

### **Can a learner-led contrastive analysis be conducted in the L2 classroom?**

One of the well-known applications of contrastive linguistics to L2 (second language) learning and teaching is Contrastive Analysis (CA). CA aims at “producing inverted [...] two-valued typology” (James, 1996b, p. 3) by identifying systematic structural differences between languages to predict or explain errors induced by L1 (mother tongue). Early CA was suggested as a tool for developing teachers’ awareness of learners’ difficulties (Kramersch, 2007, p. 141), guiding curriculum design, and supporting L2-only policy within the general trend toward protecting learners from contrasting/confusing L1 and L2 (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p. 101). CA turned towards the learner and cross-linguistic L2 instruction with the emergence of the *Cognitive Turn in Contrastive Analysis* (Kupferberg, 1999), under the influence of (neuro)cognitive conceptions that view L2 acquisition as a brain transformation process based on “cross-linguistic interaction” between fully developed (L1) and developing (L2) language systems (Herdina & Jessner, 2002, p. 29). CA has been redefined – with a focus on the learner – as a cognitive process that occurs “when two languages come into contact in the bilingual brain” (James, 1996a, p. 143), while traditional teacher-focused pedagogical application of CA has been extended to an explicit instructional method dubbed “*contrastive teaching*.” In contrastive teaching, the teacher engages students in comparing L2 and L1 features to facilitate the development of students’ cross-lingual awareness and, thus, natural L2 acquisition (cf. James, 1996b, Chap. 6.3.3; Kivistö-de Souza, 2015). James (n.d.) claims that “now **the learner can become her own contrastivist** since the two languages coincide in one individual at this cognitive [...] level” (p. 14). However, in contrastive teaching, as described in the literature, it is the teacher who provides learners with cross-linguistic information from a previous teacher- or researcher-led CA. To our knowledge, CA has never been used as a *learner-led practice*.

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We suggest an affirmative answer relying on our experience of implementing a *foreign accent modeling activity based on learner-led phonetic-phonological CA* in Russian L2 classrooms taught to French-speaking learners (Author, in press). During the activity, learners act as language experts on a movie set and advise a non-Russian-speaking actor who plays a role in which he speaks learners’ L1 (French) with a recognizable Russian accent (learners’ L2). To help the actor, learners must conduct a CA of L1/L2 phonetic-phonological systems to identify the differences inducing possible negative interferences (accent features) and produce a list of practical advice for the actor (the final product of the activity). In line with the principles of contrasting teaching, the activity lets students review and deepen their previous knowledge of L2 phonetics within a real-life problem-solving context through reinforcing their phonetic-phonological awareness and increasing their self-esteem as bilingual persons by capitalizing on their expertise in L1 and L2.

Our method is grounded in a research-inform teaching and implies theoretical literature study, classroom observation, and data collection from a learner experience survey. In this paper, we will focus on **linguistic rationales of the learner-led phonetic-phonological CA** and, more specifically, on adapting existing phonetic-phonological CA procedures to the learner-led context. We explore existing transfer errors typology (Mayor, 2008; Odlin, 2022; Weinreich, 1953/2011) and compare the “phoneme-and-allophone” (or structural) CA and the “generative phonology” CA model (Kenstowicz & Kisseberth, 1979; Wardhaugh, 1967) in terms of their compatibility with the principles of the explicit teaching of L2 phonetics.

We conclude that for a learner-led context, the most suitable is a simplified eclectic version of phonetic-phonological CA that combines features of both the “phoneme-and-allophone” model (contrasting the L1 and L2 repertoires of phonemes) and “generative phonology” models (contrasting phonological features and generative rules), and mainly focused on substitution errors. In closing, we summarize the potential benefits of the accent modeling activities in teaching other languages and training L2 teachers.

## Selected literature

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