

A CASE OF CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS  
BASED ON WRITTEN DISCOURSE

The possibility of contrasting languages has been seriously considered, exemplified<sup>1</sup> and attacked<sup>2</sup> in the past thirty years. It has been of particular interest to linguists dealing with language teaching and language teaching materials and to language teachers as well. This paper aims at investigating whether contrastive analysis at discourse level is at all possible, and, if it is, whether statements of contrast should be made relevant to the norms determining discourse and in particular to the type of transaction carried out through discourse.

Along with Coulthard, then, we will assume that between the levels of grammar of a language and non-linguistic organization, there is the level of discourse. "Sequences which from a grammatical viewpoint are a random succession of clauses of different types can be seen from a functional point of view to be highly structured".<sup>3</sup>

Discourse, then, does not consist simply of a string of grammatically well formed utterances or sentences, but rather, such utterances combine to form discourse, the coherence of which depends primarily on the relations between these utterances. Discourse can also serve as the picture of the communication situation in that it realizes who is saying/writing what, to whom and how. The appropriateness conditions of a type of discourse, however, depend also on the type of transaction carried out through discourse. It interests us then to see how different communities encode types of transaction. It seems reasonable at this stage to give a brief account of the methodologies of contrastive analysis that have been attempted and the criticisms that they have evoked. The relevance of this account draws from the fact that we will try to show in this paper that it is perhaps more feasible and practically justifiable to attempt contrastive analyses at the level of discourse rather than any of the levels of grammar.

One of the first linguists to attempt contrastive analysis and put forward a methodology for it was Robert Lado<sup>4</sup> whose thesis can be

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1. (a). R. Lado, *Linguistics Across Cultures*, Ann Arbor The University of Michigan Press, 1957.

(b). P. Stockwel and S. Bowen, *The Sounds of English and Spanish*, 1965.

(c). P. Stockwel and S. Bowen, *The Grammatical Structures of English and Spanish*, 1965.

2. R. Wardhaugh, 'The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis', in J. Schuman and N. Stenson, *New Frontiers in Second Language Learning*, Newbury House, 1975.

3. M. Coulthard, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, Longman, 1977.

4. R. Lado, 1957, *ibid.*

summarized in his own words as follows "... we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student". The same opinion was expressed by C.C. Fries at about the same time in relation to teaching materials: "The most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner". Moreover, Lado proposes three axes of comparison, i.e. form, meaning and distribution, along which phonological, syntactic, lexical, and cultural comparisons can be made. This thesis of contrastive analysis was criticised as too strong, in that it is possible to contrast the system of one language (phonology, syntax and lexicon) with the system of a second language in order to *predict* those difficulties which a speaker of the second language will have in learning the second language and to construct teaching materials to help him learn that language. Thus, the "strong" version of the contrastive analysis theory makes demands on linguistic theory and of linguists that they are in no position to meet. This version demands that "(a) linguists have available a set of linguistic universals formulated within a comprehensive linguistic theory which deals adequately with phonology syntax and semantics, and (b) a theory of contrastive linguistics into which they can plug complete linguistic descriptions of the two languages being contrasted so as to produce the correct set of contrasts between the two languages".<sup>5</sup>

A different version of contrastive analysis that has been put forward seems more realistic in that it requires of the linguist to use the linguistic knowledge so far available to him in order to *account* for observed difficulties in second language learning. This version, called the "weak" version, also allows for the fact that linguistic difference and learning difficulty are not necessarily related and certainly not synonymous<sup>6</sup>, as the strong version seemed to suggest. The starting point in the contrast here is provided by actual evidence from such phenomena as faulty translation, foreign accents and learning difficulties. But again contrastive analysis is centered round the phonology, syntax and lexicon of two languages with the addition of learning problems, which are now distinguished from the language to be learned, although admittedly it makes fewer demands on contrastive theory.

Two different approaches to the problem of contrastive analysis emerged in the sixties due to the great interest that was currently expressed for generative transformational theory. The one dismisses the

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5. R. Wardhough, 1975, *ibid.*

6. P. Corder, *Introducing Applied Linguistics*, Penguin Modern Linguistics Texts, 1975.

contrastive analysis hypothesis on the following grounds: if all natural languages have a great deal in common, then anyone who has already learned one, knows a great deal about any other, and, since the deep structures of the two languages are very much alike, the actual differences are superficial. Moreover, it is pointless to relate superficial differences between two language systems, since a second language learner must learn the precise way in which that second language relates the deep structures to its surface structures - this relation being unique for each language. However, the first problem concerns the notion of deep structure itself, which is extremely uncertain at the moment. The second problem arises from the fact that it may be the case that the theory of generative-transformational grammar has nothing to contribute to contrastive analysis anyway, since it claims that languages are the same in the deep structure and we can more or less talk about the same things in virtually all natural languages.

The second approach to the problem of contrastive analysis, also originating from a generative-transformation theory of grammar and language, not only accepts the contrastive analysis hypothesis, but also considers it as a measure of evaluating the postulations and claims of linguistic theory. Consequently, contrastive analysis should be the method whereby the differences between two languages are made explicit. The assumption that all languages share a common deep structure is considered basic to the implementation of contrastive analysis rather than a reason for rejecting it, in that "if languages did not share a general framework and number of grammatical processes, there would be no point of departure for the contrastive statements to be made".<sup>7</sup> According to this approach, any differences between languages are to be found in the way language universals, i.e. deep structures, are realized in particular language specific grammars. Statements of contrast are made in terms of how the source language can be modified so that it can account for the production of sentences in the goal language by means of modification, addition and deletion rules. Moreover, in order for contrastive analysis to be applied to error prediction in language learning, factors of performance must be considered, too.

However, in the above described approach the precise description of the two languages is required even if in terms of rules and transformations. The statements of contrast seem to be better formalized in this approach than in the strong version as it was developed by Lado, but the demands on linguistic theory seem to be equally high in both the strong version of contrastive analysis and the generative - transformational approach to it in spite of the claim of TG grammar for simplicity. In

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7. R. J. Di Pietro, *Language Structures in Contrast*, Newbury House Publications, 1971.



particular, if in this latter approach one of the steps suggested in contrasting two languages is to postulate the underlying universals<sup>8</sup>, then we need to know what these universals are and how they relate to natural languages. Also, if we are to formulate deep - to - surface realizational rules, we must be able to specify all the deep structures of the languages in question. How far is this practically feasible?

All methods of contrastive analysis that have been briefly referred to so far are based on the levels of phonology, syntax and lexicon, with the exception of R. Lado who also attempted to apply his method across cultural patterns of behaviour rather than cultural features realized through language in a formal manner.

Let us now briefly refer to the results of an experimental investigation in the area of interference errors based on written discourse and made by J. Schachter and W. Rutherford.<sup>9</sup> The writers experimented with English language materials written by Japanese and Chinese native speakers. These materials were overloaded with particular structures such as extrapositions. ("It is a tendency that such friendly restaurants...") and existentials ("These is a small restaurant...") However, there are no constructions in the surface structure of either Japanese or Chinese that correspond to English extrapositions and existentials. The object of investigation then was to find what led the Japanese and Chinese native speakers to resort more often to the use of such constructions. It was found that topic prominent languages, such as Chinese, tend to use word order for the expression of discourse function, whereas English, a subject prominent language, uses word order to signal grammatical relations. The writers then assumed that the Japanese and Chinese learners expected that:

1. Word order is indicative of discourse function
2. The position of leftmost, preverbal noun phrase is often reserved for topics
3. New information, destined to become a topic, will not occur in sentence initial position.

Therefore, the Japanese learners use English extraposition constructions to make generic statements concerning general facts and beliefs, which serve as settings for future topics, and Chinese learners use English existential constructions to introduce new referents which serve as subsequent topics. The overproduction of these constructions leads to a particular type of error that represents "a carry over not of surface syntax from  $L_1$  to  $L_2$  but rather of  $L_1$  function - form constraints to  $L_2$ ." Moreover

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8. R. J. Di Pietro, 1971, *ibid*.

9. J. Schachter and W. Rutherford, 'Discourse function and Language Transfer', in *Working Papers in Bilingualism*, 1979.

the writers put forward the assumption that "for any research that purports to shed light on the dynamic processes of language acquisition, it is necessary that the researcher focus attention on that particular property that makes of language itself a dynamic phenomenon: namely, discourse."<sup>10</sup>

This dynamic phenomenon, discourse, as we have already mentioned, will be the basis of our contrastive analysis. The type of discourse we have chosen is written discourse as exhibited in a letter of request. Let us then first make our assumptions on what written discourse typically implies - if we except film-scripts and written plays. First of all it implies a continuous piece of writing of whatever length, and second it assumes the existence of a possible writer and at least a possible reader, even if the reader is only going to be the writer (as, e.g. in the case of a diary). These two persons seem to be what speaker S and addressee H are in oral discourse. However, let us specify that in written discourse "writer" as a term covers primarily the person who is responsible for and interested in the written text rather than the person who actually did the writing (i.e. the typist, etc.) Another feature of written discourse is what we shall call "potential look back", i.e. the possibility of both writer and reader to look back at the text for whatever reason. Yet another feature is that, normally, the organization of items in the written text is not affected by e.g. verbal interruption, facial expressions of others, various responses etc. and in general, the consequences from what has been written become known after the writing phase is ended, i.e. when the written text is finished. These features can be considered very general, in the sense that most written texts have them almost by definition.

When we move to particular types of written discourse we may find that there is a number of variable factors affecting the items that will enter the written text and the organization of items in it. These factors may also be sensitive to cultural organizations. The variable factors that determine whether a specific item will be entered in the written text are:

- i) relevance to topic, i.e. how relevant is the item to the main topic of the written text?
- ii) effectiveness as to goal, i.e. if the text has been written with a particular goal in mind, what contribution does the item make to the achievement of the goal?

On the other hand, the organization of the chosen items in the text will be made on the basis of

- i) their function, i.e. an item entered to introduce a series of others will probably precede the others whereas the opposite will happen if it is used to e.g. summarise a number of others.

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10. J. Schachter and W. Rutherford, 1979, *ibid.*

ii) most effective ordering, i.e. when precedence sequences are not strictly required, this ordering of the items will be preferred, which best contributes to the achievement of the desired goal.

The writing of letters is constrained by both invariable and variable features. Moreover, the letter is a socially and culturally marked activity in that the relative and social identity of the two people involved is explicitly stated in the introduction (e.g. Dear...) and in the closing (e.g. Yours sincerely, etc.) We used the term *relative* to define social identity in the sense that, although we may know the social standing of the sender S and the receiver R in respect to each other at the moment of writing and for the specific purpose of writing, in other circumstances their roles could even be reversed along with a different social classification.

We can assume that in the writing of a letter, two items are normally expected to be present

- i) the identification of the two people (or parties) involved, i.e. who is writing to whom, or who is seeking communication with whom.
- ii) the statement of the purpose of writing either directly, or, less frequently, indirectly, i.e. why S is writing to R.

The organization of the rest of the items will chiefly be made in relation to the two above. The experiment was carried out with eight educated adults doing postgraduate research. Four of them were native speakers of British English and four native speakers of Greek. We shall refer to the English subjects as a,b,c and d, and the Greek subjects as a',b',c' and d'. The proficiency in English of all eight subjects was measured rather crudely through a Cloze test with fifty items. The English subjects received 58%, 62%, 58%, and 60%, average 59.5%, and the Greek subjects received 48%, 56%, 34% and 32%, average 42.5%. These results tell us that on the whole, the Greek subjects achieved more than the two thirds of the English subjects' performance, which we considered adequate proficiency for a second language speaker. We can also observe a certain homogeneity in the results of the English subjects as opposed to those of the Greek subjects. This can be explained on the basis of the fact that the English subjects were native speakers of the language tested whereas the Greek subjects, being foreign speakers of the language tested, were at different levels of proficiency in the foreign language. Of the Greek subjects the one that had scored high (56%) in the test and the one that had scored low (32%) produced the longest letters. This is probably due to the fact that the "good" one felt linguistically unrestricted to express his request particularly eloquently making use of idiomatic expressions and other means of exhibiting his knowledge of the language. On the other hand, the "bad" one probably did not have the linguistic means to communicate briefly and efficiently, and therefore needed more words to express the request, i.e. avoided connectives that would shorten the passage. Another general observation



on the Cloze test is that even when the English subjects made mistakes, these "mistakes" were only alternative possibilities to the words of the original text and very rarely affected meaning in a way that would not precisely agree with the general idea of the text or the specific sentence where the blank occurred. Moreover, the "mistakes" of the English subjects occurred more or less in the same blanks. This homogeneity also points to the fact that these subjects must be native speakers of the language of the test and all obeyed the same linguistic rules. On the contrary, the Greek subjects made a variety of mistakes, but again the homogeneity of some of these mistakes points to the fact that these foreign speakers of the language of the test may belong to the same linguistic community. Finally, the Greek subjects' letters showed better performance in the foreign language than the tests. The reasons for this may be psychological and linguistic. Psychological because the letter was considered "the real job" as opposed to the test, and linguistic because in the letter the subjects had the opportunity - however limited - to choose what they wrote and therefore preferred to write what they were sure of if it also served their communicative purposes. On the basis of the results of the test, we continued the experiment. The text for the test is provided in Appendix I.

The instructions for the writing of the letter were given to both groups in English and read as follows: "Write a letter of about 200 words to the Professor of a foreign University asking for a copy of his yet unpublished and latest article which he has already sent for publication to a Journal, of the editorial board of which one of your lecturers is a member and has told you about this article and also given you the Professor's address. You're going to use this article to write one of your essays and it is going to be very useful to you".

We will assume that the items of the letter brought in the instructions are in a "neutral" ordering against which the ordering that the two groups will utilize will be examined. The first item, then, in the instructions is the mention of the writing of the letter by the subject, i.e. it specifies the person of the sender S and the form of written discourse. The second item is the reference to the person of the receiver R. The third item is the request, the fourth is the reference to the yet unpublished article, the fifth is the reference to the S's lecturer as a member of the editorial board of the Journal and last is the reason for the request.

Now, we must decide which of these items should be considered significant, and against which the presence and the ordering of other items occurring in the letters will be measured. The first item seems to be important in that the content of the letter will be such that, at least in Western cultures, one has to specify who he is in a letter sent to a person who, it is given, does not know him, unless, of course, it is an anonymous letter which is especially marked by its name to show deviance from the

general rule. On the other hand, the type of written discourse may or may not be explicitly stated in the letter itself and it is probably indifferent which route is chosen, since one, it will arrive by post, and two, its form, i.e. the picture, will indicate that it is a letter. Therefore, it seems reasonable to consider identification of S as the first item. The second item appears to be somehow weak in our scale of interest, since we can predict that it will take some well-established form of the type "Dear Sir", or "Dear Professor X" etc. So, we could equally well eliminate it from our items of interest. The closing of the letter can be said to consist of two parts. The first part belongs to the actual body of the letter and usually relates to its content. The second part is somehow independent, is formally signalled by space between it and the last paragraph of the body of the letter and consists of a kind of greeting or good-bye. It does not convey new information about S and R and their relationship but confirms the information about them given in the opening, in the sense that a "My dearest Bob" letter cannot end by "I remain very sincerely yours". This second part of the ending does not seem to be very important since the form it may take is predetermined by the relevant opening. But the first part of the closing, it will be shown, can be important. Therefore, the second part of the closing can be eliminated from the significant items brought in the letter, whereas the first part of the closing constituting part of the main body of the letter will be considered. In the neutral ordering of items in the instructions, it is the reason for request. The rest of the items seem to be rather crucial in the letter and we suggest that they should be taken in consideration. The final list of items, then, is as follows:

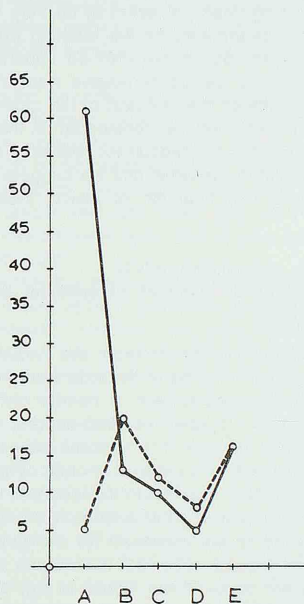
- A. Reference to S
- B. Request
- C. Reference to yet unpublished article
- D. Reference to lecturer as member of editorial board
- E. Reason for request.

In order to show the relation between the "neutral" ordering of the instructions and the actual ordering of the letters we shall use a table and for each S we shall give each item a number 1-5 according to the position it occupies in this S's letter (i.e. first, second, third, etc.) Then for each item A-E we shall add up the numbers indicating order and will compare the totals of the two groups in a chart. The smallest total will indicate that this item occurs e.g. first in the letters of the English subjects etc. If an item does not occur at all in a letter, it will be given the number 20 (which in fact represents the maximum we can get from the five items of the four S's of each group for the item that occurs last), so that an item that repeatedly does not occur in the letters of e.g. the English speakers will be assigned a very big number that will in fact indicate the absence of



this item from the letters of this particular group and it will show on the chart, too.

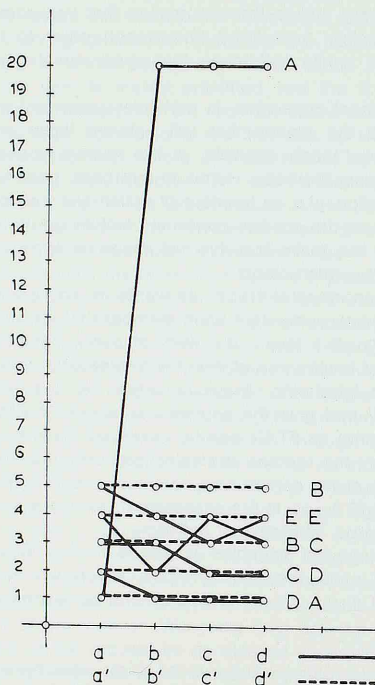
	A	B	C	D	E		A	B	C	D	E
a	1	4	3	2	5	a'	1	5	3	2	4
b	20	2	3	1	4	b'	1	5	3	2	4
c	20	4	2	1	3	c'	1	5	3	2	4
d	20	3	2	1	4	d'	1	5	3	2	4
TOTAL	61	13	10	5	16	TOTAL	5	20	12	8	16



The chart shows on what item two groups of S's chose similar ordering of items (i.e. items C,D,E) and where they chose completely divergent ordering or omitted an item altogether (e.g. B,A).

To show exactly how each item is ordered in each group's letters, we can use the following chart.

This chart clearly shows that items C and D present very similar ordering on the letters of both groups. These are the items referring to the unpublished article and to the S's lecturer as a member of the editorial board of the Journal.



What is important, though, is to see the ordering pattern i.e. what precedes what and, possibly, to explain why. Another important issue is to see whether the two groups brought in their letters items other than those in the instructions, how they ordered them and again explain why those items were brought in and given that order in relation to the rest of the items.

Since by its content, this is a letter of request we can assume that it must display certain forms of politeness which will be realized through introducing items that will contribute to the goal, (i.e. "ask for something and be polite") and ordering them appropriately so that their relevance to the letter becomes obvious. To account, then, for politeness strategies employed by the S's as part of the means for achieving the goal, we shall adopt a theory of politeness based on FTA's (face threatening acts).<sup>11</sup>

This theory makes the assumption that "all competent adult members of a society have (and know each other to have)

i) "face", the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself.

ii) certain rational capacities, in particular consistent modes of reasoning from ends to the means that will achieve those ends.

Moreover, the "face" consists in two related aspects

a) negative face: the basic claims to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction - i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition.

b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or "personality" (crucially including the desire that this self image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants.

If we then interpret "face" as wants we can define "negative face": the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others. "Positive face": the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others. Face-threatening acts are redressed with apologies for interfering, linguistic deference and with other "softening mechanisms" that give the addressee a face-saving line of escape.<sup>12</sup> We can assume that as FTA's can be assessed according to seriousness, in the same way the redress strategies can be numbered according to the face-lowering of the person who committed the FTA. The more dangerous the particular FTA *x* is, in S's assessment, the more he will tend to use the higher numbered strategy in softening it.

The sociological variables proposed in this theory for the assessment of the seriousness of an FTA, which we shall also adopt are i) the "social distance" (D) of S and H (in our example S and R) which is

11. P. Brown and S. Levinson, 'Universals in Language usage: Politeness phenomena' in E.N. Goody (ed.), *Question and Politeness strategies in social interaction*, CUP, 1978.

12. P. Brown and S. Levinson, 1978, *ibid*.



a symmetric relation.

ii) the relative "power" (P) of S and H (an asymmetric relation).

iii) the absolute ranking (R) of imposition in the particular culture.

P, D and R contribute to the seriousness of an FTA, and thus to a determination of the level of politeness with which, other things being equal, an FTA will be communicated. In the same theory of politeness, negative politeness is considered "redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded... negative politeness is specific and focused; it performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA unavoidably effects.

We can now look at our data. The most striking difference that we observed from the charts was on the item A: Reference to S's identity. In the Greek subjects' letters this item is mentioned first and very explicitly sometimes even carrying information about the S's interests and future plans and covering a whole paragraph in the letter. In the English subjects' letters this item is mostly omitted and the S is introduced through a third person, namely the S's lecturer. There are two possible explanations for this fact. According to the first one, to write a letter to somebody you have never met before and ask him to do something for you is considered as a very serious FTA and R (absolute ranking of imposition) is rated very high in the Greek culture in this case. In order to redress, S has to at least give some information about himself, and at the same time to pay off what he already knows about the R (receiver) that enabled him to actually write the letter. The second explanation would run contrary to the generally held assumption that the more western a society is the more the individual is valued and the more individuality is expressed by the people and through their activities, whereas, if we go east, people consider themselves as belonging to institutions rather than being individuals. In our experiment, the opposite showed. The English subjects, by introducing themselves through their lecturers (who are themselves part of the institution: University) identified themselves through the institution, whereas the Greek subjects introduced themselves as individuals giving information about their plans and even past history. Another difference in the ordering of the items in the letters of the two groups appears with the ordering of items B and E. Invariably, in the English subjects' letters B (request) is followed by E (reason for request), while in the Greek subjects' letters the reason for request precedes the request. We would consider the ordering E-B as a strategy that would secure the otherwise uncertain fulfilment of the request. We could then ask the question: why should the fulfilment of the request be considered uncertain? We reserve the answer to this question, as it will in fact be the answer to a number of others that will soon arise. We can only postulate at this stage that if the reasons for the request are given before the request, they also serve

as an introduction to what is at hand and help the R to expect what is coming next. In fact, in some cases this item "reasons for request" is assumed to be inferred from the item of identification which had been made explicit and the S expresses this assumption through quality hedges of the form "as you can understand".<sup>13</sup> This means that the actual topic of request has been carefully introduced through two preceding items: full identification of S and reason for request.

Another item that was not included in the instructions as such but rather as a piece of information, but which was brought in the letters of the Greek subjects as a separate item of particular relevance to the topic is the reference to the fact that R's article had not been published yet, as a problem, since the article cannot be obtained through the normal way, i.e. the Journal. This "problematic" situation is made explicit with markers such as, "*unfortunately*"<sup>14</sup>, "*nevertheless* he encouraged me to write to you"<sup>15</sup>, "*although* I know it has not been published yet."<sup>16</sup> Why should the fact that the article has not been published yet constitute a problem in itself other than that the S has to write a letter in order to ask for it? The English subjects did not see the fact as a problem at all and consequently did not particularly mark this aspect of the transaction.

A striking difference between the two groups of letters not included in the items of the instructions exists in the closings of the letters. If the request is an FTA of the negative face of the R, then the redress - which may in fact occur at various points in the letter whether directly or indirectly - can occur at the closing of the letter, which is probably a noteworthy position in a letter. The strategies employed to redress - when they exist - vary. In the Greek subjects' letters the S invariably redresses the FTA by explicitly claiming his indebtedness to the R, e.g. "I would therefore be grateful if you could..."<sup>17</sup> or "I would therefore be most grateful if you could..."<sup>18</sup>, "you will make me feel very much obliged to you if..."<sup>19</sup>, or by hedging his opinion on his debt, e.g. "Hoping that I am not causing you real trouble..."<sup>20</sup>, which is in fact a statement of the opposite: "I know that, normally, by asking you to do something for me, I am causing you trouble, only I am hoping that the trouble is not too great".

In the English subjects' letters, there is only one occurrence of FT redress, and this does not occur in the marked position of closings, which

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13. See Appendix 2, letter a'.

14. See Appendix 2, letter b'.

15. See Appendix 2, letter c'.

16. See Appendix 2, letter d'.

17. See Appendix 2, letter a'.

18. See Appendix 2, letter b'.

19. See Appendix 2, letter d'.

20. See Appendix 2, letter c'.

weakens the weighting of the redress, but is also related to the reason for request rather than to the request itself which would constitute the FTA: "I really would be most grateful if you could... because it (the article) would give me a much better idea of..."<sup>21</sup>. What we find in the closings of the English subjects' letters is a statement or restatement of the reasons for request.

Another fact relating to the closings is that only the Greek subjects' letters all include thanking in advance. At first glance this might be thought of as being contrary to the FTA redress strategies that these subjects had employed so far, since thanking in advance assumes that the request will certainly be fulfilled - which is a new FTA in itself to R. However, this is not so. Thanking in advance is used as a further strategy to incur debt to the S resulting from R's future actions which are still uncertain but which the S wishes to anticipate by "premature" thanking, just in case they occur. Therefore, we can consider the item "thanking in advance" as a strong case of FTA redress given only when the FTA is ranked particularly high.

A further difference between the letters of the two groups is the length. The Greek subjects' letters tend to be longer than those written by the English subjects. What usually makes them longer is the longer identification of the S- which we have already discussed and certain other items that, we shall show, relate to different types of transaction carried out through the letter that is under examination. These other items are present in some of the Greek subjects' letters. One of these items is the expression of personal feelings and desires in the letter: "I write to you in order to get in touch with you. I would very much like to meet you, but... So it is necessary to ask for your help in writing..."<sup>22</sup>. The impersonal phrase "it is necessary" as an FTA redress strategy is used because R's right for non-distraction is not only threatened but also threatened for S's personal reasons, i.e. to offer his help to S. In another letter also, the S states "you will make me *feel* very much obliged to you if..." and again we observe reference to personal feelings. The second item related to the S's lecturer who is mentioned not only as a member of the editorial board of the Journal, but also as the S's personal adviser and therefore sharing the responsibility of the request with S, as is shown in "... Nevertheless he *encouraged* me to write to you..."<sup>23</sup>. "Pr. B. is also the one that gave me your address and *advised* me to write you this letter..."<sup>24</sup>. Encouragement and advice relate to a persons' feelings and actions and are markers of a

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21. See Appendix 2, letter c.

22. See Appendix 2, letter c'.

23. See Appendix 2, letter c'.

24. See Appendix 2, letter d'.



level of personal communications.

So far, from the examination of our data we have observed that the Greek subjects' letters are rather heavily marked with FTA redress forms compared to those written by the English subjects. On the other hand, the Greek culture does not seem to be particularly "pre-occupied with debt". The answer to the problem and to the questions that we have asked in previous paragraphs must be found not in the type of discourse itself, but rather in the norms determining discourse and in particular in the type of transaction that is carried out. The type of transaction will determine matters of appropriateness in discourse. It seems then, that a letter of request of the type discussed is treated by the English community as a type of business transaction in which for a student to ask for a preprint of a Professor's article and for a Professor to fulfil the request is thought of as a routine-like activity of the professional kind. On the other hand, for the Greek community this kind of letter of request is considered as a type of personal transaction in which the student is actually asking for a personal favour which, if granted to him, will indebt him seriously to the Professor.

With the above described experiment and its outcomes, we have tried to show that contrastive analysis at the level of discourse is possible and that statements of contrast should be made relevant to the type of transaction carried out by the participants.

## APPENDIX 1

LANGUAGE AND "SUCCESS" IN BRITAIN

Traditionally the British middle (1)..... and upwards-striving working classes (2)..... with success and operating (3)..... a nominally monolingual society, (4)..... been strongly concerned about (5)..... forms of language. They have (6)..... anxious to preserve or (7)..... a certain spoken dialect, (8)..... anxious for conformity to (9)..... conventions of 'correctness' in (10)..... Mastery of such prescribed forms of spoken (11)..... written (12)..... was generally held by (13)..... to be the mark (14)..... a well-educated person and (15)..... not to guarantee, at (16)..... to make fairly certain (17)..... fluency and articulateness necessary (18)..... success. Such success was (19)..... estimated in terms of (20)..... in examinations, leading to (21)..... education and subsequent appointments (22)..... 'good' jobs in government, (23)..... professions, industry and commerce.(24)..... is a matter of subjective (25)....., and probably not (26)..... to objective research on (27)..... adequate scale, to what (28)..... they were right in (29)..... belief that language forms (30)..... to this extent. What (31)..... become apparent was that (32)..... were many children who (33)..... not become, for various (34)....., masters of the prescribed (35)..... conventions, but who were (36)..... highly intelligent and capable. (37)..... success of those who (38)..... the disadvantages of non-conventional (39)..... showed that the prescribed language (40)..... might not be essential, (41)..... led to some consideration (42)..... the possibility of there (43)..... others who might be (44)..... back in some way (45)..... the fact of their (46)..... 'unconventionality'. This in turn (47)..... related to more fundamental (48)..... not only of the (49)..... but also of the functions (50)..... language.

APPENDIX 1 continued

( 1) classes	(18) for	(35) language
( 2) concerned	(19) conventionally	(36) nevertheless
( 3) in	(20) achievement	(37) the
( 4) have	(21) higher	(38) overcame
( 5) the	(22) to	(39) language
( 6) been	(23) the	(40) forms
( 7) attain	(24) it	(41) and
( 8) and	(25) opinion	(42) of
( 9) rigid	(26) susceptible	(43) being
(10) writing	(27) any	(44) held
(11) and	(28) extent	(45) by
(12) language	(29) their	(46) linguistic
(13) them	(30) mattered	(47) was
(14) of	(31) did	(48) consideration
(15) if	(32) there	(49) forms
(16) least	(33) did	(50) of
(17) the	(34) reasons	

(From Wallwork, J.F. (1978), "Language and People". Heinemann Educational Books, London).

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**APPENDIX II**

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**(a) Dear Professor Marketos,**

I am a student at the Department of Phlebotomy, Cambridge, studying the M. Phil course. The course is by examination, and through the year we have to write six long essays on topics of particular interest in phlebotomy.

I have read with much interest some of your papers on the cerebral activity of rabbits in warm climates, and wish to write my next essay on this subject. Dr. S.D. Higgins, one of my lecturers, has advised me that you recently submitted a review article on your work to the "Journal of the Greek Bleeding Society" which has been accepted for publication. I wonder if you would be kind enough to send me a preprint? I would find this most useful as it may be some time before the Journal is published, and it would add greatly to the completeness of my essay.

Yours faithfully,

**(b) Dear Professor Lafayette,**

My supervisor, Dr. Smith, of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Cambridge, has suggested I write to you to request a copy of your paper "The Vascular Sustain: A New Approach" which I understand is shortly to be published in "The Journal of the American Anatomical Society". Dr. Smith is, of course, a member of the editorial board of that journal and he has supplied me with your address. The reason I make this request is that I am undertaking a study of transport systems in mammals in connection with an essay I am required to submit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy. I anticipate that your article will be most useful and enlightening.

Yours faithfully,

**(c) Professor Brown.**

Dear Sir,

Dr. Scott, my lecturer in Physical Chemistry and a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Physics, in which I have read many of your papers concerning the liquid state, told me that you have just submitted for publication an article about transport properties in polar liquids. As I am engaged in a project about this very matter, I was wondering if you could send me a copy of this article. I really would be grateful if you could, not only because of the great interest of the work itself, but also because it would give me a much better idea of exactly where new fields of research were opening up and what directions the subject may take in the near future.

So, I look forward to your reply with great anticipation, and if you could send a copy of your article, I really would be delighted!

Yours sincerely,

**(d) Dear Sir,**

Professor Thomas, my supervisor in Spatial Morphology and also a member of the



editorial board of the RIBA Journal, informed me that you had sent a paper for publication to the above mentioned Journal titled "The Interpretation of Space and related matters" and he suggested my reading it. Since this paper has not been published yet, I wonder if you could send me an advance copy of it. I could then read it and take it into account when I am writing my Spatial Morphology paper. I am sure that your paper will help me very much in my work.

Yours sincerely,

(a') Dear Sir,

I am working with Professor Johnson, who happens to be an editor of the "Molecular Physics"; he informed me about an article that you sent for publication to the above Journal.

I am doing research on the reduction of the relativistic Dirac-Rock equs in the unrelativistic limit, and, as you can understand, your article is going to be very useful in my work. I would therefore be grateful if you could send it to me.

Thanking you in advance, I remain, dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

(b') Dear Professor Bourdeas,

I am currently doing postgraduate research on the relation between the ruling classes and Oxbridge. I am particularly interested in the comparison between Oxbridge and public schools treated as social selection mechanisms. My supervisor, Professor Kakomiris who, as I am sure you know, is a member of the editorial board of Liberal Sociology Studies, has referred to an article which you recently sent them for publication. I understand your article focusses on the networks of social relationships maintained by public school leavers after graduation.

I would be extremely interested to read your article especially in view of the interim research report I must prepare for presentation to the University within the next few weeks. Unfortunately, Professor Kakomiris was unable to let me photocopy the original which you sent. On the other hand, my report must be handed in before the day of publication of the next issue of Liberal Sociology Studies. I would therefore be most grateful if you could send me a copy of your article. I am sure you appreciate how essential your help will be for my research.

Yours sincerely,

(c') Dear Professor,

I am a student of the last year at the National Technical University of Athens. During this year I am preparing my final thesis for my Diploma on energy problems in Architecture.

I write in order to get in touch with you. I would very much like to meet you but I know that this is impossible because of the distance and the lack of time. So, it is necessary to ask you for help in writing. My Professor J. Marks mentioned to me last week that you have written an article on a specific problem of energy in housing

design. He told me that you have been working on this subject for many years and that this article would be very helpful for my work. He has also informed me that there is a problem that the article is unpublished. Nevertheless he encouraged me to write to you.

Hoping that I am not causing you real trouble, I would be very interested in having a copy of this article.

Thanking you in advance,

Yours faithfully,

(d') Dear Professor,

I am a student at the National Polytechnic School of Athens, Greece in the field of Architecture. My Professor, Dr. Benthall, who you probably know and who also is a member of the editorial board of the *Architectural Journal*, has informed me about your article for the Greek vernacular settlements which is going to be published in the above Journal. Professor Benthall is also the one who gave me your address and advised me to write you this letter.

I am very interested myself in this article and I am going to write my thesis about Greek settlements. As Professor Benthall has informed me, your article will be of great importance and help for me. So, I am writing to you asking you, if it is possible, to send me a copy of your article, although I know that you haven't published it yet. It is a matter of urgency for me, that's why I cannot wait until it is published in the Greek magazine, because it is going to take a few months in order to be published.

I am thanking you in advance, and I must also tell you that you will make me feel very much obliged to you if you decide to send it finally to me.

Yours sincerely,

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## ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Σοφία Μαρμαρίδου - Πρωτοπαπά, *Υπόδειγμα συγκριτικής ανάλυσης στηριζόμενης σε γραπτό λόγο*

Το άρθρο αυτό επιχειρεί να παρουσιάσει και να υποστηρίξει την άποψη ότι συγκριτική ανάλυση μεταξύ δύο γλωσσών μπορεί να γίνει με επιτυχία στο επίπεδο λόγου (Discourse Level) μάλλον παρά στο φωνολογικό, συντακτικό ή σημασιολογικό επίπεδο της γλώσσας.

Ο στόχος αυτός πραγματοποιείται με την αναλυτική εξέταση παραδειγμάτων γραπτού λόγου, και συγκεκριμένα όκτώ επιστολών με καθορισμένο περιεχόμενο που έχουν γραφεί στην Αγγλική, οι τέσσαρες από όμιλητές της Αγγλικής και οι άλλες τέσσαρες από όμιλητές της Ελληνικής. Η γλωσσική δεινότητα των όκτώ ατόμων στην Αγγλική έχει προηγουμένως μετρηθεί με κατάλληλο τέστ. Αφού δοθούν μερικά βασικά χαρακτηριστικά της δομής του γραπτού λόγου και ιδιαίτερα της επιστολογραφίας, γίνεται η σύγκριση των δύο ομάδων επιστολών με βάση τη σειρά και τον τρόπο που αναφέρονται τα προκαθορισμένα στοιχεία του περιεχομένου στην κάθε επιστολή. Παράλληλα μελετάται το πληροφοριακό και πολιτιστικό περιεχόμενο κάθε επιστολής.

Τέλος υποστηρίζεται ότι τα στοιχεία δομής λόγου που διαφέρουν στις δύο ομάδες μπορούν να ερμηνευθούν από τα διαφορετικά πρότυπα συναλλαγής (Norms of Transaction) που ακολουθούν τα μέλη των δύο ομάδων. Οι Έλληνες όμιλητές λειτουργούν σε πλαίσια γραπτού λόγου του οποίου ο τύπος αρμόζει σε διεκπεραίωση προσωπικής συναλλαγής, ενώ οι Άγγλοι όμιλητές αντιμετωπίζουν δομικά το περιεχόμενο του γραπτού λόγου σαν μία περίπτωση επαγγελματικής δοσοληψίας. Έτσι αποδεικνύεται ότι τα διαφορετικά πρότυπα συναλλαγής αντανakλώνται στη δομή του γραπτού λόγου και ερμηνεύουν τις διαφορές που παρατηρούνται σ' αυτόν.