

# The Place of Contrastive Linguistics in Language Comparison<sup>1</sup>

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## 0. Introduction

The program of “Contrastive Linguistics” was formulated in the sixties and seventies of the last century, with the primary objective of making foreign language teaching more efficient (cf. Alatis, 1986; Aarts, 1981). After a brief period of enthusiastic support, however, this approach to language comparison has led a somewhat modest, if not marginal existence. Quite often, authors and organizers of conferences use the term almost apologetically, pointing out that their contrastive study is really a small scale instance of a typology, of a theoretical study or of something else. There are several reasons for this insecurity. One reason certainly goes back to the ill-conceived idea held by many of its early proponents that Contrastive Analysis was tantamount to a theory of second language acquisition. After several years of trying to implement part of the program nobody holds this view any more. It is now generally accepted that the relationship and the contrasts between mother tongue and a foreign language to be learnt is only one of the factors that enter into the process of learning a foreign language and of planning its teaching (cf. Wienold, 1973). Moreover, many tests and experiments as well as large-scale surveys have been carried out and give us a realistic picture of whether and how contrasts in the systems of two languages have an influence on learning and performance (cf. Carol & Lambert, 2006; Stutterheim & Lambert, 2005; Hawkins & Filipović, 2011). A second problem is the fact that a central aspect of the contrastive program, i.e. the writing of comprehensive contrastive grammars for relevant pairs of languages, was never or hardly ever properly implemented. Most of the early attempts at writing such grammars (e. g. Moulton, 1962; Kufner, 1962) do not have the required depth or granularity as far as their syntactic and morphological parts are concerned. This situation is now changing; there are many hopeful beginnings, i. e. substantial parts of such grammars already available or at least under construction. Together with V. Gast I have myself made a contribution to this part of the program (König & Gast, 2007). Finally, there is the problem of finding a place of contrastive linguistics within the spectrum of language comparison, relative to other comparative approaches to linguistic analysis: historical comparative linguistics, language typology, microvariation (comparative dialectology) and intercultural communication. This is the issue addressed in this paper. It will be shown that only by relating contrastive linguistics to and by delimiting it from other subfields of comparative linguistics will we obtain a clear picture of its agenda, its potential and its limits. What contrastive linguistics shares with these other approaches is its focus variation between languages and within a language, but it clearly has its own agenda, even if it partly overlaps with these other approaches in certain respects. The scope of our discussion can be illustrated by the following diagram:

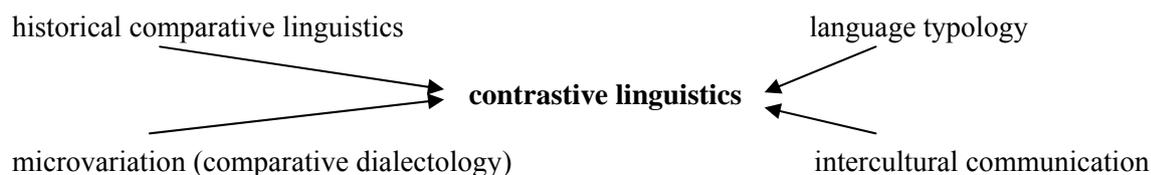


Figure 1

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the Freiburg Institute of Advanced Studies (FRIAS) for their hospitality during the time this article was written.

In the following sections we will compare the goals and the potential of contrastive linguistics step by step with those of the other approaches to language comparison placed into the four corners of Figure 1 and in doing so establish a clear agenda and profile for this field.

## 1. Contrastive Linguistics and Historical Comparative Linguistics

In contrast to Historical Comparative Linguistics (HCL), the oldest branch of comparative linguistics, contrastive analysis (CA) is neither concerned with historical developments nor with the problem of describing genetic relationships. Contrastive Analysis is purely synchronic in its orientation and a comparison between the vowel systems of German and Finnish or between the form, meaning and use of reflexive markers in English and Mandarin Chinese is just as relevant as the corresponding comparisons between the relevant systems in genetically related languages (cf. Hyvärinen, 2001). In addition to its purely synchronic orientation CA also differs in its scope from historical contrastive linguistics, since it is typically concerned with a comparison of corresponding subsystems in only two languages. We will return to this point below.

In spite of these differences Contrastive Linguistics and HCL may overlap if two genetically related languages are examined for shared structures and contrasts. In that case contrastive linguistics can build on the findings of HCL, which also provides the relevant explanation of the contrasts as a result of geographic separation, contact with other languages and inbuilt drifts. A contrastive analysis will then often resemble a description of contrasts between two consecutive stages in the historical development of two languages. Many examples can be given of such partial overlap between the goals and findings of HCL and CA. I will begin with two well-known cases and then turn to some more subtle contrasts.

It is a well-known fact that the distribution of the sentential negation marker *not* in English is very different from that of the German counterpart *nicht* (cf. Jacobs, 1982; Harbert, 2007: 376-92). If the negation marker *not* does not include another scope-bearing element in its scope as in (1)a its standard position is after the first auxiliary verb (cf. (1b)). Furthermore, *not* may fuse with a following indefinite article (*a*) or pronoun (*any*) to *no* (cf. (1c-d)), with the effect of a subtle contrast in meaning:

- (1) a. Not many arrows hit the target.
- b. Many arrows did not hit the target.
- c. George is no scientist.
- d. George is not a scientist.

In German, by contrast, the negation marker *nicht* occurs as closely as possible before the elements in its scope and is thus extremely flexible in its distribution (cf. (2a-b)). Fusion between *nicht* and a following indefinite expression to *kein* is possible and may even be obligatory, but this process is not only sensitive to positional restrictions (adjacency), as it also is in English, but also to stress and to focusing (cf. (2c)):

- (2) a. Nicht viele Pfeile haben die Scheibe getroffen.
- b. Viele Pfeile haben die Scheibe nicht getroffen.
- c. Georg ist kein Wissenschaftler.

If the indefinite phrase is stressed or part of a focused phrase, fusion is excluded (cf. (2e-f)):

- (2) d. Ich möchte mit keinem Studenten sprechen. ‚I don’t want to talk to any student.‘
- e. Ich möchte nicht mit EINEM Studenten sprechen.  
        ‘I don’t want to talk to a single student.’

- f. Ich möchte nicht einem Verbrecher in die Hände fallen. ‘I don’t want to fall into the hands of a criminal.’

The relevant change, which further separated English from German, occurred in Early Modern English. In Shakespearean English we still find the negation marker after main verbs. The introduction of positional restrictions for *not* had consequences for scope marking in general. In contrast to German, where the scope of *not* is generally marked by word order, the corresponding English sentences are either ambiguous (cf. (3)) or contrast in terms lexical elements as in (4) (cf. König, 1992):

- (3) a. Der Direktor wäscht sein Auto nicht selbst. ‘The director doesn’t wash his car himself.’  
b. Der Direktor wäscht sein Auto selbst nicht. ‘The director doesn’t wash his car himself.’
- (4) a. John did not talk to any students. ‘J. hat mit keinen Studenten gesprochen.’  
b. John did not talk to some students. ‘J. hat mit einigen Studenten nicht gesprochen.’

The introduction of a positional restriction for negation, except in cases like (2a), occurred in close connection with another well-known contrast between the two Germanic languages under discussion. English draws a strict distinction between two classes of verbs: between main verbs and auxiliary verbs, in German some of the counterparts of English modal auxiliaries also have properties that separate them from main verbs, but the relevant historical process of differentiating two classes of verbs is much further advanced in English than it is in German (cf. Plank, 1984b.). Again Shakespearean English is much closer to German than is Modern English. One of the crucial properties of auxiliary verbs in English is that they can no longer combine with objects or directional complements and function as the sole verb of a sentence. Thus, to give two examples, the modal auxiliary *must* can no longer combine with a directional expression to form a complete sentence, in contrast to both Shakespearean English and Modern German, nor can the auxiliary *can* combine with a direct object as its counterpart in German<sup>2</sup>:

- (5) a. I must away. (Shakespeare)  
b. Ich muss weg. (German)  
c. I must go away. (ModE)  
d. Ich kann diese Aufgabe.  
e. I can solve this problem.

These contrasts between English and German are well-known. What they are meant to illustrate here is a contrastive description of these phenomena overlaps significantly with a historical syntactic description of Germanic languages (cf. Harbert, 2007).

This overlap and potential for cooperation between CA and HCL can also be illustrated with more fine-grained and subtle developments currently under way. It is a characteristic feature of the German system of deictic distinctions that a distinction is drawn between the directional adverbial prefixes *hin-* (‘away from the speaker/center of orientation’) and *her-* (‘towards the speaker/center of orientation’). This distinction is neutralized in combination with prepositions in informal spoken German, as the following examples show:

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<sup>2</sup> There are, of course, heavy constraints on possible combinations between modal verbs and complements in German. The verb *müssen*, for example, only combines with directional complements, though it may select instances of all three semantic types: GOAL, PATH and SOURCE:

- (i) Ich muss nach Berlin.  
(ii) Ich muss durch einen dunklen Wald.  
(iii) Ich muss hier weg.

## GERMAN

- (6) a. Wir schwimmen über den Fluss. – Wir schwimmen jetzt hinüber zu dir.  
‘We are swimming across to you.’  
b. Ich bin auf der anderen Seite des Flusses. Schwimm doch herüber zu mir.  
‘Why don’t you swim across to me!’  
c. Wir schwimmen jetzt rüber. – Schwimm doch rüber.  
d. Geh doch rein/hinein. – Komm doch rein/herein.

Interestingly enough, Modern German is here following the lead of Yiddish, where the relevant neutralization occurred much earlier:

## YIDDISH

- (7) a. zi geyt arayn un er geyt aroys. ‘She is going in and he is coming out.’  
b. aroyf ‘up’, arieber ‘over’;

In cases like these synchronic comparisons of two genetically related languages make us aware of changes more or less completed in one language and currently under way in another. For reasons yet to be identified one language is following the lead of the other. Another instance of similar changes occurring in two genetically related languages at different stages in their development concerns conditionals whose protasis takes the form of an interrogative, i.e. manifests subject-auxiliary inversion in English and verb-first order in German:

- (8) a. (Engl.) Had I known this I would not have gone there.  
b. (Germ.) Hätte ich das gewusst, dann wäre nicht hingegangen.

These conditionals can be analyzed as the result of syntacticizing discourse: A question is raised as a pre-sequence to another conversational move, a positive answer is anticipated and the intended speech act is added as a consequence (cf. van den Nest, 2010):

- (9) Lieben Sie Brahms? (Ja!) Dann lade ich Sie zu einem Konzert am Montag ein.  
‘Do you like Brahms? Then I’ll invite you to a concert on Monday.’  
⇒ Lieben Sie Brahms, dann lade ich Sie zu einem Konzert am Montag ein.

In both English and German such conditionals were common in earlier periods of their historical development and manifested few, if any, restrictions (van den Nest, 2010). In Present-Day English such conditionals are only found in combination with three auxiliary verb forms: *had*, *should* and *were*:

## ENGLISH

- (10) a. **Had** I known this I would not have gone there.  
b. **Should** he come earlier we might be able to eat out.  
c. **Were** he to reveal these secrets this would be a catastrophe for international diplomacy.

In German there are no restrictions for the use of such verb-first conditionals as far as the selection of a verb, a tense or a grammatical mood is concerned (cf. Reis & Wöllstein, 2010). The only major change that can be observed in the historical development of these conditionals is an increase in the integration of the protasis into the main clause by omitting the correlative pronouns (*so*, *dann*) and placing the protasis into the position immediately preceding the finite verb of the main clause (cf. (11d)):

## GERMAN

- (11) a. Kommt er rechtzeitig, so/dann können wir ins Theater gehen.  
      ,If he comes back in time we can go to the movies.‘  
      b. Kam er rechtzeitig nach Hause, so gingen wir regelmäßig ins Theater.  
      ,If he came back in time we regularly went to the movies.‘  
      c. Käme er zu spät, so könnten wir nicht mehr ins Theater gehen.  
      ,If he were late we could not go to the theatre anymore.‘  
      d. Hätte ich das gewusst, wäre ich nicht hingegangen.  
      ,Had I known that, I would not have gone there.‘

Nevertheless, the somewhat formal stylistic quality of the examples in (11) show that there is a clear preference for auxiliaries or conjunctions in German, too. As yet there is no quantitative study that would demonstrate this clearly, but the following reformulations show that the resultant examples are much more common in spoken German.

- (11‘) a. Wenn er rechtzeitig kommt... Kann er rechtzeitig kommen...  
      b. Sollte er rechtzeitig nach Hause kommen.../Wenn er rechtzeitig nach Hause kam...  
      c. Würde er zu spät kommen...

Again, German seems to undergo a process of change that is much further advanced in English.

As a final example of a fruitful cooperation between HCL and CA I would like to mention trilateral studies investigating the relations between languages of a family. A well known example are the comparisons between English, German and Dutch initiated by van Haeringen (1956) and further pursued in Hüning et al. (2006), which invariably led to the result that Dutch shares many properties with the other two Germanic languages and can be placed between these two on a scale of similarity and contrast. Such trilateral comparisons illuminate analogous changes manifesting different temporal instantiations and also imply detailed descriptions of contrasts between the relevant languages.

## 2. CL and Language Typology

Language typology aims at mapping out the space and limits of variation between languages irrespective of their genetic affiliation. Even though the scope of this enterprise is in principle all-embracing, it is usually a representative sample of the world’s (7000 or so) languages that is taken as an empirical basis for a typological study. It is the major goal of typologists to show that languages do not “vary randomly and without limits”, as was assumed by structuralists like M. Joos, but in recent years their program of finding language universals has met with increasing skepticism from people carrying out fieldwork on little-described and endangered languages (cf. Evan & Levinson, 2009). What CA shares with LT is the synchronic orientation, but these two sub-fields of comparative linguistics differ greatly in their scope, in their granularity and in their explanations. The scope of contrastive studies is typically limited to two languages which play an important role as source and target languages in the teaching of foreign languages. The scope of typology is unlimited and panchronic, even if for practical purposes a representative sample is taken as a point of departure. Another way of describing this difference in scope is to say that typology analyses a few parameters of variation across a wide variety of languages whereas the goal of CA is to analyze many parameters of variation in only two (or three) languages (cf. Hawkins, 1986). It is along these lines of a comprehensive comparison of two languages that the goal of

providing a holistic typology of two languages can at least be envisaged (cf. Rohdenburg, 1990; König, 1996).

As far as the most basic contrasts between two languages are concerned, CA can simply be based on the findings of typology, as summarized in the relevant articles, handbooks and surveys (cf. Haspelmath et. al., 2004; Eckmann, 2010). The major contrasts between well-described languages like English and German or English and French, for example, are well-known. German differs from English in its basic constituent orders, in the availability of a case system and case-dependent rules, in having a gender system for all nouns and in its preservation of traditional inflectional categories for nouns verbs and adjectives. French, like all Romance languages, differs from English in the categorial status of its pronouns, which occur as clitics in preverbal positions. A contrastive study will go beyond such basic statements of similarity and contrast and explore contrasts and properties of languages that would not even be noticed without such a comparison. It is often precisely the periphery rather than the well-known core of two languages that stands in the center of attention. The following examples illustrate this difference between typology and CA in the granularity of their observations.

### **(2a) Use of free choice quantifiers in French and English**

Free choice quantifiers (Engl. *anything*; Fr. *n'importe quoi*; Finn. *vaikka koska/kuka/mitä* etc.) are found in many, if not all, languages. In contrast to universal quantifiers (Engl. *everything*; Fr. *tout*), such free-choice quantifiers typically occur only in scalar contexts like the following:

ENGLISH

(12) My sister would invite anybody to her parties.

FRENCH

(13) Ma sœur inviterait n'importe qui à ses soirées.

These sentences clearly differ in their meaning and truth conditions from the corresponding sentences with universal quantifiers (*everybody*, *tout le monde*), as was first noticed by Z. Vendler (1967). A sentence like (12) can be tested and falsified by replacing the quantifiers by the most unlikely candidate for the resultant open sentence, in this case perhaps by 'her worst enemy'. If the sentence is true for the most unlikely case it follows that it is also true for more likely cases, down to the most likely case 'her best friend'. The admissibility in such scalar contexts is the characteristic property of such free-choice quantifiers, which generally do not occur in non-scalar, episodic contexts, like the following:

ENGLISH

(14) \*He said anything. \*He is still talking to anybody.

That free-choice *any* is not licensed in non-generic past tense<sup>3</sup> or present tense contexts is a well-known fact and analogous restrictions can be observed in a wide variety of other languages. As a result of a fairly recent development, however, this restriction does no longer hold for the relevant French quantifiers introduced by *n'importe( qui/quoi)*. These expressions are admissible in episodic contexts with a purely negative meaning, i.e. the speaker disapproves of the instances identified by the quantifier:

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<sup>3</sup> Note that free-choice *any* is incompatible with the habitual past marker *used to* (\**He used to invite anybody*). The auxiliary *would* in (12) is the past tense of a conditional or an emphatic *will*.

## FRENCH

- (15) a. Il a dit n'importe quoi. 'He said all kinds of things/nonsense.'  
b. Il est encore en train de parler avec n'importe qui.  
'He is still talking to some insignificant people.'  
c. Vous avez invité n'importe qui. 'You invited all kinds of people.'

### (2b) Exhaustive interrogatives and related exclamatives (E-G)

Another example meant to illustrate the fine granularity of contrastive statements relates to content interrogatives with universal quantifiers in English and German. In contrast to normal questions of this type, questions expressed by these interrogatives require an exhaustive list rather than a partial list of answers in a situation where several answers could be given. In German there are no restrictions on the dimension involved, i.e. on the interrogative pronoun, as is shown by the following examples:

- (16) a. Wen hast du **alles** dort gesehen?  
b. Wer kommt **alles** zu dem Treffen?  
c. Wo bist du **alles**/überall gewesen?  
d. Wozu brauchst du das **alles**?

In English, by contrast, such sentences are fine with interrogative pronouns in subject or object position, but marginal, if not problematic, with adverbials.

- (17) a. **What all** did you see there?  
b. **Who all** will come to the meeting?  
c. **?Where all** did you go on your trip?

Since content interrogatives are frequently also used with some formal adjustments as exclamatives, we can now ask whether these or related differences between the two languages also show up in the corresponding exclamatives. The answer to this question is that the contrasts are even more striking in these cases. In German all of these interrogatives are also usable as exclamative sentences, provided we change the word order to that of embedded structures as well as the intonation:

- (18) a. Wer da alles reden wollte! 'The people who wanted to give a speech!'  
b. Wen Paul alles kennt! 'The people Paul knows!'  
c. Wo der alles hinfährt! 'Amazing, the places he visits!'  
d. Wozu der alles Geld braucht! 'It is amazing the reasons he needs money for!'  
e. Wo der alles/überall Häuser hat! 'The places he has houses in!'

In English there are no exclamatives based on interrogatives of this kind at all, as is shown by the translations in (18).

This special attention given by CA to depth and detail does not mean, of course, that such bilateral comparisons will be exclusively concerned with minor contrasts down to the level of individual lexical items and lose sight of major generalizations. The primary goal of CA, as of any other subfield of linguistics, is to formulate generalizations about contrasts between two languages. But a comparison can certainly be carried out down to the most remarkable detail and there are phenomena, such as contrasts in the lexical subsystems of two languages that are

probably more fruitfully pursued within contrastive studies than as typologies (cf. Plank, 1984a).

Over and above the shared properties and differences described there is a potential for fruitful interaction and cooperation between typology and CA. A contrastive study revealing striking differences between two languages is often the starting point for a comprehensive typology and typology provides a highly important basis for contrastive studies. Finally, it should be noted that the explanations given for contrasts within CA will be very different than those discussed for typology. In CA explanations will be given in terms of historical change, of language contact and of interrelations between contrasts. The explanations discussed in typology look very different and are typically formulated in terms of principles like iconicity, economy, ease of processing and other functional principles.

### **3. CA and Microvariation**

During the last twenty years or so dialectology has undergone a striking reorientation: In addition to the traditional domains lexicology and phonology, morphology and syntax became a major focus and dialectologists began to be interested in comparative work on different dialects within a language, thus examining the patterns of variation within a language in analogy to the interlinguistic variation analyzed by typologists (cf. Kortmann, 2004). More often than not, this program is carried out within the framework of Generative Grammar (Poletto, 2000; Obenauer, 2006) but there are also many functionally oriented projects under way. For European languages like English, German, Italian, Swedish, French, etc. major surveys of microvariation are available and sometimes even major handbooks on variation in a particular language (Kortmann & Schneider, 2004). It is part of the goals of this approach to variation to obtain a more realistic picture of a language and the scope and limits of variation within it. On the other hand, these studies are also used as a testing ground for generative theory, for the further development of the Minimalist Program and for concepts of complexity.

How do CA relate to this approach to linguistic variation and what are the possibilities of a fruitful and interesting interaction? First of all, there is a clear similarity and a major difference. Both programs are interested in language variation but microvariation is concerned with intralinguistic variation, whereas CA is interested in interlinguistic variation. Moreover, standard languages are the preferred object of study in CA, whereas the whole wealth of manifestations of a single language is in focus in dialect studies. On the other hand, the systematic study of variation in a language gives us a more realistic study of what needs to be learned. Dialects may play a role in foreign language acquisition both as a starting point and as a target. The contrasts between two languages may look very different depending on whether dialects are taken into account or not, as B. Kortmann (2004) has shown for relative pronouns in English. Most dialects of English do not have relative pronouns as the standard language does, but introduce these attributive clauses by various particles (*what, as, such*, etc.). Or, to give a different example, a characteristic feature of the vowel system of standard German, namely the opposition between unrounded [i, e] and rounded front vowels [y, ø] is not found in most dialects of German. In my own work I have found dialectal observations interesting and useful because they provide information on gaps in one's data, on phenomena that one would expect on the basis of historical and cross-linguistic considerations, but does not find in the standard languages. This will be illustrated by two examples from the semantic and syntactic domain of reflexivity.

#### **(3a) Identity between attributive intensifier and reflexive marker in Dutch**

In a wide variety of European languages reflexive markers like German *sich*, Romance *se/si* or Russian *sebjá* are clearly distinguished from intensifiers (German *selbst*, Fr. *lui-/elle-même*, Russian *sám*). In languages at the periphery of Europe (Celtic, English, Finnish) and in fact in what seems to be the majority of languages exactly the same forms are used both as reflexive markers and as intensifiers. In these languages a differentiation cannot be based on formal properties but only on distribution: *self*-forms occurring in argument (object, complement) position are reflexive markers, those in adjunct position are intensifiers. English, Finnish, Mandarin, Japanese and Turkish are such languages:

- (19) a. The director himself will attend the meeting. (intensifier, adnominal use)  
 b. The director admires himself. (reflexive pronoun)

Intensifiers have several uses. In addition to the adnominal use exemplified by (19a), we find two adverbial uses, roughly paraphrasable by ‘alone’ and ‘too’ in many languages:

- (20) a. The director writes his speeches himself. (adverbial, exclusive use)  
 b. The director is himself somewhat puzzled. (adverbial, inclusive)

In many languages, as for instance in Turkish, Mandarin, Japanese and Old English, intensifiers also have an attributive use:

- (21) a. kendi oda-m ‘my own room’  
 SELF room-1SG  
 b. kendi memleket-iniz ‘your own country’  
 SELF country-2PL

In such languages we find 5 uses of intensifiers (adnominal, adverbial exclusive, adverbial inclusive, reflexive, attributive), whereas only the first 4 are found in English and only the first three in German, in Romance and Scandinavian languages. Germanic and Romance languages use a special adjective (English *own*, germ. *eigen*, Fr. *propre*) as counterpart of attributive intensifiers in Turkish or Mandarin, as is shown by the English translations in (21). Interestingly enough, there are dialects of Dutch (e.g. Brabants) in which *eigen* is used attributively (‘his/her own’) with a reflexive meaning

- (22) a. Hij maakt hem de meesten zorgen over zijn eigen.  
 He makes him the most worries over his own  
 ‘Most of all he is worried about himself.’  
 b. Hij wast zijn eigen. ‘He is washing.’

This fact looks totally out of place and surprising, when considered in isolation. In the context of comparative and typological perspectives it is not peculiar at all but has clear parallels in several other languages.

### (3b) *Self*-forms in subject position?

Similarly interesting observations can be found in dialect studies on the distribution of *self*-forms in English (cf. Siemund, 2002). There are contexts where the distinction between the reflexive use of such *self*-forms and their use as adnominal intensifiers is not clearly visible in English. This problem arises whenever the intensifier is in construction with a personal

pronoun rather than a noun. In subject position personal pronouns combine with intensifiers and the relevant forms are clearly distinct from reflexive markers:

- (23) a. The director himself told me.  
b. He himself told me. (cf. Germ. 'Er selbst hat es mir gesagt.')

In object position or complement positions, however, combinations of personal pronouns and *self*-forms (*him himself*, *her herself*, etc.) are hardly, if ever found in authentic English texts. This means that the distinction between reflexives and intensifiers is not made in these positions, even if the relevant forms do not have a reflexive meaning and are translated as combinations of personal pronoun + intensifier in German:

- (24) They would talk of himself, he thought fondly. (Germ. 'von ihm selbst')

In (24) there is no antecedent or binder for the *self*-form, which therefore cannot be analyzed or interpreted as a reflexive marker. The only sensible analysis therefore is an analysis as an intensifier with a deleted or incorporated personal pronoun (*him himself* > *himself*). Data from regional varieties of English add more contexts to the problem of drawing a clear distinction between reflexive markers and intensifiers. In Irish English *self*-forms are also possible in subject position. Since these *self*-forms denote a person who is salient in the context given and lack antecedents anyway they can only be analyzed as intensifiers with deleted or incorporated personal pronouns.

Irish ENGLISH

- (25) a. It's himself is going to speak today.  
b. Himself was not looking to friendly today.  
c. And it's himself that told me that up in a pub. (Filppula, 1999)

Finally, mention should be made of the fact that CA and studies on microvariation do not differ all that much when two members of a language family are compared.

#### 4. CA and intercultural communication

The last decades years have witnessed the growth and elaboration of another kind of language comparison, now generally called 'intercultural communication' or 'intercultural pragmatics' (cf. Samovar, 2009). What this approach does is to compare language use rather than systems and in doing so reintroduce the cultural context into the comparison that is normally excluded in any analysis of *langue* or of competence.

It is the legacy of structuralism that linguists from various schools of thought abstract from the context of use, especially from the cultural context, from the situational context and to a large extent also from the historical context. The only contextual parameters that are still taken into account in comparisons of language systems are more or less the following cf. Levinson, 1983): the coordinates of speech situation including the relations between S and H (→ deixis), their preferences (→ speech act theory, conversational analysis), the status of speaker and addressee (→ politeness, honorifics), contextual assumptions based on Gricean principles of cooperative communication (→ conversational inference) and the current status of the communicative exchange (→ information structure). Intercultural Communication, by contrast, deals with the pragmatic side of language comparison, with contrasts between communicative norms and communicative behavior in context. The language and cultures selected for such comparisons are precisely those that are used in regular and important

interactions. Let us consider a few examples of phenomena typically dealt with in this approach to language comparison.

It is a well-known fact that languages may differ in the number of terms they have for addressing a single interlocutor and in the conditions relevant for the use of these terms. In English we have only one (*you*), In German and many other European languages we find two (*du, Sie*) and in Japanese we find 5 according to some counts, but as many as 15, according to other analyses. To take the simpler example of terms of referring to the speaker, English and German have one expression (*I, ich*) – unless we include such expressions as *yours truly* or *meine Wenigkeit*, whereas Japanese has as many as four for male speakers and three for female speakers. The system of first person pronouns in Japanese can roughly be described as follows:

	<b>formal</b>			<b>informal</b>
<b>male</b>	watakushi	watashi	boku	ore
<b>female</b>	watakushi	watashi	watashi	atashi

Figure 2: personal pronouns in Japanese

The parameters of use relevant for these pronouns are roughly describable as ‘informal – formal’ and ‘male – female’, but are not easily identifiable in concrete situations. Another example of differentiations and specific norms of use in a hierarchically structured society relates to verbs of giving and receiving. Even the most elementary teaching manuals of Japanese mention two different verbs for ‘give’ in English, one being glossed as ‘to humbly present’ for situations where the speaker is the source of the transfer and the receiver occupies a middle social position (*ageru, agemasu*) and the other one (*kureru, kuremasu*) being used for acts of giving with the speaker as receiver. This distinction is essential even for elementary stages of using Japanese, but the overall system is much more complicated and can be described as follows<sup>4</sup>:

<b>Verbs of giving in Japanese</b>			
<b>Giver</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Status of outgroup</b>	<b>Verb</b>
Ingroup	Outgroup	Low (W: Very low)	<i>yaru</i>
		Medium	<i>ageru/agemasu</i> ‘to humbly present’
		High	<i>o-age suru</i>
		Very high	<i>sashi-ageru</i>
<b>Status of ingrouper</b>			
Outgroup	Ingroup	Low/Medium	<i>kureru/kuremasu</i> ‘to hand down’
		High	<i>kudasaru</i>

Figure 3

The choice of verb roughly depends on whether the speaker is the source of the transfer or somebody else (ingroup vs. outgroup) and on the social status of the recipient (low – medium – high).

The phenomena just described are part of honorific systems, found especially in languages with a strict hierarchical organization of their societies in current or former stages of their history. Other popular topics in the analysis of intercultural communication are *inter alia* the following:

- how to use/perform **speech acts** (criticize, requests, apologize, greet, telephone calls; declining offers)

<sup>4</sup> Bernard Comrie has drawn my attention to these facts.

- communication in **institutional settings**: in the classroom; business cultures; negotiating;
- culturally distinctive **speech codes** (e.g. *dugri* ‘straight talk’ in Israeli Sabra culture (open, direct, blunt, to the point));

A few additional examples will provide illustration of these topics.

Even though a culturally neutral terminology, assumed to be applicable to all kinds of communicative systems, is used to talk about speech acts in different languages and countries, various studies have shown that there are culture-specific ways of apologizing, of criticizing and of declining offers. Analogous differences are found in communication activities in institutional settings, such as business negotiations. In particular, the implicit assumptions of early studies of speech act theories (Searle, 1969; Levinson, 1983) that the felicity conditions of specific speech act types and their formal encoding are more or less the same across languages have turned out to be not tenable (cf. Egner, 2006; Dacapua & Dunham, 2007). In a wide variety of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies of speech acts like ‘giving advice’, ‘requests’, ‘promises’, ‘apologies’, etc. important differences have been revealed. In her article on the speech act of promising in Western cultures and African cultures Egner (2006), for example, points out that a firm commitment of the speaker is not part of the essential conditions of that speech act. A promise in the African cultures studied appears to be used primarily as a means of politely closing a verbal exchange. Moreover, different metalinguistic speech act verbs are available in a number of West African languages to differentiate a binding promise from a non-binding one. In a much earlier study of these questions Wierzbicka (1985) showed that English, in contrast to Polish, places heavy restrictions on the use of the imperative for requests and orders, encouraging the use of interrogative and conditional forms instead and that these differences are a reflection of cultural differences describable in terms of spontaneity, directness, intimacy and affection as opposed to indirectness, distance, tolerance and anti-dogmatism. Intercultural contrasts in communication relevant in institutional settings are of special interest and practical value to businessmen and businesswomen. The rules of business negotiations in Japan are now known to be very different from those practiced in the United States or in Europe.

Kinship systems may be very differently organized in different societies and cultures. Even if we still find different lexical distinctions in some European languages, these distinctions are losing or have already lost their social significance as a result of parallel social developments. Striking contrasts, however, emerge, as soon as comparisons are carried out between European systems and systems of differentiations found in remote cultures, as for instance in New Caledonia. In Paicî, a Melanesian language of this island, kinship terms are only differentiated for three generations, i. e. for a period of time that can be experienced by the average speaker. In other words the same expressions are used for a grandfather and a son, for a father and a grandson, and for the brother of the speaker himself and the male child of a grandchild. An analogous differentiation is found for female relatives (cf. Leblic, 2006). This is shown in the following diagram:

<b>Level of kinship</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>+2</b>	<b>+1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-3</b>
M Ego uses <i>ciè</i> in addressing	x			x			
A Ego uses <i>ao</i> in addressing		x			x		
L Ego uses <i>caa</i> in addressing			x			x	
E Ego uses <i>ciè/aajii</i> in addressing				x			x

**Figure 4 Kinship terms in Paicî (Leblic, 2006: 69)**

This organization of a kinship system clearly reveals a cyclical conceptualization of time and thus an important background assumption for the interpretation of many utterances in that language. This conceptualization of time is clearly different from anything known of European languages.

Finally, there are culturally distinctive speech codes that play an important role in shaping the communication of a specific society. One well-known example is *dugri* 'straight talk' a distinctive speech style in Israeli Sabra culture. In her detailed study of *dugri* speech T. Katriel (1986) characterized it as 'open, direct, blunt, to the point, sincere' as a manifestation of being true to oneself. In neglecting considerations of politeness and smoothness of interpersonal encounters, this speech code contrasts sharply with *musayra*, a culturally focal way of speaking and acting among Arabs.

## 5. Conclusions

On the basis of the preceding attempts to find a suitable place for Contrastive Linguistics within the spectrum of comparative approaches to linguistics analysis we are now in a position to summarize the essential components of the agenda for its agenda:

### (i) Synchronic orientation

Contrastive Linguistics has a synchronic orientation. Comparative Historical Linguistics can provide explanations for contrasts and their interrelations between genetically related languages and CA may identify problems and phenomena worth analyzing from a historical perspective, but it is only in the case of genetically related languages that such overlap and cooperation are possible.

### (ii) Granularity

CA is also concerned with fine-grained, in depth-analyses of similarities and contrasts that are generally inaccessible to typological generalizations. In that sense it is a complement to typology rather than a small-scale typology. For a CA both the availability vs. the lack of articles and their contrasts between the uses of articles in two languages with articles are of great interest. This emphasis on fine granularity does not mean, however, that the focus is on isolated observations rather than generalizations, but these generalizations will look very different from the implicational statements and hierarchies of typology. Even though we find some interesting attempts to develop a field of lexical typology (cf. Koch, Vanhoeve ) I still think that lexical contrasts between two languages are best described in pair wise fashion. That this does not preclude the possibility to make interesting generalizations is shown in Plank (1984a).

### (iii) Comparison of language pairs

CA is mainly concerned with bilateral language comparisons, between mother tongue and a foreign language tongue, between source language and target language or between first language and second language, depending on what kind of applications are envisaged. Extending the scope beyond two languages is only possible if the goal of comprehensive comparisons is given up in favor of analyses of small fragments of languages as a first step towards a typology or an areal study. It is precisely this restriction to a comparison of two languages which enables CA to consider a wide variety of parameters of variation and get as close as possible to the goal of providing a holistic typology for a language. The question which languages should be selected for comparison receives a different, though principled, answer in all five approaches to comparative linguistics discussed above: HCL looks at languages of one single family, Microvariation at varieties of a single language; language typology is all-embracing in its scope, even though its comparisons are confined to a

representative sample of the world's languages; Cross-cultural communication selects language use from cultures and communities that interact regularly and CA selects language pairs that play a role in language acquisition, in bilingualism or translation. It goes without saying that comparisons between "sundry languages" have no clear place in this system of comparative linguistics.

(iv) Perspective

CA means describing one language from the perspective of another and will therefore reveal properties of languages that are not easily visible otherwise. In other words, CA has a great heuristic value for the analysis of highly language-specific properties. Different languages used as standards of comparison will in all likelihood lead to different descriptions. Different properties of a language will look remarkable, depending of the language used as language of standard of comparison. A contrastive analysis which does not lead to new insights is pointless.

(v) Falsifiability

The results of contrastive descriptions are easily falsifiable, if they are expressed with precision and great explicitness and therefore in need of constant revision and improvements. This statement also implies a certain criterion of adequacy: contrastive descriptions have to be given in a format that makes falsification possible.

(vi) Theoretical framework

The challenge for CA is discovering the contrasts and describing them in a maximally general way and not the choice of a specific theoretical format. Its explanandum is the contrasts between languages. Given that CA is meant to have some relevance for language teaching and the training of foreign language teachers, its statements should avoid technical jargon. An enlightened version of traditional grammar suitably enriched with insight from generative grammar and typology seems best suited to this task. On the other hand good contrastive descriptions may lead to modifications in national traditions of grammar writing.

As soon as the typical properties mentioned above are extended in one way or another (e.g. by including more than two languages or several dialects of one language, by looking at the contextual embedding and use in communication, by looking at earlier stages of the languages under comparison) contrastive studies move into the direction of one of the other four approaches. In conclusion, I would like to point out that none of the preceding statements is meant to be prescriptive in any way. The main point of the preceding discussion is that only by finding a place for CL in relation to other forms of language comparison will we be able to gain a clearer picture of what contrastive linguistics is and what it is not.

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