Croatian and Slovenian: a review of studies on the relationship between the two languages

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Presentation overview

• aim
  • present studies of Croatian and Slovenian
    ▪ from 1960s to the end of the 20th ct.: contrastive studies
    ▪ 21st ct.: sociolinguistic and corpus themes
  • present the results of those studies
    ▪ at university and primary school level
    ▪ in Slovenian society

• presentation based on
  • theory and practice
  • 30 years of pedagogical and scientific work
Theoretical framework (1)

- contrastive studies (CS)
  - 1950s: Weinreich: contrastive analysis (CA)
  - 1960s and ‘70s: CA peaks as error analysis
    - aim:
      - predicting and diagnosing errors or interference
    - what is an error?
      - any deviation from standard language
      - cause of errors: interference + other sources
Theoretical framework (2)

- contrastive analysis criticism
  - too small or too homogenous corpuses
  - awkwardly defined and classified errors; out of context
  - basing conclusions on researchers’ linguistic sense
- 1980s and early 1990s
  - development of corpus linguistics and language technologies revives interest in contrastive studies ⇒ corpuses give a fresh and wide view of language and language use
Theoretical framework (3)

- results of contrastive studies
  - have an important role in applied linguistics, especially in teaching related languages:
    - easier at early stages – immediate communication
    - more difficult later because of interference which is deep, difficult to correct, and likely to remain permanent (fossilisation)
  - help predict and eliminate interference errors
Croatian and Slovenian in contact with foreign languages (1)

- Slovenia: gains popularity in 1980s
- Croatia:
  - 1960s, Filipović and Institute of Linguistics at University of Zagreb
    - theoretical, professional and pedagogical literature
      - contrastive synchronic and diachronic studies at all levels
      - *Zagreb school of phonetics*
        - systems of phonetic errors in foreign languages in relation to Croatian
Croatian and Slovenian in contact with foreign languages (2)

- Croatia:
  - 1990s:
    - contrastive descriptions of Croatian and foreign lang.
    - handbooks (a series of *Concise Phraseological Dictionaries*)
  - conclusion: CS of Croatian and foreign lang.
    - from 1960s to ‘90s: contrastive analyses, languages in contact and concise phraseological dictionaries
    - from 1990s on: corpus of Croatian + contrastive grammars + other themes
Croatian and Slovenian

- Slovenia
  - 1970s:
    - contrastive studies: similarities and differences in systems + pointing to errors
  - mid-1980s:
    - linguistic and applied level: projects at the Institute
      - error analysis and material design
        - morphological, syntactical and lexical errors + elimination methods
        - phonetic and phonological errors + correction
Croatian and Slovenian (2)

Slovenia

mid-1990s:

- unresolved issues of Croatian as a foreign language
  - Croatian and Slovenian contrastive issues
  - presenting Croatian and Slovenian culture at Slavic Studies abroad
  - methodological issues of learning Croatian as a FL
  - scientific work of V. Kalenić ⇒ initiator of contrastive studies of Croatian and Slovenian
  - +
  - errors by Croatian and Serbian native speakers learning Slovenian
Sociolinguistic approach to CS of Croatian and Slovenian (1)

- **foreign accent**
  - the inability to be completely proficient in a foreign language, starting from the phonetic level and moving to other levels

- **sociolinguistic themes included into**
  - the project at the Institute of Science
    - *Slovenian language – basic, contrastive and applied research*
  - bilateral projects
    - among Slovenia and Croatia, BH, Serbia and Montenegro
    - results of monograph *Between politics and reality*
      - sociolinguistic situations + relation to native and foreign languages
Sociolinguistic approach to CS of Croatian and Slovenian (2)

- researched themes
  - native speaker tolerance toward speakers of Slovenian and Croatian as foreign languages
  - stereotypes in Slovenian society
    - about foreign language speakers
    - about speakers of languages from former Yugoslavia
Corpus studies of Croatian and Slovenian

- what is new in contemporary contrastive analysis of language acquisition

  - methodology:
    - THEN: two linguistic systems in contact were contrasted
    - NOW: native speaker language contrasted with foreign speaker language in a particular context

  - corpus
    - THEN: language in its application (comprehension and production), metalinguistic attitudes, researchers’ linguistic sense
    - NOW: corpus linguistics
Corpus studies of Croatian and Slovenian (2)

- linguistic description created
  - on the basis of comprehensive electronic corpuses ⇒ linguistic element frequency of occurrence

- corpus analysis provides
  - information on overuse, underuse and misuse ⇒ notes linguistic transfer and avoidance strategy ⇒ does not lead to errors but to information on particular linguistic element use
  - IMPORTANT! we are not interested in what the learner did wrong, but in what the learner did right
Corpus of language acquisition (1)

- **definition**
  - computer collections of authentic texts collected according to specific criteria and for a specific purpose

- **Balažic Bulc (2008) Corpus of Croatian LA**
  - 2 control corpuses by students of Slovenian and Croatian as first languages – non-professional authors
  - 2 specialised corpuses of linguistic scientific articles (*Jezik in slovstvo* and *Govor*) – professional authors
Corpus of language acquisition (2)

- results of contrasting corpuses of Croatian as a first language and Croatian as a foreign language by non-professional authors
  - differences in use of conjunctions in terms of underuse, overuse and misuse
  - influence of avodiance strategy
    - disjunction međutim (however) in CFL compensated by disjunction ali (but)
    - explanatory conjunction tako (in in this way) used frequently
    - misuse of disjunctive pa (instead of a)
Corpus of language acquisition (3)

- the possibilities of the corpus of language acquisition and control corpuses
  - insight into linguistic style of a certain discourse community and genre
  - longitudinal monitoring of acquisition of a certain genre
    - text author/leaner monitors progress
    - access to performance feedback that is often lacking at university level
Studies of Croatian and Slovenian in application (1)

- related languages require contrastive approach
  - the only way to consciously correct interference errors at all levels

- communicative-contrastive approach
  - linguistic activity
  - contrastive tables

the results of contrastive, sociolinguistic and corpus studies ⇒
Studies of Croatian and Slovenian in application (2)

- university level
  - first contrastive textbook (1990)
    - morphological, syntactic and lexical level
    - linguistic issues for Slovenian speakers stemming from first language interference
  - monograph *Croatian and Slovenian in Contact* (2002)
    - phonetic and phonological level
    - how do native speakers of Slovenian speak Croatian as a foreign language
  - contrastive textbook *Croatian language 1* (2008)
  - monograph *Therefore, that is, because... on conjunctions* (2009)
Studies of Croatian and Slovenian in application (3)

- primary school level
  - Croatian, Serbian and Macedonian as elective subjects in Slovenian primary schools

- the results of CS used in
  - writing curricula for the electives
  - contrastive textbooks, workbooks, handbooks...
  - designing programmes for professional teacher education
Studies of Croatian and Slovenian in application (4)

- Croatian in Slovenian society
  - Croatian, Serbian (and Bosnian and Montenegrin) – becoming foreign language in Slovenia
  - in focus: proficiency exams in Croatian – C1 level

- the results of CS used
  - in designing exams
  - in designing programmes and teaching material for different workshops
    - for translators, court interpreters, etc.
Conclusion (1)

- contrastive analyses will have their important role, especially in teaching related languages
- contrastive and sociolinguistics approach + corpuses of language acquisition
  - the only way to predict and eliminate errors at all levels (even text level)
  - provide insight into learners’ discourse competence
Conclusion (2)

- theoretical results
  - contrastive descriptions of particular linguistic issues $\Rightarrow$ basis for Croatian and Slovenian contrastive grammar

- applied results
  - designing teaching material
  - teaching Slovenian as a foreign language to speakers of non-Slavic languages