71 errors out of 193", *i. e.* in 36 % of cases

- H. V. George

It seems that between a **third and half** of learner errors may be caused by the **L1: L2 misfit**. Given that a CA predicts "behavior that is likely to occur with greater than random frequency"

There are further arguments surrounding the gross predictive capacity of CAs,

- If CA can predict a scale of difficulty and this scale is valid
 - . It would be great impact on the pedagogical Grading for Evaluation (testing).

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Scales of Difficulty

- Stockwell & Bowen (1965) proposed a hierarchy of FL learning difficulty for phenology .

They try to create a scale for the level of vocabulary of Higa (1966) and Rodgers (1969).

The scales based on the notion of positive and negative transfer potential under stable conditions in terms of relations between matched rules of L1&L1

Three possible relations between L1&L2

- a) L1 has a rule and L2 an **equivalent one**.
- b) L1 has a rule but L2 has **no equivalent**.
- c) L2 has a rule but L1 has **no equivalent**.

There are 3 types of choices

- Second step is to identify the type of choices :
 - a) **Optional** phonological choice "refers to the possible selection among phonemes"
 - one is free, in English and German, to choose either /s/ or /ʃ/. in word-initial position, to say (English) show/so, (German) Schaul/Sau. Russian allows the 'free' choice of either on budit/pisat ' or on napishet to express future reference.

b) **Obligatory** phonological choice involves little freedom, since phonetic context determines which of a set of allophones is required : thus /t/ and /t̪/ are optional choices in Russian while [t] and [t̪] as realisations of /t/ are each obligatory choices in English

c) **Zero Ø** reflects the absence of a category in one of the languages while it is available in the other

for example,

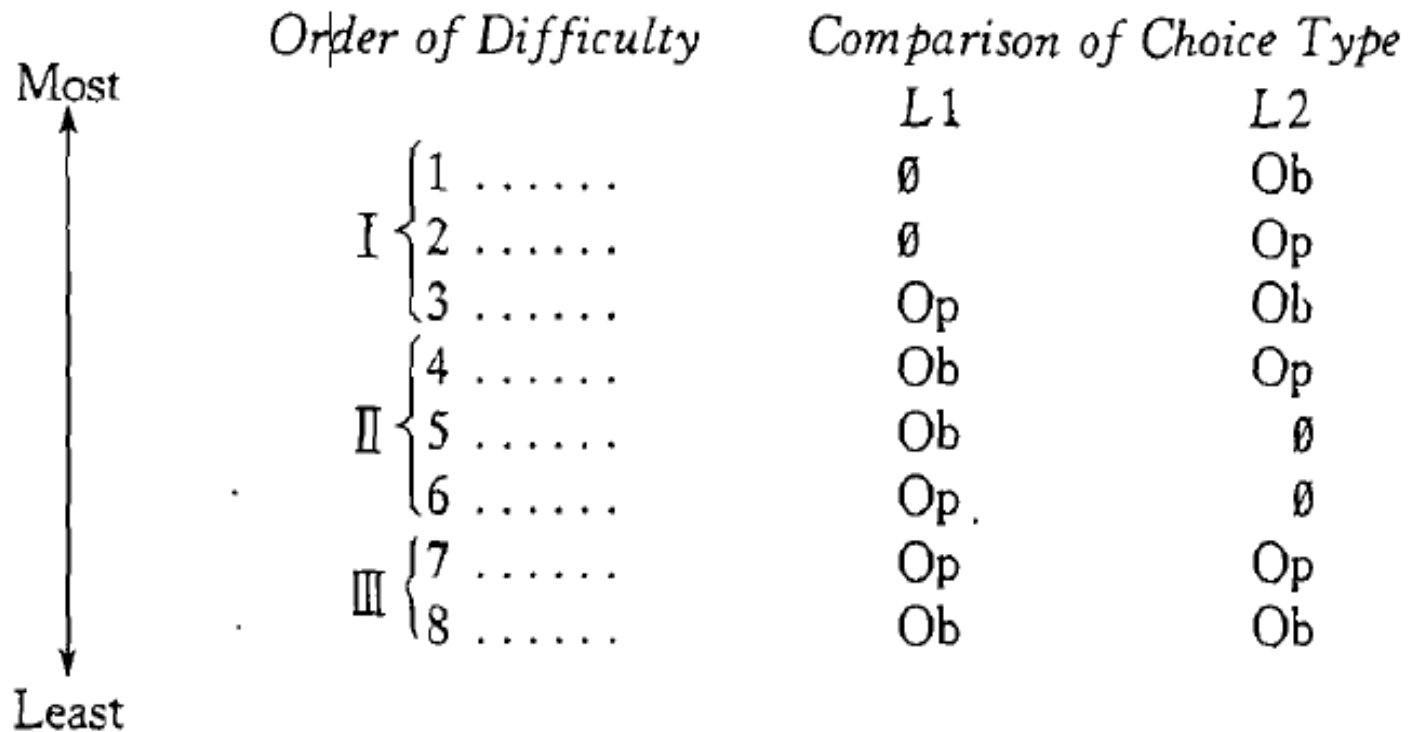
English is unlike Arabic in lacking **pharyngeals**.

Russian has no grammatical category such as the English articles

These different choices allows 8 kinds of relationship between L1 & L2

123(I), 456(II), 78(III)

Eight point hierarchy of difficulty simplified in three orders of difficulty.



- Tran-Thi-Chau points to several shortcomings
- e. g. placing verb form (concord) on the same level of difficulty as the Perfective/ Imperfective contrast in Spanish when **the former** "requires only memorisation" whereas **the latter** calls for knowledge of the contextual determinants of either category.

Diagnosis of Error

- Teachers have their roles in assessor and monitor of the learner's performance to know :
- **why** errors are made

Even for the learner in case of self-monitoring and avoidance of the same errors in the future

- Wardhaugh (1970) "The weak version requires of the linguist only that he use the best linguistic knowledge available to him in order to account for observed difficulties in second language learning"
- "reference is made to the two systems [L1 and L2] only in order to explain actually observed interference phenomena"

- For example, in a composition written by a Singaporean learner of English describing a naughty pupil, I found the passage: "My class has naughty boy name call Seng Haut. . . . He everyday in class likes scold people bad words and fighting". A non-contrastive diagnosis of these underlined errors turns out to be difficult, longwinded, and not plausible.

Testing

- **Validity** is the most important requirements to test a language
- The most valid test therefore would be one that was **comprehensive**
- For ,obvious reasons such a test would be impracticable to administer to students after their first week or two of instruction

- Lado (1961) based his theory of testing to a considerable extent on CA
- "If a test is constructed for a single group of students with identical language background and identical exposure to the target language then contrastive analysis is essential"

CA has two roles in testing

- First, since sampling is required, it will carry suggestions about **what** to test, and to **what degree to test** different L2 items, If items isomorphic in L1 and L2 are assumed to be easy for the learner, they can be by passed in the test.

How to test

- multiple-choice type of objective test is being constructed
- Harris says: "The most effective distractors in a test item will be those which evoke first-language responses from those subjects who have not fully mastered the very different patterns of the target language«
- It is less obvious how CA predictions might inform the writer of the 'integrative' tests that are in vogue today: cloze tests and noise tests for example
- a cloze test could be designed in which only those elements of the L2 test are deleted which are predictably difficult for learners of a given LI to operate: for instance, deleting the articles in an English test for learners whose LI is Russian or Polish

- practical considerations centre on the fact that tests must be produced for world-wide use
- Davies points out: why even Lado was forced to abandon his attachment to CA in testing in devising his own proficiency tests: "the task of preparing separate language tests for all language backgrounds is so enormous that we may never hope to have such tests except for a limited few languages"

These reservations are not wholly justified, for a number of reasons

- First

It is questionable that FL tests should be and need to be 'universal'

Is it possible to evaluate student in developing country as the same instrumental of that student of advanced country.

Different language has its own difficulty on scale . That is each learner will have different ability to learn language

Learning foreign language differ from second language

- Secondly

English, as an international auxiliary language, is a special case

Testing English should be different of testing another language

- Thirdly

CA does not require the whole test to be based on its findings, but perhaps between a quarter and a third of the items should be contrastively motivated

CA doesn't account for all errors.

- Fourthly

there is a possible compromise somewhere between a 'universal' test and a multitude of L1-oriented tests: tests devised on the basis of typological groups sharing contrastively with English

Course Design

- concerned with the two pedagogical principles
- Selection.... what
- Gradingwhen
- This is for product design while the implication of methods (how) is the process design

1- Selection

- If L1&L2 identical then L1:L2 identities will not have to be learned since it is there in L1 learner knowledge
- materials do not only teach what is 'new' and unknown, but provide confirmation of interlingual identities.
- What is shared should be learned

- There is a further, non-contrastive, reason why we must not select by **exclusion**: this is that the terms in any linguistic SYSTEM
- prefer to use the term ***Intensity Selection*** (while the learner is exposed to *all* parts of the L2, he must be given opportunities to confirm his positive transfers on the one hand and to learn what he does not know on the other.)

Two basic types of teaching materials confirming and learning

- Corder suggests 4 but doesn't meet the contrastive dimension
- **Confirming** less time-consuming
- The obvious candidate for L1 : L2 isomorphic constructions is the now much-maligned translation exercise: "The strongest charge yet against the use of translation. .. is the claim that it enforces the expectation of isomorphism ... in the students' minds"
- positive transfer is what concerns and audiolingual is the suitable one

Grading

- Lado : "the student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him and those elements that are different will be difficult"
- learning should proceed from the simple to the difficult

There are objections

- First : is concerning the *integrity* of linguistic systems
- if we postpone just one term of a system in the syllabus, the student's grasp of the terms he has learnt must be not only partial, but distorted .
- Second : as a criterion it may clash with other equally important criteria