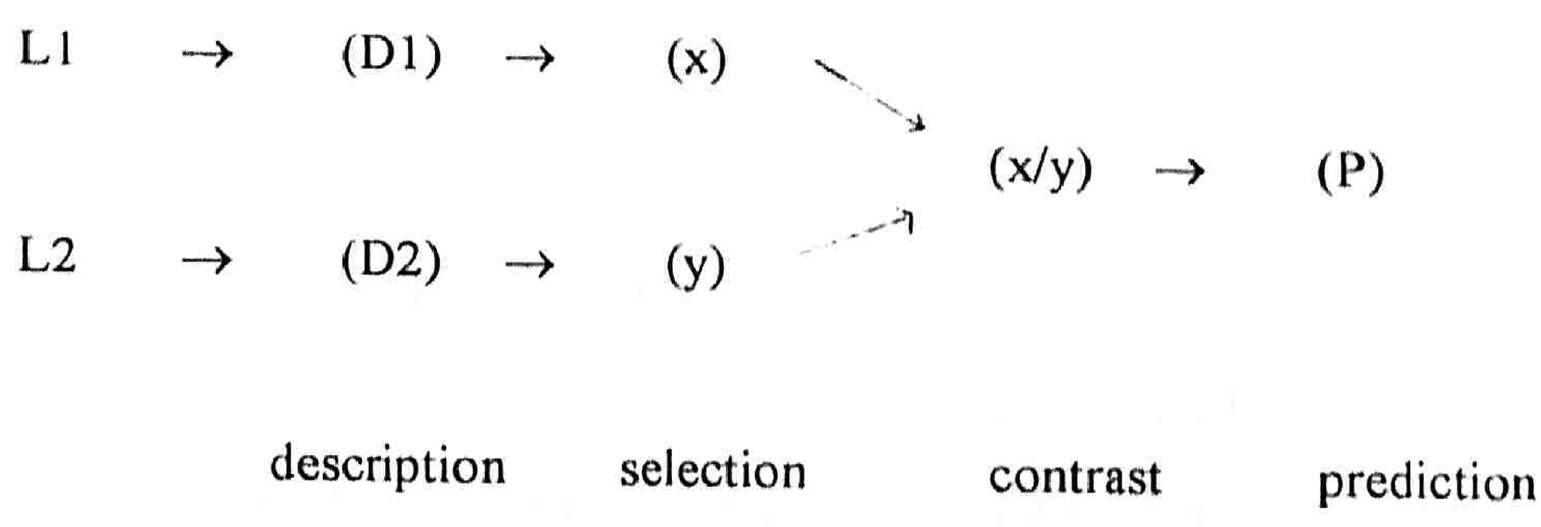
CHAPTER 2

2.1 LITERATURE BACKGROUND

2.1.1 The contrastive analysis hypothesis

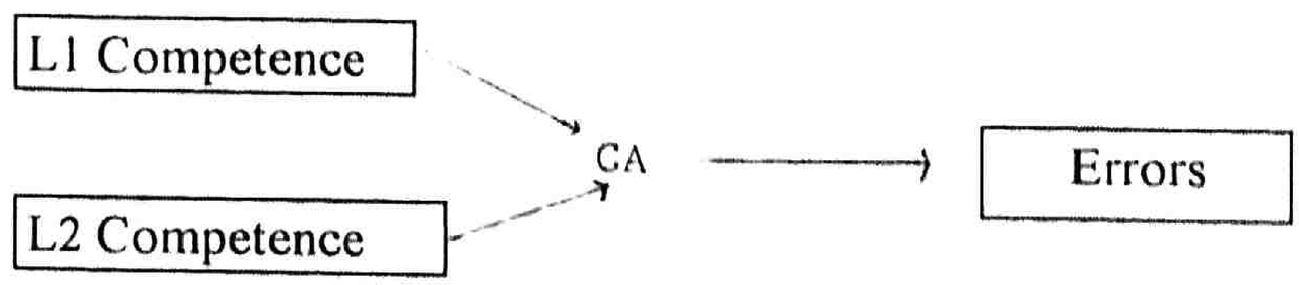
Contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH) was introduced in the 1950's before error analysis hypothesis became popular. Contrastive analysis (CA) could be traced to Charles Fries (1945), Robert Lado (1957), Robert Politzer (1967) and Leon Jakobovits (1970).

There are four procedures involved in contrastive analysis as shown in this diagram (Whitman 1970: 191).



Formal descriptions (D1 and D2) of two languages, the mother tongue (L1) and the target language (L2), are written. Based on the descriptions, forms (x and y) are selected for contrast. Prediction of difficulty is made on the basis of this contrast. "Difficulty and the production of errors is treated as an expected concommittent of the language contact of a new language in an already established one, as in the language classroom" (Whitman 1970:194).

Contrastive analysis is derived from the behavioristic view that language learning is habit formation. The old habit (the mother tongue) can either hinder or facilitate the new habit (the learning of a second language). The strong or predictive version referred to as contrastive analysis apriori, is "a point by point analysis of the phonological, morphological, syntactic or other subsystems of two languages" (Schachter 1974:205). This simple prediction model takes the competence grammar of the two languages as input. The output consists of the likely errors of the learners.



Simple prediction model (Sah 1981:104)

This model predicts the errors that will be made by a second language learner due to the influence of the mother tongue.

In contrastive analysis, it is predicted that similar structures of two languages will pose no difficulty. The greater the differences, the greater the difficulties will be. When the structures of two languages are similar, there will be positive transfer. The L1 knowledge will facilitate the learning of the second language. Oller and Redding (1971) found significant correlation between successful L2 performance in English and similarity in surface structure features between L1 and L2. L2 learners who had "article-like" categories in L1 performed significantly better on a multiple choice test evaluating article knowledge than learners with no article system in their L1's.

In learning the second language, negative transfer or interference takes place when the learner transfers his L1 knowledge onto L2 structures that are different from those found in L1. This results in the making of errors. Wilkins (1980:190) notes that many mistakes of a foreign language learner "can be traced to the mother tongue." Selinker (1969) found that Israelis commonly produced the wrong word or lexical item whenever one Hebrew word covered the same semantic areas as two English words. Evidence of syntactic word order interference from Czech in students' acquisition of English was discovered by Duskova (1969). Similar findings of mother tongue interference were obtained by Taylor (1975), Ard and Homburg (1983), Broselow (1983), Rutherford (1983) and White (1985).

The didactic value of contrastive analysis has received much attention. According to Charles C. Fries (1945:9), "The most effective materials for teaching of a foreign language are those based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner." Zellig Harris (1954) speculates that there is a possibility of acquiring a language by learning only the differences between the new language and the old leaving those features which are identical in both to be carried over untaught. Lado (1957) argues that by pinpointing the differences between the source and target languages, the linguist can predict for the teacher the problem areas of the students. Whitman (1970:191) notes, "In essence, a contrastive analysis takes two languages and processes them in such a way as to make predictions of difficulty for the speaker of one learning the other."

This strong or predictive version of the contrastive analysis hypothesis (also known as contrastive analysis apriori approach) is not without its weakness. In the first place, it does not have 100% predictive ability. It can only predict some of the learning problems. Many errors, which teachers are familiar with, are not predicted by the linguists. Even though a large proportion of errors made in L2

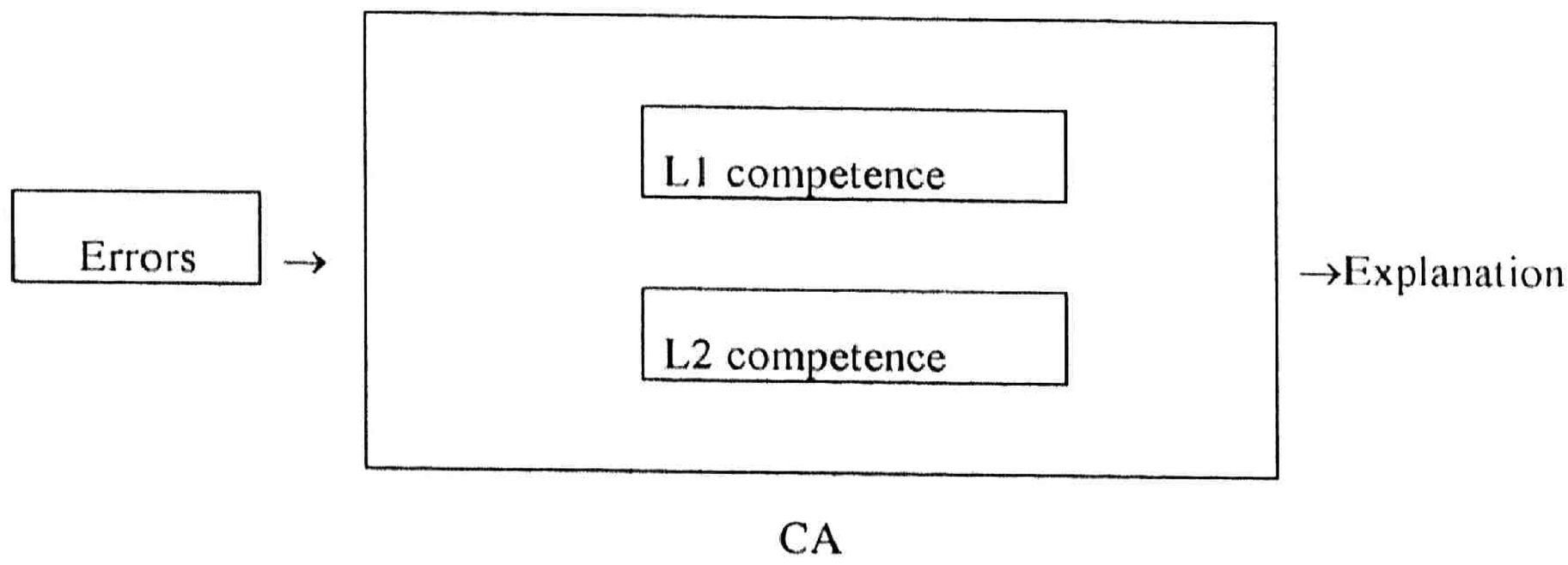
learning can be attributed to mother tongue (MT) interference, many other errors are caused by the complexities underlying the structures of the second language (L2) and not by interference. Richards (1971a) states that interference from the mother tongue is clearly a major source of difficulty in second language learning and contrastive analysis has proved valuable in locating areas of interlanguage interference. Many errors, however, are caused by the strategies employed by the learner in language acquisition. Some errors are due to the difficulties found within the target language. These cannot be accounted for by contrastive analysis. George (1972), Lance (1967) and Brudhiprabha (1972) found that only one-third of the deviant sentences in L2 could be attributed to language transfer. Wardaugh (1970) points out that CA cannot be used to predict learning problems but is more useful in explaining known or discovered difficulties.

Errors made by L2 learners do not necessarily reflect differences in surface structures between L1 and L2. Duskova (1969:19) concludes that "large number of errors have little if any connection with the mother tongue." An example is the omission of the plural ending in the noun "two month". As Czech distinguishes between singular and plural nouns, this omission proves that errors cannot be explained in terms of surface structure contrast between Czech and English.

Due to its weakness, contrastive analysis is more appropriate to explain observable difficulties than to predict difficulties. Error analysis (EA) proponents such as Corder (1967), Richards (1971a) (1973a), Dulay and Burt (1972) challenge the theoretical and practical usefulness of CA which only provides theoretical speculations. According to Nickel (1989:296), "The role of CA was anywhere not so much to predict as to rather explain errors that had happened."

The weak or explanatory version of contrastive analysis is also known as contrastive analysis aposterior model. This model covers only errors in

production leaving errors of comprehension undetected. This inductive variety of contrastive analysis is the error analysis model. It provides factual empirical data by studying the actual errors produced by the learners. The errors are explained by comparing the grammar of the mother tongue (L1) and the target language (L2). The weakness of this model is that it is based on error production data alone and fails to take into account the phenomenon of avoidance.



Error analysis model (Sah 1981: 105)

Here the learner refers to L1 when he gets into any difficulty. According to Newmark (1966), students "pad" from the native language if they do not know how to say something in the target language.

Oller and Ziahosseiny (1970), however, support a moderate version of contrastive analysis hypothesis based on a comparison of the spelling errors of foreign students with a native language that uses Roman alphabets (Group R) and those made by students with a native language that uses a non-Roman system (Group NR). This moderate version of contrastive analysis hypothesis predicts that spelling errors are based on interference of similar items due to false generalization. "The categorization of abstract and concrete patterns (including time sequenced events) according to their perceived similarities and differences is the basis for learning; therefore, whenever patterns are minimally distinct in form

or meaning in one or more systems, confusion may result. Conversely, where patterns are functionally and perceptually equivalent in a system or systems, correct generalization may occur" (Oller and Ziahosseiny 1970:185-186). Therefore the learning of sounds, sequences and meanings will be the most difficult where the most subtle distinctions are required either between the target language and native language or within the target language itself. This accounts for intralingual errors due to the confusion in one language (Richards 1970) and interlingual errors (Selinker 1969a, 1969b). More intralingual errors are predicted than interlingual errors. There are greater similarities between structures within a language than there are across languages. The knowledge of the learner is constantly adjusted. Thus, in the course of learning, the number of interlingual errors decreases relative to intralingual ones. As the student knows more of the target language, there is a lesser need to "pad" from the native language. Hence, the possibility of confusion across two language systems lessens. This moderate version of contrastive analysis seems to be the most acceptable.

2.1.2 The error analysis hypothesis

Error analysis (EA) is "derived from the linguistic theory of the 1960's and first language acquisition research. One of the goals of error analysis is to help construct an account of the second language learners' linguistic competence" (Richards 1985:63). It traces the differences between the way second language learners and adult native speakers use a language (Richards 1971). Schachter (1974) refers to error analysis as "CA aposterior" or "the weak" or "explanatory version". Dulay and Burt (1982) compares error analysis with the L2 acquisition = L1 acquisition hypothesis based on the following assumptions:

The language learner possesses a specific type of innate mental organisation. A limited class of processing strategies helps him to produce utterances. He gradually adjusts the linguistic rules as he gets more input. This process is guided

by the particular form of the L1 system in L1 acquisition and by the particular form of the L2 system in L2 acquisition.

Error analysis examines empirically the actual errors in the TL produced by L2 learners and seeks to explain the causes. Error analysis is based on the mentalist view that the learner has an innate creativity which enables him to reorganize the input he receives from the target language. This "language acquisition device" (LAD) enables the learner to "formulate hypotheses about the structure of the language to which he is exposed.... The hypotheses are tried out in the child's own language production and are regularly checked against the further data that his exposure to the language provides. As he finds that his hypothesis cannot account for all the data, he modifies the hypothesis and checks it again" (Wilkins 1980:169).

"Error analysis has yielded insights into the L2 acquisition process that has stimulated major changes in teaching practices. Perhaps its most controversial contribution has been the discovery that the majority of the grammatical errors second language learners make do not reflect the learners' mother tongue but are very much like those young children make as they learn a first language. Researchers have found that like L1 learners' errors, most of the errors L2 learners make indicate they are gradually building an L2 rule system" (Dulay, Burt and Krashen 1982:138).

The notion of an "interlanguage" is derived from the mentalistic view. The learner possesses a capacity to formulate and reorganize the structures of the target language (TL). Selinker (1985) defines "interlanguage" as "a separate linguistic system" based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a TL norm. It is a language system different from the mother tongue and the target language. Nemser (1971) defines interlanguage as "an

approximate system" and calls it "learner speech" or "learner system". This learner speech is continually modified as new elements are incorporated throughout the learning process. Such a developing system is reflected in the learners' errors. Corder (1971) considers this interlanguage as an "idiosyncratic dialect" or a "transitional dialect" which has a systematic and regular grammar. Corder explains that "the sentences are idiosyncratic" precisely because the rules of the target language are not yet known. Error analysis is a useful tool for research on interlanguage studies.

2.1.2.1 Classification of errors

Classification of errors is useful for teachers to have a deeper insight into L2 learning process. There are many different categories of errors used by different researchers.

Corder (1967) points out that the learner is using a definite system of language at every point of his language development. The learner's errors give an indication of the system of the language he is using or has learnt at a particular point in the course. However, this system may not be the correct system. Corder (1967) also draws a distinction between systematic and unsystematic errors. Systematic errors are errors of competence. They reflect the learner's transitional competence or knowledge of the language to date. There are also unsystematic errors which occur randomly. Native speakers of the language also produce ill-formed utterances. These do not result from an imperfect knowledge of the language. Such "lapses" are mainly due to memory lapses, physical states such as tiredness and psychological conditions such as strong emotion. The speakers are normally aware of these when they occur and can readily correct them. Corder (1967) states that "it would be quite unreasonable to expect the learner of a second language not to exhibit such slips of the tongue or pen, since he is subject to similar external and internal conditions when performing in his first or second

language." Such errors of performance of the learners are termed as "mistakes". They are unsystematic and are the product of chance circumstances.

The distinction made between errors of competence and performance is of limited use. A L2 learner who can recognize and correct his errors on the basis of explicit L2 knowledge may still retain them in his actual L2 use. Such performance errors that reflect a lack of automaticity in using language skills may actually reflect a lack of L2 competence. There are errors that learners can recognize but cannot correct. It is difficult to decide whether such errors are competence or performance errors.

Corder (1973) also classifies errors according to the stage the learner is at:

(a) the pre–systematic stage refers to the stage when the learner guesses randomly. The learner makes many errors and only occasionally "hits the right form as if by chance" (Corder 1973:270-271). Such errors can be considered as competence errors. Examples are:

*"I don't want to friend you".

*"I does no wrong".

*"Us has no way of knowing".

The learner cannot correct his own error or give any reason why he chooses a particular form.

(b) the systematic stage is reached when a learner has discovered and is operating a rule of some sort. His hypothesis is wrong due to incomplete, inaccurate and imperfect knowledge of the rules of the target language. He produces competence errors such as: *"I sawed, I thinked, I seed it or I buyed it." He may form incorrect plural nouns such as *"sheeps, deers, furnitures, informations". The student may produce sentences like*"He did it hisself or *"Have you baken the tarts?" and *"Have you tooken the

things?" The learner cannot correct his error but he can give an account of the rule that he is following.

(c) the post systematic stage refers to the stage when the learner produces the correct form inconsistently. He has learned the rule but does not apply it consistently. This may be due to the lack of attention or memory lapse. This is the practice stage of learning the language. The learner can correct his errors at this stage. Most of the errors made are performance errors such as the distinction between "he" and "she". The learner also can give an account of the rule that he is following.

A second language learner can be at different stages for the different sub-systems or categories of the language, for example, he may be at the post-systematic stage in the number system, systematic stage in the article system and pre-systematic stage in the use of the perfective aspect. Thus, it is difficult to state which stage the learner has reached in his language development.

Corder (1981) classifies an error as:

(a) an overt idiosyncrasy which refers to a superficially ill-formed sentence but a plausible interpretation can be made from it or a superficially ill-formed sentence where a plausible interpretation is not possible; and

(b) a covert idiosyncrasy which refers to a superficially well-formed sentence in terms of the target language rules but it cannot be interpreted "normally" in context.

Jain (1974) categorizes errors under:

(a) systematic errors whereby the learner possesses some construction rules in certain areas of the language use but "because of some kind of limitations

in rule schematic, the rules give rise to errors of over application" (Jain 1974:207);

(b) unsystematic errors caused by psychological conditions such as great excitement or physiological factors such as fatigue; and

(c) asystematic errors occur when "it is difficult to state precise rules for the occurrence of errors in the learner's performance data ... and there are too many cues to frustrate his reaching a firm generalization" (Jain 1974:204).

Richards (1985) distinguishes between "intralingual" and "interlingual" errors. Interlingual errors are caused by language transfer. Intralingual errors that are due to the inherent difficulties found in the target language and the strategies used by learners to learn the second language come under the following categories:

(a) overgeneralization errors (errors are caused by extension of target language rules to inappropriate context.);

(b) simplification errors (errors result from redundancy reduction);

(c) developmental errors (errors reflect built-in stages of linguistic development);

(d) communication - based errors (errors result from strategies of communication);

(e) induced errors (errors are derived from the sequencing and presentation of target language items);

(f) errors of avoidance (these result from failure to use certain types of target language); and

(g) errors of overproduction (these refer to target language features produced correctly but used too frequently).

Burt and Kirparsky (1972) distinguish between errors which significantly hinder communication and those that do not do so. Global errors affect the overall

sentence organization and significantly hinder communication. The most systematic global errors are:

(a) Wrong order of major constituents

Example *"English language use many people" ;

(b) Missing, wrong or misplaced sentence connectors

Examples:

*(If) not take this bus, we late for school.

* He will be rich until he marry.

*He started to go to school since he studied very hard;

(c) Missing clues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rules.

Example * The students' proposal (was) looked into (by) the principal; and

(d) Regularization of pervasive syntactic rules to exceptions (in transformational terms), not observing selectional restrictions on certain lexical items.

Example *"We amused that movie very much (That movie amused us very much).

Local errors affect single elements (constituents) in a sentence and do not usually hinder communication significantly, such as errors in noun and verb inflections, articles, auxiliaries and the formation of quantifiers (Dulay, Burt and Krashen 1982:191).

As there are so many different classification systems of errors made by various scholars, it is difficult to compare the results of different studies.

2.1.2.2 Arguments for error analysis studies

(a) Error analysis (EA) is a useful tool in the study of L2 acquisition. It allows the investigator to focus his energy and attention on just areas that prove to be difficult. Lim (1976:24) points out that "a lack of acquaintance with error analysis will sometimes cause the teacher to becom concerned with insignificant errors and bypass others that are quite important. "Error analysis is also a useful technique to trace learners' learning strategies.

(b) Unlike contrastive analysis (CA), error analysis does not restrict the cause of errors to interlingual factor but it also considers intralingual factor.

(c) Error analysis provides a more efficient and economical basis than contrastive analysis for designing pedagogical strategies. It provides data on actual problem areas and not predicted difficulties.

2.1.2.3 Some limitations of error analysis

According to Jacquelyn Schachter and Marianne Celce-Murcia (1977:441), there are six weaknesses of error analysis:

(a) the analysis of errors in isolation;

(b) the classification of identified errors;

(c) the statement of error frequency;

(d) the identification of points of difficulty;

(e) the ascription of causes to systematic errors; and

(f) the biased nature of sampling procedures.

Once errors are extracted from the corpus, the researcher tends to focus his attention on organizing and classifying the errors as well as tracing the sources of such errors. The rest of the corpus (the non-errors) are not considered any further. Hammarberg (1974) criticizes the neglect of the corpus. Anderson (1977) points out that only a careful consideration of both errors and non-errors can

reveal the learner's learning strategy. Moreover, if too much attention is focussed on errors, the researcher may forget that the ultimate goal of L2 learning is communicative fluency.

The learner's language contains many types of errors. Jain (1974:190) notes , "Errors do not seem to submit themselves to any precise systematic analysis, the division between errors traceable to L1 interference and those that are independent of L1 interference is not invariably clear cut " Many errors can be given more than one evaluation. According to Wyatt (1973:177), "No two people would have classified the results in quite the same way and several errors could fall into two or more categories."

It is inadequate to state only absolute frequency of error types, for example, the need to use articles and prepositions often results in more errors made in these two parts of speech. Considering relative frequency of error types is more helpful. The researcher can quantify accurately an error type only in contexts set for the learners (filling in the blanks or multiple choice questions). The total number of required occurrences of any element or structure in a given corpus is compared with the number of instances in which deviations or errors are found.

It is not easy for an error analysis researcher to identify areas of difficulty for the learners in the target language. The researcher has to consider the phenomenon of avoidance. Schachter (1974) points out a weakness of the aposterior approach based on his analysis of fifty free compositions of some Persian, Arab, Chinese and Japanese students studying English at the American Language Institute in the University of Southern California. Similar to English, Persian and Arabic have postnominal relative clauses. Chinese and Japanese have prenominal relative

clauses. The relative clauses in English are constructed differently from those in Chinese and Japanese. This structural difference makes it difficult for the Chinese and Japanese students to produce relative clauses. Subsequently, they avoid using them. Error analysis alone is thus inadequate to identify points of difficulty as it only explains errors shown up in production. Students may resort to using paraphrases to avoid difficult constructions. Kleinmann (1977) provides evidence of Arabic-speaking learners avoiding the use of English passive constructions. Duskova (1969:15) points out that "the lower frequency of an error need not necessarily mean that the point in question is less difficult." Various other studies confirmed this. Swain (1975) found that children learning French as a second language avoided using the indirect object pronoun. Perkins and Larsen-Freeman (1975) discovered that their subjects studying French as a second language used a semantic avoidance strategy to avoid talking about concepts for which their vocabulary was lacking. The subjects of Ickenroth and Varadi (1975) used various escape routes such as using words with the same meanings, superordinates and paraphrasing.

The sources of the learners' errors may be ambiguous. The researcher cannot be sure when he decides whether an error is an interlingual or developmental error. The omissions of the obligatory copula in English by Chinese, Arabic and certain other learners may be explained as interference errors due to the structural differences between the target and source languages. However, monolingual English learners (that is, children) and native speakers of languages with similar structures as English in this area, for example, Spanish, also produce the same errors. It is difficult to identify the causes of errors. "Explaining error type is not simply a matter of assigning a single source to each error that occurs. Language learning is an interaction of internal and external factors and explanation of errors must reflect that interaction" (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982:144). Dulay et al.

(1982:142) note that "the error analysis literature is rife with studies that confuse the cause of error with their description." Description refers to the product of language acquisition but explanation refers to the process of language acquisition which consists of the interaction between the learners' internal processing mechanism and the external environment. There is often a confusion between the explanatory and descriptive (process and product) aspects of error analysis.

Arabski (1979) criticizes the five processes referred to by Selinker to explain both interlingual and intralingual errors. It is difficult to differentiate between the processes involved in overgeneralization, strategies of second language learning and strategies of second language communication. The five central processes which Selinker considers to be responsible for fossilizable errors are defined in such general terms that they can easily apply to a variety of learning problems. What is peculiar to learning a language is not clarified. The strategies of second language acquisition, overgeneralization and strategies of communication show no clear difference as the result in every case is "simplification".

It is not easy to gather authentic samples of data especially in a longitudinal study on an individual subject. The researcher has to take into consideration the subject's lapses, whims and perhaps occasional non-cooperation. For example, in a taping session of a research done on a bilingual child's acquisition of English and French lexical items, the child did not produce the French word ('lapin') for rabbit. The researcher might conclude wrongly that the child did not actively use the French form. However, the researcher was aware that the child used both the English and French words due to previous acquaintance with the child. Error analysis researchers should realize that performance data may not always be accurate. The researcher may face non-cooperation when he is collecting data, especially from

children as shown in this example:-

Interviewer : Adam, which is right

"two shoes" or "two shoe"?

Adam : Pop goes the weasel (Steinberg 1982:144).

In most error analysis studies, the learners' language is examined at a single point in time. There is not much known on the development route or process. Production data which can be analyzed easily is stressed. However, language is speaking, listening, reading and writing. Comprehension data (which is often neglected in error analysis) is equally important in understanding the process of second language acquisition.

It is assumed in error analysis that interlanguage develops in stages in an approximate system. However, the language produced by L2 learners is unstable and arbitrary. As such, it is doubtful whether we can use the term "system" to refer to the learners' performance that is unstable and always changing.

Corder (1981) refers to an authoritative interpretation of errors. The researcher who knows the learner's mother tongue has the chance to meet the learner so that he can ask the learner directly in the mother tongue what he means. The learner expresses his meaning in L1 and the researcher is required to translate this correctly into L2. It is difficult to translate accurately from L1 to L2. Moreover, the learner may not remember what he intended to say when he was using the target language. The longer the time period is between the original sentence and reconstruction, the more difficult it is for the learner to recall what he intended to say earlier on.

Despite the limitations of error analysis, it is still an important field of study as it can provide relevant feedback to the curriculum designers, teachers and the learners themselves.

2.1.3 Second language acquisition theories

Second language learners have two independent systems, an acquired system and a learned system. The acquired system is subconscious and refers to natural linguistic abilities. There is no conscious focusing on linguistic forms. This acquired system is derived from participation in natural communication situations. On the other hand, the learned system is developed consciously in formal language learning situations. Learners can also learn by taking up self study programmes. Formal learning situations are characterized by the presence of feedback and error correction, rule isolation and presentation of artificial linguistic environment that introduces just one aspect of grammar at a time.

The acquired system initiates language output but conscious learning is available as a monitor to alter the output of the acquired system, sometimes before or after the utterance is produced. Language production is based on what is "picked up" through communication but the monitor alters production to improve accuracy towards the target language norms.

The learners' L2 performance depends on whether monitoring takes place. The learners use only the acquired system under monitor-free conditions (little time is available and the focus is on communication rather than forms). In such cases, learners produce consistent errors. This natural order is a product of the "creative construction process" of acquisition which is guided by universal principles. Adults and children show the same pattern of errors because they share the same "natural" system for internalizing the rules. However, errors are more inconsistent in situations where monitoring takes place. Once the monitor operates, the

learning system is activated and grammatical rules are taken into consideration. A different difficulty order is found. Adult L2 performance varies due to variable use of conscious monitoring. Some individuals monitor whenever possible and there are others who rarely monitor.

It is easier to learn simple rules such as the regular past and third person singular present tense in English under monitored conditions. These rules are redundant and unnecessary for communication so they are difficult to produce under monitor-free conditions. The reverse is true for other morphemes, for example, the definite and indefinite articles. It is difficult to teach them and they have to be acquired through communication. The use of articles is easier under monitor-free (acquisition) conditions than under monitored (learning) conditions (Krashen, Butler, Birhaum and Robertson quoted in McLaughlin 1978:313).

Motivation and personality also determine the extent to which students are able to acquire L2. A great deal of input goes to the language acquisition device (LAD) of students with a low affective filter. A high or strong filter filters out the input language for students. Language input plays a prominent role in L2 classrooms. Optimal input has the following characteristics:

(a) It is comprehensible.

The target language input must be comprehensible to the learner. Concrete referents are important for a learner's early language development. These refer to extralinguistic items that can help the learner to grasp the meanings of the new language. These include things and activities that can be seen, heard or felt when the language is used. Experienced teachers usually provide concrete referents in the form of visual aids, motor activities and other "here and now" kinds of extralinguistic support.

(b) It is interesting and relevant to the student.

The input can be processed and understood better if is interesting and relevant. If the input is very interesting, the acquirer is not even aware that it is encoded in a second language. He focuses intently on the message. Thus, only genuinely communicative activities are effective. Therefore, in second language learning, students need to learn new facts and concepts at the same time that they are acquiring English.

(c) It is not grammatically sequenced.

The input should be slightly above the learners' competence level. Given enough comprehensible input, i + 1 is supplied without any deliberate attempt to program it in. This input also provides built-in review ensuring that the students are exposed to a variety of structures. When the students use the language to communicate, they will learn the grammar eventually.

(d) The input must be of sufficient quantity.

It is easy to supply i + 1 to a given student if there is sufficient input. Students can obtain sufficient input through extensive reading such as reading for pleasure. Although the input needs to contain i + 1, it does not need to focus exclusively on it. A sub-hypothesis of the Input Hypothesis is that if there is enough comprehensible input, enough i + 1 is provided for successful acquisition to take place. We do not have to program in i + 1. According to the Input Hypothesis, we do not need to teach speaking directly. The learners are ready to talk after they have gained sufficient competence via input. There is some individual variation as to when this silent period ends.

The interaction or social model of language states that language learning occurs through participation in speech events. Therefore, talking to others or holding a conversation is important in language learning. McLaughlin (1978) points out that classrooms should mimic as much as possible the "natural setting" by exposing

learners to meaningful input. There should be more emphasis on communication in classroom teaching and less emphasis on formal rules and error correction. Learners experience target language as a useful tool for communication through role-playing, dialogues and cooperative tasks. The students should be given activities that enable them to carry out meaningful communication and master formal rules. The teachers should set different tests to correlate with the different tasks. Both acquisition and learning take place in an ideal classroom. The creative construction process is stimulated by contextualized exercises and opportunities to use natural language. Clear presentation of grammatical rules and selective error correction are most effective for learners who are "monitor-users".

2.1.4 Some studies on interlingual and intralingual errors

This section deals with error analysis studies that have been carried out.

Duskova (1969) analyzed the actual errors made by fifty postgraduate Czech adult learners of English. The subjects had sufficient knowledge of English to be able to read scientific literature and to converse on work-related subjects. They were asked in Czech to express in English a request for correction of an English letter, to give a brief account of their last journey abroad and to write the conclusion of a scientific article. The analysis of errors was confined to errors made in grammar and lexis. Duskova pointed out that "another problem for Czech learners is presented by the system of the English tenses. Here , the difficulty is predicted by contrastive analysis as the temporal systems in the two languages greatly differ. The actual source of most errors, however, is again interference from the other terms of the English system and only rarely from the corresponding Czech" (Duskova 1969:23-24). He concluded that "while interference from the mother tongue plays a role, it is not the only interfering factor. There is also interference between the forms of the language being learnt both in grammar and lexis. In grammar, it is the other terms of a particular English sub-system and/or their

function that operate as interfering factors, while in lexis, words and phrases are often confused as a result of formal similarities. In addition, there are other minor interfering factors such as interference from another foreign language that was learnt before" (Duskova 1969: 25).

Dommergues (1970) administered TOEFL to 505 freshmen at the University of Paris VII. The response of 438 native French speakers to a syntax test was studied. This study concluded that analogy errors increased and interference errors decreased during the process of language learning. Buteau (1970) also studied errors made by French students learning English. It was discovered that French sentences corresponding literally to their English equivalents were not necessarily the easiest to learn. The probability of errors could not be determined based on the degree of difference of the linguistic structures between the native language and the target language. Errors in English produced by speakers of Japanese, Chinese, Burmese, French, Czech, Polish, Tagalog, Maori and Maltese were studied by Richards (1970). He classified the sources of intralingual/developmental errors under overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules and the building of false systems and concepts.

Dulay and Burt (1973) conducted a comparative error analysis study to determine whether the actual errors made in L2 by children could be accounted for by "creative construction" or by "habit formation". Using the Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM), the researchers tried to elicit natural speech from 145 Spanish-speaking children. Seven coloured cartoon pictures and a set of thirty-three questions in English and another thirty-three questions in Spanish were given. The questions were structured to elicit certain structure types. 388 unambiguous errors for six syntactic structure types were classified into three categories:

(a) interference errors that reflected the mother tongue (Spanish) structures - 3 %;

(b) developmental errors similar to those made by children learning the language natively - 85%; and

(c) unique errors that were neither developmental nor interference errors - 12%.

The children's L2 errors in syntax were characterized by the omission of functors and overgeneralizations rather than by the incorrect use of L1 structures in L2 speech. Thus, children learning L2 used the same general learning processing abilities as children used in learning their mother tongue. This supported the creative construction theory.

Dulay and Burt's second study (1973) was done on 151 children: ninety-five Chicano children from Sacramento, California, twenty-six Mexican children studying in San Ysidro and thirty Puerto Rican children from East Harlem district in New York. Natural speech was elicited from five to eight years old Spanish speaking ESL students by using the Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM). It was found that there was a common sequence of acquisition of eight of Brown's (1973b) original fourteen functors, namely, present progressive, plural, past irregular, possessive, articles, third person regular, contractible copula and contractible auxiliary. The three groups of children came from different English learning environments but there was evidence of a universal strategy of L2 acquisition. The common sequences indicated that the learning order of these structures was controlled by the child's processing strategies. He must be cognitively ready to acquire any of them. This finding suggested that "we should leave the learning of syntax to the children and redirect our teaching efforts to other aspects of the language " (Dulay and Burt 1973:257).

Bhatia (1974) conducted an error analysis study at the University of New Delhi. The subjects who were second year B.A. students were in the age group of seventeen plus. Hindi was their mother tongue. They were at the transitional stage of acquiring second language competence. Their free compositions of 250 words each were collected from written, regular class work. The percentage values of different errors showed the relative significance of given errors. It was discovered that error percentage in verb forms and tense sequence made up 40% and that of subject-verb agreement was 20%. These percentage values helped to determine areas of priority for remedial work. It was found that second language learning was affected by motivation, transfer (mother tongue interference) and internal interference.

Scott and Tucker (1974) examined the English proficiency of twenty-two Arabic-speaking students. The subjects were taking a low intermediate intensive English course at the American University of Beirut. Samples of written and oral data were taken at the beginning and at the end of the term. The areas of difficulty were ranked in order. Comparisons were made between errors made at the beginning and at the end of the term. It was discovered that verbs, prepositions and articles were the areas where the students most often deviated from standard English (Scott and Tucker 1974:75). Elliot (1983) reported that Scott and Tucker found that 32% of errors were found in verbs.

Selinker et al. (1975) conducted a survey on ten boys and ten girls of about seven-and-half years old native speakers of English taking a Toronto French immersion program. They found that the errors made by their subjects were due to strategies of language transfer, simplification and overgeneralization of target language rules. The absence of peers who were native speakers of the target language affected the surface forms of L2 speech of children in the programme. The interlanguage developed into a dialect in its own right - this dialect was an

acceptable means of communication among speakers who shared the same interlanguage.

Taylor (1975) collected eighty written English translation of Spanish sentences. The test was administered orally to twenty native Spanish-speaking ESL students at elementary and intermediate levels. The subjects' mastery of auxiliary and verb phrase in eight sentence types in English was tested. The results showed that "increased proficiency in English does not qualitatively affect the kinds of errors which a learner makes" (Taylor 1975:82). Elementary subjects who knew less of the target language relied more on transfer strategy. Intermediate students with more knowledge of the target language relied more on overgeneralization strategy. It was found that these two strategies were two distinctly different linguistic manifestations of one psychological process, that is, the reliance on prior learning to facilitate new learning.

Anglejan and Tucker (1975) examined the acquisition of a set of linguistically complex English structures by adult French-Canadian learners of English at beginning and advanced levels of proficiency. It was discovered that target sentences were not processed by relating them to similar structures in their native language (even for the beginners). Both groups appeared to deal directly with the data of the target language. The beginners tended to rely more on semantic than syntactic information for clues to interpret certain ambiguous sentences. However, the advanced subjects were more inclined to use a combination of syntactic and semantic information. The findings suggested that L2 learners interpreted target language sentences by utilizing basic language processing principles such as applying broad general rules. Language specific rules appropriate to the mother tongue were not used to interpret target language sentences. There was no evidence of any attempt made by learners to use native language structures in the

target language. Anglejan and Tucker's (1975) study supported the creative construction process hypothesis in the development of L2 competence.

Cohen (1976) conducted a preliminary investigation into errors in verb-forms, teacher correction, student explanation and interlanguage background among three university students. The subjects had relative degree of proficiency in Mandarin and were in advanced ESL class at University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). A questionnaire was administered orally to elicit information about each subject's interlanguage background. An error analysis was done on the students' written work based on an average of eleven assignments. At an interview, the subjects had to locate the errors and supply the correct forms as well as to explain why the errors were made. The study focused on deviations in verb forms and revealed that verb-form errors predominated. Error correction did not seem to have any significant effect on the students' errors due to the faulty process of correction. The interlanguage background and the subjects' explanation of verb-form errors provided useful insights concerning the L2 learners' errors.

Meziani(1984) conducted a random study of fifty 200-word essays written by Moroccan learners of English at pre-university level. The topics given elicited the use of the past tense. Meziani (1984: 299) pointed out that " the English tense system is in fact a problem for most learners whatever their language background is ". The distribution of errors by category in Meziani's 1984 study showed that the highest percentage of errors was found in tense (39.20%) and that of concord was 3.00%. Meziani used the term "tense" to apply to both tense (past, non-past) and aspect (continuous, non-continuous). The tense category was divided into six sub-categories with the following percentage of errors:

simple present instead of simple past	36.0%
present perfect instead of simple past	7.3%
past perfect instead of simple past	28.5%

simple past instead of simple present	3.3%
present perfect instead of past perfect	4.3%
others	20.6%

A total of 71.8% of all tense errors made included the use of other tenses instead of using the simple past. The low frequency of errors in structures involving the continuous and the perfect was due to the nature of the topics given. Deviations from the correct verb-forms, for example, double marking where the past tense forms instead of the stem forms were used, consisted of 43.15% of the errors made. The use of the verb stem instead of v+ed could be due to phonological reason. The finite verb must agree with its subject in person and number. Meziani's 1984 study reported that the percentage of errors due to person agreement was 68.75% and that in number agreement was 31.25%.

In Singapore, Elliot (1983) examined and identified errors in descriptive (non-scientific) writing of Nanyang University graduates in science and mathematics. The twenty candidates wrote two essays of 150 words each. There was a control group of twenty candidates from the University of Singapore. In such a situation, learners attempt to learn the correct form of L2 in an environment where L1 and a deviant form of L2 are used. Standard form of L2 exists only in the classroom. Non-standard English that is used by the majority of the population has an influence on the standard form of L2. "In Singapore, communication in English is often achieved without the grammatically correct use of verbs" (Elliot 1983:79). The intralingual/developmental errors are temporary and are susceptible to correction. Interlingual errors are more firmly rooted and are difficult to correct. The most difficult to correct are intrusive errors which are the most firmly rooted due to the environmental influence of the deviant form of L2. This situation is similar to the learning of English as a second language in Malaysia. It was found in Elliot's (1983) study that "in mathematical writing (selected for errors) the undergraduates had 53% of their errors due to verbs, in non-scientific writing

done under examination conditions, the graduates had 27% of their errors due to verbs and in the formulation of questions (simulated classroom condition), the graduate teachers had 56% of their errors due to verbs" (Elliot 1983:105). The two groups surveyed showed the greatest difficulty with verbs, with agreement of subject and verb, especially in the third person singular present, with the perfect ending ("d" or "ed") with the "have/had" choice and with the choice between the auxiliary verbs "to have" and "to be". "While the verbs supplied the biggest group of errors, the redundancy of English is such that the meaning which the writer intended to convey was usually perfectly clear. It may be suggested that this fact contributes to the perpetuation of errors-there is no vital need to find the correct usage" (Elliot 1983:82). ESL students may be contented to communicate in their redundancy-reduced variety of English but it is still the responsibility of ESL teachers to teach the correct grammatical usage.

Siriporn Vongthieres (1974) studied selected English grammatical difficulties of advanced Thai students. She analyzed informal essays written by thirty Thai graduate students at the Ohio State University. It was discovered that errors in the verb system accounted for the highest frequency of error (32.54%). The wrong use of tenses accounted for 14.58% of the total errors. The errors in the verb category were sub-divided under tenses 44.80%, agreement of subject and verb 20.83%, omission of copula 6.25%, passive construction 12.50%, verbals 5.20% and two-part verbs 10.42%. Pornthip Krairussamee (1982) conducted a survey on the teaching of English as foreign language in Thailand. She analyzed the errors made in the compositions written by 153 first-year university students in Bangkok. It was discovered that verb errors were the errors of the highest frequency (32.56%). Verb errors were divided into five categories: tense and verb forms 55.24%, subject-verb agreement 20.42%, auxiliary verbs 11.75%, verbals 11.89% and verb forms in conditional sentences 0.70%. The English tense system is difficult for Thai students to master due to the absence of tense in Thai as a

linguistic device to signal time relation. Both studies in Thailand showed that verbs accounted for the highest frequency of errors made by the subjects.

2.1.5 Some error analysis studies carried out in Malaysia

A number of error analysis studies have been carried out in Malaysia. Suffian (1968) analyzed the compositions of 200 Form Three pupils from three Malay-medium secondary schools in Malaysia and Singapore. He found that errors in verbs made up 40% of the total number of errors. The major problem area was subject-verb agreement. Suffian accepted French's (1961) idea that errors occurred as a result of the learner's honest endeavour to get them right and Lado's (1957) argument that errors arose because of interference from L1.

Mohd. Dom (1969) carried out an investigation on errors made by Malaysian fifth formers from Malay-medium secondary schools. Each composition had an average length of fifteen sentences. Errors in verbs were the most glaring making up 61% of the total errors. Errors in determiners consisted of 14% and those found in prepositions constituted 9%.

Chee (1969) studied errors made by 300 Standard Six English-medium pupils in Johor Bahru in their written descriptive compositions. He classified the errors under seven grammatical categories, namely, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns and lexis. He found that errors in verbs constituted 59.5% of the total number of errors. He attributed this high frequency to negative transfer of the mother tongue to the target language. Incorrect tense usage consisted of 27.5% of the errors made under verbs. Errors in nouns and pronouns constituted 11.95%, those in prepositions 5.7%, articles 6.45%, structure and lexis 6.3%, spelling 5.5%, adjectives 2.5%, adverbs 0.5% and miscellaneous 1.45%

Yap (1973) examined free compositions written by 497 school children in Standards Four, Five and Six in a primary school. The errors were categorized as punctuation, capitalization, word order, structural and spelling errors . Yap found that the percentages of errors made were: word form 49.98%, spelling 14.34 %, punctuation 14.1%, structural 12.55% and capitalization 9%. Yap noted that "one realizes that if there were a concentrated attack on word-form errors alone, 50% of the errors would be eliminated and half the battle with written English would be won" (Yap 1973:68). As word-form errors formed the main category of errors, remedial work should focus on this category especially on the areas of subject-verb agreement, use of prepositions, use of articles and sequences of tenses. "The errors in verbs alone accounted for over 40% of the total number of errors in each standard" (Yap 1973:90). "Wrong formation of the past tense, though scoring low in terms of percentage had a rising average number of errors per pupil along with rising grade level. Mistakes in tenses, therefore, tended to increase with grade level. This suggests that the teaching of tenses still needs very much more attention in both the English and Malay-medium classes than had been afforded it" (Yap 1973:91).

Tunku Mohaini (1983) analyzed the oral and written errors made by Malay students of upper secondary schools with particular reference to the words ending in consonant clusters, the final members of which are /t/, /d/, /s/ and /z/. The oral errors were elicited through a reading test which considered both the root words ending in such clusters and inflections. Mohaini's (1983) study revealed that the final consonants were frequently deleted in root words and grammatical inflections. For the writing section, fifty compositions were analyzed for errors in the use of the past tense verbs, the plural nouns and the possessive nouns which provided the words with consonant cluster endings.

Inflections were frequently not affixed to these forms. The students were unfamiliar with target language rules on the use of inflections. These errors were caused by mother tongue interference and the learning strategies of the learners. Effective remedial measures were suggested since these grammatical forms were fundamental aspects of the English language.

Padmanabhan Nair (1990) analyzed the verb structure errors in three types (expository, imaginative and argumentative) 200-word written compositions of 120 Malay students. The subjects, whose mother tongue was Bahasa Malaysia, were from two secondary schools. There were sixty subjects from each school. Bahasa Malaysia was the dominant language. The order of composition types differed for every twenty students in each school. Nair (1990) traced the patterns of occurrence of these errors and he identified and explained the possible sources of these errors. The identified errors were classified into four forms in order of frequency: wrong forms 52.42%, omission of forms 34.88%, insertion of forms 12.9% and wrong word order 0.61 %. Fourteen error types were identified, namely, errors in agreement (concord), past tense, present tense, future tense, perfect tense, errors at word level (finite and non-finite) inversion errors, three infinitive types of errors and two participle types of errors. By composition types , the highest percentage of errors was found in the imaginative (51.44%) followed by the expository (28.29%) and finally the argumentative type (20.27%). Errors made in tenses (simple past, simple present, future, perfect and the continuous) made up 75.36% of the total errors made. The usage of tenses constituted the main problem area as the students could not grasp the concepts of past, present and future within the verb structure. As the English tense system appeared redundant to the Malay students, the stem forms of the verbs were generally used. The scope of Nair's (1990) study was restricted to the description and explanation of interlingual and intralingual errors in the verb structure.

A number of error analysis studies showed that mastery of the English verbs was a problem to second language learners. The present study was restricted to the survey of written verb-form errors made by Sarawakian Malay ESL students. Even though there were many error analysis studies conducted in Malaysia, only Nair's (1990) study focused on verb-form errors. The present study closely resembled the former study as both studies focused on verb-form errors. However, the present study was justifiable as it had a different sampling of respondents with a different geographical, linguistic and cultural background.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The second language learner's language (which Corder 1981 considers to be an idiosyncratic dialect) can be described in terms of a set of rules. Some of these rules may be related to the rules of the target language. This idiosyncratic dialect is unstable because as the learner gains more exposure and new knowledge of the correct rules, he modifies the rules of his idiosyncratic dialect towards the target language norm. Even though some of the rules in the idiosyncratic dialect are particular to an individual (an idiolect), there are also some idiosyncratic rules shared by others having similar cultural background, aims or linguistic history.

2.2.1 Stages in error analysis (refer to Appendix 1)

Corder (1981) points out that the first stage in error analysis is the recognition of idiosyncrasy. He refers to the two criteria of acceptability and appropriateness to determine the degree of correctness of the learner's language output. Errors can be identified as either overt or covert errors. An overt idiosyncrasy is identified when there is a violation of the rule of the language code or language usage. When a well-formed sentence cannot be given a normal interpretation in the context, a covert idiosyncrasy is identified. This may be due to a violation of the rule of referential boundary, that is, it is not appropriate in terms of the material truth

value Alternatively, it may be inappropriate due to the wrong use of style or register. The second stage of error analysis is the description of the learner's language output. When the researcher has identified an idiosyncrasy, he tries to place a plausible interpretation of it based on the context. A well-formed sentence is reconstructed in the target language. This well-formed sentence is the translation equivalent of what a native speaker uses to convey the same meaning in the same context. A comparison is made between the learner's idiosyncratic dialect and the well-formed translation equivalent to identify the differences in the grammar of the L1 and the target language. An authoritative interpretation and an authoritative reconstruction are possible if the researcher knows the learner's mother tongue and has the chance to meet the learner. He can directly ask the learner to explain in his mother tongue what he means.

The final stage of error analysis is an explanation of the idiosyncrasy. A linguistic explanation focuses on the grammatical rule that has been broken, substituted or deviated. A psycholinguistic explanation investigates the source of errors (why and how errors occur). According to Nickel (1981:9), "One will have to distinguish between direct and indirect interlingual interference. It may be that what one can call the `macro-cause' is interlingual and what one might call the `micro-cause' is intralingual." H.V. George (1972) points out that only about 33% of errors are interlingual errors that can be traced to the mother tongue. The rest appear to be related to the target language and occur irrespective of the mother tongue of the learners. These intralingual errors are also termed as "developmental errors."

2.2.2 Explanations for errors

Selinker (1972) suggests five central processes to account for both interlingual and intralingual errors. These are:

a. language transfer - the effect of mother tongue interference;

b. transfer of training - the effect of teaching procedures;

c. strategies of second language learning - the effect of the learner's approaches to the material to be learned;

d. strategies of second language communication - the effect of the learner's approaches to communicate with a native speaker of the target language; and

e. overgeneralization of the target language linguistic material - the effect of the learner's overextension of a rule or semantic feature.

Richard schema (1985) classifies intralingual errors as errors due to:

a. overgeneralization;

b. ignorance of rule restriction;

c. incomplete application of rules; and

d. false concept hypothesizing .

"Overgeneralization covers instances where learners create a deviant structure on the basis of their experience of other structures in the target language.... It may be the result of the learners reducing their linguistic burden" (Richards 1985:48). Duskova (1969:20-21) notes that "since (in English) all grammatical persons take the same zero verbal ending except the third person singular in the present tense ... omissions of the `-s' in the third person singular may be accounted for by the heavy pressure of all other endingless forms. The endingless form is generalized for all persons, just as the form `was' is generalized for all persons and both numbers in the past tense.... Errors in the opposite direction like `there does not exists any exact rules' may be explained either as being due to hypercorrection or as being due to generalization of the third person singular ending for the third person plural."

Overgeneralization refers to an attempt made by a learner to reduce redundancy, especially for items which are contrasted in the target language grammar but are not contrasted in the learner's native language. For example, the "-ed" marker "often carries no meaning to the learner as pastness can be expressed lexically such as "Yesterday I go to the university and I meet my professor" (Richards 1985:48).

Ignorance of rule restriction means that rules are applied to contexts where they do not apply. The use of analogy or the rote learning of rules may cause learners to make errors, for example, the learner forms the past tense forms of "put, think and see" as *"putted, thinked and seed". In the same way, past participles are produced with the wrong addition of the "-en" resulting in the use of *"baken, tooken" and other idiosyncrasies.

Incomplete application of rules refers to "the occurrence of structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable sentences" (Richards 1985:50). It may be possible for communication to take place without the need for learners to master more than elementary rules.

False concepts hypothesized refers to "a class of developmental errors that derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. These sometimes result from poor gradation of teaching items. The form `was' , for example, may be interpreted as a marker of the past tense, `one day it was happened' and `is' may be understood to be the corresponding marker of the present tense; `he is speaks French'" (Richards 1985:51).

2.2.3 A combination of tense category and nature of errors taxonomies

The researcher used a combination of tense category and nature of errors taxonomies to describe the written verb-form errors identified. The tense

categories investigated were past, present and future tenses. Based on Dulay and Burt's scheme (1982), the errors were categorized under:

a) omission;

b) addition;

c) misformation; and

d) ordering.

(a) Errors of omission

Compulsory elements are omitted. Omissions occur mainly in tense markers or number markers such as the omissions of the grammatical morphemes. Examples of such omissions are the omissions of the" - ed" marker in the simple past tense verbs and the "- s" marker in the verbs after the third person singular nouns/pronouns. The modal verbs that come after the main verbs in the simple future tense (such as "shall" or "will") may be omitted.

The students may omit the compulsory "be" verb in a sentence,for example, *"The students come from places that ∧ far away." The "ing" form may be omitted from a word that occupies the place of a gerund such as in, *"When it comes to go∧home for a holiday, we have to spend a lot of money on transport."

(b) Errors of addition

Unnecessary elements may be present. These occur when redundant tense markers are used. Students may put the "-s" marker on verbs after the plural pronouns/nouns in the simple present tense, for example,

*"We <u>lives</u> in a hostel."

*"The students <u>likes</u> to read story books."

Double marking refers to the marking of two items for the same feature such as in tense. The examples are :

*"My neighbour doesn't likes cats."

*"The thief didn't ran away when I shouted."

The past tense "-ed" marker may be redundantly added in cases where it is incorrect to do so. Examples of such errors are:

*"He putted his things in the hostel yesterday."

*"She cutted the fruits last night."

The main verbs which come after the modal verbs are in their base forms. However, students tend to place the "-s" or "-ed" markers after the main verbs which come after the modal verbs, for example,

*"The noise will disturbs the neighbors."

*"My friends and I can discussed our problems."

*"He promised me that he would helped me."

Students may redundantly put the "be" verbs before the main verbs, for example,

*"She is works in my school"

*"The students are go to the library every day".

*"He was knew that he had a bad dream."

*"The thieves were told Ahmad to put up his hands."

An infinitive is required after the word "to" but students may put a redundant "ing" form after the verb, for example,

*"They invite me to playing badminton."

(c) Errors of misformation

The wrong forms of the verbs are chosen in place of the right ones. These commonly occur in cases of subject-verb agreement when the wrong verb-forms are selected. Examples of such errors are:

*"There is also disadvantages of living in a hostel."

*"My neighbour are kind."

*"The men was here last night."

*"My neighbour were invited to the dinner."

*"They has a pet."

*"She have five children."

*"The students does not like to eat in the hostel."

*"My mother do not like to eat fish."

The past tense form of verbs may be wrongly used to express present states or conditions, for example,

*"Razak was the eldest child in the family"

*"My neighbours were often very helpful"

*"I had five sisters."

*"We could learn about other people's culture by reading,"

Alternatively, the students may use the present tense forms to refer to past actions. As a result, errors are made such as,

*"He shifts next door yesterday."

*"My neighbours are absent from the meeting last night."

*"She has a bad cold last week."

*"My neighbour does not come to my house yesterday because she is sick."

*"He asked her if she will like to dance with him."

(d) Errors of ordering

The correct elements are wrongly sequenced. Students tend to encounter a lot of difficulties with phrasal verbs. They produce sentences such as:

*"I phone up him" instead of "I phone him up."

*"I pick up her" instead of "I pick her up."

*"Switch off this" instead of "Switch this off."

The students are often confused when they use reported questions or indirect speech. They produce sentences such as:

*"They asked me where was the girl."

*"I show her where is the cinema."

*"They will tell me what is the matter."

*"He asks you when will you go home."

Students tend to follow the same word order as used in direct speech or question form when they are reporting.