

INTERLANGUAGE AND INTRALANGUAGE PARAPHRASE

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Paraphrase is an extremely interesting area of research both in descriptive linguistics proper as also in applied linguistics. In this paper it will briefly be considered from the language teaching point of view as a learning device to be exploited in the construction of teaching material, i.e., pedagogical grammar. Paraphrase, seen contrastively, can have four aspects. A string of forms can be formally identical or distinct both within one language and between language 1 and language 2. Following the general assumption that paraphrase is a matter of semantic sameness as judged by an educated native speaker or a component bilingual (see Marton 1968 and Krzeszowski 1971) we may say that an utterance may be paraphrased in the same language, either by giving a *strict equivalent* without changing the order or number of morphemes, or what may be called an *intralanguage paraphrase* where the order and number are changed. Paraphrase is most typically used of the latter type and very often where the new utterance is longer than the original. If we move to contrastive semantic statements, we have, following Marton (1968), an L2 utterance which is *congruent* with an L1 utterance having the same meaning in a given context or set of contexts. This state of congruence requires the same formal identity as we described for equivalence above. An *intralanguage paraphrase* changes the order and/or number of morphemes of the L1 original. There is, however, a situation arising out of the formal characteristics of L2 which produces what seem to be nearly congruent structures like *John's dog* and *pies Jana*. Under the present definition this would be an interlanguage paraphrase but more precisely it might be termed *loosely congruent* as long as the lexical morphemes remain the same in number and reference. If we wished to balance out this analysis, we might create the condition of *loose equivalence* within one language which would be the type of paraphrase involved in passivisation (*Betty hit Mary* : : *Mary was hit*

by Betty). A typical translation procedure for converting an L1 string of forms into L2 terms would be as follows: Try a strictly congruent structure; if not acceptable, try a loosely congruent version; if not, restate original utterance as an intralanguage paraphrase and begin again. This may be similar to what learners often do despite attempts to isolate them from their own native language (see Fig. 1):

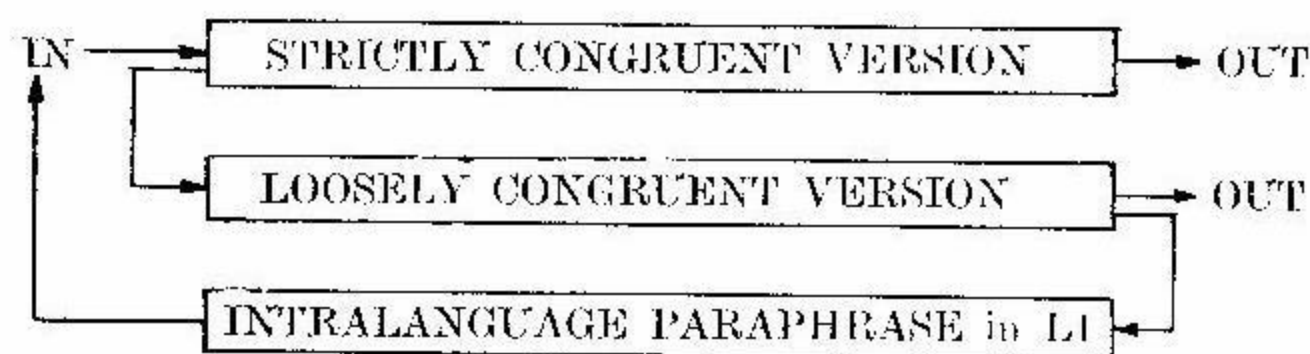


Fig. 1. A typical L1-L2 conversion procedure

Thus *John's dog* might be converted to *Jana pies* and accepted; if not, to *pies Jana* and accepted; and if for some stylistic reason this was not accepted, the paraphrase, *the dog which belongs to John*, would be constructed and then once again sent through the same process, the first stage of which would render *pies, który należy do Jana*.

It has been noted by Smaby (1971) that certain paraphrases are more easily formalised than others, a typical example being the passivised form of an active sentence. Such paraphrases do not require special knowledge of the linguistic or extralinguistic context although their appropriateness in context will of course depend on such factors. There are some cases such as the relationship between *kill* and *cause to die* where linguists would like to make strictly formal context-independent descriptions. The extension of formal analysis of this sort will certainly be of interest to pedagogical grammarians.

What is of interest to the language teacher extends into all context-dependent areas of usage beyond the confines of what is neatly describable in grammars. The ability of an educated native speaker to paraphrase utterances in his language in all kinds of contexts providing they represent plausible and familiar meanings (see Gleitman and Gleitman 1970) provides a useful model for extending foreign language proficiency. But first, the contrastive aspects should be considered, i.e., the ability of a component bilingual to render an L1 utterance in various different ways in the target language either directly or with reference to L1 intralanguage paraphrases, e.g., *pies Jana* as *John's dog*, *the dog that belongs to John*, *the dog owned by John* and so forth. This would include contextually determined paraphrases like *he belongs to him* and *the policeman's dog*. This is particularly relevant where

the methodological approach adopts the view of cognitive psychologists (see Ausubel 1968) that new information should be related to old information, concepts already firmly anchored in cognitive structure. Thus the native language is not ignored but exploited as a base on which to establish the meaningful learning of target language items. The new information is linked with but at the same time distinguished from existing well-learned similar information in the learner's brain. A presentation of some L2 item may then include a congruent L1 item or an interlanguage paraphrase. L2 equivalents and intralanguage paraphrases may be supplied simultaneously or later according to the teacher's discretion. The item may then be practised using the same techniques and also tested.

The most obvious candidate for practice through paraphrase is the relatively neglected area commonly termed vocabulary. It is accepted that vocabulary is best learned in context. Paraphrases provide effective and systematic ways of doing this, teaching not only the lexical item itself but also an associated rephrasing of it to form semantically identical (or nearly identical) units. New relating lexical items are also taught. Thus in an exercise texts such as:

John peered into the dark room and saw a small furry animal carefully licking its paw. The — stared at him and then mewed.

we have the missing item *cat* plus associated items: *furry*, *lick*, *mew*. The text might then be continued and repetitions of the three associated words used to form blank spaces in their turn. A preliminary contrastive exercise would use L1 equivalents (*pokryte futerkiem*, *lizać*, *milczeć*) to cue the answers. The learner would be using both the L1 items and the L2 context to learn the words under consideration. Another example of such a contrastive exercise might be the following, designed to teach phrasal verbs:

After a long struggle the enemy — their position and fell back to the safety of the forest. (Wycofali się)

The learner must fill in the blank with a phrasal verb that is an interlanguage paraphrase (or loosely congruent version) of the Polish cue word capitalised at the end of the sentences. An L2 intralanguage paraphrase cue or loose equivalent (like ABANDON) might also be used of course. Care would also have to be taken to establish adequate contextualisation for items so that *replace the receiver on the hook* and *replace* as cues for the phrasal verb *hang up* would be supported in the context by mention of the word *telephone* so as not to provoke such deviant sentences as **he hung up the book he had damaged*.

Not only vocabulary but structure can be usefully dealt with using para-

phrase techniques. This is not only true of the standard surface structure transformations of the active-passive type. It also proves to be relevant in, for example, the vexed area of modal meanings. Thus *it is very important that*, *it is of great importance that* as well as *it is highly probable that* may serve as L2 paraphrases of *must* and also as a basis for L1 interlanguage paraphrases (*to jest bardzo ważne*, etc.) An exercise might require that the learner read through a text using *must* wherever he finds an acceptable paraphrase of *must*. This task may be made easier by either supplying Polish interlanguage paraphrases or simply underlining (at least at an early stage) the English paraphrases. The learner will of course be reminded that he must reorder the English text to accommodate *must*, as would be necessary in a text like: *He told me that (to jest bardzo ważne) I come immediately*, or *I think that it is highly probable that they are married*, for example.

Word ordering is itself a structural problem for Polish learners of English (and even though to a lesser extent for English learners of Polish), for example the constraints on noun premodifier word order in English (see Sharwood Smith (1975) for a fuller account). Prepositions or the so-called particles attached to verbal forms in phrasal verbs are rarely permitted in English except in ironically deviant structures relating to the language of journalism. On the other hand, Polish, especially written Polish, allows such constructions. The learner of English is often unaware of the problem and if he is, then finds difficulty in remembering. There is powerful motivation to forget in many cases because the required interlanguage paraphrase demands a decision about tense-itself a problem. Thus an utterance such as *ustalona przez Jones'a transkrypcja* may need only a reordering of the elements and a congruent translation but *wielbiana przez tysiące aktorka* requires the learner to decide between *who was adored*, *who has been adored*, *who had been adored* in a past time context since the relative clause is obligatory in many contexts. There is no doubt that Polish learners naturally follow the Polish word order unless corrected and error analysis will show this. This is precisely what has led some methodologists to abandon the behaviourist position that was assumed by the audiolinguists, viewing L1 as a source purely of *negative* interference. It seems that learners use the native language will-nilly. A more positive approach suggests that we exploit this and guide them in their use of L1.

Any language course, any pedagogical grammar below the most general type of reference work is particularly concerned with the special demands of its "consumers". However, a general approach to the use of the paraphrase technique in teaching might involve starting with L2 contexts with L1 congruent and interlanguage paraphrases of the items and structures to be elicited (avoiding 100% translation exercises) and the gradually switch to L2 contexts with L2 equivalents and paraphrases. It is not expected that learners will all achieve the paraphrasing ability ascribed to educated native

speakers with all the internal interconnections in cognitive structure this involves. But a conscious and systematic use of paraphrase must help to develop this type of integrative skill much more than many language courses seem able to do. Furthermore, specialised courses, say for translators, will naturally find the interlanguage paraphrases just as useful as those possible *within* L2, and will seek specifically to develop the skill of a "competent bilingual translator". The contribution of contrastive studies is immediately apparent. It is not that any of those techniques are really new in language teaching, but advances in systematic comparisons between Polish and English that lead to explicit statements about how the two languages relate semantically and syntactically can help the teacher and materials writer enormously in systematizing their own approaches to language description which they wish to construct so as to facilitate meaningful learning.

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