

A Review Study of Error Analysis Theory

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Abstract: Up until the late sixties, the prominent theory in the field of second language acquisition or learning was almost behaviouristic, which claimed that the learning was a result of acquiring a set of new language patterns. Hence, second language errors were considered as only the result of learners' mother tongue habits in the target language. Errors which were not explained based on this assumption will definitely be underestimated. Therefore, there was a need for another approach in order to clearly describe second language learners' errors. Given this, the current study aims at reviewing and discussing the Error Analysis theory in terms of theoretical foundations, theoretical assumptions, limitations and significance of this theory. This review reveals that despite the criticism that this theory has received, it still plays a fundamental role in investigating, identifying and describing second language learners' errors and their causes. Most importantly, Error Analysis can enable second language teachers to find out different sources of second language errors and take some pedagogical precautions towards them. Moreover, Error Analysis can provide a good methodology for investigating second language learners' errors. Once the causes or sources of errors are discovered, it is probable to conclude and decide on the remedy.

Keywords: First language, second language, errors, acquisition.

1. INTRODUCTION

Studying second language acquisition (SLA hereinafter) in terms of the language learners' errors is something that foreign and second language teachers (EFL/ESL hereinafter) have always done for very practical reasons. Through the results of examinations and tests, the errors that second language (L2 hereinafter) learners commit are a major factor in the feedback system of the teaching-learning process. Thus, it is important that the foreign language (FL hereinafter) teachers should be able to not only identify the errors, but also understand the linguistic reasons for their occurrences. Given this, studying learners' errors could be a first step to introduce L2 teachers to the knowledge of learner's language.

To investigate L2 learners' errors, Contrastive Analysis theory (CA hereinafter) was first appeared and it was the well-known theory in the field of SLA or L2 learning. The main assumption of this theory was that L2 learners' errors are due to negative interlingual interference from their mother tongue (MT hereinafter). Regardless of its popularity, it was not without any limitations. It has been questioned by many scholars for its lack of predictive power as well as the subjectivity of its interpretation of errors (Al-khresheh, 2015). Al-khresheh also points out that "the main criticism of CA was that interlingual interference from first language (L1 hereinafter) is not the only reason for the occurrence of errors in SLA"(p.123). As a reaction

to this criticism, Error Analysis (EA hereinafter) theory occupied the mainstream in the field of SLA research for its great contributions. This study reviews and discusses the EA theory as an alternative approach to CA theory exploring its role in describing and explaining learners' errors in the process of acquisition of L2. Therefore, theoretical foundations, theoretical assumptions, limitations and significance of this theory are discussed in this review.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Up until the late sixties, the prominent theory in the field of SLA or L2 learning was almost behaviouristic, which claimed that the learning was a result of acquiring a set of new language patterns. Hence, L2 errors were considered as only the result of learners' MT habits in the target language (TL hereinafter). Therefore, errors which were not explained based on this assumption will definitely be underestimated. EA, however, deals with "the learners' performance in terms of the cognitive processes they make use of in recognising or coding the input they receive from the TL" (Erdogan, 2005, p. 263).

CA was an effective theory and famous for its ability to compare between the structures of two languages (L1 & TL) in order to identify the areas of similarities and differences between them (Al-khresheh, 2013). Similar structures might be easy for FL learners to master, but the different ones might be difficult, and consequently, might lead to different types of errors. Its main objective was to predict the areas of differences between the L1 and the L2. Consequently, and for a decade, EFL teachers were optimistic about the

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predictive ability of the CA approach. However, like any other theory, the CA had some theoretical limitations. Generally, the main criticism was that not all the similarities between the L1 and the TL were easy to be mastered, nor were all the differences complicated or different (Schachter, 1992). Furthermore, CA was also criticised as being insufficient for describing L2 errors by comparing structural differences between L1 and L2. Interference from L1 is not the only reason for the occurrence of errors in SLA. Therefore, there was a need to employ another approach in order to clearly describe EFL learners' errors. EA can provide a good methodology for investigating L2 learners' errors because it plays a fundamental role in investigating, analysing, and categorising errors made by L2 learners.

In the field of SLA, EA was first established by Stephen Pit Corder and his colleagues in the late of 1970s and became a very popular approach for describing L2 errors. Corder is the father of this theory. He first indicated it in his article "The significance of learner errors" in 1967 when he mentioned that L2 errors are interesting because they can reflect some of the underlying linguistic rules. His theory came as a reaction or a result of the severe criticisms which CA received. Hence, a shift of focus from potential errors to the actual committed ones is needed. EA has mainly focused on the actual committed errors by FL/L2 learners and became very popular in the field of applied linguistics. Compared to CA, EA does not only provide a pedagogical orientation but it can also provide a good scientific orientation. It does not make its main focus on input, practice or inductive learning; it focuses generally on linguistic and cognitive processes.

Brown (1994) argues that EA has great value in classroom research. The systematic analysis of errors made by FL/L2 learners makes determining areas which need reinforcement in teaching possible (Corder, 1974). EA has been later defined by James (1998:1) as "the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language". According to Mahmoodzadeh (2012), EA could be defined as a procedure used to identify, categorise, and explain the errors committed by FL/L2 learners. It is considered as the most appropriate tool for analysing learners' errors. Schaumann and Stenson (1976, p. 4) state that "the task of EA is to explain and analyse why one aspect of the target grammar has not been adequately acquired whilst a second is learnt without difficulty." Al-khresheh (2013) also claims that EA deals with the way people learn and use a language.

3. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

As mentioned previously, EA involves a systematic description and classification of L2 errors contained in a sample of learner's speech or writing. EA has challenged the CA on the assumption that FL/L2 learners' errors cannot only be caused by interlingual interference from the L1, but they might also be caused due to intralingual interference from the TL itself. In simple words, EA acknowledges interference from L1 as one of the sources of L2 errors, which makes it to some extent related to the CA.

According to EA, a great number of errors made by FL learners are similar regardless of their MT. Such errors are caused due intralingual interference or transfer. James (1998) claims that such a type of interference from the structures of the TL itself is the main cause of intralingual errors. These errors can be created without referring to L1 features. Based on this assumption, EA serves two main purposes: the first one is "to provide data from which interferences about the nature of the language learning process can be made". The second one "indicates to teachers and curriculum developers which part of the TL students have most difficulty producing correctly and which error types detract most from a learner's ability to communicate" (Dulay *et al.* 1982, p.138).

According to Corder (1973), there are two main objectives of EA: one theoretical and the other being known applied. The theoretical objective checks the validity of the theories such as the theory of transfer. In other words, this objective can help in understanding how and what a FL learner learns whilst studying a FL. On the other hand, the applied objective, "concerns pedagogical purposes" (Mahmoodzadeh, 2012, p. 735). This objective enables learners of L2 to learn their TL more efficiently and effectively by using the previous knowledge of their dialects for pedagogical purposes. Once L2 errors are analysed, the nature of problems and difficulties encountered by language learners will be identified. Identifying such difficulties can therefore help EFL/ESL teachers pinpoint their students' weaknesses and hence revise their teaching methods and learning materials accordingly (Al-khresheh, 2011).

4. INVESTIGATING L2 ERRORS

EA is different from CA in the way it looks, investigates, describes and analyses learners' errors in general. As stated earlier, CA explains errors

committed by L2 learners by comparing between the two systems of the TL and native language (NL hereinafter) of the learners. Negative interference from learners' L1 is not the only source of errors in SLA. L2 errors cannot be only committed because of the influence of their MT. There are certainly some other causes of L2 errors which need to be addressed. However, such other causes can be clearly explained through the EA approach. According to EA, L2 learners' errors can be attributed to two main different sources: interlingual and intralingual interference (the effect of the TL itself).

Exploring different sources of L2 errors is needed for the sake of understanding the nature of the language being learnt. EA can help in exploring, investigating and analysing such errors. EA was lately revitalised following important works in the framework by Lennon (1991), Leki (1991), Kellerman (1986,1995), Selinker (1992), Teh, (1993), Brown (2000), Jiang (2009) and Al-khresheh (2010, 2015).

Those researchers have proved the validity of the EA theory in explaining different types of FL learners' errors such as syntactic, grammatical and phonological errors. For example, Al-khresheh (2010) has proved the importance of EA in investigating one type of word order errors which is within simple sentence structure. Abi Samra (2003) has also investigated different types of grammatical, syntactic, semantic and lexical errors following the EA approach. According to this approach, some certain steps for investigating L2 errors were proposed, namely collection, identification, description and explanation of errors (Ellis, 1994).

5. STEPS FOR ERROR ANALYSIS

EA is carried out in four consecutive stages as stated by Ellis (1994, p. 48). These stages are as: (1) "collection of a sample of learner language, (2) identification of errors, (3) description of errors, and (4)

explanation of errors". These stages are summarised and discussed in the following subsections.

5.1. Collection of a Sample of Learner Language

Researchers are different from each other in their choice of data collection methods. According to this stage, learners' errors are influenced by a group of important factors. Ellis (1994, p. 49) asserts that these factors are significant in "collecting a well-defined sample of learner language so that clear statements can be made regarding what kinds of errors the learners produce and under what conditions". The factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

5.2. Identification of Errors

There are certain ways to distinguish between an error and a mistake. The first one is associated with checking the consistency of the L2 learner's performance. If a learner sometimes uses the correct form of a certain structure or rule and later on uses the wrong one, then it is a mistake and can be self-corrected. However, if he/she always uses it wrongly, then it is an error. The second way is associated with asking an L2 learner to correct his/her deviant utterance. In case that he/she is unable to, the deviations are errors, and where he/she is successful, they are definitely mistakes.

Identification of an error is different from explaining what an error is. Corder (1981) has provided a common model for identifying errors in the utterances of L2/FL learners. According to his model "every sentence is to be regarded as idiosyncratic until shown to be otherwise" (p.21). His model provides a good distinction between what he calls 'overt' and 'covert' errors. If a sentence is ill-formed in terms of TL rules, it has been regarded as 'overtly idiosyncratic' whilst the sentence that is superficially well-formed but does not mean that the learner intends to mean has been

Table 1: Factors to Consider when Collecting Samples of Learner Language (Ellis, 1994, p. 49).

Factors	Description
A. Language
<i>Medium</i>	Learner production can be oral or written
<i>Genre</i>	Learner production may take the form of a conversation, a lecture, an essay, a letter, etc.
<i>Content</i>	The topic the learner is communicating about
B. Learner
<i>Level</i>	Elementary, intermediate, or advanced
<i>Mother tongue</i>	The learner's L1
<i>Language learning experience</i>	This may be classroom or naturalistic or a mixture of the two

regarded as '*covertly idiosyncratic*'. Corder (1978, p. 56) states "to identify the presence and nature of an error, an interpretation of the learner's utterance is necessary". It could be understood that Corder wants to indicate the importance of interpretation of learners' utterances. Such an interpretation might reveal the main differences between '*what a learner wants to say*' and '*what a learner has said*'. Corder's model shows that literal translation can be a probable indicator of the FL learners' errors which might be attributed to interference from their own MT.

Identifying FL/L2 learners' errors is fundamental for determining the standard against which a particular item that is considered erroneous. Brown (2000), Ellis (1994) and Corder (1981) (cited in Al-Tamimi (2006, p. 39) "consider any deviation from what a native speaker would produce, as an error". Therefore, an error can be any choice, by the language learners, which strays from its proper application, as would be expected from a typical, knowledgeable, indigenous speaker of the language being learnt; otherwise, go against whichever canon in dialogue, of slurred 'language grammar' along with practice. Appropriate elucidation of the inaccuracies can commence when faults are recognised.

5.3. Description of Errors

This stage of EA takes place after the identification step. No description can be made without identifying the errors. Such a description of FL learners' errors is a prerequisite for a good explanation of errors. Particularly, description of errors helps in serving three major purposes. These purposes can be summarised as follows: Initially, would be to instinctively expound all that is unstated, so as to substantiate an individual's instinct. The second purpose can be as a prerequisite for counting learners' errors. A third purpose is to create categories and subcategories for errors which can help in the process of developing a comprehensive taxonomy of L2 errors.

Corder (1973) classifies FL learners' errors in terms of the differences between their utterance and the reconstructed version. Based on that, errors are classified into four categories: omission, selection, addition, or misordering of some elements.

According to Ellis (1997), omission appears when a student leaves a required item for an utterance out of a sentence that he/she constructed. For example, *There is boy over there*. This sentence leaves out the article

'a' which should be added before the word 'boy'. Selection can be done by selecting an incorrect element. Addition is by adding unnecessary elements. Lastly, misordering which can be done by misplacing the item or putting it in the wrong place. Ellis (1997, p. 23) points out that "classifying errors in these ways can help us to diagnose learners' learning problems at any stage of their development and to plot how changes in error patterns occur over time". Erdogan (2005, p. 264) makes the aforementioned categories very clear by providing some examples:

Omission:

Morphological omission *A strange thing happen to me yesterday'.

Syntactical omission *Must say also the names?'

Addition:

In morphology *The books is here.'

In syntax *The London'

In lexicon *I stayed there during five years ago.'

Selection:

In morphology *My friend is oldest than me.'

In syntax *I want that he comes here.'

Ordering:

In pronunciation *fignisicant for 'significant'; *prulal for 'plural'

In morphology *get upping for 'getting up'

In syntax *He is a dear to me friend.'

In lexicon *key car for 'car key'

Brown (2000 cited in Erdogan, 2005) states that "An error may vary in magnitude. It can include a phoneme, a morpheme, a word, a sentence or even a paragraph. Due to this fact, errors may also be viewed as being either global or local". Erdogan (2005, p. 264) distinguishes between the global and local errors. He indicates that global errors might hinder communication by preventing understanding of the intended meaning. Below is such an instance:

"* I like bus but my mother said so not that we must be late for school."

In contrast, local errors might not stop comprehension of the intended meaning in the event that only a slight breach in a single part of the 'sentence' concerned occurs, hence enabling a correct assumption by the listener. Below is such an example:

"* If I hear from her, I would let you know."

5.4. Explanation of Errors

The ultimate objective of EA theory is explanation of errors. Hence, this stage is considered the most important for EA research. In order to reach to some effective remedial measures, Sanal (2007) claims that the analyst should be aware of the mechanism that triggers each type of error.

Explaining the nature of errors is a fundamental issue in SLA. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005.p,62) declare that "explaining errors involves determining their sources in order to account for why they were made". In Ellis's words (1994, p. 57), explanation of errors "involves an attempt to establish the processes responsible for L2 acquisition". On the other hand, Ellis explains the psycholinguistic sources of the nature of L2 learners' errors by classifying them as errors of performance and errors of competence. The following Figure 1 illustrates Ellis's explanation.

As illustrated in Figure 1 above, errors of competence can be caused by applying the rules of the TL wrongly whilst the errors of performance are the result of committing mistakes repeatedly in language

use. Generally, FL/L2 learners' errors might be attributed to different sources or linguistic factors that might affect the process of English language learning such as L1 influence or the effect of TL itself. These linguistic factors are called interlingual and intralingual interference. They are considered as the two major linguistic factors that might negatively affect FL/L2 acquisition (Richards, 1974; James, 1996; Brown, 2000; Abi Samra, 2003).

To conclude, errors, whether interlingual or intralingual, remain vital to understanding learners' strategies. Analysing such errors, which includes identifying, describing, classifying and explaining them can be of much help to FL/L2 researchers, syllabus designers and EFL/ESL teachers.

However, focusing on only one of these linguistic factors is not sufficient for the researchers who are interested in investigating and analysing L2/FL learners' errors. Explanations for each type of L2 errors are highly required. The following subsections give an in-depth discussion of these errors.

5.4.1. Interlingual Errors

Errors which are caused by the impact of the NL or MT are called interlingual errors. They are defined by Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977, p. 443) as "those caused by the influence of the learner's MT on production of the TL in presumably those areas where languages clearly differ". This type of errors occurs as being the result of language transfer, which might be

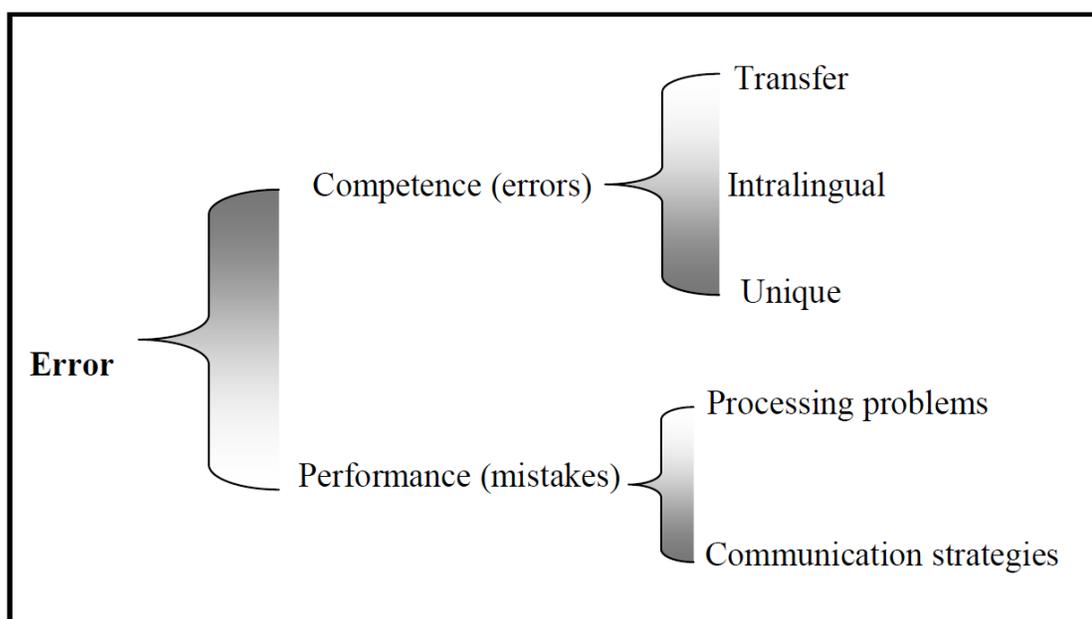


Figure 1: Psycholinguistic Sources of Errors (Ellis, 1994:58).

caused by the learner's MT. As there are two types of transfer, namely; positive and negative, it should be indicated here that this type of error is a result of negative transfer of certain linguistic structures from L1 (Al-khresheh, 2010). In other words, such a negative transfer can be attributed to a rule of pattern in the L1 that leads to an error in the TL. Consequently, the negative impact of the L1 or NL on learning TL can be referred to as interlingual interference or transfer.

Numerous previous studies have shown that interlingual interference does occur in the writing process in L2/FL. In Ellis's words (1994, p. 62), transfer is "a very complex notion which is best understood in terms of cognitive rather than behaviourist models of learning". Lim (2010, p. 24) points out that "interference has long been regarded as one of the major factors causing difficulties in the acquisition of a second language, yet what actually constitutes interference remains a subject of great interest".

This type of interference is a significant source of EFL/ESL learners' errors. Previous studies have attributed a huge number of FL learners' errors to the influence of their L1 (Al-khresheh, 2010, 2011; Noor, 1996, Mahmoud, 2005; Richards, 1974; Kharma and Hajjaj, 1989; Lim, 2003). This indicates the important role that L1 plays in the process of L2 learning or acquisition. Nemser (1974) and Newmeyer (1996) confirm that using L1 is unavoidable whilst learning L2. Its use might be positive or negative as Al-Nofaie (2010) states that EFL/ESL learners use their L1 as a tool to learn their L2. When they use it negatively by transferring some structures from their L1 to produce their L2, they commit such types of errors which are called interlingual errors. Zobl (1980) summarises some of the characteristics of these errors as follows:

1. Interference produces errors that are not like developmental.
2. Learners depend on L1 as a crutch at low level of L2 proficiency.
3. Learners use L1 to hypothesise about L2.
4. Learners are unable to separate L1 from L2.
5. Learners' errors are due to L1 habits.
6. Learners employ an interlingual generalisation.

Dulay *et al.* (1982, p.163) assert that "L2 errors are often the result of learners relying on carrying out word-

for-word translations of NL surface structures", whilst producing spoken or written utterances in their performance of TL. Briefly, the MT linguistic structures might be a source of difficulty which can lead to L2 errors for L2 learners. Nevertheless, EA does not regard interlingual errors as "the persistence of old habits, but rather as signs that the learner is internalising and investigating the system of the new language" (Erdogan, 2005, p. 265).

5.4.2. Intralingual Errors

Given that interlingual errors are caused by interference from the learner's L1, there are still some errors whose origins cannot be found in the structures of the learner's L1. In simple words, L1 does not play a role in producing such type of L2 learners' errors. Al-Tamimi (2006) confirms what has been mentioned by Brown and asserts that the errors that do not reflect the structure of their NL or MT are caused by intralingual interference from the TL itself. He considers this type of interference as one of the major factors that might affect the process of SLA. They are independent of learners' L1 (Jiang, 2009). Therefore, the errors, which are caused by the effect of the TL itself, are called intralingual errors. This indicates that interference from the learners' L1 is not the only cause for committing errors. More specifically, intralingual errors can occur as a result of negative interference or transfer from applying different general learning strategies similar to those noticeable in L1 acquisition. They might also occur because of an incomplete process of acquiring the L1 (Richards, 1971). Corder (1967, p. 161) puts forward the following hypothesis:

I propose therefore as a working hypothesis that some at least of the strategies adopted by the learner of second language are substantially the same as those by which a first language is acquired. Such a proposal does not simply imply that the course or sequence of learning is the same in both cases.

Simply, this hypothesis reveals that some L2 learners' errors can be regarded as intralingual errors. They might result from partial learning of the TL. Particularly, intralingual errors "have been viewed as those that reflect the learner's competence at a particular stage, and they are evidence of some general characteristics of first language acquisition. They have been found to be non-interlingual in nature as they are not directly caused by the differences

between their first language and second language" (Lim, 2010, p. 24). According to Richards (1974, pp. 174-181), intralingual errors are those which can reflect the common features of rule learning. These features or characteristics can be subdivided or classified into four categories: "overgeneralisation, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and hypothesis of false concepts". Zobl and Liceras (1994) distinguishes intralingual errors from interlingual ones as follows:

1. Errors are similar to those made by native speakers.
2. Learners create similar rules to those of native speakers.
3. Errors reflect learners' competence at a certain developmental stage.
4. Learners try to construct hypothesis about the L2.
5. Errors originate from L2.
6. Errors reflect general characteristics of acquiring language rules.
7. Learners use the strategies of simplification, generalisation and reduction of grammatical redundancy.

Given the above explanation about intralingual interference as one of the major linguistic factors that affect the process of SLA, it is quite important to discuss the general characteristics of rule language learning that has been reflected by intralingual errors.

5.4.2.1. Overgeneralisation

The notion of overgeneralisation is not novel in the field of language acquisition or language development. Overgeneralization is one of the main reasons that cause interlingual errors. It simply refers to the applying of a certain rule in the language learning process to several situations when there are different rules which need to apply. It has been defined by Jakobvits (cited in Richards, 1974, p. 174) as "the use of previously available strategies in a new situation".

Overgeneralisation errors were also defined by Ellis (1994, p. 59) as those which "arise when the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of other structures in the target language". FL/L2 learners use overgeneralization as a common strategy or method to

facilitate their language learning process. It has been noticed by O'grady (2005) that this strategy is not only common in SLA but also in L1 acquisition. Littlewood (2002) confirms that overgeneralisation is considered to be a fundamental learning strategy or method used by language learners. According to Al-khresheh (2013), overgeneralisation occurs when the learner incorrectly widens the scope of the rule to a situation where the linguistic rule cannot be applied.

Abi Samara (2003) claims that overgeneralisation seems to be almost associated with redundancy reduction as it covers some instances where the L2 learners produce deviant structures based on their previous experience of some other linguistics structures in the TL. Similarly, Sulaiman (2006) reveals that overgeneralisation involves applying a certain rule in more contexts than it should. He refers it to an extension of a rule in the TL to an environment in which it does not apply. He explains that L2 learners find overgeneralization as a good language learning strategy without paying any attention to realising the contexts to which it can be applied.

In simple terms, Richards (1974, p. 175) points out that there are two reasons of overgeneralisation errors: (1) the learner's creation of "one deviant structure in place of two regular structures. For example: '*He can sings*'. This sentence should be: '*He can sing*'. There is an over form of a structure verb *sing* becomes *sings*". (2) The result of the L2/FL learners' attempts to decrease or reduce their linguistic burden. Lim (2010) confirms that overgeneralisation is intralingual in nature because it could be as a form of grammatical or morphological simplification. This simplification is quite similar to simplifications used by children who learn the same language as their MT.

However, in regard to interlingual interference, Littlewood (1984, 2002) does not separate overgeneralisation from interlingual interference because he does not consider them as different processes. He declares that "they represent aspects of the same underlying learning strategy" (p.25). He explains his point of view by saying that both overgeneralisation and interlingual interference occur when the learner uses his/her previous knowledge about language in order to facilitate the learning process.

5.4.2.2. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

Another cause of intralingual errors is ignorance of rule restrictions. It is closely connected with

overgeneralisation and is not totally different. According to Richards (1974), ignorance of rule restrictions is the inability to uphold the limits (borders) of present formations, specifically, administering rules to inappropriate situations. For instance: having learnt the sentence structure *'she arrived at home yesterday'* which is absolutely correct, a learner may use this previously acquired grammatical rule in a new situation or he/she might apply it in a situation such as *'she has arrived at home yesterday'*, which is definitely wrong. Misordering can be a good example of such errors which are caused by ignorance of rule restrictions. Richards (1971) claims that these type of errors might be caused by some structure 'drills' that combine complementary rudiments.

5.4.2.3. Incomplete Application of Rules

One of the important causes of intralingual errors is incomplete application of rules. This type of intralingual interference occurs when a FL learner produces some structures, whose deviancy can represent a definite degree of development of the grammatical rules that can be acquired in order to make acceptable utterances. In other words, incomplete application of rules can be also named as failure to achieve complete knowledge of the L2/FL. It occurs when a language learner finds that he/she can communicate successfully by using simple grammatical rules rather than more difficult ones.

According to Richards (1974), FL learners tend to apply some of the rules and continue to construct deviant forms in order to ease their learning. Question formation by FL/L2 learners is a good example of these types of intralingual errors, particularly misordering some items. For example, a FL learner might produce such a sentence: *'when you will come to the meeting?'* instead of *'when will you come to the meeting?'*. Richards confirms this fact by revealing that many FL learners face much difficulty in formulating questions. This type of intralingual interference of errors emphasises the systematic difficulty in particularly formulating wh-questions.

5.4.2.4. False Concepts Hypothesised

Intralingual errors can also result from the EFL learners' faulty comprehension of distinctions in the L2/TL. Al-Tamimi (2006, p. 44) explains that this type of intralingual error is sometimes as a result of "poor gradation of teaching items". The learners might form hypotheses about some grammatical rules of the L2. For example, an L2 learner might interpret using the

forms *'was or did'* wrongly when he/she thinks that these forms are markers of the past tenses; therefore, he/she produces utterances such as *'one day it was happened'* or *'she was finished the homework'* (Richards,1971). The errors that result from false concepts hypothesised can be attributed to "classroom presentation, especially when excessive attention is paid to points of differences at the expense of realistic English"(Lim, 1998, p. 9). Archiforms and double-marking are also examples of errors that might be caused by *'faulty comprehension of rule distinctions'*.

Having explained the above four sources of intralingual errors, it could be clearly noticed that they are inter-related and quite similar to one another. These four sources can only give us ideas about the ways in which such intralingual errors can perhaps occur, and how pedagogical and psychological factors might result in intralingual interference.

6. CONCLUSION

EA was very popular in the 1960s and 1970s. It occupied the mainstream in the field of SLA research for its great contributions to this field. EA was considered as an alternative to CA theory. Despite its popularity, it was not without any limitations or criticisms. It has been criticised by some researchers for its poor statistical inference. Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) have criticised EA because it fails to capture all FL learners' errors. That is because learners have a tendency to avoid L2 items which they are not sure about. Jiang (2009, p. 118) reveals that "during the 1970s, EA was criticised in that it only presented a partial picture of what a learner produces of the L2/FL, namely, the errors." It has been criticised due to the following reasons:

- (1) EA neglects correct sentences because it mainly focuses on sentences with errors. In other words, it was unable to see the full picture of the learners' language because it is extremely restricted to errors. To get the complete and right picture of the learner's competence, there is a need to make an investigation into non-errors as well. Therefore, it was not very successful by only looking at areas where L2 learners were competent (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Brown, 2000; Gass and Selinker, 2001).
- (2) When FL/L2 learners face difficulty to use certain grammatical or syntactic structures, they try to avoid using such structures. Hence, these

avoided structures cannot be studied because the main focus of this approach is on errors (Schachter & Celce-Murcia, 1977)

In response to some of the aforementioned limitations, for example, with regard to the first limitation, it is not necessary to isolate incorrect (erroneous) sentences from their context. For example, ungrammaticality or inappropriateness of certain structures, which can be seen in L2 learners' errors, cannot be clearly investigated without considering the context. In relation to the second limitation, a huge number of participants can be employed. Consequently, when some participants avoid using some syntactic or grammatical structures, others might not.

Despite the above limitations, EA still plays a fundamental role in investigating, identifying and describing FL learners' errors because EA, as a pedagogical technique, is very effective in pinpointing the L2 learners' errors and their causes. It contributes to a very comprehensive knowledge about the process of SLA. It remains an appropriate and valid research method in helping EFL/ESL teachers and L2 researchers successfully handle students' errors in the classroom. It can provide "a means to empower L2 teachers in that their error feedback can be made more effective and more beneficial to L2 learners." (Jiang, 2009, p. 116). EA can also enable EFL/ESL teachers to find out different sources of L2 errors and take some pedagogical precautions towards them. James (1998, p. 120) confirms this fact by revealing that "EA continues to enjoy widespread appeal. The explanation is not hard to find: teachers cannot escape from a preoccupation with learners' errors, and they are attracted towards EA by its promise of relevance to their everyday professional concerns".

In emphasising the need for an error-based analysis, this review study reveals that the most practical aspect that these errors can help, is to provide good feedback to both teachers and students. They tell teachers something about the efficiency of the teaching materials, and their teaching techniques. Furthermore, they enable teachers to decide whether they can move on to the next item or not. Researchers, such as Rennie (2000), Abi Samra (2003), Bataineh & Bataineh, (2005), Chen, (2000), Farooq (1998), Al-khreshah (2010; 2011; 2015), Ferries (1995, 1999), Ferries and Roberts (2001), and Lee (2004) point out that written accuracy is quite important to L2 learners in various contexts and therefore learners would always

like to get feedback from their teachers on their written errors. Nevertheless, teachers of FL/L2 cannot be always competent at explaining the nature of errors made by their students. When FL teachers are not able to provide precise error feedback, their students will commit the same error every time. Unsuccessfully error correction may even mislead L2 learners in their written production.

Besides, this review reveals that L2 learners' errors should be taken positively. These errors can be considered indicators of the learners' language competence at a certain point of time. They are also considered as an obligatory feature of learning. L2 Errors are important in three ways: First, they tell the teacher how far the learner has come and what he still must learn. Second, they give the researcher evidence of how language is learnt. Third, they are devices learners used to test out their hypothesis concerning the language they are learning.

Pedagogically, the EFL teachers should be always aware of and also be able to deal effectively and positively with types and sources of their students' errors. They should be aware of areas of differences and similarities between L1 and L2 due to the fact that using or referring to L1 in the first stages of language learning is vital and unavoidable. Making learners aware of cross-linguistic differences might be of assistance with certain difficulties in the TL. Teachers ought to draw students' attention to the fact that literal translation from or into L1 is not usually right since rules of building sentences are not equivalent in L1 and L2.

Finally, much concentration on the language learners' errors may possibly cause the correct utterances in the process of SLA go unnoticed. So, the most important point is to ask ourselves as L2/FL teachers how to help language learners correct their errors.

Although there are many techniques which help language learners notice the language, and which you can use right the way through a lesson, correction from the teacher may sometimes prevent language learners from becoming aware of mistakes. It might unenthusiastically affects their confidence. Moreover, it harms their ability to analyse why something is wrong. Consequently, teachers should put responsibility for error correction first and foremost on the student. This can be done through self-correction, group correction, and student-to-student correction. Following these

techniques offers the language learners the opportunity to notice their mistakes. The students' discovery of types of error can be more effective. Such techniques allow learners to build confidence and responsibility. This review reveals that there is extremely no point in correcting a student in front of the rest of the class as it is quite demotivating. To keep correcting mistakes can highly encourage the learners to take risks for making mistakes, getting afraid of answering question, losing marks and as a result they will start slipping down the classroom hierarchy.

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Received on 30-06-2015

Accepted on 27-07-2015

Published on 25-03-2016

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