

THE POLISH-ENGLISH CONTRASTIVE PROJECT *

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Polish-English contrastive studies in Poland began to develop in a systematic way seven years ago. The idea for an organized research project in that area was launched by the author in 1964. In 1965 when the Institute was reopened at the University of Poznań, the project assumed a definite shape and several topics were immediately assigned as Ph. D. dissertations. These dissertations together with some narrower research problems were considered as pilot projects for a larger contrastive studies project with several objectives as outlined below.

Although the core of researchers consisted of the Poznań Institute staff members, a numerous group of young linguists from Łódź and Warsaw joined the project and began to collaborate from the outset.

The first analyses undertaken in 1965 were based on either structural or transformational models, depending on the prior linguistic training of the project's participants. However, early in 1967 it was accepted that the most explicit model should be used as the basis for an adequate contrastive analysis and consequently the transformational generative model has been adopted since then, in spite of its numerous weaknesses which were noticed but which in our opinion could not be a sufficient reason for considering TG a less adequate theory than traditional or structural. These weaknesses, in fact, opened new vistas for contrastive studies and served as a basis for new theoretical objectives for them.

From the beginning it has been accepted that the term "contrastive studies" should be used in a broader sense including both the studies of the differences and similarities between two languages under comparison, for it is obvious that the ability to differentiate also implies the ability to identify, i.e. differences and similarities are in complementary distribution, and no complete characterization of one language vis-a-vis another can be given without taking both these aspects into consideration.

Since 1966 it has also been recognized that contrastive studies are of two basic types:

* This is a revised version of the paper read at the 1970 Zagreb Conference on English Contrastive Projects, Zagreb, 7-9 December 1970.

1. *GENERAL THEORETICAL CONTRASTIVE STUDIES* which are a part of typological linguistics, their aim being among other things to *construct an adequate model* for the comparison of two languages (including the formalization of such fundamental notions as *congruence, equivalence, correspondence, etc.*), to determine a method for quantifying the divergence and convergence of two languages or language components as, perhaps, a new universal, etc.

General theoretical contrastive studies are basic for SPECIFIC THEORETICAL CONTRASTIVE STUDIES (i.e. Polish-English, Hungarian-English, etc.) which by using the model constructed by the former should produce an exhaustive account of the differences and similarities between a given pair of languages. It should be noted that the comparison of any two languages should be made in abstract terms, i.e. the rules of the grammars of both languages should be compared and not their ultimate surface products. They should be bi-directional.

The relation between *GENERAL* and *SPECIFIC* theoretical contrastive studies may be considered as approximately parallel to the relation between *UNIVERSAL* grammar and the grammars of particular languages.

2. *GENERAL APPLIED CONTRASTIVE STUDIES* belong to applied linguistics. It has been assumed that they should provide a proper model for the comparison of two languages for a specific purpose (e.g., a simplification of the theoretical model for pedagogical purposes as illustrated by the use of "surface phonology" vs. "deep phonology"). General applied contrastive studies should also provide methods for the prediction of interference as well as for establishing the hierarchy of difficulty in learning the categories in a foreign language, etc.

The results and methods of general applied contrastive studies and the findings of specific theoretical contrastive studies should be utilized by *SPECIFIC APPLIED CONTRASTIVE STUDIES* for a given pair of languages to facilitate the preparation of proper teaching materials (e.g., for determining the appropriate selection, gradation, restrictions), the construction of language tests and the choice of teaching strategies.

Needless to say, since no generally accepted theory of contrastive studies has thus far been proposed, what has been said above constitutes only a working framework for our research, determining the directions of our investigations and the objectives of our project. We feel that these objectives should

- (1.) contribute to a theory of contrastive linguistics,
- (2.) contribute to a theory of language in general,
- (3.) contribute to the grammars of English and Polish,

- (4.) provide an exhaustive contrastive grammar of English and Polish, both theoretical and applied, and
- (5.) provide material for teaching English to Polish speakers and vice versa.

It should be pointed out that items (4.) and (5.) are central to our project even though items (1.), (2.) and (3.) are of no less interest or importance.

The purpose of the first pilot projects (1965 - 67) was to provide segments of a Polish-English contrastive grammar in the areas of syntax and phonology as well as to answer the question of adequacy of a given linguistic model (structural or transformational) for contrastive studies; i.e. the aims were mainly theoretical.

During that period two larger pilot projects (doctoral dissertations) were completed:

- (1.) Krzeszowski, T. P., 1966. *Some Types of English and Polish Verb Phrases* (unpubl.).
- (2.) Granicka, I., 1967. *English Past Tenses and Polish Aspect* (unpubl.).

Furthermore, twenty-seven reports on individual problems of Polish-English contrastive grammar or on research in progress were presented at seminars held in Poznań once a month. Some of them appeared in print.

The most important theoretical papers on contrastive grammar published between 1965 and 1967 were:

- (1.) Cygan, J., 1965. "On the System of Negation in English and Polish". *Language Learning* 15. 17 - 28.
- (2.) Cygan, J., 1966. "Czas i aspekt w języku angielskim i polskim" (Tense and Aspect in English and Polish). *Języki Obce w Szkole* 1. 130 - 144.
- (3.) Krzeszowski, T. P., 1967. "Fundamental Principles of Structural Contrastive Studies". *Glottodidactica* II, 33 - 40.

The applied aspects of contrastive studies, rather marginal in our project prior to 1968, were not totally neglected. Six reports on their pedagogical implications were published in 1966 and later.

The most important contributions published in the area were: Krzeszowski, T. P., 1966. "English Tense Expressing Verb Phrases in the Process of Teaching Polish Students". *Glottodidactica* I. 115 - 124. Cygan, J., 1967. "English Question Structures and the Polish Learner". *Glottodidactica* II. 85 - 93.

In December 1967 the research team consisted of twenty-one linguists (from Poznań — 10, Łódź — 3, Warsaw — 6, Wrocław — 2). It was accepted then that the transformational model would be employed in our contrastive project from that moment on, with the proviso that the two most

advanced pilot projects would be continued and completed within a structural framework.

With three years of research experience in contrastive studies we decided that the POZNAŃ POLISH-ENGLISH CONTRASTIVE PROJECT should become a ten-year project consisting of the following three stages:

1. 1968 - 1970: a continuation of organized intensive research in various areas of Polish-English contrastive grammar (phonology and syntax).
2. 1971 - 1973: a continuation of intensive organized research (phonology, syntax and semantics) and the preparation of a three-volume Polish-English contrastive grammar, both theoretical and applied.
3. 1974 - 1977: publication of the above-mentioned work and the preparation and publication of teaching materials.

It should be noted, however, that Stage 3 does not exclude further research on certain theoretical problems nor is the preparation of teaching materials (e.g., phonetics) excluded from Stage 2.

At the present time the project is being directed by three members of the Institute of English at the University of Poznań. Professor Dr. Jacek Fisiak, Director of the Institute, has been serving as director of the whole project since 1965. Since 1967 Dr. Kazimierz Polański has been responsible for the Polish language section, while Dr. Waldemar Marton has been in charge of the applied linguistics section for the past two years.

During the first stage of our project research efforts have been concentrated on monographs (doctoral dissertations) covering wider areas of Polish-English contrastive grammar as well as on reports discussing various issues concerning general theoretical contrastive studies. The following doctoral dissertations have been completed since 1968 or are about to be completed:

- (1.) Marton, W., 1968. *Noun Modification in English and Polish*. Unpubl. (Prof. Dr. Jacek Fisiak supervisor)
- (2.) Koczyński, A., 1968. *English and Polish Consonant Phonemes*. Unpubl. (Prof. Dr. J. Fisiak supervisor)
- (3.) Arabski, J., 1971. *Infinitival Constructions in English and Polish*. (Prof. Dr. Jacek Fisiak supervisor)
- (4.) Zabrocki, T., 1972. *Sentence Adverbs in English and Polish*. (Prof. Dr. Jacek Fisiak supervisor)
- (5.) Lipińska, M., 1972. *Basic Sentence Patterns in English and Polish*. (Prof. Dr. Jacek Fisiak supervisor)
- (6.) Kuczyński, A., (in progress) *Adverbs of Place, Time and Manner in English and Polish*. (Prof. Dr. Jacek Fisiak supervisor)

- (7.) Jakubczak, I., 1972. *Relative Clauses in English and Polish*. (Doc. Dr. Kazimierz Polański supervisor)
- (8.) Majchrzak, K., (in progress) *Fraza nominalna w języku angielskim i polskim* (The Noun Phrase in English and Polish). (Doc. Dr. Kazimierz Polański supervisor)
- (9.) Grala, M., 1972. *Participial Constructions in English and Polish*. (Doc. Dr. Kazimierz Polański supervisor)
- (10.) Oleksy, W., (in progress) *Interrogative Constructions in English and Polish*. (Doc. Dr. Kazimierz Polański supervisor)
- (11.) Zybert, J., (in progress) *English and Polish Vowels in Contact*. (Prof. Dr. Jacek Fisiak supervisor)
- (12.) Morel, A., (in progress) *Verb Complementation in English and Polish*. (Doc. Dr. Kazimierz Polański supervisor)
- (13.) Mieszek, A., (in progress) *Cleft Sentences in English and Polish*. (Prof. Dr. Jacek Fisiak supervisor)
- (14.) Mendelius, C., (in progress) *Pronominalizations in English and Polish*. (Prof. Dr. Jacek Fisiak supervisor)
- (15.) Staszewski, J., (in progress) *The Ways of Expressing Purpose in English and Polish*. (Doc. Dr. Kazimierz Polański supervisor)
- (16.) Szewczyk, H., (in progress) *Aspects of Word-Order and Its Communicative Function in English and Polish*. (Doc. Dr. Kazimierz Polański supervisor)
- (17.) Furman, A., (in progress) *Prefixation of Verbs in Polish and Its Equivalents in English*. (Doc. Dr. Kazimierz Polański supervisor)
- (18.) Jakóbczyk, M., (in progress) *Ways of Expressing Accessory Circumstances in Polish and English*. (Doc. Dr. Kazimierz Polański supervisor)

Several works concerning the theoretical aspects of contrastive studies have been presented at seminars and conferences. The most important of them to date have been:

- (1.) Krzeszowski, T. P., 1968. "The Place of Contrastive Studies in Modern Linguistics". Unpubl.
- (2.) Marton, W., 1968. "Transformational Contrastive Studies: Some Methodological Remarks". Unpubl.
- (3.) Marton, W., 1968. "Equivalence and Congruence in Transformational Contrastive Studies". *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*. 1. 53 - 62.
- (4.) Fisiak, J., 1968. "Phonological Contrastive Studies: Methodological Considerations". Unpubl.
- (5.) Marton, W., 1969. "English and Polish Nominal Compounds: A Transformational Contrastive Study". *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 2. 59 - 72.

(6.) Fisiak, J., 1970. "The Case Grammar and Contrastive Studies". Unpubl.

The analysis of English errors made by Polish students was included additionally in our project in 1967. A report on the subject was presented and subsequently published (Arabski, J., 1968. "A Linguistic Analysis of English Composition Errors Made by Polish Students". *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 1. 71 - 89). An extensive monograph and further studies should appear in print between 1972 and 1975.

In 1967 we began to assemble our own corpus of English and semantically corresponding Polish sentences on punch cards. The sentences were taken from novels, magazines and scientific works. In 1969 the corpus consisted of 100,000 English sentences and approximately the same number of Polish sentences. The corpus is considered only as an aid to our research workers and has been used by them since 1968.

This year the encoding of information concerning both English and Polish has been initiated and should be completed by the end of 1973.

This will make the information concerning various aspects of the structure of English and Polish more easily accessible. Our corpus, however, is not designated for computer processing.

Since 1968 a Polish language corpus gathered in Katowice has also been at our disposal and has frequently been used by our project participants. We would like to point out that at present we do not foresee any possibility of using computers in our project.

The project has been subsidized since 1965 only by limited funds from the University of Poznań, and this in turn has by and large determined the scope and progress of the research which has been undertaken.

In the autumn of 1969 the Ford Foundation expressed some interest in contributing to the financing of the project through the Center for Applied Linguistics, and consequently preliminary negotiations were held in spring and summer 1970 in Washington, D. C., between Dr. J. Lotz, Dr. W. Nemser, Dr. Hood Roberts and Prof. Dr. Jacek Fisiak.

The collaboration between the Center for Applied Linguistics and Poznań began in March 1972 and we hope that it will help us to complete the contrastive grammar of English and Polish, both theoretical and applied, much more quickly and thoroughly than originally expected. This, of course, will automatically speed up the preparation of teaching materials.

In order to handle the new situation successfully a conference of all prospective collaborators including the participation of Dr. W. Nemser of the Center for Applied Linguistics was held at Karpacz between December 17 and 19, 1970. During this conference five research teams were organized composed of seventy five members from Poznań, Wrocław,

Warsaw, Cracow and Łódź. Since then the centers have been conducting research in their assigned areas. Poznań has also been serving as the administration and coordination center.

The results of individual research presented in theses, monographs, papers and reports will be first published in our new series of PAPERS AND STUDIES IN POLISH-ENGLISH CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS and will be later summarized in three major volumes which will then form the basis for further publications in the area of applied Polish-English contrastive studies and teaching materials. We plan to publish the three volumes as follows:

- (1.) J. Fisiak, K. Polański, A. Kopczyński. *The Sounds of English and Polish*. (1973)
- (2.) K. Polański, J. Fisiak, W. Marton. *The Syntax of English and Polish*. (1974)
- (3.) K. Polański, et al. *The Lexicon of English and Polish*. (ca. 1975)

The publication of the following handbooks should be possible from 1972 onward:

- (1.) J. Arabski. *A Manual of Polish Phonetics for English Speakers*. (1974)
- (2.) H. Grabińska. *Language Laboratory Manual of English Phonetics for Polish Students* (1972 - 73)
- (3.) W. Marton, et al. *The Syntactic Structures of English*. Five volumes. Volume I (1975)
- (4.) K. Polański. *A Comprehensive Polish Grammar for Speakers of English* (1973?)

Other materials and tests will later be based on the theoretical results obtained from our research. Thus, summing up this brief account of the Poznań Polish-English Contrastive Project, let me point out that in our opinion the project has both theoretical linguistic values as well as pedagogical and can contribute just as other similar projects have to a better understanding of language, its nature and use.