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are not to be dismissed altogether ; on the contrary, they should be taken as a stimulating power for linguists and analysts to investigate more deeply and objectively in this field. Finally and in order to put some of the ideas concerning the role of CA together we have to refer again to Lado's "*Linguistics Across Cultures* " in which he says "The most important factor determining ease and difficulty in learning the patterns of a foreign language is their similarity to and difference from the patterns of the native language. "Different patterns betwee -n the two languages will certainly prove their difficulty leading to the occurrence of errors but those patterns which are similar will be easily learnt and mastered by the learners .

English diphthong /ei/ in *lady* producing the faulty pronunciation * /le:di/ instead of / leidi/ though the combination /ei/ or/ej// is used in Arabic (especially in Standard Arabic) in such words as /beit/, /teir/.. etc .

Harris (1963) suggested that CA predictions, once formulated, are no longer the province of contrastive analysis theory. "It seems that what is predicted is only ease or difficulty. These are in no way linguistic categories but psychological ones. "(Ibid 1963).

Other linguists went so far as to claim that CAs cannot predict errors which are likely to be committed by learners of foreign languages. Jacobson et al (1971) claim that" The main conclusion concerning the gross capacity of contrastive analysis to predict difficulty is that it hardly exists." Others even suggested that Error Analysis would offer a better alternative to Contrastive Analysis in Applied Linguistics.

However, two things should be borne in mind when discussing the dilemma of "predictiveness" in CAs.Firstly, CA has never claimed that it can predict all the errors made by learners or that L1 interference is the only source of error and secondly, not everyone would see it as a function of CA to predict error anyway (James 1978 p 234).

CONCLUSION

Whatever has been said about the role of CA as a "predictive" power in second or foreign language learning is still inadequate and needs more study and investigation. I think that as long as some of the errors and difficulties of language learners are reasonably explained and predicted in terms of interference of L1, CAs will continue to be valid inspite of the charges made against their predictive capacity. These charges

Some of the proponents of CA claim that even intralingual errors can be predicted by CA and the claim is made clear by saying that interference and errors are due to the unfamiliarity with L2 rules so the learner will try to use L1 rules to express himself (or herself) and consequently errors occur. However, there are said to be certain limitations governing the predictive capcity of CAs. First of all, as has been mentioned earlier, not all errors committed by learners of foreign languages, are due to interference. Intralingual errors are far beyond the reach of the predictive power of CA.

" It is not always true that differences between native and foreign languages lead to error through transfer. Nor is it true that the native language is the sole source of error". (Wilkins 1972 p. 201).

Secondly CA is said to be unable to indicate which of two or more potential substitutions the 12 learner will make a choice of (James 1978 p. 227). Wilkins supports this claim by the example of the French speakers of English having the tendency to substitute either /s/ ,/z/ or /t/ , /d/ for English /ɵ/ and/ð/. Baird points out that in some Indian languages there is a dental /t/ and a retroflex/t/ either of which could be predicted to substitute for the English phoneme /t/. (From James 1980 p. 183. Baird 1967& Denison 1966).

It is also said that sometimes CAs yield false predictions in that they may predict errors that do not materialise. Gradman (1971) questions Lado's prediction that English learners of French will find the /ʒ/ sound difficult in word initial positions as in *jamais* and *jaune*.

Sometimes if the native language usage is transferred, the learner might well avoid the incidence of error. For example, an Arab learner of English might mispronounce the

Limitations in the Predictive Power of CAs

Befor we have a look at the limitations which CAs are said to have as far as their predictive capacity is concerned, we have to distinguish between two majoar types of errors that learners of foreign languages are likely to commit.

1. Intralingual errors which are totally accountable by reference to the target language.

2. Interlingual errors; those caused by the interference of the learner's mother tongue with the target language. (Corder 1973, 1967, (Richards 1971, James 1971, Selinker 1972...).

Intralingual errors actually reflect the learners' competence at a particular stage. Their origins are found within the structure of the foreign language itself. Such errors can't be related to interference but rather to "the strategy by which a second language is acquired and taught (Richards 1974, Selinker 1972). Obviously such errors can't be predicted by any sort of CA. They are caused by' overgeneralization "or" simply ignorance of rule restrictions and therefore incomplete application might occur". (Richards 1974 pp 174/175). They might also come out as a result of poor gradation of materials or merely bad teaching methods and techniques.

Where the patterns of L1 and L2 are isomorphic, interference occurs and interlingual errors emerge; here CA is said to have a strong predictive role and a capacity to specify errors and problems. This can be of benefit in attempting to remedy ar at least eliminate learners' erros and also pedagogically in the production of teaching materials which will minimise the incidence of errors and help the learners achieve better results.

usages... etc. constitute learning burdens for learners of second languages. "Words that are different in their morphological construction are difficult" (Lado 1957 p. o86). Arab learners of English find fifficulty in learning such idioms as *call up, call in, call on...* etc. Such idiomatic usages of verbs and prepositions are not normally used in Arabic.

On the grammatical level experience has shown that Arab learners(1) of English fail to master the use of the relative pronouns of English. They would tend to use this faulty sentence:

* This is the man whom I saw him

Instead of

This is the man whom I saw.

This faulty use of the rule is due to the influence of Arabic in which students use هذا هو الرجل الذي رأيته

A contrastive study of the rules used in Arabic and English grammars would certainly be able to identify learners' difficulties and errors in this respect.

Several attempts have been made to determine the proportion of errors caused by native language interference (James 1980 p. 146). The tests which were made revealed that at least one third of the errors committed by learners are due to the influence of the mother tongue. The proportion of errors which testees committed ranged between 53% (Richards 1971), 36% (Grauberg 1971) and 51% (Tran–Thi–Chau 1975)(2). The remaining sources of errors will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

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(1) *Most of the examples cited above are taken from Arabic and English due to the writer's experience with his students.*

(2) *These tests are mentioned in James (1980).*

The Actual Capacity

Linguists and researchers have found out that CA has a strong predictive capacity which can be realized on the basis of descriptive contrast between the L1 and the L2. 'This capacity seems to be stronger on the phonological level and weaker on the lexical and grammatical levels". (Richards 1971 p. 172).,

A CA between Arabic and English will certainly reveal that Arab students (especially. those living in rural areas) will find difficulty in pronpouncing the /p/ sound of English. Such learners of English would tend to pronounce the word people as /bi: bl/ instead of /pi: pl/. In English the sound /p/ is a phoneme by itself whereas it is one of the allophones of the phoneme /b/ in Arabic and it has different distributions and positions from those used in English. Similarly most of the Arab learners of English would replace the velar nasal sound /ŋ/ by the combination /ng/ and also the fricative sound /ʒ/ by the affricate /dʒ due to the influence of the Arabic language "Six of the nine diphthongs of English are often mispronounced by the Iraqi learner of Rnglish owing to interference of the mother tongue Arabic (Aziz 1970).

Experiments and experiences have shown that Arab learners would insert a vowel between the fricative /s/ and the voiceless plosives /p/, /t/ and /k/ in initial clusters in words such as *spring* /spring/ *street* /stri:t/ and *scream* /skri:m/... etc. They would tend to produce the faulty pronunciations /səpring/ /sətri:t/ and /səkri:m/ respectively; the reason for this is the fact that consonant clusters are rarely found in Arabic especially in initial positions

As far as the semantic level is concerned differences between languages in the forms, meanings, distributions, idiomatic

On the other hand, other experiments and researches have been made by some linguists trying mainly to eliminate the role played by CA in L2 learning. New results appeared on the scene of contrast ve linguistics and contrastive analysis, most important of which centred around the notion that CAs have limited, if any, predictive capacity as far as applied linguistic and pedagogy are concerned.

"CA is inadequate theoritically and practically to predict the interference problems of a languag learner" (Whitman et al 1972 p. 29).

"The function of Contrastive Analysis in language teaching is explanatory rather than predictive". (Catford 1968 pp. 161, 163).

Wilkins suggests that it is practically difficult to base the content of language teaching entirely on the results of CAs for the fact that these errors may be caused by differences and by the structure of the target language itself. "Even if it were possible to make wholly accurate predictions of contrastive difficulties we should not have predicted all the difficulties that a learner faces. The structure of the target language has to provide much of the content of language teaching. ". "It cannot be assumed," Wilkins adds, "that the non–contrastive aspects of the language will look after themselves. "(Wilkins 1972 p. 204).

Tran–Thi–Chau (1975) claims that the degree of CA in predicting and explaining learners' difficulties is little or none. That she could derive from a measure which she applied on her own students.

It was claimed that this sort of comparison would help to discover and describe the problems that the speaker of one language will have in learning the other. Such comparisons, they explain, will help to predict the errors and difficulties encountered by learners of foreign languages and analyse them in such a way that would help in handling them and consequently try to eliminate them as far as possible.

"We can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student" (Lado 1957 p. vii) Then he goes on to extend his view by saying that much misinformation and many misleading explanations can be avoided if the teacher already knows the cause of his students' errors and also if he identifies the points where interference of L1 may cause difficulty or error in the learner's performance of L2.

More recently, many linguists and analysts reiterated the importance of L1 interference with L2 learning. (1), All their researches, together with Lados', and Fries', seemed to claim that CAs have strong predictive power. Oller (1971) speaks of CA as.. ".... a device for predicting points of difficulty and some of the errors that learners will make.....".

James (1978) talking about the status of CA in Applied Linguistics claims that it is possible to identify at least four interpretations of what CAs are meant to predict. These four interpretations are: (i) interference (ii) difficulty (iii) errors and (iv) tenacity.(2) (James 1987 pp. 224, 225).

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(1) *See for example (Ferguson 1965, Politzer 1967, Jacobovits 1970 James 1980..... etc.)*

(2) *Tenacity refers to the amount of time a learner takes to master any given target structure. (From James 1978).*

NOTES ON THE PREDICTIVE POWER OF CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS (*)

By Subhi Sh. P. Zora

INTRODUCTION

It has long been claimed that Contrastive Analysis (henceforth CA) is able to predict (1) arrors and difficulties of learners of second or foreign languages. This claim has been verified by the fact that some of these errors and difficult es can be attributed to the interference between the learner's native language (LI) and the language being learnt (L2). This interference is claimed to occur at the phonological, syntactic and/ or lexical levels and to be predicted by a CA of the two languages concerned (L1 & L2). In order to assess this predictive ability one has, first of all, to understand what CA is, what results it can give and has yielded over the last two or three decades of its age and finally some notes and points of arguments concerning the actual capacity and limitations of the predictive power of CAs.

For and Against

Much of the work on CA was carried out by Lado and Fries as early as 1960. These, and other. linguists maintained that the key to ease and difficulty in foreign language learning lies in the comparison between native and foreign languages.

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(1) *"predict" is used in this paper in the sense of "identify" or "anticipate" and not in the common sense of "forecast".*