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Les analyses de discours dans une perspective contrastive

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1. Introduction

In this summary paper I will first attempt to define and categorize the field, then discuss how contrastive studies in discourse have been conducted and how data has been analyzed, including some possible pitfalls. Then I will summarize briefly some of the findings, suggest how the findings can be interpreted in a broader sense, and finally how they can be applied. Among the issues to be raised are the possibility of a discourse typology of languages/cultures and the ethics of expecting people from other cultures to adopt the communicative behaviour of others.

Discourse is the level of language beyond the sentence level, used and studied in context, and is produced both orally and in writing.

1.1. Approaches

There are three main ways in which discourse has been studied contrastively:

1.1.1. By comparing L1 discourse across languages and cultures, say, French and German — sometimes known as the *Contrastive Approach*. Some examples: Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989), the results of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project

1. This is an expanded and substantially revised version of a paper presented at the *Contrastive Linguistics conference in Gent*, September 2001.

(CCSARP); Gnutzmann and Oldenburg (1991) on introductions and conclusions in American and German journals, Sachtleber (1990) on French and German conference papers, Béal (1990, 1992) on workplace communication in French and English in Australia, Golebiowski (1998) on Polish and English articles, Kirkpatrick (1992) on Chinese and English letters of request, Spencer-Oatey and Cray (2000) on Japanese and English responses to unfounded accusations, and Pavlidou (2000) on telephone conversations in Greek and German.

1.1.2. By comparing L2 discourse in the same target language across different L1s and base cultures, say, the English discourse of Spanish, Finnish and Greek speakers — part of the *Contrastive Interlanguage Approach*: Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993), Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989: Chs. 9-10), Farrell (1997) — English of Chilean and Vietnamese students.

1.1.3. By comparing L2 discourse with L1 discourse in, say, English, for example: Bergman and Kasper (1993) on native and non-native English apologies, Ostler (1987) on English expository texts by Saudi-Arabians and native English speakers, sometimes also L1 discourse of the non-native speakers (e.g. Clyne 1987 — German L1, English L1, English of L1 German; Taylor and Chen 1991 — Chinese L1, English L1, English of L1 Chinese).

1.1.4. While not contrastive in the strict sense, the *Interactive intercultural approach* (e.g. Clyne 1994, Young 1994), where discourse between L1 and (Chinese) L2 users of English (Young) or speakers of different L1s interacting in the same L2 as a lingua franca, say English (Clyne), does also facilitate contrastive insights. This approach has not been taken as much as the others.

1.2. Languages

Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993: 7) commented on the relatively few target languages that had been studied in interlanguage research (let alone contrastive interlanguage research) by this time — English with German, Hebrew, Norwegian, Spanish, and Japanese. The spread of languages has since greatly increased. Also, many theoretical, methodological and cultural insights derive from monolingual studies of the discourse of ‘other’ languages (e.g. Hinds 1980 on Japanese, some of the interlanguage studies in Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993). It

is surprising that there are very few discourse studies contrasting national varieties of a pluricentric language (e.g. Herbert 1989 on compliments in South African and American English; Muhr 1995 on the use and non-use of modal particles by German and Austrian speakers of German; Birkner and Kern 2000 on East-West German interaction management in interviews). The only way to obtain contrastive information is to compare existing data that does not contrast national varieties. Creese (1991) did this as a preliminary to her pilot interviews to elicit British and American informants' perceptions of British-American variation in communication patterns.

As it is very difficult to clearly differentiate which contrasts originate with language and which ones originate with culture, Agar's (1994) term 'languaculture' is appealing. Agar (1994: 60, 122) argues that culture needs to be hooked onto language.

1.3. There are two distinct types of study differentiated in relation to the aspects of language.

1.3.1. One focuses on *pragmatics/speech acts*, i.e. the communicative intent, function and effects of an utterance. Resulting from monolingual studies which introduced into linguistics the application of the philosophical theories of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), this field has been the subject of a substantial number of studies in recent decades. The best known outcomes are Blum-Kulka et al (1989) and Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993). The contrastive and interlanguage approaches are often blurred. That may imply that Portuguese or Danes behave communicatively in much the same way in English and their L1. However, that this is not the case is evident from the CCSARP data itself (Rintell and Mitchell 1989) as well as from other studies (e.g. Olyne 1987).

The other level of language explored is *discourse proper*. There is some overlap with contrastive morphosyntax in relation to exploring the opportunities that a grammar allows for certain meanings or aspects to be emphasized through the addition of clitics and particles and especially by marked word order.

An early contrastive development was the study of interlanguage English academic discourse by Kaplan (1972). Based on the essays of foreign students in America, this stimulated an ongoing tradition on contrastive rhetoric focussing on the organization of written discourse

which has implications for teaching as well as for linguistic typology (see 5.3).

Contrastive studies of *discourse proper* have largely focused on academic writing but there are also investigations of letters and formal meetings, for example (e.g. Clyne 1991a, Clyne and Manton 1978).

1.4. The universals debate

A very basic issue determining method of analysis is whether speech acts are different or whether they are universal and are merely realized in a different way. This was the subject of controversy between Fraser (1985) and Wierzbicka (1985) with the latter arguing strongly for the cultural specificity of speech acts, subsequently (1991, 1997), analyzing speech acts that are specific to a languaculture (e.g. Hebrew *dugri* 'straight talk', Polish *podanie* 'asking the authorities a favour',). Accepting that it is the realization not the speech act that varies is inherent in the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project with its confidence that speech acts realized by L1 and L2 users in any language can be expressed within a common framework for comparison based on level of directness. Wierzbicka (1991) considers directness to be a relative and not discrete category. What constitutes directness/indirectness is an interpretation of particular aspects of the cultures. Her rejection of the universality of speech acts has prompted her to develop her natural semantic metalanguage into cultural scripts. The theory of cultural scripts as an approach to contrastive discourse aims at modelling hidden cultural norms in universal terms which, Wierzbicka believes, share meanings across languages. Such terms include *I, you, want, don't, say, think, do, this, good, bad*. This avoids arbitrariness and enables us to approach universals from the culture with which we are most familiar. The same set of terms is used to explicate and compare similar speech acts which are distinctive in each language, without resorting to stereotypes such as the directness-indirectness scale, for example:

Thank (English)

- (a) I know: you did something good for me
- (b) I feel something good towards you because of this

Kansha suru (Japanese)

- (a) I know: You did something good for me
- (b) I say: I feel something good towards you because of this
- (b') I know: I couldn't do something good like this for you
- (b'') I feel something bad because of this
- (c) I say this because I think I should say it. (Wierzbicka 1991: 157)

2.4 Contrastive discourse and other contrastive studies

Contrastive discourse studies in the generic sense began after the early extravagant claims on behalf of contrastive studies (in teaching and learning) had been discredited. Contrastive studies have therefore been conducted partly for intrinsic reasons and partly to explain rather than to predict. The expectations on them were also less strong. On the other hand, discourse studies renewed interest in contrastive research (Carl James included a chapter on them in his 1980 book). However, contrastive studies of discourse will probably provide us with more information on the relation between language and cultural/sub-cultural (institutional, disciplinary) values than other contrastive studies. Thus they have the potential to contribute more to an understanding of communication breakdown and its resolution than can other contrastive studies.

Contrastive studies of discourse deal with parts of an almost boundless range of texts and cannot be reduced to manageable units as in contrastive phonology and, to a lesser extent contrastive morphosyntax. This has also been a problem for contrastive semantics which was only tackled in a very fragmentary way (e.g. in Leisi 1959). Contrastive discourse studies are less precise and quantifiable than those of any other level of language. Unique problems lie in contrasting texts of considerable size. This means that there will be a concomitant problem of subjectivity in the analysis (Cf. Sachtleber 1990, Gnutzmann and Oldenburg 1991).

Hawkins's (1986) contrastive typology, through recourse to Sapir's (1921) notion of 'drift', postulates that each language develops a unified typology that equips it for the parameters of later change. In the case of English and German, the former shows a greater distance between form and content than the latter. This would interpret, for

instance, the tendency of the language towards a more grammatical (fixed) or pragmatic (flexible) word order (Gi-vón 1979).

Also, for instance, when comparing the incidence of hedging between languages (see, for example, Clyne 1991b) there are more opportunities to do this in German, French and Italian than in English — reflexive verbs, subjunctives and/or modal particles, e.g.

Es wäre zu bedenken, ob
 si fa vedere
 Es fragt sich eben, ob...
 ceci se prouve facilement...

This allows for more options than simply modal auxiliaries, impersonal constructions, and agentless passives and may help explain double and triple hedging (see examples above). But it is the utilization of the construction not its presence that is significant in intercultural communication. Liddicoat (1997a) shows that the French conditional, is employed as a hedging device in scientific discourse, building on its function as *irrealis*, one of the three functions of the French conditional.

3. Underlying fields

The fields informing this research are:

1. Pragmatics (Austin, Searle), concerned with speech acts, communicative intent, function, expectations and effects, which can be contrasted.

2. Discourse analysis, an extension of the linguistic model to the level beyond the sentence and to language in context, which is conceived as a grammar of discourse, a social semiotic or socially constructed communication patterns (e.g. Halliday 1978, Bateson 1972, Schank and Abelson 1977, Van Dijk 1977).

3. Conversation analysis, a branch of ethnomethodology where talk, being rule governed, becomes the object of an investigation of social structures and relations, and the structure of a conversation is identified, focussing on the devices for managing the interaction and constructing joint meaning (see Button and Lee 1987).

An important figure in the development of intercultural discourse studies has been Gumperz (e.g. 1982). Perhaps his greatest contribution has been in the understanding of contextualization cues. These are linguistic features such as prosodic cues that rely on speakers' agreement on what is going on in their interaction and on its goals. They play a significant role in inter-cultural communication breakdown and discrimination (Roberts, Davies and Jupp 1992).

While conversation analysis is specifically useful for contrasts of oral language, discourse analysis is employed for both written and oral language. Email takes on an intermediate position (Gruber 1997).

4. Data collection and methods of analysis

4.1. Methods of elicitation

4.1.1. Spoken discourse

In a useful critique of research design of spoken discourse research in this field, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (fc) differentiate between scripted and non-scripted, experimental and non-experimental research. The best-known and most used method, the discourse completion test (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al 1989), is an instance of *scripted experimental research*, as is any kind of role-play.

Unscripted non-experimental data, on the other hand, is authentic data which is collected 'as it comes', for instance, data recorded in the workplace or in service encounters. *Unscripted experimental data* is based on a situation set up but where speech is spontaneous. Sometimes an attitudinal survey follows on from textual analysis (e.g. Clyne, Hoeks and Kreutz (1988), following Clyne (1987) on German and English academic discourse). Advantages and disadvantages of each research methodology can be characterized as follows (see Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford fc, Kasper 2000):

Authentic data offers the advantage of real life data with speakers being themselves. Natural occurrences appear within their setting and retrospection is possible. The disadvantages are that it is difficult to collect, not comparable, occurrences tend to be sporadic, and the data suffers from the Observer's Paradox (Labov 1970).

Non-authentic data, while targeted and comparable, does not necessarily reflect the real behaviour of the participants.

Though the discourse completion test is in writing (except for its later variant, dialogue completion), it is intended to indicate spoken communication. It is hard to assess how meaningful the data is, and it may introduce the participant's own stereotypes of X communication. Rintell and Mitchell (1989) make a comparison between oral and written administrations of the discourse completion procedure for requests and apologies. Written responses were longer than spoken ones among non-native but not native speakers. It is a pity that the differences for non-native speakers were not analyzed according to language and cultural backgrounds as length would have been perceived as a politeness marker by some groups (see 4.1 below).

From the above, it can be concluded that no method of data elicitation is perfect and that each is helpful within its own scope and limitations.

4.1.2. Written discourse

Written discourse is analyzed in contrast according to a number of methods, including Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Givón (1983).

Our analysis of academic discourse written by German and English speakers focuses on the following (Clyne 1987):

- (i) *Hierarchy of Text*: Which macropropositions are dependent on which others? Is there more discourse subordination or co-ordination?
- (ii) *Dynamics of Text*: How is the text developed, in terms of a main argument and subsidiary arguments? How is the reader informed about this development and helped to understand the text?
- (iii) *Symmetry of Text*: How long are the various sections in comparison? And the text segments containing the different macropropositions? Are there marked discrepancies in their length? Are data (and quotations) embedded in the text or loosely attached?

4.2. Oral and written discourse

The contrastive analysis of oral and written discourse may not necessarily result in the same outcomes. To give one example, in discourse completion tests on oral discourse, German comes out far more directly than English while in written academic discourse, Germans hedge more than English speakers. This may not be due to the written-oral divide but rather to the difference between authentic data and the results of discourse completion tests or, more likely, the difference

between everyday communication and academic communication involving different face issues (see below, 6.1).

4.3. Contexts/genres

Contexts and genres in which authentic data for contrastive (etc) studies has been collected include:

- For oral communication — Workplace, service encounters, counselling, business (Béal 1990, 1992, Clyne 1994, Roberts, Davies and Jupp 1992, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford *et al.*, Van der Wijst and Ulijn 1995)
- For written communication — Academic discourse, (Connor and Kaplan 1987, Ventola and Mauranen 1996, Duszak 1997, letters of request/application, e.g. in public or university domain, Clyne 1991, Kirkpatrick 1993, Liddicoat 1997a)

5. Some findings of contrastive discourse research

5.1. Variation in turn-taking

Employing the interactive inter-cultural approach, recorded data on communication in English as a lingua franca between immigrants from a range of European, south-east and east, south and west Asian and Middle Eastern cultures in ten Melbourne workplaces pointed to three non-Anglo communication styles (Clyne 1994). One of the variation patterns refers to the length of speech acts/speech act sequences, especially where the content is potentially face threatening. Long turns encompass additional speech acts to counteract the effects of the main speech act (Style A) while short ones avoid continuing the tension (Style C). Other variation patterns include predominant type of politeness (positive, A and B, negative, C) and the means of turn maintenance or appropriation (increase in speed and volume, (A); increase in speed and volume for maintenance and decrease in volume for appropriation (B), and decrease in speed for both (C).

Table: Communicative Styles

Style A	Style B	Style C
Relatively long turns with downtoners and explanations and 'apparent disclaimers', digressive discourse patterns, increase in speed and volume in order to maintain and appropriate turns, simultaneous speech, mixture of positive and negative politeness.	Relatively long turns (except in particular work situations), much repetition, rhetorical parallelism, bureaucratic style, increase in speed and volume in order to maintain turns but decrease in speed to appropriate them, positive politeness.	Relatively short turns, turn maintenance and appropriation attempted by elongation of words, a decrease in speed, rising intonation, and repetition, negative politeness expressed particularly through deferential speech, compliant with anticipated expectations (including commissives.)

Style A *tends* to occur among central and southern Europeans, B among south and west Asians, and C among south-east and east Asians. However, not all features were necessarily present in the discourse of the groups from the region. Some groups more centrally represent a style (e.g. Croats in Style A), some do so in a more peripheral way (Germans in Style A), or lie on the periphery of two or more styles/regions (Filipinos between Styles A and C — long turns and personal small-talk).

5.2. Variation in realization of speech acts

Research predating the CCSARP but also using the discourse completion test (House and Kasper 1981) indicated that Germans employ a higher degree of directness for requests and complaints than do English people. Germans concentrated on a high level of directness (e.g. Accusation as complaint), while English people varied between this and three levels lower on House and Kasper's directness scale. According to the researchers, English speakers use downgraders (please, kind of, just, I guess) 1 ½ times as often as Germans in general and 2.7 times as much in complaints.

In broad terms, the results of the large CCSARP study comparing 'speech act realizations' by speakers of Argentinian Spanish, Australian English, Canadian French, German German, and Israeli Hebrew,

established a continuum in the degree of directness of speech act realizations. For requests there is situational variation but generally the directness scale is Spanish, Hebrew, German, French, English, and the indirectness scale is English, French, German, Spanish, Hebrew. No significant differences in apologies were recorded, according to Olshtain (1989) because the situations were similar across cultures. (It is not clear to me why this would discourage intercultural variation.) However, for specific situations, IFIDs — illocutionary force indicating devices (e.g. sorry, I apologize) — are more likely to be used in some languages than in others. On the whole, French and English speakers use them more than German and Hebrew speakers. As Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993: 8) conclude in their overview, a preference for a higher level of directness in interlanguage than in L1 and/or L2 in requests, making and rejection of suggestions, refusals, and various conflictive acts. On the other hand, non-native speakers of Hebrew are more inclined to downtone requests than are native speakers.

Béal (1990), working with authentic data, also notes the greater use of downtoners in Australian English than in French with the speakers of the latter preferring the future, imperatives, and *il faut*. French strategies convey the impression of assertiveness, disagreement and impatience.

5.3. Variation in directionality and discourse rhythm of written texts

Contrastive studies of written academic discourse have concluded that:

- (i) While texts by people from any language cultures will be more or less linear, English speakers' texts will be *generally* more linear than those by German, Czech, Polish and Finnish speakers (Clyne 1987, Mejrková 1996, Duszak 1997, Golebiowski 1998, Ventola 1996). These European cultures, attaching great importance to content, need excursions/'digressions' for purposes such as including something important to elucidate — a theoretical, historical and/or ideological dimension — in a text focussing on, say, the empirical, practical, synchronic. For quite different reasons, the texts of Chinese, Japanese and Korean speakers tend also to be less linear than those of English speakers. The former do not explicitly indicate the main point but rather imply it by continually reverting to it (e.g. Hinds 1980 for Japa-

nese, and in different ways Eggington 1987 for Korean, Kirkpatrick 1992 for Chinese). There are specific Chinese classical patterns of academic discourse (Kirkpatrick 1992).

- (ii) Texts by English speakers tend to be more 'symmetrical' than those by German speakers (Clyne 1987).
- (iii) English-speaking academics generally employ advance organizers more and earlier in the text than German speakers (Clyne 1987).
- (iv) Variation in the way in which inferences are drawn — *yinwei* 'because' initiates discourse in Chinese and relates to the whole network of conditions while *soyui* 'so' signifies transition to the main information. Also, the main point appears last in an argument. In Chinese, a full range of contingency factors is mentioned while in American discourse, there is a linear sense of causality (Young 1994).
- (v) Texts of the culture (e.g. literature, history) tend to be in a more culture-specific style and those in natural sciences more influenced by English discourse patterns (Liddicoat 1997b).

The differences in actual textual structures and speech act realizations outlined above are indicative of variation in cultural (and disciplinary) expectations of communication patterns. For instance, in a study by Clyne, Hoeks and Kreutz (1988), Australian and German linguists and Australian sociologists perceive different features of a text to be acceptable or readable. Linearity is the key feature for Australian linguists, technical terms and linearity for Australian sociologists, and information density and vocabulary are what German linguists consider to make the main difference between a readable and unreadable text.

6. Cultural parameters and cultural values

Speech acts and the rhythm and directionality of spoken and written discourse are not understanding inter-cultural communication. There is an interface between the linguistic potential and the use made of it due to cultural determinants. The hedging phenomena mentioned in 2, above, are an example. Another is the variation in rules of address in different European languages, even though they all make use of 2nd person singular and 2nd and/or 3rd person plural pronouns. The development of linguistic potential occurs because of the uses, thus the decision as to whether language or culture is the determinant is neither

feasible nor important. The existence of modal particles in German, Dutch, Hungarian and other languages (e.g. German *doch*, *wohl*, Dutch *wel*, *hoor*, Hungarian *csak*, *ugye*) enables speakers of each of these languages to use this linguistic potential to negotiate or impose consensus on the status of the proposition with their interlocutors. The functions of the modal particles contribute to a German, Dutch or Hungarian way of behaviour that speakers may or may not choose to adopt or maintain. Let us then consider how variation in speech acts and directionality and discourse rhythm relates to cultural values and to grammatical typology.

6.1. Politeness

This affects not only the contrastive pragmatics studies which attribute so much weight to levels of directness and thereby to different ways of being polite in different cultures (see 5.2 on CSSARP and Béal, for instance). Written discourse and especially academic written discourse is also guided by considerations of politeness. For instance, hinting (Chinese, Japanese) rather than explicitly expressing (Anglo) what are the important issues; and the more general matter of whether it is the author's responsibility to make the text completely lucid (Anglo) and/or whether it is more the reader's responsibility to take the trouble to understand this (both continental European and east Asian (Hinds 1987, Clyne 1987)). This is partly a question of human relations based on what Brown and Levinson's (1987) conceptualize as a dichotomy of *positive politeness*, where a closer relation with the interactant is developed through frankness and *negative politeness* where a conflict is avoided through modesty, formality, and restraint. Here Anglo and Asian negative politeness inform different ways of writing. The three main tenets of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness are: degree of relative power, social distance, and the relative ranking of impositions in the particular culture.

The dichotomy is related to another, comprising *positive face*, the want to be approved, and *negative face*, the want not to be imposed on. All cultures make use of both, but in some cases one relates very closely to the core values of a culture. For instance, Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese cultures with a strong emphasis on harmony and respect and in a different way, Anglo and Nordic with an emphasis on

avoiding intrusion exemplify a greater tendency towards negative politeness. Human relations in German, French, Spanish and Italian cultures indicate a tendency towards positive politeness (Clyne 1994: 176-186, also Section 5 above). Peeters (2000) demonstrates the distinction by drawing on both Béal's data and Wierzbicka's cultural scripts to arrive at the contrast between French *s'engager* and English *show restraint* as cultural key words.

6.2. Form and content

All cultures strive to achieve some balance between form and content in the organization of discourse. However, in some, the rules develop a life of their own. This varies between formal rules for essay writing and meeting routines in Anglo cultures and certain religious formulae, built into all writing and speaking in Arabic Islamic cultures. Content dominates the organization of a text far more than others, particularly where knowledge is idealized (as in German). The importance attached to the information (*Sache*) rather than the way in which it is expressed impacts on reader vs. author responsibility discussed in relation to politeness (see 6.1). The form-content dichotomy affects the criteria for assessing a written product and evaluating its author, especially in academic settings (Clyne 1981).

6.3. Literacy and oracy

There are cultures which attach more importance to oracy or to literacy. This means that one or the other will be subject to more stringent rules for acceptable discourse. There may also be variation between certain features in oral and written discourse, e.g. hedging is more prevalent in English than in German spoken role plays and in German than in English written academic discourse (Blum-Kulka et al 1989, Clyne 1991b). This may be attributed to different levels of politeness and the need for the authority of the scholar and of knowledge to be protected.

6.4. Organizational issues

Cultures that have a strong form-orientation are likely to place constraints on the structure of a text in terms of its directionality and its symmetry. The classic example of a culture of this kind is Anglo. There

is a canon of a good written text — especially academic text — in which arguments proceed in a linear manner, no section is very substantially longer than another, footnotes and other material are integrated into the main text, and there is early placement of advance organizers. Such discourse is taught and practised through the education system. These features are also inherent in formal meetings (e.g. keep one motion before the chair at a time, move that the motion now be put, remove from discussion at the meeting and refer a matter to a sub-committee). The straight line as a phenomenon in Anglo culture recurs in the obsession with queuing. In more content-oriented cultures, people are freer to ‘digress’, and ‘digressions’ (excursions) are utilized to broaden the topic of the text, narrowed by the Anglo confines of ‘relevance’. For instance, historical, ideological and polemic academic issues can be more readily incorporated into a text not specifically dealing with these.

There are also those cultures which, due to negative politeness, refrain from giving explicit information on how to interpret the main point but rather hint it. This leads to repetition and the impression among people from other cultures that the direction is circular (cf. Kaplan 1972). In other cultures with an emphasis on negative politeness (such as Finnish), it may be impolite to be constantly reminded where the writer is going (Mauranen 1993).

6.5. Abstract — concrete

Some cultures emphasize the abstract and logical thought processes more, others stress the concrete and emotional reactions. This is illustrated in Farrell’s (1997) comparison of the essays of Chilean and Vietnamese students. It will be evident if we compare Galtung’s (1985) description of German intellectual style with Vo Phien’s (1989) assertion that feeling is more important in Vietnamese communication than reason.

7. Some functions of contrastive discourse research

7.1. Development of an areally-based discourse typology alongside a grammatical typology

The first use of contrastive discourse research is to show how languages are used differently and to extend linguistic paradigms. In particular, it might eventually facilitate the development of an areally/culturally based discourse typology alongside grammatical typologies of the Greenberg type. To get from the findings of contrastive discourse studies to this stage, we would have to take on broad insights from neighbouring disciplines, especially anthropology (as the study of culture) and psychology (as the study of the mind). One should mention Galtung's mapping of what he terms Saxon, Teutonic, Gallic and Nipponic intellectual styles based on his experience and understanding of the (academic) culture. Though this contribution is specifically useful in interpreting the contrastive analysis of academic discourse, it provides an important insight for the development of discourse typologies, that of some cultural styles being on the periphery of one or more areas. It is our observation that people from 'peripheral' areas tend to be particularly effective intercultural communicators (Clyne 1994: 158).

Like Galtung's styles, Hofstede's (1991) comparisons of workplace ethics can help inform and interpret linguistic research and is perhaps more generally applicable. It is based on a survey among over 116,000 employees in a large multinational corporation in forty countries (unfortunately not including countries formerly in the Soviet Bloc), verified by other empirical studies. He explores:

- Social inequality, including the relationship with authority
- The relationship between the individual and the group
- Concepts of masculinity and femininity
- Ways of dealing with uncertainty.

This has led to four bipolar dimensions (indexes) which also underlie relations between interlocutors/ interactants in discourse:

- Power distance (PDI) (acceptance of inequality or conflict, or interdependence and harmony)
- Uncertainty avoidance (UAI) (high or low risk taking vs anxiety)
- Individualism/Collectivism
- Femininity/Masculinity (aggressive vs collaborative behaviour)

Hofstede plots the various *countries* (not necessarily cultures) according to their scores on these four dimensions. While English-speaking and Northern European countries show a low PDI and UAI, German-speaking cultures have a combine PDI with a relatively high UAI. English-speaking countries and, to a lesser degree, Northern Europe, have a high level of individualism compared to Southern Europe. Northern Europe's high femininity rate contrasts with the low one for German-speaking countries and Italy, with English-speaking countries in the middle.

These are but a few examples. There are many sources of information on particular cultures and individual cultural values which can inform this discussion.

7.2. Linguistics of inter-cultural communication

Contrastive discourse research can contribute to a linguistic of inter-cultural communication. It could draw on the various strands of research mentioned above. Such model-building would entail some adaptation and modification of Grice's (1975) maxims to make them function (a) beyond an Anglo-(American) context and (b) in inter-cultural communication (Clyne 1994: 192-194):

For instance, 'Do not make your contribution more informative than is required' is inappropriate for content-oriented cultures where the more knowledge provided, the better. Modification: 'Make your contribution as informative as is required for the purpose of the discourse, within the bounds of the discourse parameters of the given culture' (p. 194).

The supermaxim of Quality 'Try to make your contribution one that is true' ignores that there are many cultures in which truth is subordinated to other values (e.g. harmony, dignity, respect). A more appro-

priate wording would be: 'Try to make your contribution one for which you can take responsibility within your own cultural norms'.

Grice's maxims of Manner are also culturally restrictive:

'Avoid obscurity' conflicts with author orientation in academic discourse and with the implicitness which some cultures require for face reasons. An alternative might be: 'Don't make your contribution more difficult to understand than may be dictated by questions of face and authority'.

'Avoid ambiguity' conflicts with south-east Asian cultures in which ambiguity is a core value (Cam Nguyen 1991: 43 for Vietnamese). Ambiguity has been described as a Central European paradigm (Konrád 1985) and an Austrian identity marker (Bodi 1985). A more culturally inclusive maxim would be: 'Make clear your intent insofar as this is in the interests of politeness or identity or of maintaining a dignity-driven cultural core value, such as harmony, charity or respect'.

We have seen that length of turns is a cultural variable, so that 'Be brief' is not a universal. This could be modified to: 'Make your contribution the appropriate length required by the nature and purpose of the exchange and the discourse parameters of your culture'. 'Be orderly' is the maxim of a form-oriented culture; reference to comparisons between English and continental European academic discourse showed that this would not be an important consideration in a culture with a stronger content orientation. A better formulation would therefore be: 'Structure your discourse according to the requirements of your culture'. So far the modifications have served to make the maxims useful for more cultures. The next maxim of manner should be added in the interests of inter-cultural communication:

'In your contribution, take into account anything you know or can predict about the interlocutor's communication expectations' (Clyne 1994: 195).

7.2.1. Problems of stereotypes and typology

There is an inherent danger that the terms employed in contrastive discourse studies already contain stereotypes, perhaps based on the

culture or language of the researchers. Graefen (1994) has criticized the use of 'digression'/'digressiveness' (usually written in inverted commas) in our work. She usually translates the term as 'Abschweifigkeit', a pejorative, although I have always employed the more descriptive 'Digression' in any German references to it. The point about using English as a starting point for comparison here was to make English speakers aware that their style of academic discourse is not the only valid one and that other styles fulfil particular functions well. Nevertheless the point is taken that caution needs to be exercised with the creation and use of terms in this field.

7.3. Some applications

7.3.1. Scholarly attitudes and practice

Perhaps the greatest contribution of this field of research is towards cultural understanding, especially in alleviating prejudices. There is a widespread tolerance among L1 speakers of languages of phonetic, lexical and morphosyntactic deviations from the norm on the part of L2 speakers. This does not usually extend to corresponding deviations at the pragmatic/discourse level. Such 'errors' are often identified with prejudices and stereotypes of the individual and the group they belong to. People from other ethnolinguistic/ cultural groups are deemed to be rude, illogical or stupid because pragmatic or discourse rules are not identified as part of linguistic variation. Academic discourse of those from other languacultures is often criticized in reviews on formal grounds or simply not published. (Clyne 1981, Ammon 1998, Flowerdew 2001). This is because of the cultural expectations of discourse. The problem needs attention. If English has become the all-powerful medium of international communication (Cf. Phillipson 1994, Pennycook 1992, Ammon 1998), then this cannot be used to force the cultural assimilation of the rest of the world or to disadvantage those from other cultural backgrounds whose discourse patterns may be judged different. In particular it is incumbent on English speakers from the 'inner circle', as Kachru (1982) describes the old native English-speaking areas, to become acquainted with other ways of using English since it is now used at least three times as much as an instrument of inter-cultural communication as it is as a native language.

7.3.2. Expectations in English programs

It should be considered how much the fruits of contrastive discourse research should be incorporated into second/ foreign language teaching. Undoubtedly this is something advanced learners need to be exposed to in terms of cultural knowledge and receptive mastery. But does this also apply to production? Should we require students of English as a second language or Japanese as a foreign language to employ pragmatic and discourse patterns of L1 users when they write and speak the language? Clearly, complete and balanced biculturalism would be the ideal. But there is a danger of cultural imperialism in insisting on using pragmatic and discourse norms of another languaculture since the discourse level is the one closest to people's cultural value systems, their socialization, and their personalities.

7.3.3. Business communication

The results of contrastive discourse research has its uses in business communication in that it facilitates an understanding of how and why people from a particular languaculture behave communicatively. We must ensure that cross-cultural training extends beyond five facts about each culture to a sensitization as to what are the options in discourse patterns and expectations and what kinds of questions need to be asked when one is confronted with an unfamiliar culture.

8. Conclusions

Discourse patterns are not an appendage to language but an essential aspect of it. They constitute that part of language which is closest to cultural values and therefore are not always susceptible to teaching. Contrastive and cross-cultural studies of discourse provide us with information on both behaviour and expectations that can contribute to the resolution of inter-cultural communication breakdown. It is important that the findings do not themselves generate or perpetuate stereotypes. It is equally crucial to challenge the assumption that 'good texts' and 'good communicative behaviour' are universal. Contrastive discourse studies can contribute to an areal discourse typology but this requires input from neighbouring disciplines in the interpretation of some of the variation in texts.

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