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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

### PART ONE

#### I. INTRODUCTION

My purpose is not to solve any problems about contrastive analysis, but to discuss critically the opposing positions of linguists and experienced teachers on this controversial subject from the viewpoint of its usefulness in second language teaching.

#### II. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

«Learning to speak a foreign language is the acquiring of an ability to express oneself in different sounds and different words through the use of a different grammar. Any sounds, words or items of grammar of the foreign language may or may not have counterparts in the native language. And these counterparts may have meanings, or content, which are similar to or considerably different from those of the other language...

If the description of a single language is a highly complex affair, the differential description of two languages is more than twice as complex. It involves not only the analysis of two languages, but a comparison of the differences in separate items and of the way they work together. It covers all levels of language and the relations between them — (1) Phonetics, (2) Grammar, (3) Lexicology, and (4) Stylistic usage<sup>1</sup>. This is what is called contrastive analysis of the student's native language and the language to be learned. Therefore, contrastive analysis is the «comparison of equivalent portions of two languages for the purpose of isolating the probable

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1. William F. Mackey, *Language Teaching Analysis*, Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1967, p. 80.

problems that speakers of one language will have in acquiring the other»<sup>1</sup>.

J. Donald Bowen (1967) agrees with Alfred S. Hayes (1965) on the point that it is descriptive linguistics which has contributed to the development of contrastive analysis by which two languages can be systematically compared on all levels of their structures. Bowen states that: «Contrastive analysis has organized the comparison of languages, has sharpened the forms and perspective of the resulting descriptive statements, so they can be truly useful to the language teacher, who has not always been convinced that he needed the linguist's help»<sup>2</sup>.

Some scholars, like Halliday and McIntosh (1964), believe that contrastive analysis is partly a reaction against some former methods which were not very «useful», i.e. the translation of isolated uncontextualized sentences, the learning of word lists with translation equivalents, and so on.

## PART TWO

### I. USEFULNESS OF CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

Whether the contrastive analysis of two languages, L<sup>1</sup> and L<sup>2</sup>, can be proved useful, what degree of significance it can have, if any, for foreign language teaching, as well as to what areas of foreign language teaching it could be applied fruitfully, comprise one of the most controversial issues throughout, at least, the recent history of foreign language teaching. Much has been written on this subject, and conflicting positions have been taken in relation to it.

One position holds many reservations regarding the usefulness of contrastive analysis. A second considers it helpful only for the teacher (as a person having language skills and experience) for developing class techniques, evaluating the language of a textbook, pinpointing learning problems, predicting the student's mistakes, etc., and not for the student, particularly when in a classroom situation. A third position allows that contrastive analysis can be relevant to the language learning of only adult students, as will be seen later.

Halliday and McIntosh, for example, discussing this issue in their book *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching* (1964), point out that contra-

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1. Albert Valdman, *Trends in Language Teaching*, New York : McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966, p. 287.

2. J. Donald Bowen, «Contrastive Analysis and the Language Classroom», *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, Series III, 1967, p. 80.

stive analysis may be excluded from foreign language teaching, not only as it is the result of the deliberate application of a pedagogical theory, but also from the force of circumstances as when the pupils have no common native language and the teacher is not aware of this factor. There are numerous foreign language classes all over the world where for theoretical, or more often, for practical reasons, the use of comparison of the foreign and native languages does not arise. Whether or not the situation predominates, there are also foreign language classes where contrastive analysis is used, and there are those who hold the view that, where circumstances permit, the native language can have a positive role in foreign language teaching.

Again, Halliday and McIntosh state that the issue of whether to use the comparison between  $L^1$  and  $L^2$  or not is «a matter partly of circumstances and partly of pedagogical theory; it can not be resolved by reference to linguistics. If the native language is to be used, however, it is important to know what possibilities exist for using it. If comparison is to be done, it should be done well; otherwise it may hinder rather than help»<sup>1</sup>. With reference to the student, they state in the same book that only adult students can derive substantial benefit from the contrastive analysis of  $L^1$  and  $L^2$ .

J. Donald Bowen is more categorical in his consideration of contrastive analysis, by saying that: «Contrastive analysis per se adds nothing to the data; it is merely a technique for organizing the facts of structural congruence between two language systems. If it has anything to recommend it as a special technique, it is that it provides an organized and systematized approach to a very complex mass of data: the items and patterns of two language systems.

The fact is that contrastive information about two languages can exist quite independently of any particular scholarly discipline and two languages in contact provide an excellent opportunity to observe the stresses and pressures one applies to the other. The language teacher has been in an advantageous position to observe this contact and he has gathered a large stock of useful information.

Much has been spoken and written about the contributions, potential and real, of contrastive analysis to language teaching.

It has been claimed that learning problems can be more specifically defined, that the importance of certain deceptively 'simple' teaching problems can be underlined and an adequate amount of emphasis can be planned, that teaching efficiency can be increased by observing which points need early attention and/or special emphasis, that errors must be anticipated early and

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1. M.A.K. Halliday, Angus McIntosh, and Peter Strevens, *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*, London: Longmans, 1964, p. 112.

prevented, so that the need for later remedial work can be minimized, that the detailed knowledge of a systematic comparison will give the teacher added confidence as he faces his class.

All these claims can be true, but none has the certainty of death or taxes»<sup>1</sup>.

Besides, according to Alfred S. Hayes (1965), contrastive analysis is useful to prospective linguists and language teachers, but not to students studying a foreign language, even if they are adults, as Halliday and McIntosh accept. This particular point of the usefulness of contrastive analysis in class will be discussed later, however, as a separate application of contrastive analysis to foreign language teaching.

Discussing contrastive analysis Hayes says: «It is often said that what we teach, or better, the habits which the student must acquire, should derive from an analysis first of the spoken, then of the written language, as analysis which is in accord with accepted principles of modern descriptive linguistics, and that further, the resulting descriptions should then be compared point by point with a similarly derived analysis of the language of the learner.

Such a contrastive analysis should then yield points of conflict or mismatch between the two languages. Such mismatch may be observed in phonology, in morphology and in syntax. These areas of mismatch will become the central points that practical language instruction must emphasize. The importance of this requirement is just beginning to find acceptance among teachers in the United States.

Formal steps in this direction, admittedly tentative and exploratory, have been taken at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., which has been preparing contrastive analyses of the sounds and forms of English, on the one hand and those of French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian on the other.

The German and Spanish analyses have already been published; the others are due to appear soon. (Herbert L. Kufner, *The Grammatical Structures of English and German*, and William G. Moulton, *The Sounds of English and German*, Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1962. Robert P. Stockwell, J. Donald Bowen, and John W. Martin, *The Grammatical Structures of English and Spanish* and Robert P. Stockwell and J. Donald Bowen, *The Sounds of English and Spanish*, Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1965)»<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, another group of linguists and experienced foreign language teachers

1. J. Donald Bowen, «Contrastive Analysis and the Language Classroom», Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Series III, 1967, pp. 80-81.

2. Alfred S. Hayes, «New Directions in Foreign Language Teaching», Modern Language Journal, 49, 1965, p. 282.

appeared supporting a position to that of the first group who did not share the former's doubts and reservations, at least not to the same degree. On the contrary, those who belong, let us say, to the opposite group admit that contrastive analysis is absolutely useful and necessary to every aspect of foreign language teaching, as a principle, as well as an indispensable tool in the hands of the teacher for the evaluation of the language of a textbook, for the preparation of new material, for the prediction of the student's mistakes, etc.

So, Fries, speaking about contrastive analysis as the «new approach», says that the fundamental feature of the new approach to language learning is not a great allotment of time, is not smaller classes, is not even a greater emphasis on oral approach, but it is a new basis upon which the teacher will build the teaching materials. This new approach rests : 1) a scientific-descriptive analysis of the language to be learned; 2) a similar scientific descriptive analysis of the language of the learner; and 3) a systematic comparison of these two descriptive analyses in order to bring out completely the difficulties of structural patterning of the two language systems<sup>1</sup>.

Lado, in his book, *Linguistics Across Cultures*, considers contrastive analysis and its results of «fundamental value».

Mariano Pascasio (1960) who studied Tagalog speakers in their learning of English, calls the complete comparison of the two languages «a task of great magnitude».

Daam M. Van Willigen in his article, «The Cultural Value of Foreign Language Teaching», in the *Modern Language Journal* (1964), writes that «it belongs to the basic principles of methodology that the analysis should be followed by a comparison with the results of the corresponding analysis of the mother tongue»<sup>2</sup>.

Another well-known scholar, Dr. William Schwab, shares Van Willigen's opinion that contrastive analysis is a principle. In his article «Recent Developments in Applied Linguistics» in the *Philippine Sociological Review* (1963), Schwab warmly praises structural linguistics and its achievements. He points out that the chief contribution of structural linguistics does not lie primarily in teaching techniques, but in the principle of a point-by-point comparison of the learner's native language with the target language<sup>3</sup>.

1. Charles C. Fries, «American Linguistics and the Teaching of English», *Language Learning*, 6, 1 & 2, 1955.

2. Daam M. Van Willigen, «The Cultural Value of Foreign Language Teaching», *Modern Language Journal*, 1964.

3. William Schwab, «Recent Developments in Applied Linguistics», *The Philippine Sociological Review*, 1963.



## II. FACTORS AND STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

According to the supporters of the usefulness of contrastive analysis, «description» is a basic factor for effective comparison. J. C. Catford (1964) asserts that no amount of careful selection, grading and presentation can be effective, if contrastive analysis is based on a description which is inadequate.

Again, Angus McIntosh and M.A.K. Halliday discuss this particular point in their article «General Linguistics and Its Application to Language Teaching» included in the book *General Patterns of Language Papers in General Descriptive and Applied Linguistics* (1960). Their opinion is that effective comparison between  $L^1$  and  $L^2$  depends upon description, so that form cannot be neglected. The better the underlying description, the more successful the comparison is likely to be. They consider it impossible to specify at what stage of foreign language learning the native language comes in. They believe that the answer depends on the pedagogical principles adopted. On the one hand, one might try to make a complete comparison of, for example, the grammatical structure of  $L^1$  and  $L^2$ ; on the other hand, one might take account only of cases of equivalence, confusing cases where there is a high probability that an item in  $L^1$  will always be translated by one and the same item in  $L^2$ . In any case, whatever the stage of teaching at which it is proposed to use  $L^1$ , valid methods of comparison will be needed. These methods depend on general linguistic theory.

In another book, *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching* (1964), McIntosh and Halliday emphasize that no single general statement can be made to account for all the patterns of  $L^1$  and  $L^2$ , and therefore, no overall comparison statement accounting for the differences between two languages. Thus, they suggest three steps for every comparison statement : 1) the separate description of the relevant features of each language; 2) the establishment of comparability; and 3) the comparison itself.

The establishment of comparability means that before comparing, for example, the nominal group in English with the nominal group in French, it is desirable to establish that they are comparable. To establish that they are comparable, we first need to show their contextual equivalence; and, in this case, McIntosh and Halliday urge reference to translation. If the items are not at least sometimes equivalent in translation, they are not worth comparing. They suggest nevertheless, that comparison can be shown in parallel tables ignoring, for the sake of simplicity, the categories determined by concord. In case of transparent material the tables can be superimposed on one another to show the foreign language student where he must make a choice

which is not made in his own language. According to their opinion the method emphasizes that comparison is the display of differences against a background of likeness.

Robert Lado gives a brief description of an effective way in which contrastive analysis must be carried out : «Of special interest to the language teacher is contrastive linguistics, which compares the structures of two languages to determine the points where they differ. These differences are the chief source of difficulty in learning a second language»<sup>1</sup>.

The linguist, and in this case Professor J. Carroll states that the only effective teacher would be a trained linguist who is at the same time a speaker of the language, Lado continues, «takes up each phoneme in the native language and compares it with the phonetically most similar ones in the second language. He then describes their similarities and differences. He takes up the sequences of the phonemes and does likewise. Morpheme and syntax patterns are also compared and the differences described»<sup>2</sup>.

Stockwell, Bowen, and Martin view the entire matter from a pedagogical sequence and relate two approaches followed by teachers in their book, *The Grammatical Structures of English and Spanish*. Some teachers, according to the authors, start at one end and work from the easiest to the hardest, whereas others begin at the other end and their contrastive analysis proceeds from the hardest to the easiest. Actually, Stockwell, Bowen, and Martin admit that no approach exists in a pure form as there are too many other considerations which play a role in sequencing materials. Finally, they imply that it is probably most helpful to combine some of the difficult correspondence with some of the more easily transferred patterns in the early lessons so as to give the student both confidence and a feeling for the important differences in the structure of the target language.

### III. THE TEACHER'S PROBLEM

Many teachers of foreign languages wonder why they should go through the painful business of comparative analysis. Is it not his responsibility simply to teach a foreign language? Is it not enough that he should know that foreign language? Robert Lado (1957) contends that it is not enough. He states that it is absolutely necessary for the teacher to know both languages and to have compared them because he believes that «the student who comes in contact

1. Robert Lado, *Language Teaching : A Scientific Approach*, New York : McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1964, p. 21.

2. Lado, 1964, p. 21.

with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult»<sup>1</sup>.

J. C. Catford (1959) confirms that it is fairly widely recognized that the comparison of L<sup>1</sup> and L<sup>2</sup> provides important background material in second language teaching. He therefore calls a comparative knowledge of L<sup>1</sup> and L<sup>2</sup> «a useful part of the teacher's equipment». In addition, Ralph B. Long (1967) agrees and emphasizes the importance for the teacher to know both languages since this knowledge will facilitate his comparative analysis of them. For Long, «clearly all teachers of English as a second language should know a good deal about their students' home language or languages... and the teacher of English as a second language needs a very considerable knowledge of the phonology, grammar, vocabulary and history of the language he is teaching, whenever he teaches...»<sup>2</sup>. These scholars are in agreement that the teacher's knowledge of both L<sup>1</sup> and L<sup>2</sup> results in the establishment of the differences between the two languages, assisted by contrastive analysis, and that «what the student has to learn equals the sum of the differences established by the contrastive analysis»<sup>3</sup>. Still another scholar, Mariano Pascasio (1960), admits that if the foreign language teacher has done descriptive - comparative studies of the two languages, it will be possible for him to locate points of similarity and difference, an ability which is extremely useful in foreign language teaching.

In their book, *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching* (1964), Halliday, McIntosh, and Stevens emphasize that the teacher must know how both L<sup>1</sup> and L<sup>2</sup> work if he wants to make use of contrastive analysis in foreign language teaching. It is not enough that he should be able to speak the two languages; he must also be able to describe and compare them, with the only difference that since the descriptions of the two languages are to be compared to determine points and areas of similarity and difference, they need to be compatible. The teacher should place them into the same descriptive frame of reference as nearly as the structures of the two languages will permit. It is important that the same model be used in the description of any two languages to be compared, otherwise differences in conceptualization may be difficult to distinguish from differences in language systems.

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1. Robert Lado, *Linguistics Across Cultures*, Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 1957, p. 2.

2. Ralph B. Long, «What Teachers of English as a Second Language Should Know», *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, Series III, 1967, p. 72.

3. Albert Valdman, *Trends in Language Teaching*, New York : McGraw Hill, Inc., 1966, p. 37.



## PART THREE

### I. APPLICATIONS OF CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

In this part an attempt will be made to depart from the strictly theoretical aspect of this discussion and to confront the whole matter from the practical aspect, that is, to examine in which areas contrastive analysis may be applied, and at the same time to examine the opposing ideas of the scholars and foreign language teachers who have sharply criticized the usefulness of contrastive analysis.

The following divisions and subdivisions are the most frequent in which the usefulness of contrastive analysis is discussed and criticized<sup>1</sup>:

- A. Evaluation of the language of a textbook;
- B. Preparation of new teaching material and supplement of inadequate material :
  - 1. to be up-to-date;
  - 2. to meet the student's needs;
- C. Investigation of the learning problems of foreign language students, as well as prediction of the student's difficulties in L<sup>2</sup> learning;
- D. Teaching contrastive analysis in class.

#### A. Evaluation of the language of a textbook

This is a point on which all scholars who recognize even some significance of contrastive analysis agree. They allow that contrastive analysis decisively helps foreign language teachers who are professionally trained, either with writing a textbook or with evaluating the language of a textbook. Lado explicitly says : «On the surface, most textbooks look pretty much alike. Publishers see to it that their books look attractive and that the titles sound enticing. That is part of their business. If a teacher is professionally trained, however, he will be able to look beyond attractive illustrations and handsome printing and binding.

He should be able to see whether the book presents the language and culture patterns that form the system to be studied, and does not merely list disparate items from here and there. He should also be able to discern whether the book gives due emphasis to those patterns that are difficult because they are different from those of the native language of the students.

Some books, advertised as panaceas for easy learning of a foreign lan-

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1. My thinking, while constructing this classification, was highly influenced by Robert Lado, *Linguistics Across Cultures*, 1957.

guage, simply present a few patterns that are similar to the native language and spend a good many chapters, sometimes an entire volume, on them. The untrained teacher and student may get the impression that the book does simplify the learning of the language. But in reality it does not teach the foreign language; it merely entertains teacher and student in easy but unproductive activity. That weakness is immediately laid bare by comparing the two languages.

Textbooks should be graded as to grammatical structure, pronunciation, vocabulary, and cultural content. And grading can be done best after the kind of comparison we are presenting here»<sup>1</sup>.

J. Donald Bowen (1967) agrees that most of the traditional textbooks are vague and not very helpful in offering guidance to the student. A careful contrastive analysis would disclose a pattern of usage which can be specified in considerable detail in terms that are both reasonable and meaningful to the student.

#### **B. Preparation of new teaching material and supplement of inadequate material**

Raja T. Nasr who has studied the problems which Arab students face in learning the English language writes : «For more effective, more satisfactory, and more successful English teaching, both English and Arabic linguistic features must be analyzed and compared. The analysis and comparison serve two major purposes :

1. they serve as a guide to the teacher, and
2. they serve as a basis for preparing textbook materials»<sup>2</sup>.

In their book, *The Sounds of English and Spanish*, Stockwell and Bowen emphasize the belief that a careful contrastive analysis of the two languages offers an excellent basis for the preparation of instructional materials, the planning of courses, and the development of actual classroom techniques.

Robert Lado finds the preparation of new teaching materials to be another fundamental application of contrastive analysis. According to Lado, the teacher is increasingly confronted by the need to prepare textbooks and other teaching materials which especially satisfy two demands : 1) to be up to date; and 2) to meet the needs of the particular students he is interested in. «The most important new thing in the preparation of teaching materials is the com-

1. Robert Lado, *Linguistics Across Cultures*, Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 1957, pp. 2-3.

2. Raja T. Nasr, *The Teaching of English to Arab Students*, London : Longmans, 1963, p. 5.

parison of native and foreign language and culture in order to find the hurdles that really have to be surmounted in the teaching. It will soon be considered quite out of date to begin writing a textbook without having previously compared the two systems involved»<sup>1</sup>.

Lado continues: «Commonly, the teacher finds that he is given an assigned textbook that he finds inadequate both as to linguistic and cultural content. The teacher who has systematically compared the two languages will be able to prepare supplementary exercises on those patterns which are important or difficult and have been overlooked or treated inadequately in the book»<sup>2</sup>. He emphasizes that «the linguistic comparison is basic and really inescapable if we wish to make progress and not merely reshuffle the same old materials»<sup>3</sup>.

### C. Investigation of learning problems and prediction of the student's difficulties

This is a point of controversy. H. W. Kirkwood, in his article «Contrastive Linguistic Analysis» (1966), notes that the student continually comes across differences on a phonological, syntactical, and semantic level, which create real problems for his language learning and which problems of difference and conflict can be solved only by a contrastive analysis of L<sup>1</sup> and L<sup>2</sup>.

Mariano Pascasio (1960) agrees with Kirkwood, but at the same time he goes a step further by admitting that the teacher, helped by «descriptive-comparative studies» of the two languages, not only can find out the student's learning problems, but he can also predict more precisely the interferences and facilitation the speakers will encounter in learning the new language.

Norman P. Sacks asserts that through a contrastive analysis of the points at which conflict arises, «he (the teacher) is able to predict the difficulties which students will encounter in learning the target language and, on the basis of these, to construct teaching materials calculated to establish habitual responses in that language»<sup>4</sup>.

One of the most fervent supporters of the idea that the teacher can diagnose his student's difficulties quickly and accurately in most cases is Lado (1957). According to him, a professionally trained teacher is able not only to know what the pattern is, but also to know precisely which feature in that pattern is troubling the student.

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1. Robert Lado, *Linguistics Across Cultures*, Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1957, p. 3.

2. Lado, 1957, p. 3.

3. Lado, 1957, p. 3.

4. Norman P. Sacks, «Application of Linguistics to Teaching», *Modern Language Journal*, 48, 1964, p. 7.

There are some scholars, however, like J. Carroll (1963) who believe that the teacher can predict the student's difficulties in advance on the basis of contrastive analysis, but only to a certain extent. There are others like Baird, Schwab, Halliday, and McIntosh who not only have reservations regarding the whole matter of contrastive analysis and learning problems, but who also speak about a confusion which arises between the diagnosis of errors and their prevention. Baird, for example, in his article, «Contrastive Studies and the Language Teacher», *English Language Teaching* (1967), blames the linguist as being partly responsible for this confusion. Baird believes that a contrastive analysis of L<sup>1</sup> and L<sup>2</sup> will enable the language teacher to predict the areas of difficulty which he and his students may encounter. He does not consider the prediction of mistakes to be a simple process, however. On the other hand, Schwab says that «the concept of contrastive analysis is often confused with the techniques of teaching»<sup>1</sup>.

Halliday and McIntosh (1964) also refer to a misunderstanding of the role of comparison and the confusion between the diagnosis of errors and their prevention and cure. Although they believe that one can predict likely errors by means of a good comparison, they claim that the diagnosis of errors has nothing to do with comparison, but that «the concern is with the analysis of an error, not with the study of its causes, and such analysis is a purely descriptive matter. Any error in English can be described with complete accuracy by reference solely to the description of English without taking any account of the student's native language or even knowing what it is. Each error is stated as a specific deviation from a described English feature»<sup>2</sup>.

#### D. Teaching contrastive analysis in class

Most scholars and foreign language teachers do not find contrastive analysis to be of any usefulness in the language class. Others, for example, McIntosh and Halliday (1964), believe that contrastive analysis may be done in class, but only when the students are adults. Similarly, J. C. Catford regards the use of contrastive analysis in class as valuable only to certain types of students. He states : «Opinions on this are divided. On the whole the practice is not recommended in this country; in the Soviet Union, on the other hand, comparison of Russian with English (or other L<sup>2</sup>'s) is regarded as a valua-

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1. William Schwab, «Recent Developments in Applied Linguistics», *Philippine Sociological Review*, 1963.

2. M. A. K. Halliday, A. McIntosh, and P. Stevens, *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*, London : Longmans, 1964, pp. 118 - 119.





ble part of the recommended process of teaching languages consciously»<sup>1</sup>.

Fries disagrees completely. He writes: «Descriptions and contrastive analyses of L<sup>1</sup> and L<sup>2</sup> is not the material to be taught. It constitutes rather the basic matter upon which to build satisfactory classroom exercises, which will contain the significant contrasts that must be mastered as new molds or patterns for the new language material. We assume that our first step is to learn to use the new language rather than to acquire detailed information about that language. Structural analyses are not for the ordinary student, but for the training of the teachers»<sup>2</sup>. Alfred S. Hayes (1965) shares Fries' opinion that comparisons themselves are not for language teaching, but for prospective linguists and language teachers.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

- A. The first, and perhaps the most controversial, subject throughout, at least, the recent history of foreign language teaching is whether contrastive analysis is useful or not for the teaching of foreign languages.
- B. A comparison of the student's native language and the language to be learned furnishes a basis for a better description of the language, the preparation of teaching materials, the evaluation of the language of a textbook, and the ability to supplement inadequate material.
- C. Subjects like the prediction of mistakes, the investigation of the student's difficulties in L<sup>2</sup> learning, and the use of contrastive analysis in class, are controversial subjects on which the opinions of scholars and foreign language teachers are divided.
- D. Teachers with a knowledge of contrastive analysis can be expected to guide their students in a more effective manner as they will understand the cause of an error and be better able to prepare corrective drills.

In conclusion, let us return to Bowen's remark about the contributions, potential and real, of contrastive analysis to language teaching: «All these claims can be true, but none has the certainty of death or taxes»<sup>3</sup>.

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1. J. C. Catford in R. Quirk and A. H. Smith, eds., *The Teaching of English*, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964, p. 148.

2. Charles C. Fries, «American Linguistics and the Teaching of English», *Language Learning*, 6, 1 & 2, 1955, pp. 1-22.

3. J. Donald Bowen, «Contrastive Analysis and the Language Classroom», *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, Series III, 1967, p. 81.

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