Jacek Fisiak, Maria Lipińska-Grzegorek,
Tadeusz Zabrocki

AN INTRODUCTORY
ENGLISH-POLISH
CONTRASTIVE GRAMMAR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

The present *Introductory English-Polish Contrastive Grammar* has been designed primarily to meet the needs of students of English at Polish universities, who have to take a course on contrastive linguistics during their third year of studies.

This narrowly defined aim of our handbook presupposes its scope, character, depth and format. The student, who will use it, will already have had an introductory course on general linguistics as well as on English phonetics and phonology (including elements of generative, phonology and transformational syntax. Therefore, the theoretical model underlying this work is a version of the transformational-generative grammar. The authors, however, have tried to avoid formalizations as much as possible, and have not hesitated to be eclectic and to use traditional interpretations to explain the facts which have not yet been satisfactorily accounted for by transformationalists (e.g., gender, number, case and aspect, to name but a few) or whose explanation, tentative as it is, would require the introduction of a highly abstract and theoretical aparatus, thus contributing to an already complicated picture of language structure. It is obviously not the purpose of the present work to prevent its reader from seeing the wood for the trees.

The version of the transformational-generative model employed in the *Grammar* accepts, e.g., the lexicalist hypothesis with reference to deriving nominals and adverbs, and treats verbs and adjectives as separate categories on the one hand, and assumes such transformations as **Psych-Movement**, **It-Replacement, Not-Transportation,** etc. on the other.

In the area of phonology, the *Grammar* concentrates basically on the phonetic representation, only hinting at the processes at deeper levels

The space assigned to this component of grammar has not allowed us to go beyond mere rudiments and has forced us to abandon, among other things, theoretical justifications.

In general, the authors have attempted to avoid theoretical controversies which would automatically require explanations of details and defences of particular points of view, something which would be beyond the scope of the present work.

An introductory grammar has to be limited to a certain number of problems. The selection and presentation of these problems often raises questions and causes controversies of various sorts. One of the fundamental principles underlying the selection of problems for discussion in the present work is the requirement that a given problem should lead to the discovery of meaningful contrasts between English and Polish both from the point of view of potential interference as well as from the point of view of systematic differences between the languages in question (e.g., details of the Polish inflexional system).

In a few places the presentation has been limited to lists of typical instances without a further analysis, e.g., the correspondences of prepositions in English and Polish.

On the whole, the authors hope that the most important aspects of English-Polish contrastive phonology and syntax have been given due attention in the present grammar.

Serious criticism is often advanced against examples illustrating certain grammatical points. Quite often an example in a pair of contrasted structures is controversial on the grounds of being unnatural, stylistically marked, rare, etc. It has to be pointed out that the aim of the present work is to present how a given grammatical structure is rendered in two languages, irrespective of its frequency and stylistic value, and not how an English structure could be best translated into Polish. Therefore, the most frequently used equivalent in Polish of a given English construction which is formally unrelated is irrelevant for the contrastive analysis performed in the present volume.

An Introductory English-Polish Contrastive Grammar is a THEORETICAL CONTRASTIVE STUDY (see p. 10) in the sense of Fisiak 1971 and 1973 (L. Zabrocki 1970 calls it KONFRONTATIVE GRAMMATIK in his German paper. The difference is, however, only terminological, the idea being the same). Its aim is to present both differences and similarities holding between English and Polish not from the point of view of one of these languages but from the point of view of how a given category is handled in both of them (for more details see p. 10 ff.).

The present *Grammar* is not a PEDAGOGICAL (i.e. applied) CONTRASTIVE GRAMMAR. It is not interested in setting up hierarchies of difficulty or explicitly defining areas of potential interference. It does not interpret linguistic facts in pedagogical terms. It is entirely neutral towards any type of application. However, it does not mean that our *Grammar* is useless for future or present teachers of English. On the contrary, it forms the necessary input to any applied contrastive study by providing an objective confrontation of two language structures. Such a confrontation, among other things, will make the reader aware that despite numerous differences between languages in the surface, there are more similarities the further one departs from the concrete manifestations of languages towards their conceptual structures.

Although our *Grammar* has been primarily designed for students, it is our hope that it may be also useful for teachers, as has already been indicated, and for linguists. Of course, the authors realize that its usefulness will be limited by the constraints discussed at the beginning of this preface as well as by all the shortcomings typical for any pioneering effort in the field of linguistics, and this book is the first attempt to summarize the research in the field of English-Polish contrastive linguistics with a definite aim in view.

The *Grammar* consists of twelve chapters and a bibliography. Each chapter ends with a bibliographical note suggesting further reading on the problems raised in the chapter.

It is clear from the bibliography that the present work owes a great deal to the linguists listed therein. The authors would like to acknowledge their debt to all of them. Particular thanks are due to all the fellow linguists who took pains to read the first version of the *Grammar* and offered comments and criticism. The authors would like to single out especially Dr Edmund Gussmann of M. Curie-Skłodowska University at Lublin for his thorough critique of the work and numerous suggestions leading to its improvement. Thanks are also due to Professor K. Polański of the University of Silesia, Docent T. Krzeszowski of the University of Łódź, Docent M. Gruchman of A. Mickiewicz University, Docent Z. Zagórski of A. Mickiewicz University, Dr B. Lewandowska of the Univer-

Adam Mickiewicz University
June 1976

Jacek Fisiak
Maria Lipińska-Grzegorek
Tadeusz Zabrocki

INTRODUCTION

Comparative studies in linguistics have a long history. Linguists have compared e.g. various stages of the development of one language or differ-ent but related languages at a certain stage of development to reconstruct a proto-language. These activities have been known as **Comparative His-torical Linguistics.**

For a different reason, i.e. to classify languages into certain groups on the basis of the occurrence of one or more features, linguists have been also comparing languages as they are used today. This type of activity has been termed **Comparative Typological Linguistics.**

Apart from those two types of comparative studies there is still a third one. Two languages (possibly more) can be compared to determine the differences and similarities that hold between them. Since the forties this type of activity has been termed **Contrastive Analysis or Study** (in German both the word *kontrastive* and *konfrontative* have been used)[1].

The latter two types of studies have different aims but share the com-parative element and the interest in comparing (i.e. contrasting and con-fronting) languages synchronically.

It may be said, thus, that contrastive and typological studies belong to one branch of linguistics, i.e. **Synchronic Comparative Linguistics.**

Contrastive studies can be roughly defined as the systematic study of two or more languages, specifying all the differences and similarities hold-ing between those languages in all the language components.

There are two types of contrastive studies (henceforth CS):

(1) THEORETICAL.
(2) APPLIED

---

[1] The term contrastive linguistics was first used by B. L. Whorf in 1941.

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. Theoretical semanto-syntactic CS operate with universals, i.e. they specify how a given universal category is realized in the contrasted languages. In phonology, theoretical CS operate with phonological primes, i.e. features, and specify how these features function in the two or more languages being compared.

In other words theoretical CS are language independent. They do not investigate how a given category present in language A is represented in language B. Instead they look for the realization of a universal category X in both A and B. Thus, theoretical CS do not have a direction from A to B or vice-versa but rather as in Fig. I.
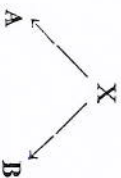

Fig. 1

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.

Applied CS are preoccupied with the problem of how a universal category X, realized in language A as y, is rendered in language B and what may be the possible consequences of this for a given field of application. Another task of applied CS is the identification of probable areas of difficulty in another language where, e.g., a given category is not represented in the surface and interference is likely to occur.

Applied CS should not only deal with differences but also attach importance to similarities. The teacher should be able to point out the forms which are similar so that the learner will not have to guess them and will not attempt to construct forms which are more "foreign" and therefore more likely to occur. Very often we express our surprise when an element of a foreign language is similar to what we have in our own language.

All in all, applied CS deal more, although not exclusively, with the surface representation of languages than theoretical CS, which is under-

standable if one remembers that learners of foreign languages have immediate access to this representation before they begin to reconstruct the underlying representation and develop competence in the foreign language.

In CS one finds such sets of terms as source and target language, L1 and L2 or native and foreign language. Theoretical contrastive studies can do away with those distinctions, which imply a uni-directional linear relation, i.e. starting with the first member of each of the pairs and going towards the other. The avoidance of these terms is indeed necessary in theoretical CS because the languages being compared have an equal status (cf. Fig. 1).

The terms L1 and L2 have their place in applied CS, the terms L1 and L2 in bilingual studies, the terms source and target language in translation and both native and foreign language as well as the previous two pairs in language didactics.

CS are not a very recent linguistic activity. As a linguistic activity independent from traditional typological investigations CS go back at least to the last decade of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

The first CS were predominantly theoretical (C. H. Grandgent 1892, W. Viëtor 1894, J. Baudouin de Courtenay 1912, P. Passy 1912, V. A. Bogorodickij 1915). The applied aspect was not totally neglected (Viëtor 1903) but was definitely peripheral and of secondary importance.

The idea of CS as a theoretical undertaking was further developed and refined by the Prague school of linguistics, notably by V. Mathesius (1928, 1936) and his followers, as the so-called language characterology (B. Trnka 1953 - 55, J. Vachek 1961, A. V. Isačenko 1954 - 60, J. Firbas 1964).

The second world war aroused great interest in foreign language teaching in the United States, where enormous efforts were made to work out the most effective and economical methods and techniques of teaching. CS were recognized as an important part of foreign language teaching methodology. C. C. Fries (1945: 9) pointed out that "the most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner". As a result a series of contrastive theses, dissertations, papers and monographs began to appear.

The approach adopted by the authors of almost all of these works was, as could be expected, pedagogically oriented. Their aim was to discover

and predict learning difficulties by comparing the native language with the foreign language.

The basic assumption underlying these studies, as Lado (1957:2) put it, was "that 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. The teacher who has made a comparison of a foreign language with the native language of the student will know better what the real learning problems are and can better provide for teaching them".

This view that differences are more difficult prevailed in the United States (and elsewhere) well into the sixties and was abandoned only a few years ago when enough evidence was produced to prove that both similarities and differences may be equally troublesome in learning another language.

Apart from pedagogically motivated CS, American linguists also contributed to more theoretically oriented CS, i.e. to the area of bilingualism and language contact phenomena. The works of U. Weinreich (1953, 1957) and E. Haugen (1953, 1954, 1958) clarified a number of contrastive issues, particularly in phonology (e.g. the inadequacy of structural phonology for CS, etc.).

An important contribution of American linguistics to the theory of CS, however, remained somehow unnoticed and had no influence on the development of the field. G. L. Trager (1949), in discussing the field of linguistics, employed the term **Contrastive Linguistics** to denote the branch of linguistics which uses the products of the analysis of descriptive linguistics and deals with both differences and similarities between linguistic systems and subsystems. Trager distinguished two types of CS; each of which may be further subdivided into synchronic and diachronic:

- (1) **intralingual** (i.e. encompassing similarities and differences within one language)
  - (a) synchronic (e.g. dialect geography)
  - (b) diachronic (e.g. the development of the language system in an individual, i.e. language acquisition)
- (2) **interlingual** (i.e. analyzing two or more languages)
  - (a) synchronic (e.g. typology)
  - (b) diachronic (e.g. comparative historical linguistics).

In the 1960's the interest in CS increased and several organized projects were launched on both sides of the Atlantic. In the United States the Center for Applied Linguistics produced a series of synthetic contrastive monographs (Gage 1962, Kufner 1962a, Moulton 1962, Lampach 1963, Stockwell and Bowen 1965, and Agard and DiPietro 1965). Several theses, dissertations and papers on various topics of CS were written.

In the second half of the sixties contrastive projects came into being also in Europe (e.g. German-English Projekt für Angewandte Kontrastive Studien in Kiel, later in Stuttgart, the Yugoslav Serbo-Croatian-English Contrastive Project in Zagreb and the Polish-English Contrastive Project in Poznań, to name a few). But even earlier, individual European scholars were contributing to the field (e.g. T. Valtonen 1953, N. E. Enkvist 1963, J. Dubský 1961, B. Kielski 1957, J. Orr 1953, H. Glinz 1957, E. Leisi 1961, K. G. Krušelnickaja 1961). IRAL and other journals carried CS papers by European and American scholars. Several dissertations and theses have been completed at European universities since 1960.

The main difference between the contrastive work done in Europe and in America was that in America almost all the work was pedagogically oriented whereas in Europe the importance of the theoretical aspect of CS was recognized on a larger scale, and both applied and theoretical CS were produced. Some contrastive projects (i.e. the Polish-English Contrastive Project) are even more theoretically biased (Fisiak 1973, 1975, Lipińska 1975, Krzeszowski 1975).

The theoretical contrastive element, one should point out, is almost always present in the works of American generativists. The aim of the authors of these works is, however, not to give a contrastive description of a given pair of languages but only to support certain linguistic hypotheses with facts taken from two or more languages.

CS can be performed meaningfully only if the confronted languages are presented within the framework of the same theory. One cannot take Polish described within a structural theory and compare it with English presented within a transformational theory. Such a contrastive comparison would be meaningless and, moreover, practically impossible as each theory uses its own set of concepts and it would not be feasible in most cases to establish similarities and differences holding between linguistic elements. Furthermore, different theories vary as to the number of facts they can account for.

This last point leads to the important issue of the selection of a linguistic model for CS. It is obvious that the model accounting for all language facts should be chosen. Since this is impossible because no such model exists today, one should select the most adequate of the existing ones. We believe that Generative Grammar comes closest to fulfilling our requirements and can explain more facts than any other theory. Generative Grammar, using one common theoretical vocabulary for the analysis of all languages, provides a uniform way to account for different surface phenomena (e.g. the comparison of languages of which one has case endings and the other lacks them in the surface structure but both have the same category in the underlying semantic structure). It is the most explicit of the existing theories despite several weaknesses which it still exhibits[2].

The explicitness of CS will depend on the linguistic theory it uses. It is obvious and unavoidable that CS will also share the weaknesses of the theory underlying them. One of those is the fact that most generative grammars are sentence based and not text based and therefore may overlook important semanto-syntactic phenomena beyond the sentence. Recently attempts have been made to improve this weakness within generative semantics[3] and also text grammar, but only a few contributions to CS have taken notice of this so far[4].

The exhaustiveness of CS is another serious problem. It depends both on theoretical premises and practical considerations. The most exhaustive theory will guarantee the most exhaustive contrastive description. Since even the most exhaustive available theory cannot explain all the linguistic facts at present, one cannot expect a complete contrastive grammar of any two or more languages. Consequently one cannot also expect contrastive comparisons of grammars (i.e. both phonologies and semanto-syntactic components) but only certain portions thereof. It should be pointed out that the choice of a given part of grammar is often arbitrary and usually dictated by practical considerations such as the availability of only a partial description of two languages within the same theoretical framework.

The fact that CS account for only fragments of language structure has no theoretical relevance. It is a methodological step towards achieving

2 For a detailed discussion of this issue see Lipińska (1975).
3 E.g. Fillmore (1974).
4 E.g. Krzeszowski (1974).

as complete a description as possible at the present stage of the development of linguistic theory.

The notion of **comparability** is fundamental for comparative linguistics in general and for CS in particular. The question of what is identical, similar or different has to be answered before any meaningful CS can be carried out.

The answer ot these and similar questions to a large extent depends on the theory underlying our CS.

Within Generative Grammar the comparability will have to be established for underlying and surface forms as well as rules. There is no way of formulating a uniform basis of comparability in general terms for all the details of phonology on the one hand and semanto-syntax on the other. This is determined by the distinction between the underlying semantic structure and its corresponding surface structure in semanto-syntax and the fact that the underlying phonological representation operates basically on the surface structure before it is converted into its final phonetic representation. Furthermore, the fact that both the underlying and the phonetic representations use the same set of universal features makes the comparison of phonetic elements possible and indeed meaningful. However, the more complicated types of relations holding between semantic elements and their surface representations make the contrastive comparison usually limited and often impossible in terms solely of the surface structure, without reference to some universal category (cf. the example of the CS of case in a highly inflected language and in English where the comparison is impossible without reference to some semantic concepts which do not belong to surface structure).

The comparison between two languages is valid only if similarity between two or more languages can be established in terms of some universal features. Those elements which are not similar are different by definition. Similar elements are those which are equivalent, i.e. equal in value or meaning. In other words equivalent elements (sentences, constructions) have the same underlying semantic structure although they may differ on the surface to quite an extent (Marton 1968, Krzeszowski 1971, 1974).

Those constructions which at a certain level of derivation have the same number of equivalent formatives arranged in the same order are congruent (i.e. formally identical).

It seems that all equivalent sentences have to be congruent at a certain stage of derivation, e.g.

E. John likes apples.
P. Jan lubi jabłka.

is diversified very late, i.e. at the level of lexical insertion in each of the two languages.

The degree of similarity in the surface realization of equivalent constructions consists in how early in the derivation a given diversification occurs. The later it takes place, the more similar the surface representation of the constructions[5].

If one takes sentences like:

E. Tom is always late.
P. Tomasz stale się spóźnia.

the diversification will take place at the stage when categories such as Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, etc. are assigned. Thus Predicate is assigned the category Adjective in English but the category Verb in Polish.

In the sentences:

E. He was asked a lot of questions.
P. Zadano mu mnóstwo pytań.

we have the same number of major grammatical categories (he = mu, a lot = mnóstwo, of questions = pytań, was asked = zadano) so the diversification occurred not at the level of category assignment but at the level of syntactic transformation (E. T-passive vs. P. T-impersonal). At this level diversification may also be due to the order of application of T-rules and to whether they are obligatory or optional.

The equivalence of constructions is determined by a bilingual person's competence which in practice amounts to translation and paraphrasing. Theoretically, the equivalence of a given pair of constructions should be determined by the identity of the semantic input, i.e. the most abstract level of grammar[6].

The problems of comparability of phonological elements and rules (the latter issue is irrelevant for semanto-syntax within the framework adopted here) are discussed in Chapter Eleven of the present work.

The development of contrastive studies in recent years has been accompanied by vigorous discussions and controversies concerning the theoretical status of CS, the reason for its existence, its place in both general and applied

[5] The line of reasoning and examples in the following paragraphs are taken from Krzeszowski (1974:12-4).
[6] Krzeszowski (1974:15).

linguistics, its immediate use as well as its form, etc. Many linguists as well as language teachers have gone so far as to reject the validity and usefulness of CS.

It seems that this attitude results from a number of misinterpretations and misunderstandings created by such factors as the peculiar methodological status of CS (Stockwell 1968, Fisiak 1973), and the lack of a precise formulation of the different aims of theoretical CS and applied CS as well as the confusion of the relationship between CS, the psycholinguistic theory of interference and errors, and the theory of second language learning. Some confusion stems from the misunderstanding of the relationship between CS and linguistic theory.

The distinction between theoretical and applied CS has been discussed at the beginning of the present Introduction. The implications of this distinction are clear as can be determined from what has already been said.

The unclear methodological status of theoretical CS caused much of the criticism of CS in general. Theoretical CS do not provide any explanation which no other science can provide and therefore CS are not an explanatory science in this sense. CS provide, however, observations concerning contrastive facts and their existence thus may be justified as follows (Zabrocki, T. 1976):

(1) "The set of contrastive statements they (CS) provide constitutes the basis of all applications of CS in the area of psycholinguistic theory of interference, error analysis, and the theory of second language learning.

(2) Theoretical CS, whose results do not explain anything in themselves and which do not even provide any original explanation for contrastive facts they collect, have a useful role supplying premises for the explanations provided by other branches of science such as those mentioned in (1).

(3) TCS have a useful role in that 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".

One of the arguments raised against CS (without distinction between theoretical or applied) is the issue of predictability of interference. Theoretical CS as part of typological linguistics are totally neutral with respect to this problem since their aim is to provide linguistic information

[2] An Introductory Polish-English...

concerning two grammars, i.e. to discover what underlies language competence and not to predict what will happen with competence when it is converted into performance. It is the theory of interference, using the necessary amount of information provided by CS as well as psychological and other extralinguistic factors, that will have to account for errors.

The criticism that applied CS fail to predict interference and errors and that the usefulness of CS can be judged only on the basis that this claim is not substantiated seems to be ill-conceived. Never in the history of CS has it been claimed that predictability of interference and errors is the sole purpose of CS or that interference is the only source of errors (James 1971). The value and importance of CS lies in its ability to indicate potential areas of interference and errors. Not all errors are the result of interference. Psychological and pedagogical as well as other extralinguistic factors contribute to the formation of errors and therefore error analysis as part of applied linguistics cannot replace CS but only supplement them. CS predict errors, error analysis verifies contrastive predictions, a posteriori, explaining deviations from the predictions.

The fact that differences in particular areas of language systems cause interference only in some cases and not in all and that no linguistic solution can be provided is due not to the weakness of CS but to other factors indicated above.

In view of what has been said here one might suggest that applied CS, apart from selecting pertinent facts from theoretical CS and presenting them in a form adequate for a given purpose, should also have a psycholinguistic component capable of handling psycholinguistic problems which are outside of the domain of linguistics proper.

The criticism that CS are of no use because a hierarchy of difficulty established on the basis of CS is an inappropriate basis for the sequencing of teaching materials is only partly valid. Likewise in the area of predictability, CS may only be one of the factors helping to establish such a hierarchy. Even in Stockwell and Bowen (1965) such factors as functional load, potential mishearing and pattern congruity were added to purely contrastive criteria. Again it has never been claimed that CS will solve this problem. It is, however, necessary to remember that we have to know which of the contrastive facts contribute to establishing hierarchy of difficulty. One should know, e.g., when structures existing in two contrasted languages have a different stylistic distribution in each language, thus helping teachers and textbook writers to take care of subtle shades of meaning.

The last major criticism against CS is that the results of CS have r[?] immediate use in the class-room. This argument contains several misu[?] derstandings. Firstly, nobody wants to use the results of theoretical CS the classroom. As Sanders (1974) has aptly put it: "To use the results C. A. (= Contrastive Analysis) 'raw' in the classroom is rather like pr[?] senting a customer in a restaurant with the ingredients and a recipe". S[?] condly, even applied CS will have to select from a contrastive gramm[?] the minimum that students at a certain age and with a certain education and linguistic background can digest. When used in the classroom C[?] form a useful technique, employing the previous knowledge of the learn[?] informing him about similarities and differences between his native la[?] guage and the foreign language he is studying, also warning him abo[?] making false analogies and about the potential areas of interference (M[?] ton 1973).

For the teacher, undoubtedly CS are essential for designing syllabus[?] and preparing teaching materials. Likewise, the usefulness of CS cann[?] be denied for textbook writers.