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## Importance of Error Analysis in Second Language Acquisition

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### ABSTRACT

Error analysis is one of the major topics in the field of second language acquisition research. Errors are an integral part of language learning. It indeed identifies the various causes of errors and summarizes the different forms of error. The learner of English as a second language is unaware of the existence of the particular system or rule in English language. Besides, the L1 transfer will be analyzed briefly as the main element of error in accordance with some examples of student's errors. The learner of L2 (English as a Second language) is unaware of the existence of the particular system or rule in English language. The learner's error have long been interested for second and foreign language researchers. There are two major approaches to the study of learner's errors, namely contrastive analysis and error analysis. Error analysis cannot be studied properly without touching upon the notion of contrastive analysis. Contrastive analysis and error analysis have been commonly recognized as branches of Applied Linguistic Science. This paper examines in detail the three most influential error theories: Contrastive Analysis, Error analysis and Inter language theory. Inter language can be seen as a restructuring or a recreating continuum and therefore: evaluates their role in second language acquisition.

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### Introduction

In the process of learning a second language, it is very natural for students to make error while learning L2 from time to time. Many factors may be existed, however, the most important reason may be the lacking of language competence or the deep influence from the L1. Basically, making errors has a positive effect on student's learning process since it is good opportunity for them to find out their own problems and it will teach them knowledge to improve their language accuracy. Error analysis is also a great way for teachers to have a deeper understanding of the error genres of students and identify how to make error corrections in the classroom properly. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to find out those errors in the class, analyze the reasons of making errors and give priority to how to reduce the possibility of making errors.

In this paper researcher divided into five major parts :

**Part one** - is a brief introduction of the whole paper;

**Part two** - presents the theoretical framework, which are second language acquisition, error analysis and L1 transfer.

**Part three** – aims to demonstrate how second language acquisition and error analysis exert on each other, and some examples that occur in speaking class will be mentioned as well ;

**Part four** – elaborates on some teaching implications based on the error analysis, and how the teacher should employ error corrections properly, and the last part emphasizes the significance of error analysis in second language acquisition.

## 2. **The Basics** are - Second Language Acquisition, Error Analysis and L1 Transfer.

### 2.1 **Second Language Acquisition**

First we understand what is second language ? Second language is a language other than our mother tongue (First language L1) that we learn from the surroundings or school. Second language Acquisition (SLA) is also called the target language (TL), which means the destination that we are bound to arrive at. It is said that SLA involves learning L2 informally in a social context, learning L2 formally in classrooms, or mixing these setting and circumstances together (Saville – Trojke, 2005)

Thus, knowing about SLA is also a way to understand different learners' acquisition of a second language in diverse environments. In additions, SLA consists of a broad range of variable that may affect the learner's language proficiency.

### 2.2 **Error Analysis**

Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. (Pit Corder – his article entitled “The significance of Learner Errors” 1967). It is quite common for humans to make mistakes in the learning process (Brocom 1994, p, 204). In order to analyze the different reasons that may affect Second language acquisition, it is necessary to distinguished errors from mistakes.

According to Brown (1994), a mistake refers to a learner committed randomly, which means the learner failed to use the language structure properly while she or he knows the correct form (p. 205). Sometimes, distinctions between error and mistake may be not obvious enough as their expressions are too short and not typical enough, while the differences can be found when learners convey adequate information.

### 2.3 L1 Transfer

According to Karim and Nassaji (2013), the transferability of L1 has been regarded as the effect of mother tongue habits. On L2 learning (p.118). L1 transfer is a part of the process of SLA that cannot be ignored. There are two genres of first language transfer, namely positive and negative transfer. As Saville – Troike (2005) stated, positive transfer refers to the proper use of L1 structure or rule in L2 utterance, while negative transfer refers to the inappropriate use of L1 in L2, which can be seen as a equally as an error (p.19). Under these circumstances, whether L1 transfer has a positive impact on target language acquisition has become a research hotspot. Different researchers hold different views toward this issue.

Some researchers considered them as the interference of learning L2. For example, Fries (1945) stated that L1 has an adverse effect on learning a second language (p.23). however, others regard them as part of cognitive process. In fact, the emergence of L1 transfer is bound to bring both positive and negative transfer at the same time. Therefore, it is necessary to fully understood the negative transfer and try our best to turn it into positive transfer.

### 3. Significance of Error Analysis in Second languages Acquisition.

In recent years, studies of second language acquisition have tended to focus on learners errors since they allow for prediction of the difficulties involved in acquiring a second language. In this way, teachers can be made aware of the difficult areas to be encountered by their students and devote special care and emphasis to them. Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made on the target language and the target itself. Error analysis, emphasizes the significance of learner's errors in second language. It is important to note here that interferences from the learner's mother tongue is not only reason for committing errors in his target language, As Richards (1971) classified errors observed in the acquisition of English as a second language as follows:

- (a) Ignorance of rule restriction occurring as a result of failure to observe the restrictions or existing structures'
- (b) Overgeneralization covering instances where the learners create a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structure of the target language.
- (c) Incomplete application of rules, arising when the learners fail to fully develop a certain structure required to produce acceptable sentences;
- (d) False concepts hypothesized deriving from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language.

Analysis of Second Language Learner's errors can help identify learner's linguistic difficulties and needs at a particular stage of language learning. In general, error analysis has several implications for the handling of learner's errors in the classroom as follows :-

1. Devising remedial measures.
2. Preparing a sequence of target language items in class rooms and textbooks with the difficult items coming after the easier ones.
3. Making suggestions about the nature or strategies of second language learning employed by both first and second language learners.

#### **4. Reflection**

For most learners in the speaking class, they are unable to use L2 to think because they rely heavily on their L1. They tend to use L1 to think and then translate it into L2. By this way, their L1 may bring the adverse effect on their L2 expressions. Sometimes, some students are affected by their peers' errors. Due to the lack of language competence, they take their peers' expression for correct. Besides sometimes teacher needs to do some presentations in the speaking class in order to show students how to answer questions structurally. However, in the process of listening, students tend to pay more attention to words or collocations that they are not familiar with, instead of putting emphasis on the usage of words or collocations in the context.

In accordance with the cause of errors, it is crucial for teachers to get to know how to make error corrections properly in the speaking class. No matter how proficiency they speak, no one will be ungrateful for the teacher taking time to point out their errors. Therefore, the way of correcting errors is of great importance. For example, instead of pointing out the error directly, teacher can ask for other learners' opinions about this error, and have them vote for it.

On the other hand, some study techniques should also be imparted to students. For instance, the setting of acquiring a second language are not limited in the classroom. They can also create language environment in the real world via listening English news, watching English documentaries, meeting foreign friends or joining in some English corners etc. In the end, both teacher and student should be aware that acquiring a second language in a native like level is a long term task. Besides, teacher should tolerate the student's errors and have enough patience on them. The successful L2 Learning hinges on integrated effort of both teacher and students.

#### **Conclusion**

In short, from what has been discussed above can be a positive learning experience in order to help the learners improve their language and use English flawlessly. All of the theories and important factors plays important role in second language acquisition. Error analysis plays a significant role in the second language acquisition having a good grasp of different genres of learners' error and being fully aware of how to make error corrections are of great importance during the instructing process. This paper also presents the opinion that being conscious of the

correlation of error analysis and SLA is essential for all teachers. Furthermore, error analysis will also make teachers focus more on their teaching methods, so as to make adjustments to meet the needs of different students.

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