

## ASPECTS OF FUTURE REFERENCE IN ENGLISH AND POLISH

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1.0. In this paper I wish to discuss three topics. The first relates to the proper starting point of contrastive studies which have language teaching aims. The second relates to the discussion of future time and how best to analyse it with respect to a given linguistic code, and the third is an illustration, in a somewhat fragmentary form, of how such an analysis may be applied to presenting future reference in English and Polish.

2.0. Any contrastive paper needs to begin with a definition of its scope and relevance. Does it, for example, aim at a very abstract and technical analysis of language contrasts according to a specific linguistic theory — what I would call a *first-order application* of linguistic theory (Sharwood Smith 1972, 1974) or does it have some more practical extralinguistic goal such as a pedagogical grammar or machine translations — what I would call a *second-order application*.

2.1. This paper has as its scope the area termed pedagogical linguistics (Krzyszowski : 1970; Sharwood Smith: 1972) which I define as the area of language pedagogy which specifically deals with linguistics and its direct offshoots to see what insights, if any, may be used in the field of language teaching. Language pedagogy and its subdiscipline pedagogical linguistics ('the applied linguistics of language teaching') belong to an area of knowledge which admits of serious academic study with its own needs and its own criteria for selecting insights from related fields and combining them into its own hypotheses and theories. From these studies a body of scientifically justified materials may emerge, one of the most important being pedagogical grammars. A type of pedagogical grammar that can be used for specified types of learners is what concerns us here, i.e. contrastive pedagogical grammar.

2.2. The contrastive analysis I shall outline here is oriented towards a cognitive view of language teaching, to what Bruner calls "hypothetical learning"



(Bruner 1962, Estacio 1971). Here the learner is made conscious of rules governing the language code and its use rather than absorbing them sub-consciously through association and habit formation. In present terms this would also involve consciously studying and using the similarities and differences between two languages. Outlining the links between the native and target language in a systematic and meaningful way will help the learner appreciate his task more clearly: where not to make generalizations as well as where useful analogies may be drawn between the system he knows and the system he is to learn... It will also facilitate a conscious translation process which may be very helpful in the acquisition of the target language as a learning strategy to be discarded at a later stage. This approach is pure heresy to confirmed audio-linguists who see the native language purely in terms of negative transfer. The cognitive view counters this by pointing to the need for linking new facts with those already in the learner's cognitive structure (Ausubel 1968) and not pretending (in the classroom at least) that the native language does not exist. Finally, it should be pointed out that a contrastive pedagogical grammar can serve both schools if only as a basis for the production of teaching materials which either exploit the interlanguage links or steer the learner clear of them.

2.3. There is another important aspect of the proposed analysis and that is notionally oriented. This is so mainly because of the extra-linguistic needs of the language learner that any pedagogical grammar has to take into consideration. We cannot simply base language descriptions (for the learner) on purely syntactic criteria and show the learner what syntactic well-formedness in the target language consists of. We must try to begin from the other end and ask: what functions does a learner need the target language for and how does the target language enable him to perform these functions? The functions will be partly psychological, partly sociological and difficult to systematise. Given the fact that work in these fields is already well on the way to providing useful categories and that the level of sophistication and abstraction required is relatively low (given the fact that the grammar is for teachers and learners rather than professional linguists), there is no reason why an analysis based on extralinguistic needs is not feasible. Here these needs centre around desire of a given learner to talk about states and events that do not exist yet at the time of utterance. It would be discouraging simply to inform the Polish learner that there is no future tense in English because no syntactic grounds exist to justify it. He has certain expectations that his own language, which has more than one verbal tense form specifically for future reference, provides him with. A pedagogical grammar has no right simply to send him off on some complicated detective work to see how this apparently impoverished language enables the speaker to refer to the future. The pedagogical grammar should have already done the detective work for him! It should provide

him with the answer to the question: how does one refer to the future in English and, if it is to be a contrastive grammar, it should make explicit the relationships between English and Polish in their handling of this same problem. There is no reason, to turn Palmer's reminder round on its back (Palmer 1965: 8), why we should not use formal syntactic criteria to help us in arriving at our notional semantic categories. They will remain notional nevertheless. The main emphasis of the grammar remains extralinguistic and the syntactic regularities of language, though not ignored, are treated as secondary. The only other thing that must be respected as being of primary importance is the difficult responsibility any grammarian has of making clear systematic and basically accurate statements about the language he is describing. These statements should be comparative in the first instance, rather than contrastive and show the learner how language A and language B, in this case English and Polish, which have many formal syntactic differences, provide answers to identical or similar notional (extralinguistic) demands.

3.0. The notional analytic framework used here derives from the theory of speech acts (Austin 1962) as exploited by Boyd and Thorne (1969) to describe the semantics of English modal auxiliaries and further exploited pedagogically by others (e.g. Sharwood Smith 1971, 1972; Jarvis 1972). The pedagogical advantage of such an approach is that it sets out explicitly to account for the two semantic elements in any modal utterance: the propositional element e.g. *Peter's feeling ill* and the illocutionary element which is information passed from the speaker to the hearer and is relevant to the time of utterance e.g. *I guarantee you; I promise you; I order you; etc.* Thus, that the speaker guarantees Peter's feeling ill or, less unpleasantly, predicts it, is expressed as follows:

*Peter will feel ill.*

To take another example, the speaker may inform the hearer that a future event is planned. Thus the difference between *The President will arrive tomorrow* and *The President arrives tomorrow* is that the first may be represented as: "I, the speaker, predict now that in the future (tomorrow) the President arrives," whereas the second may be represented as "I, the speaker, inform you now that there exists a plan now that the President arrives in the future (tomorrow)". Predication, promises, commands, announcements of plans are some of the different kinds of present time information that is conveyed by the speaker at the time of utterance. The present analysis is confined mainly to future reference in the restricted sense where prediction and futurity are more emphasized than what is usually understood by modality e.g. permission, possibility, etc. It is difficult to separate modality from future reference particularly with regard to *shall* and *will*. The speech act analysis was first applied to modal verbs in the standard sense (*must, may, can, etc.*). These are of course not necessarily future referring. *Peter may be ill* may



refer to the present or the future. Here we will discuss forms which are always future in one way or other, or forms which, when used in the present have a double meaning, e.g. the Present Progressive form in *I am reading a poem* (present reference: *I am reading the poem at the moment* or *I am in the middle of reading it now* as opposed to future reference: *it is arranged that I read a poem* or *I have agreed to read a poem*, etc.). A complete pedagogical grammar would probably contain modals and forms of future reference in one section using the same framework.

4.0. Coming now to the third part of my paper, I would like to show how the speech act style of analysis can be used contrastively. I must apologise for the fragmentary nature of the illustration particularly of the Polish part. A more detailed presentation of the English section is to be found in Sharwood Smith (1972). The Polish part is based on an analysis and discussion of Polish future reference by fifth year students of English at Poznań University.

5.0. In English, it turns out that future reference is expressed mainly by the following forms: WILL+MV (main verb), SHALL+MV, BE GOING TO+MV, BE TO+MV and the two grammatical Present tenses (Simple and Progressive). We may add to this a set of more complex forms as expressed in the following verb phrases using TAKE: 'will be taking, will have taken, will have been taking, will have been taken'. The forms betray a much greater number of meanings and this has led a many to describe meanings in terms of form (form 'x': meanings X<sub>1</sub>...n). Here we try to rationalise the meaning using the speech act framework for reasons given above and then attach the forms to the semantic categories (meaning X: forms 1...n).

5.1. In present terms the speech act can be reduced to two components which are labelled P(present information passed from speaker to hearer at the time of utterance) and F(the state or event in the future). Following this we get a number of sentence schemas which correspond to a number of different characterisations of P. P signals the basic meaning associated with verbal form it calls for. This is an important point because much of what has been associated with future-referring verbal forms turns out on closer inspection to be 'accrued' meaning, i.e., meaning accrued or gathered from the context (linguistic and extralinguistic) or from the more subtle associations between verb forms and their history or meaning in other contexts. I refer here particularly to the form *will* which, in my dialect of English, rarely has the aspect of volition or intention attributed to it. In *he will go to Karpacz*, there may be a suspicion of volition but this is more from the association with the main verb *to will*, the noun *will* or the association between a verb which admits of human agents and a pronoun marked as human and animate or even the rare occasions where *will* retains its older meaning (*if you will*) than from its basic meaning. The semantic schemas are based on the basic meanings of forms available

in the language. *Going to* is another case in point. If we say *Tom is going to read a paper in Karpacz* or *Tom is going to drink some fresh milk*, we may decide to describe the meaning of the form as intentionality. Even more obvious is the intentional aspect of the announcement: *I am going to read a paper in Karpacz*. But if we were to add *against his will* or *against my will*, there is no paradox or inconsistency. Moreover in sentences like: *It is going to rain* it is clear that no intentionality is involved unless one posits a malevolent deity. Even using *I* or *he* we can exclude intentionality by using verbs that do not admit of human control such as *be* in *be sick* or *lose*.

5.2. In English, if we leave aside the second more complex set of forms (of Sharwood Smith 1972) we may establish three primary categories of speech act, i.e. three sentence schemas from three types of P. Each schema is here given a pedagogical dummy symbol for speedy reference, mnemonic value and use in cognitive drills. They are:

- |                              |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Simple Predictive Future. | O—O        |
| 2. Impositional future.      | —I— or — — |
| 3. Preplanned Future.        | PLAN       |

These refer of course to three primary notional categories and not three verb forms. They may each be realised by one or more verb forms which we will call "exponents".

5.3. The Simple Predictive Future relates to what has often been called the pure or colourless future. All future sentences are predictive to some degree but this type of future is the least coloured by any additional present information, i.e. aside from predictiveness. It is characterised as: I PREDICT. Its exponents in my English (Standard English / English) are *will*, 'll and *shall* (usually in first person questions) and *going to* (although this latter form may suggest a new category: future of present indications (cf. the writer's forthcoming Ph.D. thesis in progress)). Thus, for example, a representation of Peter's coming home tomorrow in this schema would be presented as follows:

I PREDICT: *Peter (come) home tomorrow.*

and using the available English exponents we would obtain:

for example:

*Peter will come home.*

*Peter'll come home.*

*Peter is going come home.*

*Peter's going to come home.*

Basically all mean the same thing. The pedagogical grammar will of course provide extra information if necessary. For example *going to* is used where the future state or event is predicted without any idea of contingency (McIn-



tosh 1966) whereas the "ll" forms are often used where the event or state depends on something else happening in the future. Compare: *I'll fall over* (if you go on rocking the boat) and *I'm going to fall over* (so please catch me!).

5.4. In the Impositional Future, a category that would go together with the modal meanings if we were to be strict, the speaker imposes a future state or event upon himself in the form of a promise or personal guarantee or the speaker imposes the state or event upon the speaker. This gives us the two subtypes of imposition: self imposition (—I—) and vocative imposition (— —). Thus the proposition *finished the bottle* might be realised

as: I IMP *me*: *I (finish) the bottle (I will finish the bottle, etc.)*

or: I IMP *you* (*finish*) *the bottle (You shall finish the bottle, etc.)*

or: I IMP *me*: *Peter (finish) the bottle (Peter shall finish the bottle, etc.)*

or: I IMP *some person(s)*: *Peter (finish) the bottle. (Peter shall finish the bottle, etc.)*

In the last example the agent is unspecified or understood as in a royal decree or command: (*He shall die at dawn*). Exponents of impositional Future are *will* and *shall* in all persons and *be to* in the second and third persons.

5.5. Preplanned future is so called because the speaker communicates the fact that there exists some fixed plan, decision or arrangement concerning the state or event in the proposition (F). The exponents of this schema are the two present tenses. There is always a future time adverbial in the text associated with the utterance unless the situation makes it redundant. There is no sense of obligation in this plan. If we say *Peter comes/is coming tomorrow* we just give the idea that it is expected by virtue of some prearrangement or decision known by the speaker. The pedagogical grammar might subdivide them into formal and informal preplanned future (Simple versus Progressive Present) or simply supply this as extra information. It seems that the Present Progressive is particularly associated with informality even in other non-future contexts (*I am looking forward* versus *I look forward*). Like Polish aspect, informality is not specifically linked with future reference.

6.0. If we now look, briefly, at the Polish system we can observe how it differs from English. This is, of course Polish seen with English eyes. Ideally an independent system should be set up and then the attempt to relate them logically follow this. As with English, we may generally exclude intention and volition from our description of basic meanings despite a tendency of native informants to be tempted by accrued meaning (especially using examples in the first person singular).

6.1. Taking the Simple Predictive Future first, we find that this meaning is expressed by the Polish Future Simple. Thus:

O—O: Piotr (przyjść) or, in other words: PRZEPOWIADAM: *Piotr (przyjść)*

is realised as:

*Piotr przyjdzie.*

And immediately the system shows us the corresponding English alternatives.

*Peter 'll come*

*Peter's going to come, etc.*

When we come to the Impositional Future, the Future Simple tense can again be used which suggests a convenient practical correlation with the *will* form in English. Thus, if I promise to come tomorrow (using *zobowiązuję się/kogoś* for the two subtypes of IMP) I can say:

ja : *Ja (przyjść)*

realised as:

*Przyjdę.*

Or, if I wish to guarantee Piotr's coming

ja *Piotr (przyjść)*

realised as:

*Piotr przyjdzie*

And if I wish to impose the state or event on somebody else including the hearer, then *mieć* + MV may also be used. Thus the king may say either: *Umrze o świcie* or *Ma umrzeć o świcie*. There seems to be a correspondence between *mieć* + MV and *be to* + MV. Finally, the preplanned type of future is also expressed by the grammatical Present tense. Thus:

— — : *Piotr przyjdzie jutro.* (INFORMUJĘ O UMOWIE, etc.) is realised as:

*Piotr przychodzi jutro.*

*Piotr ma przyjść.*

Additional information would be provided in the grammar to distinguish the two verbal forms used above on a cline of certainty, the first being of a more fixed nature and the second admitting of a possible change of plan. This of course is not identical to the formal/informal distinction in the two English present tenses.

6.1. A mention should be made of the Polish Future Composite tense (*być* in the future + INFIN/PAST BASE FORM). It seems to be the case that in English the complex form, e.g. *will be taking* carries not only the emphasis on futurity (through simple predictive *will*) plus progressive aspect (through the *-ing* form but also an idea of preplannedness (cf. informal preplanned future). The meaning is then a combination of future emphasis and preplannedness. Interestingly enough, the Polish Future Composite Tense also seems to carry this combination of meanings as in:

*On będzie zdawał egzamin*

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the Future Composite may only be used with Imperfective aspect (but see Sharwood Smith, "Imperfective versus Progressive" (1974) for the dangers of over-relating aspect in English and Polish)

7.0. Summing up, working within the area of pedagogical linguistics, according to a notional cognitively-oriented approach, we have begun to answer the question: how do we refer to the future in English and Polish? Using the speech act framework, future reference has been subcategorised into a small number of schemas which allow us to relate in a meaningful way various verbal forms in English and in Polish for the benefit of the language teacher and the language learner. Much work remains to be done and the present paper is presented as a pointer rather than the end product.

#### EXAMPLES:

- O—*Peter (come) ⇒ Peter'll come, etc.*  
           Piotr przyjdzie.  
 —J— *Peter (come) ⇒ Peter will come, etc.*  
           Piotr przyjdzie  
 — — *Peter (come) ⇒ (ditto)*  
           *Peter is to come:*  
           *Piotr ma przyjść*  
 — — *Peter (come) ⇒ Peter's coming (tomorrow), etc.*  
           *Piotr przychodzi (jutro), etc.*

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