FEEDBACK TUTORIAL LETTER

2nd SEMESTER 2019

ASSIGNMENT 1

CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS

CTL821S
### Observation

- Some of the students only define Error Analysis without fully defining what Contrastive Linguistics is, and how the two are related.

- For Error Analysis being the Weak Version, most of the students did not give detail on how it is the weaker version, but focused only on error analysis itself.

- For Question 2, most of the students had an idea on the differences between their chosen language and English, however, fully explaining it was a bit of a problem.

- Some of the students need to also explain how they understand the quotes in their own words when providing a quoted explanation.

- Lastly, the students need to work on their APA Referencing style as some just listed the references used, without them being in Alphabetical order nor the proper APA Style.

- Some students also need to focus on grammar, punctuation as well as concord.
Question 1(a) was to explain error analysis as the weak version of Contrastive analysis and (b) state the differences between CA and EA.

With this, the students were expected to also define what Contrastive linguistics is.

**Contrastive Analysis**

Contrastive Analysis is defined as the act of systematically comparing two languages, while looking at specific aspects of both languages. It is the study and comparison of two languages, learners' Target Language (TL) and learners' Native Language (NL). In other words, it is the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities. This is done to show similarities and differences between the two languages.

Contrastive Analysis was used extensively in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the 1960s and early 1970s, as a method of explaining why some features of a Target Language were more difficult to acquire than others. According to the behaviorist theories prevailing at the time, language learning was a question of habit formation, and this could be reinforced or impeded by existing habits. Therefore, the difficulty in mastering certain structures in a second language (L2) depended on the difference between the learners' mother language (L1) and the language they were trying to learn.

The theoretical foundations for what became known as the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis were formulated in Lado's *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957). In this book, Lado claimed that "those elements which are similar to [the learner's] native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult". While this was not a novel suggestion, Lado was the first to provide a comprehensive theoretical treatment and to suggest a systematic set of technical procedures for the contrastive study of languages. This involved describing the languages (using structuralist linguistics), comparing them and predicting learning difficulties.
Contrastive analysis can help teachers to:

- design teaching and learning materials (methodology)
- engage learner in activities to be a good user of target language (classroom activities)
- evaluate text books.
- pay attention to the structure of the texts beyond sentence level
- pay attention to conversation in its regular pattern in different situations
- pay attention to complex areas like intonation
- pay attention to different underlying rules which differ from culture to culture
- contrastive analysis does not suggest a method or teaching technique but help methodologists to pay attention to the what’s of teaching and how’s of teaching.

Linguistics o Contrastive analysis pays attention to different languages at lexical, phonological, syntactical and semantic levels of Contrastive studies find similarities and differences between languages in:

a) Grammatical structures (pronouns, articles, verbs, consonants and vowels)  
b) Sentences and constructions (interrogatives, relatives, negatives, normal phrases, syllables, diphthongs,…)  
c) Rules of the compared languages (interrogative, passivization and etc.)

According to Richards (1971), researches show that contrastive analysis may be most predictive at the level of phonology and least predictive at the syntactic level, for this many of the common mistakes are syntactic errors in written work.

**Error Analysis**

(a) Error Analysis is an approach that seeks to identify errors made by second language speakers systematically. It is concerned with the compilation, study and analysis of errors made by second language learners and aims at investigating aspects of second language acquisition because second language learners are bound to make some mistakes. Error analysis is the study of the type and quantity of errors that occur, particularly in the fields of applied linguistics. These errors can be divided into three
sub-categories: overgeneralization, incomplete rule application, and the hypothesizing of false concepts. They reflect a learner’s competence at a certain stage and hence differ from learner to learner.

According to Richards in Emmaryana (2010; 5), error analysis is an activity to reveal errors found in writing and speaking. Error analysis also is the study of errors made by the second and foreign language learners. Error analysis may be carried out in order to (a) find out how well someone knows a language, (b) find out how a person learns a language, and (c) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

Error analysis comes in three version; of which, this assignment will focus on the weak version.

The weak version simply considered the pure level of language (the phonological, Lexis and syntax). The weak form of the hypothesis claims only to be diagnostic. A contrastive analysis can be used to identify which errors are the result of interference. According to the weak hypothesis, contrastive analysis needs to work hand in hand with an error analysis. This means that, through the weak version, the errors that the students make are easily identifiable. Having knowledge on the differences between the target language and native language is an advantage. For example, on a syntactic level, the English speakers would not have a problem with pronouncing the l and r sound, however, because the Oshiwambo learner does not have the letters in the vocabulary, it would be a difficult task.

The weak version is also said to start with an analysis of learner’s learning errors and it argues that:

- Not all errors are caused by interference. This means that, sometimes, the errors could be a psychological problem.
- Contrastive Analysis can identify which errors are caused by interference and which ones are not.
- CA cannot determine which errors are easy to learn and dismisses the idea of prediction as heresy.
- Thus, it recognizes that L1 and L2 have similarities and differences which will make it easy to construct a syllable of the learner.

b). Difference between Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis Error analysis differs from contrastive analysis as follows:
1. Contrastive analysis starts with a comparison of systems of two languages and predicts only the areas of difficulty or error for the second language learner, whereas error analysis starts with errors in second language learning and studies them in the broader framework of their sources and significance.

2. EA unlike CA provides data on actual attested problems and so it forms a more efficient basis for designing pedagogical strategies.

3. EA is not confronting with the complex theoretical problems like the problem of equivalence encountered by CA.

4. EA provides a feedback value to the linguist, especially the psycho-linguist interested in the process of second language learning in ascertaining. a. Whether the process of acquisition of first language and second language learning are similar or not? b. Whether children and adults learn a second language in a similar manner or not?

5. EA provides evidence for a much more complex view of the learning process— one in which the learner is seen as an active participant in the formation of and revision of hypotheses regarding the rules of the target language.

6. CA studies Interlingual error (interference) whereas EA studies intralingual errors besides Interlingual.

**Question 2:** Select any indigenous language of your choice, then compare and contrast its structure with English at any level of the language of your choice (phonological, morphological or syntactical level). Predict the difficulties that the second language learners from the indigenous language you have selected are likely to encounter. (25)

When learners are learning English as a second language, it is often difficult at first because of the differences that exist between the two languages.

For this question, students were expected to choose an indigenous language of their choice and then compare and contrast its structure with that of English at any level of the language of their choice. These included, phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and or semantics. With this, they were expected to predict the difficulties that the second language learners from the chosen indigenous language might encounter.