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CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS FOR LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LEARNING: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The analysis carried out by contrastive linguistics helps to extract the similarities and differences between two languages, particularly in contact, and above all, in a learning environment of the target language in the presence of the mother tongue. This discipline endeavours to propose solutions to ensure good language acquisition. The aim is not only to deduce the convergences and divergences between two languages but also, and above all, to extract the difficulties encountered by language learners and find solutions to enrich this learning, i.e. to envisage appropriate teaching strategies.

KEYWORDS

Language Acquisition-Learning, Target Language and Mother Tongue, Convergences and Divergences, Teaching Strategies, Contrastive Analysis

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Introduction.

This article is part of the increasingly important field of contrastive linguistics, a discipline which, although it shares common roots with other approaches such as comparative linguistics, is distinguished by its pragmatic and didactic focus. Far from simply juxtaposing linguistic systems, contrastive analysis aims to identify precisely the convergences and divergences between two or more languages, not as sterile theoretical exercises, but with a view to proposing concrete solutions to problems of acquisition and translation. This approach, which began in the mid-twentieth century, notably under the impetus of authors such as Lado (1957) with his seminal work *Linguistics Across Cultures*, has been considerably refined over the decades, incorporating contributions from psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics. It is therefore no longer just a question of drawing up inventories of contrasts, but of understanding the cognitive mechanisms underlying the errors and difficulties encountered by language learners, and of envisaging appropriate teaching strategies. The problem thus revolves around the crucial role of contrastive linguistics in the learning of languages and target languages in the presence of the mother tongue. The following hypotheses were noted:

- The need for in-depth contrastive analysis is particularly acute when we consider the multiplicity of language systems and the complexity of their interactions.
- A study of the contrasts between Arabic and French, for example, reveals fundamental differences both at the phonetic level, with consonantal and vowel distinctions that are sometimes radically opposed, and at the morphosyntactic level, where grammatical structures and categories diverge significantly. These divergences have direct implications for the difficulties encountered by Arabic-speaking learners in acquiring French, particularly in the construction of complex sentences and the use of verb tenses.
- The results of contrastive analysis should not remain confined to academic circles, but should be transposed into textbooks and teaching practices in order to optimise the teaching and learning process, thus enabling better mutual understanding between speakers of different languages.

It should be stressed that contrastive linguistics should not be limited to a simple comparison of the formal structures of languages. It must also take into account the pragmatic and socio-cultural dimensions, since the use of a language is always rooted in a specific context. The work of scholars such as Kachru (1986) on the notion of “circles of English” *The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions and Models of Non-Native Englishes* has highlighted the importance of linguistic variation and the influence of socio-cultural contexts on language use. From this perspective, contrastive analysis must explore not only grammatical differences, but also the cultural differences that manifest themselves through language use, such as conversational conventions, forms of politeness, idiomatic expressions and discursive styles. Taking these aspects into account is essential to promote effective intercultural communication and avoid the misunderstandings that can result from a literal interpretation of statements. The aim of this research is to integrate this perspective into the analysis of the contrasts between Arabic and French, by examining, beyond the linguistic structures themselves, the socio-cultural implications of their differences.

As a research plan, we will first address the definition and the field of study of contrastive linguistics, the core term for this work, then, and secondly, we must address an essential element that revolves around the origins of this discipline and its development through the historical aspect that determines its roots. We will then discuss the practical and theoretical objectives of contrastive analysis and the research methodologies used to carry out contrastive analysis.

It is essential to define key concepts such as contrast, comparison and interlanguage; the techniques and methods used by researchers in contrastive analysis will then be discussed; and lastly, and most profoundly, an important aspect of this work will be the descriptive analysis of linguistic structures, such as interlinguistic comparison and the predictive analysis of interferences.

1- Definition and field of study of contrastive linguistics:

By focusing on the differences and similarities between two or more languages, contrastive linguistics carries out a systematic analysis of the linguistic systems involved. It thus differs from purely descriptive approaches, which focus on the description of a single language, or from typological linguistics, which classifies languages according to their common characteristics without necessarily focusing on the differences. Its field of study, far from being limited to the simple identification of these differences, aims to understand the underlying mechanisms that generate them, by scrutinising the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels of analysis. This rigorous approach makes it possible to identify potential sources of learning difficulties for speakers of a given language, but also to build bridges between the cultures and ways of thinking conveyed by each language. The ultimate aim is to improve cross-linguistic understanding and provide tools for translation, language didactics and the analysis of learning errors, based on a solid empirical foundation, as Krzeszowski (1990, p. 14) clearly explains in his insistence on the relevance of the contrastive approach to second language teaching.

The field of contrastive linguistics is investigated through the meticulous analysis of the concrete realisations of languages. Contrary to an abstract theoretical approach, it focuses on observable manifestations, whether oral or written. In doing so, it identifies patterns, regularities and exceptions specific to each language system, and then compares these characteristics. It studies, for example, the way in which the same conceptual reality is expressed in two different languages, or the way in which one syntactic structure is rendered in another. For example, the contrastive analysis between Arabic and French highlights the differences between these two linguistic systems. In phonetic and phonological terms, Arabic contains guttural sounds such as (ع, ح, خ) which do not exist in French, and in terms of the concept of time, French distinguishes between the past, present and future through conjugation: *je mange*, *je mangeais* and *je mangerai*, whereas in Arabic there are mainly two tenses: past (الماضي), present-future (المضارع), expressed by the prefix (س): *je vais écrire*. It can also explore the reasons why certain linguistic phenomena are present in one language and absent in another. This approach proves particularly fruitful when applied to languages that are typologically very different, revealing disparities that might go unnoticed with more closely related languages.

The field of contrastive linguistics encompasses an essential pragmatic dimension. It is not just a question of comparing grammatical or lexical structures, but also the ways in which languages are used in specific social and cultural contexts. Rules of politeness, conversational conventions and discourse styles differ considerably from one language to another, and these differences can be a source of misunderstandings and difficulties in intercultural communication. For example, the expression of agreement or disagreement, the management of speaking turns, or the use of greetings can vary considerably, requiring a detailed contrastive

analysis. This pragmatic dimension is therefore crucial to ensuring effective communication and avoiding the pitfalls of naive “transferability” of linguistic models.

2-Origins and Foundations of Contrastive Linguistics:

The emergence of contrastive linguistics, although often attributed to post-Second World War developments in foreign language teaching, is in fact rooted in much older and varied concerns. As early as the beginning of the 20th century, researchers such as the German linguist Hugo Schuchardt, in his work "Über die Lautgesetze: Gegen die Junggrammatiker" (1885), highlighted the variability of phonetic and morphological systems between languages, underlining the importance of comparing languages to better understand their specific functions. By opposing the neogrammatical approach, which favoured a universal view of phonetic laws, Schuchardt paved the way for a more relativistic conception of language, which is essential to the comparative perspective. He was particularly interested in the reciprocal influences between languages, a central point in any contrastive approach and one which anticipates more recent research into cross-linguistic transfers. This attention to the structural differences and interactions between languages was an essential basis for the development of a genuine contrastive linguistics, even if the study was still in its infancy at the time (Schuchardt, 1885, pp. 120-135).

The theoretical foundations of contrastive linguistics were gradually strengthened by the work of American structuralist linguists. The influence of figures such as Charles Fries, with his book 'Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language' (1945), was crucial. From a behaviourist perspective, Fries stresses the importance of systematically comparing the linguistic systems of the learner's mother tongue (L1) and target language (L2) in order to identify potential learning difficulties. His approach emphasises the notion of transfer, positive or negative, depending on the similarity or difference of the linguistic structures of the two languages. This approach is based on the idea that the errors produced by the learner are often due to interference from his or her mother tongue, a view that has profoundly influenced the development of teaching materials and language teaching methods. As a result, contrastive analysis has become an indispensable tool for predicting errors and helping to design appropriate teaching materials (Fries, 1945, pp. 22-36).

Alongside developments in the West, work in the Arab world also highlights comparative concerns, although often rooted in a different tradition of grammatical and rhetorical studies. Ibn Khaldun's "Muqaddimah" (1377), although not explicitly presented as a treatise on contrastive linguistics, offers interesting insights into linguistic and cultural variation, particularly with regard to the influence of linguistic contact on the evolution of languages and the relationship between language and culture. Ibn Khaldun addresses the question of the acquisition and transmission of language skills, highlighting the way in which discourse practices and social contexts can modify the use and understanding of languages. His reflections on the differences between Arabic dialects, in particular, contain the seeds of a concern similar to that of modern contrastivist linguists, namely the analysis of variations within language systems and the consequences of these variations on communication. These reflections reflect an awareness of the relativity of linguistic and cultural norms, which is a foundation of the contrastive approach (Ibn Khaldun, 1377, p. 150).

3- Historical development and context of contrastive linguistics:

The emergence of contrastive linguistics, although it has its roots in long-standing pedagogical concerns, crystallised as a distinct discipline during the twentieth century, particularly under the impetus of behaviourism and its conception of language learning as the acquisition of habits. This approach, strongly influenced by the work of Skinner (1957), suggested that the errors of foreign language learners arose mainly from interference between their mother tongue and the target language. In this context, contrastive linguistics, as a method, presented itself as a tool for systematically identifying these differences and, consequently, for anticipating potential difficulties encountered by learners. The work of Charles C. Fries (1945) in North America, for example, played a pioneering role in the implementation of this approach, stressing the need for comparative structural analysis in order to develop teaching materials adapted to the specific characteristics of learners. This initial phase therefore saw the establishment of a methodology based on the comparative analysis of linguistic systems, with particular emphasis on the phonological, morphological and syntactic levels.

Contrastive linguistics then underwent a significant evolution, marked by the growing influence of cognitivism and criticism of the reductive vision of behaviourism. Chomsky's (1957) theories on generative grammar shook the foundations of strict contrastive analysis by emphasising linguistic universals and the innate abilities of speakers. Researchers began to explore more complex areas, such as semantics, pragmatics and the socio-cultural dimension of language. This new orientation, reflected in particular in the interest in

error analysis, led to the formulation of the concept of “interlanguage” by Selinker (1972): a transitional linguistic system developed by learners in the course of their learning. The analysis of errors, moving away from a vision centred solely on structural differences, made it possible to gain a better understanding of the cognitive processes involved in the acquisition of a foreign language and to relativise the predictive power of traditional contrastive analysis. This evolution has therefore led to a broadening of the field of the discipline, by including more nuanced aspects that take into account the specificities of individuals and learning contexts.

Alongside this theoretical evolution, the development of contrastive linguistics has been influenced by the sociolinguistic context and the specific needs of different fields. Comparative studies of Arabic languages, for example, have made a significant contribution to the discipline, both in terms of structural analysis and didactic aspects.

4- Practical and theoretical objectives of contrastive analysis:

Contrastive analysis, far from being limited to a simple inventory of interlinguistic differences, pursues significant practical objectives, particularly in the field of foreign language teaching. It provides a methodological framework for anticipating potential difficulties encountered by learners by identifying areas of negative transfer, i.e. interference due to the structure of the mother tongue (L1). For example, contrastive analysis between Arabic and French reveals significant differences in the structuring of propositions, gender and number systems, and the use of verb tenses. This detailed understanding of the differences enables teachers to target their teaching interventions, develop appropriate teaching aids and propose specific exercises to overcome these foreseeable difficulties. Arabic and French have different syntactic structures. In French, the basic order (SVO) is subject, verb, object, for example: La fille mange une tarte. In Arabic the order can be (VSO): verb, subject, object, example: الكعكة البنت اكلت. In terms of differences in gender systems; French and Arabic have different grammatical genders: in French nouns are masculine or feminine (un cahier, une image), in Arabic nouns are the same as French, but the feminine is often marked by the letter (o): طالبة f طالب m.

From a theoretical point of view, contrastive analysis feeds into general linguistics by contributing to a better understanding of the universal and specific mechanisms of languages. It makes it possible to identify invariants and variations between language systems, thereby shedding light on the cognitive processes underlying language acquisition and production. By comparing different languages, we can highlight recurring patterns, universal constraints and idiosyncrasies specific to each language. For example, by comparing languages of different origins, such as Chinese Mandarin and German, as Wang (2010) points out in his study of linguistic typologies, we can better understand the limitations of certain linguistic theories and develop more sophisticated models. In short, contrastive analysis is not just a tool for comparison, but an instrument of theoretical investigation that contributes to the construction of a more complete and nuanced science of language.

On a theoretical level, contrastive analysis also serves as a critical tool for assessing the relevance of dominant linguistic theories. It allows us to test the validity of proposed concepts, categories and models by comparing them with data from different languages. For example, contrastive linguistics can highlight the limits of an excessive universalist approach that tends to deny or minimise linguistic diversity. Lazard's (2006) study of actantial constructions in various languages shows that contrastive analysis can put into perspective generalising theoretical propositions that are often based on limited data, particularly from Indo-European languages. In this sense, it contributes to the constant evolution of linguistic theories, adapting them to the richness and complexity of the global linguistic landscape, thus guaranteeing their relevance and application beyond a restricted linguistic framework.

5- Research methodologies used in contrastive linguistics:

Research in contrastive linguistics is based on a variety of methodologies, each responding to specific objectives and different corpora. One of the dominant approaches is the comparative analysis of parallel corpora, in which texts produced in two different languages but translated from one another are examined in detail. This method makes it possible to identify divergences and convergences not only at the lexical and grammatical level, but also in terms of syntactic structures, discourse strategies and cultural markers. The expression of possession in French uses the verb “avoir”: j'ai un ballon; in Arabic it uses a prepositional structure: كرة : عندي j'ai un ballon. The aim is to extract the linguistic transfers and interferences that occur during the translation process, revealing the specificities of each language and the challenges posed by the transition from one language to another. An exemplary study from this perspective is that of Baker (1993),

who explores metaphor translation strategies in an English-Arabic corpus, demonstrating how cultural and linguistic variations influence the choice of equivalents in translation (Baker, 1993, p. 233).

Another central methodology in contrastive linguistics is analysis based on elicited data or data produced by language learners. Unlike parallel corpora, this approach focuses on the actual linguistic productions of individuals in a learning context, whether grammatical exercises, oral productions or free writing. Analysis of these data enables us to identify typical errors, interlanguage phenomena and learning strategies used by non-native speakers. By focusing on systematic errors and transfers from the mother tongue, it becomes possible to identify more precisely the difficulties specific to each language pair and thus to refine teaching and remedial methods.

It is crucial to mention the importance of contrastive analysis based on native speakers' intuitions and judgements of grammaticality. This method differs from the previous ones in that it is less empirical and more introspective. It involves soliciting the opinions of native speakers on statements constructed specifically to test hypotheses about grammatical rules, syntactic constraints or semantic differences between two languages. Although this approach is not infallible and can be influenced by subjective factors, it offers a complementary angle for discovering the nuances and specificities of the languages under study.

6- Key concepts: contrast, comparison and interlanguage:

The concept of contrast, at the heart of contrastive linguistics, revolves around the identification of systematic differences between two or more languages. The analysis is not limited to a simple juxtaposition of structures, but aims to understand the underlying mechanisms that give rise to these divergences. For example, a study of the aspectual systems of French and literal Arabic reveals some notable contrasts. While French clearly distinguishes the imparfait from the passé composé to mark the *inaccompli* and *accompli* aspects, literal Arabic uses specific verb forms, often linked to morphological patterns, to express these same aspectual notions.

Comparison is the methodological tool par excellence in contrastive linguistics. It is used to highlight similarities and differences, by meticulously analysing linguistic data. This comparative process is not a simple inventory of distinctive features, but a structured investigation that relates linguistic systems at different levels of analysis: phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic. A comparison of the verbal morphology of French and Mandarin Chinese reveals a fundamental divergence in the way temporal and aspectual information is encoded. French uses inflectional suffixes, whereas Chinese relies mainly on particles and word order. This comparison reveals not only formal divergences, but also different strategies of linguistic expression and a typology of languages (Li & Thompson, 1981, p. 43).

The interlanguage represents the transitional state of a foreign language learner's linguistic system. This constantly evolving system lies between the mother tongue (L1) and the target language (L2). The interlanguage is neither an imperfect copy of the L2, nor a simple modified version of the L1, but an autonomous system, governed by its own rules and presenting phenomena of influence from the mother tongue, overgeneralization of L2 rules and developmental errors. The study of interlanguage is essential in contrastive linguistics, because it enables us to understand the processes of language acquisition and to predict the difficulties that learners may encounter. Take, for example, the case of an Arabic-speaking learner of French: the frequent difficulties with the grammatical gender of French can be explained not only by the absence of a grammatical gender in literal Arabic, but also by the strategies of interpretation and analogy that this learner uses in his interlanguage (Selinker, 1972, p. 215).

7- Methods and Techniques for Contrastive Analysis:

In its quest to highlight the similarities and divergences between two linguistic systems, contrastive analysis relies on a range of diversified methods and techniques, each meeting specific needs according to the level of analysis. Among these approaches, distributional analysis occupies a prominent place. This involves examining the contexts of appearance and non-appearance of linguistic elements in the two languages under study. This approach, often associated with structural linguistics, can reveal subtle differences in the way similar concepts are expressed through grammatical categories, syntactic functions or lexical choices. For example, by comparing the way in which the concept of "time" is expressed in French and Arabic, we could observe a fundamental difference in the use of verb tenses, particularly in the management of the aspect accomplished and *inaccompli*, which would lead to different communication strategies for the representation of past or ongoing actions. It is important to note that this approach, although objective and based on empirical data, may sometimes require a nuanced interpretation to take account of stylistic or dialectal variations. (Jakobson, 1963, p. 232)

Another crucial approach to contrastive analysis is the study of interlanguage errors. This type of analysis, largely inspired by psycholinguistics and language didactics, focuses on errors made by learners when acquiring a second language. It postulates that many errors can be attributed to mother tongue interference, i.e. the tendency to apply the rules or structures of one's first language to the target language. Once these errors have been identified and classified, they provide valuable information about the specific difficulties encountered by learners and enable teaching interventions to be better targeted. For example, an Arabic speaker learning French might make errors relating to the place of the adjective in relation to the noun, or in the use of grammatical gender, as these structures differ considerably from Arabic. This approach makes it possible to better understand the challenges posed by language learning and to develop appropriate teaching tools. (Selinker, 1972, p. 215)

Contrastive analysis also benefits from the contributions of corpus linguistics. This approach, which is based on the analysis of large sets of real texts, makes it possible to identify usage patterns that are not always apparent from introspective analysis or isolated examples. Corpus data provides a more nuanced and comprehensive view of the differences between languages, particularly in terms of the frequency of use of certain structures, collocations and semantic nuances. For example, the semantic nuances between Arabic and French relate precisely to the way in which certain concepts are expressed, and we can note the lexical richness below for the same concept: Arabic has several words expressing a specific nuance of a concept, whereas French uses a single word: for example the word 'lion' in French has several words and meanings: for example lion: سبع ضرعام، ليث، اسد، in Arabic and each of these words has a different nuance related to the strength, majesty or even aggressiveness of the animal 'lion'. The use of corpus processing software enables statistical analyses to be carried out on the distribution of words and grammatical structures, revealing specific features of each language which may have important implications for translation, language teaching and intercultural understanding. For example, comparing nominal collocations in French and Arabic via a parallel corpus could reveal language-specific word associations that would not be intuitive a priori. (Sulaiti, 2017, p. 139)

8- Descriptive analysis of linguistic structures:

Examining linguistic structures from a descriptive perspective reveals an underlying complexity that is often unsuspected at first glance. For example, an analysis of the French verbal system reveals temporal and modal nuances that morphology and syntax attempt to express with remarkable precision. A study of the subjunctive, for example, reveals a network of subtle uses, oscillating between subjectivity, unreality and syntactic dependency. This richness, when compared with the verbal systems of other languages, such as English, which is also Indo-European, highlights the particularities of a given language. For example, in English, constructions involving "may" or "might" and infinitive forms can express semantic values close to those of the French subjunctive, but without the same morphological granularity (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 219).

Exploring noun structures offers another fertile field of investigation. The categorisation of nouns, their gender, their number and the changes they can undergo are essential aspects in understanding how a language organises its vision of the world. French, with its grammatical gender system, contrasts masculine and feminine, a distinction which does not always have a clear semantic equivalent and which poses considerable challenges for learning and translation. By way of comparison, Arabic, while also having a gender system, manifests it in a different way, for example in the agreement of adjectives. A study of agreement in constructions such as bayt kabir (the big house) in Arabic reveals a surface grammar in which the feminine is morphologically visible, in contrast to French (Wright, 1896, p. 118).

The descriptive analysis of syntactic structures highlights the hierarchical relationships between the different elements of the sentence. The order of words, the nature of subordinate phrases and the use of emphasis all contribute to structuring the meaning of an utterance. The study of passive constructions, for example, illustrates significant differences between languages. While French uses auxiliary verbs (être, se faire), in some languages such as Korean, passivation can be marked by suffixes on the verb or by specific case particles. Thus, in Korean e-nun (subject) and i/ga (nominative) can be used to indicate the theme or the agent in a passive sentence, without resorting to impersonal constructions like in French. (Song, 2005, p. 312)

8-1- Cross-linguistic comparison to identify similarities and differences:

The comparative approach in linguistics, applied to the study of languages, reveals fascinating areas of convergence and divergence. An examination of sentence construction, for example, shows that while some languages, like English, favour an SVO (subject-verb-object) structure, others, like Japanese, adopt an SOV order, which radically alters the nature of syntactic dependencies and the interpretation of semantic relations.

Comrie's (1989) *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology* explores these structural variations in depth, showing how typological choices shape not only form but also meaning. This observation, which is fundamental to contrastive linguistics, prompts us to reconsider the notion of linguistic universality and to appreciate the richness of the diversity of modes of expression. The work of Comrie (1989) thus emphasises that differences, far from being anomalies, constitute fertile ground for a better understanding of the cognitive mechanisms underlying language.

Comparative analysis is also crucial for understanding lexical and semantic particularities. The notion of “time”, for example, has complex nuances from one language to another. In Classical Arabic, the richness of the verbal conjugation, with its forms expressing the perfective and imperfective aspect, offers a different perspective to that of Romance languages where the distinction between the simple past and the compound past, in French for example, is essential.

Comparing phonological systems reveals significant differences in the way sounds are produced and perceived. The phonemic inventory of a language can vary considerably: some languages, such as Mandarin, use lexical tones to distinguish words, while others, such as French, do not. In his study *The Sounds of Language: An Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology* (2011), Ladefoged explains how articulatory and acoustic differences shape the perception and production of sounds. Vowel and consonant systems also vary considerably, underlining that the “sound matrix” of each language is a unique system that imposes its own constraints and possibilities. The contrastive study of the phonological domain is crucial for foreign language teaching and the correction of pronunciation in learners, demonstrating once again the importance of comparison for a better understanding of the mechanisms of linguistic expression.

8-2- Predictive analysis of linguistic interferences and errors:

Predictive analysis of linguistic interferences and errors, one of the pillars of contrastive linguistics, aims to anticipate the difficulties that learners of a target language may encounter, based on a systematic comparison with their source language. This approach goes beyond the simple a posteriori identification of errors; it aims to identify areas of structural and lexical divergence between the two languages, thus predisposing them to inappropriate transfers.

The prediction of linguistic interference is also based on an in-depth analysis of the phenomena of transfer and over-generalisation which mark the learning of a foreign language. When confronted with new structures, learners tend to apply known patterns from their mother tongue, resulting in positive or negative transfers. Predictive analysis is not limited to grammar and lexicon, but extends to pragmatic and sociolinguistic aspects. Cultural and communicative differences between languages can also give rise to significant errors or misunderstandings, particularly in the context of social interactions. For example, a study carried out by Ghadessy (1999) on the differences in the use of politeness between English and Malay shows major discrepancies which can lead to misunderstandings, or even conflict situations, if learners are not aware of these differences. For example, the level of formality, the use of specific polite expressions and even the use of metaphors can differ substantially from one culture to another. It is essential to integrate these sociolinguistic considerations into a predictive approach, highlighting the risk areas for cultural and pragmatic transfers, in order to enrich the language learning process and enable more effective and respectful intercultural communication. Predictive analysis is a fundamental tool for more informed language teaching, adapted to the real needs of learners.

9-Prospect:

The profound changes taking place in contemporary linguistic studies are having a direct impact on contrastive linguistics, forcing it to redefine its approaches and focus. The development of automatic language processing technologies, in particular, offers unprecedented possibilities for the comparative analysis of massive multilingual corpora. Contrastive linguistics, once confined to the study of structural differences between two or more languages, can now explore much more complex and nuanced phenomena such as discourse variations, implicit cultural markers or interactional dynamics in an intercultural context. This move towards quantitative and qualitative analysis of real data paves the way for a more detailed understanding of linguistic and cultural transfers, as well as taking greater account of the pragmatic dimension of language. From this perspective, the work of Adami and De Pietro (2011, p. 45), who advocate a multidimensional approach to comparative analysis, seems particularly relevant. Their plea for an integration of data from linguistics, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics underlines the importance of a holistic approach to identifying the subtleties of contrastive phenomena.

Contrastive linguistics also has to deal with the socio-political and ideological issues associated with the study of languages. In an increasingly globalised world, linguistic contacts are multiplying, giving rise to phenomena of creolisation, pidginisation and register variations that call into question the traditional categories of linguistic description. Contrastive linguistics can no longer be satisfied with a simple formal comparison, but must also take an interest in the social, cultural and historical factors underlying the differences between languages. For example, the study of language borrowing and transfer reveals how languages change and adapt under the influence of exogenous and endogenous factors. In this way, a contrastive approach incorporating a sociolinguistic dimension is essential for understanding the power issues and identity dynamics at play through language practices. Analysing comparative media, political or literary discourse in different languages can also shed light on the cultural representations and stereotypes conveyed by language. The contrastive linguistics of the future must move towards greater interdisciplinarity and openness to other areas of research. The contribution of neuroscience, for example, could provide a better understanding of the brain mechanisms underlying language acquisition and production in a bilingual or plurilingual context.

Recent developments in contrastive linguistics have shown a growing interest in corpus-based approaches, enabling a more detailed empirical analysis of the differences and similarities between languages. Contrastive analysis of the written production of French- and English-speaking learners, based on comparable corpora, has revealed significant divergences in the use of discourse markers and syntactic complexity, making it possible to refine teaching tools and strategies accordingly. Methodological innovations now rely on statistical analysis and automatic natural language processing techniques to extract more subtle linguistic patterns and quantitatively evaluate interlingual phenomena, thus offering a new and more objective perspective on linguistic differences. In so doing, contrastive linguistics no longer confines itself to a simple comparison of abstract systems, but takes an active interest in their concrete manifestation in usage, opening up promising prospects for language teaching and translatology.

Conclusions

Furthermore, the application of contrastive linguistics is not limited to the simple description of differences; it is particularly relevant to the analysis of linguistic interference and the identification of potential sources of error in foreign language learners. The use of contrastive analysis tools, such as categorisation by type of deviance, thus improves language teaching, by making it possible to develop targeted exercises and activities to overcome specific difficulties. This applied dimension underlines the importance of contrastive linguistics not only as a field of theoretical study, but also as an essential practical tool for improving language teaching and learning, promoting better intercultural communication.

Contrastive linguistics also has to deal with the socio-political and ideological issues associated with the study of languages. In an increasingly globalised world, linguistic contacts are multiplying, giving rise to phenomena of creolisation, pidginisation and register variations that call into question the traditional categories of linguistic description. Contrastive linguistics can no longer be satisfied with a simple formal comparison, but must also take an interest in the social, cultural and historical factors underlying the differences between languages. For example, the study of language borrowing and transfer reveals how languages change and adapt under the influence of exogenous and endogenous factors. In this way, a contrastive approach incorporating a sociolinguistic dimension is essential for understanding the power issues and identity dynamics at play through language practices. Analysing comparative media, political or literary discourse in different languages can also shed light on the cultural representations and stereotypes conveyed by language.

Finally, this research into contrastive linguistics highlights the importance of a holistic and interdisciplinary approach. It calls for collaboration between linguists, translators, educationalists, and even computer scientists, to deepen our understanding of the complex mechanisms that govern human communication. The contrastive study of the role of pronouns in Germanic and Romance languages, for example, highlights different strategies for ensuring textual cohesion, demonstrating that a thorough understanding of the cultural context is fundamental to fully grasping linguistic nuances (Siewierska, 2003, p. 212). Thus, contrastive linguistics, far from being a static discipline, is a dynamic and constantly evolving field, capable of making fundamental contributions not only to the understanding of language, but also to the improvement of intercultural communication and the enhancement of linguistic diversity.

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