CHAPTER - 2

THEORY OF ERROR ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

2.0 INTRODUCTION:

The study of language learning remains incomplete without an in-depth analysis of the errors that creep into its usage both, from the theoretical point of view and from the standpoint of the methodology employed in analyzing them. The present section of this dissertation/thesis deals precisely with this aspect of language learning.

Language learning was initially perceived as mastery over its interrelated subsystems through extensive practice. Skinner (1957) declared that language is learned through a process of 'habit formation' and 'verbal behaviour'. This is usually referred to as the Behaviouristic theory. However, Noam Chomsky (1960) influences brought about a change of attitude in this sphere. Language came to be viewed as not merely 'verbal behaviour' but also as a complex system of internalized rules underlying this behaviour. It is believed that it is this system of internalized rules that empowers a person to create innumerable original sentences. According to Chomskyian theory children are born with an innate capacity for acquiring language. This inherent ability helps them in a creative-construction of language.

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF TRANSFER AND INTERFERENCE:

The concept of 'interference' was first given by Weinrick (1953) and Labov (1966) who claimed that the second language learner already possesses a set of habits, i.e. his mother tongue. Some of these earlier habits will help him to learn his new language rules and structure while the others will create problems. Language ‘transfer’ refers the learner trying to apply rules and forms of the first language to the second language. Even the psychologists Skinner (1957), Watson (1924), Pavlov (1936), and Thorndike (1936) believe that a child’s present learning is influenced by his past learning. They have
found that knowledge of the learner’s mother tongue would ease the
teaching of the second language. If the structure of both the languages is
similar, then first language habits are helpful and useful to acquire second
language habits. Then, we have ‘positive transfer’ or ‘facilitation’. But, if
mother tongue and target language are structurally different, we get
‘negative transfer’ or ‘interference’. Robert Lado summed up the learner’s
problem in a well known formulation. ‘Those elements that are similar to his
native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different
will be difficult’ (Littlewood, 1984: 17) ‘Negative transfer’ occurs when the
learner transfers items and structures that are not the same in both languages.
It has been noticed that the learner sometimes draws upon the stylistic
qualities of his mother tongue quite unintentionally, and then, frames
sentences in the target language in a similar manner resulting in errors if the
syntax of the second language is different. Setjit Kaur (1993: 54) gives
example of lexical and grammatical transfer, while comparing Punjabi and
English.

(a) He will not do marriage with her.
(b) Midas thought he was taking dreams.

The verbs ‘take’ and ‘do’ have been identified with Punjabi words
‘leina’ and ‘karna’. Due to inference from native language ‘take’ is used with
auxiliary ‘to be’. Lexical repetition especially of quality and degree words is a
feature of Punjabi which is transferred to English, for example:
(c) She brought little-little gifts for everyone.
(d) Some sometimes we go there.

Difference between the two languages leads to interference which is
the cause of learning difficulties and errors. As Lee (1968:180) puts it that “the
prime cause, or even the sole cause, of difficulty and errors in foreign
language learning is interference coming from the learner's native language.”
Knowledge of language demand mastery over vocabulary as well as grammar. The learner has already mastered the rules of grammar of one language and while learning the second language, the knowledge of his mother tongue interferes. Hence, he is bound to make errors.

2.2. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS:

While learning a second language students commit errors. Errors are indispensable to learners since the making of errors is an effective meaningful means of improving and accurate learning. These are two ways to identify or analyse the errors—Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis.

Contrastive Analysis, as the term itself indicates means the comparison between systems of the first and second language. Contrastive analysis was done to compare the languages so that it could facilitate language learning and teaching. It was realized that since "an individual tends to transfer the features of his native language to the second language, a comparative study will be useful for the purpose of identifying the likeness and difference between the languages and this enables the linguist to predict areas of difficulty for second language learner" (Stern, 1987: 159).

Contrastive analysis is based on ‘habit formation’. It reflects the essential truth of the behaviourist view that "We learn what we do" (Wilkins, 1974: 197). According to this theory, ‘habit’ plays an important role in acquisition of the first language as the learner is considered to have mastered his mother tongue through the imitation of adult utterances. Applied linguistics used the contrastive analysis distinction between the learner’s first and second language to predict errors. The importance of contrastive analysis as stated initially by Lado and then reiterated by others is as follows ‘The errors and difficulties that occur in our learning and use of a foreign language are caused by the interference of our mother tongue. Whenever the structure of the second language differs from that of the mother tongue, we can expect both, difficulty in learning and errors in performance (Wilkins, 1972: 198).
From the behaviourists’ perspective, the learner uses his preview mother tongue experiences as a means of organizing the second language data. So, if the structure of both the languages is similar, the learning will be easier. But, when the system of both the languages is different it creates problems. Contrastive analysis is helpful in locating those problematic areas and efforts could be made to find solutions to them. On the whole, contractive analysis has a prognostic value i.e. to predict the errors, difficulties and problems faced by learners, while learning a second language. These views are also put forward by Lado who says that ‘individuals tend to transfer the forms and meaning and the distribution of forms and meaning of their native language and culture– both productively when attempting to speak the language and act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by native (Wilkin, 1972: 198). Contrastive analysis is the method of analyzing the structure of any two languages with a view to estimate the differential aspect of their system, irrespective of their genetic affinity or level of development.

The comparative study between the target language and mother tongue is done to facilitate language learning and teaching at the phonological, vocabulary and grammatical level.

2.2.1 PHONOLOGY:

While comparing the sound systems of both the language we consistent from the smallest elements of language structure which is ‘phoneme’ the only meaningful sound in itself. There is no /p-h/, /b-h/, /t-th/ distinction in English as is the case in Punjabi.
Contrastive analysis of both sound systems shows that there is no Punjabi sound that precisely matches any English one. The faulty pronunciation of English sounds occurs because of the learner’s unconscious adherence to the sound system of his own mother tongue. The learner involuntarily extends his native sound system to the target language. On studying the sound systems of both languages, it becomes obvious that some sounds are close, some are fair approximations and some do not match at all. For example, there is no equivalent to Punjabi sounds like \( t, d, \, th, \, l, \, r \), in the English language. On the other hand, English sounds like \( p, k \) are close to Punjabi sounds, \( ph, kh \). Similarly, the Punjabi vowels \( i, \, \partial, \, w \), are close to English vowels, \( i, \, \partial, \, \nu \). So, the Punjabi speaker going to English will find it easy to pronounce certain English words like kit, bat, pull. On the contrary,
there are some vowels that are diphthongized as in the word ‘go’. These will be difficult for him to learn.

2.2.2 VOCABULARY:

As far as vocabulary is concerned, it becomes necessary to take into account for the lexical and contextual meaning. This becomes clear from the example given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Punjabi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Tail</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Tail of the organize</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Tail end of the story</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Tail piece</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This shows that a minimum of four meanings of ‘tail’ have to be learnt by a Punjabi learner learning English as second language. In the same way, English words like perilous, dangerous, risky, hazardous have one word ‘khatra’ in Punjabi language. In the above example, extensions of meaning, collocation a list meaning, and contextual meaning, all have been taken into consideration. Contrastive analysis is helpful in predicting the problematic areas. Synonyms always create difficulty and have to be learnt. Certain English words like ice/snow etc are confusing to a Punjabi learner because in Punjabi the same word ‘bura’ is used to denote the two. The native speaker knows the difference but the Punjabi learner has to learn it.

2.2.3 GRAMMER:

Grammatical systems of both the languages can be compared. For example, sentence structure is svo in English and sov in Punjabi

*English* – He writes a letter.

\[ s \quad v \quad o \]

*Punjabi* – Usne chithi likhi

\[ s \quad o \quad v \]
These different aspects of languages can be explained by describing the word-order of both the languages.

A study of third person singular in the two languages brings up certain interesting facts for instance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Punjabi</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tu</td>
<td>she</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu</td>
<td>he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tusi</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second person singular and second person plural i.e. tu/tusi merge in ‘you’ in English. The English learner will find it difficult to learn this system of Punjabi but a Punjabi speaker will find it easy to learn the second person plural in English as second language.

In the initial stage of learning, second language differentiation is more difficult than generalization.

It is believed that language learning is not an overnight process. It cannot take place through the parrot like repetition of words and structures. It requires a lot of active strategies. That is why the behaviorist theory began to be challenged. A study of the learner errors shows that language is not just a habit forming process but also a development process that requires a creative functioning of the mind.

There is no denying the fact, that interference from the mother tongue
is the main source of difficulty in learning a second language. Contrastive analysis is a useful tool in predicting the interference errors especially the pronunciation errors. But, there is evidence which shows that interlingual interference is not the only cause of errors. There are intra-lingual and development errors that contrastive analysis is unable to deal with. These issues are discussed in section (2.5) under the head “Error Analysis”.

2.3 INTERLINGUAL STUDIES:

Research (Mackey, 1960, Brown, 1973, Krashen, 1982 and Berko, 1958) in the field of language acquisition has proved that there is a universal order of acquisition despite differing socio-cultural backgrounds of the learners. A study carried out by (Dulay & Burt, 1974), shows how children acquire plural, possessive, third person singular etc. The order of acquiring proficiency in first language remains constant in children from all strata of society. The rate of acquisition may vary but the sequence is the same.

It is clear from the various studies in first language that children do not only initiate and reproduce but construct their own rules. The interlingual study tries to prove that the process of learning second language is the same as first language. The team of Dulay (1974) made an attempt to show that structures are acquired uniformly across the world. The team proved that a second language is similar to the learning of the first language. It is a creative process. According to the creative construction hypothesis, the learner of second language also processes the language in a creative way. Littlewood (1984) has formulated the following model in connection with the creative construction theory of language acquisition.

\[
\text{Second language} \rightarrow \text{Natural processing} \rightarrow \text{Temporary representation of the system} \rightarrow \text{utterances}
\]

It is evident that the internal processing mechanism operates on its own and is not directly dependent on the learners’ attempts to produce the language
themselves. The learners’ own utterances are a natural outcome of the system they have internalized. In other words, when the child interacts with the people around him, he constructs his language in a creative manner. Stern has also arrived at a conclusion which is akin to Littlewood. He states: this “innate mechanism operates in a similar way in second language” (1987: 161).

The second language learner too uses active strategies such as ‘transfer’ and ‘generalization’ to construct the rules which underlie the second language.

2.4 THE CONCEPT OF INTERLANGUAGE:

The term ‘interlanguage’ is used to denote the ‘second’ language system that is developed by the learner on the basis of his first language. Hence, an interlanguage can be described as the speakers’ attempt to use two languages— one, his own, and the one learnt, and the errors and non-errors consequent upon it. The concept of interlanguage was coined by Selinder (1972). According to him the language that does not resemble either the mother tongue or the target language is the ‘interlanguage’. As Corder (1978) puts it ‘an interlanguage continuum’ intermediate between the restricting and recreation hypothesis’ (Stern, 1987: 403). It is being referred to as ‘transitional competence’ (Corder, ibid: 1967), idiosyncratic dialect (Corder, 1971) approximative system (Nemser, 1971) and language learning system (Sampson and Richard, 1972). These terms imply the level of competence maintained by the learner while he is learning a second language. The level of errors come from the learner’s output i.e. what he produces from the time he starts learning second language till the time he gains proficiency in it. In interlanguage, what happens is neither transfer of first language nor per the rules of second language but errors independent of both, for example, ‘I will come tomorrow’ instead of ‘I would come tomorrow’. The learner is quite competent with reference to the ‘communicative ability’ while his grammatical competence remains insufficient and defective. The structure of such interlanguage is different from the actual target language system. It may however exhibit resemblance to the target system. This interlanguage could
also contain some elements of source language in some degree or the other (Stern: 1987:33).

2.5 ERROR ANALYSIS:

The field of Error Analysis and interlanguage studies was brought into prominence in the 1970 by S.P. Corder (1971) who wrote, "A learner’s errors, then, provide evidence of the system of the language that he is using (i.e. has learned) at a particular point in the course" (Richard, 1985: 63). Error analysis was an alternative to contrastive analysis- an approach that showed that contrastive analysis was unable to predict a great majority of errors, although the significance of language transfer cannot be denied. Moreover, the problems of age, social factors, personality factors, language aptitude and motivation were totally ignored.

A key finding of Error Analysis has been that interference of the mother tongue is not the only source of errors. Researchers like Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974) have attacked the role of interference and habit formation in second language learning. They, in order to calculate the frequencies of error types, recorded the speech data of Spanish speaking children learning English and came up with some interesting facts. They claimed that three percent of the children’s errors were due to ‘interference’ while eighty five percent were ‘developmental’ errors.

Error Analysis hypothesis is that first language acquisition is similar to second language. It is based on the idea that learning is a creative process. The learner possesses the innate grammar with the help of which he uses certain strategies to learn a language. The learner, unconsciously, formulates an involuntary hypothesis in his mind on the basis of his preliminary study of second language. If that hypothesis happens to be correct, he does not make error and the hypothesis become a rule for the learner and if it causes errors then he rectifies it on the basis of more data, so errors play a positive role in the language learning process.
The errors committed by the other language learner can be grouped under two heads, receptive and expressive. Receptive errors are not noticeable whereas expressive errors are always obvious. Expression can be either spoken or written. Spoken or spontaneous expression does not make for an easy study of error. Written or controlled expression is preferable for the purpose of error analysis.

2.5.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ERRORS:

In contrastive analysis, lessons were prepared in such a way that there was hardly any chance of making a mistake. Errors were considered as sign of failure. But in Error analysis, it was taken as a natural occurrence in learning. The approach towards errors totally changed. They were taken as an essential part of language learning and as an indication of the extent of progress made by the learner and of what was left unlearnt.

Pit Corder (1974) has made an in depth study of errors in the learning of second language. He feels that an analysis of errors is significant because of various reasons. The errors indicate the level of progress made by the learners’, the strategies and procedures adopted by him and also provide an effective means of testing his hypothesis about the native of second language. Error analysis is an indispensable tool for the language instructor as it gives him the opportunity of assessing the teaching technique adopted. It can also suggest possible modification in the syllabi and teaching methodology. Errors provide an indispensable data base in the study of the learner’s language. Error is taken as inevitable in the development of second language learning and as valuable aspect of learning. Dulay and Burt (1974) are of the view that "you cannot learn without goofing" (Stern, 1987: 354). Errors should not be taken as an ailment that needs to be eradicated. On the whole, it is an important tool to diagnose and assess the progress made by the learner.

Before an analysis of errors, it is important to identify and seek out errors which are due to learner’s output and which are not. Errors can be
classified as follows:-

(a) **Performance Errors:** Performance errors can be traced to performance. Even in our mother tongue such performance errors are visible. We commit such errors due to some slip of the tongue or lack of attention or mere fatigue. ‘Lapses’ can be defined as those deviations from the norm which are made unintentionally and as a result the intended meaning gets distorted to some extent, but such instances are neither frequent nor common.

(b) **Unsystematic Errors:** Unsystematic errors are those mistakes which are not based on any system i.e. they do not occur from any underlying system but from superficial influences. Such errors do not reflect the learner’s developing system. In other words, mistakes are such expressions which are not correct from the point of view of grammar. They also fail to communicate the intended meaning. However, they do not occur frequently or consistently. So, mistakes are those deviations from the norm that occur at random. In the case of mistakes the learner recognizes it himself and corrects it.

(c) **Systematic Errors:** Systematic errors are those errors that occur due to a set pattern in the mind of the learner. Systematic errors are those expressions that are incorrect grammatically and distort the meaning. The occurrence of error is consistent, frequent and systematic. In language theory mistakes are tolerable but errors are unacceptable.
The errors committed by the learner of the second language so that he has stored knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar rules of his native language, these ‘interference errors’ are identified by contrastive analysis. Richard (1972) has distinguished errors as ‘intralingual error’ and ‘development error’. These errors do not occur due to any interference of the learner’s native-tongue but are evidence of a ‘system’ of the target language which the learner forms in his mind in the process of learning. Distinction of errors has been also made by Pit Corder (1974) in the following manner.

(a) **The Presystematic Stage**: The learner commits error at random because he is unaware of the system which operates in second language.

(b) **The Systematic Stage**: A learner commits errors on a regular basis because he is following a wrong rule of the target language. He is able to give an account of the rules he has followed.

(c) **The Post Systematic Stage**: Post systematic is the stage where the learner is able to speak correctly occasionally. Sometimes he makes errors and can correct himself if asked to do so.

2.5.2 ERROR TYPES:

Errors can be classified as follows:

(1) **Interlingual Errors**: Errors occur as results of confusion between two languages i.e. transfer of rules from mother tongue to the second language for example ‘My head is circling’ or ‘My father has two-two cars’. Lexical repetition is a feature of Punjabi which is transferred to English. Error like ‘they have hungry’ is another example of interference from mother tongue.

(2) **Intralingual and Developmental Errors**: Developmental errors imply that the learner is processing the second language in his own way and these errors are similar to those that occur in mother tongue also. For instance, ‘they hungry’ instead of ‘they are hungry’. Intralingual errors
occur within the same language for example ‘I’ and ‘he’ went to the library instead of ‘He’ and ‘I’. Intralingual or developmental errors can be further categorized as:

(a) **Overgeneralization:** In the case of transfer, the learner hypothesizes from his previous mother tongue experiences, while in the case of overgeneralization he uses his previous knowledge of second language system. For instance, English has a rule for forming plurals. A noun can be made plural by adding ‘s’. For example the learner often writes ‘mouses, oxes, mans, instead of ‘mice, oxen, men’ and in past tense, the learner has learnt to use ‘ed’ words like ‘goed, comed, writted, pulled’ are due to overgeneralization. The learner is not aware of the situation in the second language.

(b) **Simplification:** It means redundancy reduction. In other words, the learner commits errors by omitting grammatical necessities. For example, ‘He makes noise’, ‘a’ article is missing or ‘Daddy want chair’ instead of ‘wants’. The learner, in order to reduce the pressure from his mind, simplifies the sentences. For example, ‘Yesterday I go to the cinema and see a movie’, ‘ed’ past maker carries no meaning since the tense is conveyed lexically by the word ‘yesterday’. Some times, it is noticed that all utterances are not difficult to understand as their meaning is understood. For example, ‘He fat man’. The learner has used the content morphemes but grammatical morphemes are deleted. The reason may be that they are difficult to learn in the second language. No doubt, the context in which they occur, supplies the missing element. But, sometimes, redundancy creates comprehensive problem for example ‘Mummy socks’. But, one thing is obvious that it depicts the creative aspect of the learner. He tries to construct new utterances for expressing new meanings.

(c) **Fossilized Errors:** Fossilized errors can be problematic in language-
learning because these errors become ingrained like bad habits and they reappear despite remediation and correction. Fossilized errors become a permanent feature of the learner’s language and are different from transitional errors which eventually disappear with the passage of time. Obvious examples are pronunciation errors as in the case of Punjabi ‘phul’ ‘tation’ ‘ju’ in place of ‘fool’, ‘station’, ‘you’. It is believed that when the speaker’s communicative or functional needs are satisfied despite fossilization, then he feels that the errors are not obstacles. In India, South Indians are a good example of it.

(d) Unique Errors: Unique errors occur when the learner is in the ‘intermediate stage of language acquisition’. Such errors are neither transferring of first language nor because of limited comprehension of second language but an independent phenomenon, for example ‘Them hungry’.

2.5.3 STRATEGIES:

In order to acquire the second language system, the learner uses various strategies. The strategies involved show how he processes the data of the language and errs in the process.

(a) Language Transfer: Transfer of rules and structure from the mother tongue to second language is one of the active strategies for many learners in sensing the language data. Earlier, instances transfer was considered as 'errors' caused by non-learning, but recently it is seen as a process of creative construction'- transfer of rules from mother tongue may be one of the learner's active strategies for making sense of the L2 data (Littlewood, 1984: 21). Most researchers agree that second language learner already possesses a ‘set of habits’ of his first language and most of the errors are due to transfer from native language. Using his previous knowledge as a tool of organizing the second language data is taken as part of his creative process. A rather similar proposal is
made by Krashen (1982) when he suggests that ‘learners can use the L₁ as a resource for adhoc translation to overcome their limitation’ (Ellis, 1985: 37). As Pit Corder expresses it, the language provides a learner with a ‘rather rich and specific set of hypotheses which the learner can use... The second language learner is likely to feel that everything he learns is different from his mother tongue, whereas in fact there are many ways in which his mother tongue knowledge can be directly transferred' (As cited in Littlewood, 1984: 26). Sentences like ‘Maharani- eater of your parents’ is totally translated from mother tongue. ‘Respected Doctor Shahib’, 'May God bless you with a son’ are cultural bound sentences. The following sentences are good examples of transfer from mother tongue.

- ‘My prof. will eat me up’,
- ‘I am having a new car’,
- ‘I will come by walk’,
- ‘We had a party’, we enjoyed very much’,
- ‘Who and who came to party’

(b) **Transfer of Training:** Transfer of training is when the interlanguage rules in the IL can be traced to the training procedures and techniques. The manner in which a language is taught will ultimately go a long way to determine the manner in which he ultimately speaks it. In the educational institutions of the region the students get into the habit of using present continuous instead of present simple. Many teachers overemphasize the present continuous tense in the class. The result is the overuse of the present continuous tense, at the cost of the simple present. For instance, occasionally, the student says, ‘I am studying in Govt. College’ instead of ‘I study in Govt. College’. A few teachers are themselves accustomed to using these ways, for example, ‘I am teaching in a college’ instead of ‘I teach in a college’. Poorgradation of
teaching items is also responsible for errors. For instance, when ‘too’ and ‘very’, two different issues, are taught together, it leads to confusion between the two and errors result. Classroom teaching should make sure that the practical grammar exercises are close to the format of spoken English. At present, change of ‘voice’ is taught often with examples like the following:

John had a little lamb.
Sam slept on the bed.

The learner will obviously end up with

A little lamb was had by John.
The bed was slept on by Sam.

Sentences like the above are not usually used in spoken English.

(c) **Overgeneralization:** Overgeneralization of target language rules means, that the learner, while internalizing a rule of second language, generalizes it beyond its limits. It is a strategy where the learner ‘creates deviating structures on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language. Richard (1985: 48) gives the following examples in this regard:

He can sings.
It is occurs.
We are hop.

He further says that sometimes teaching techniques of certain types, along with pattern drills and transformation exercises get mingled leading to overgeneralization. His example is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He walks quickly.</td>
<td>Change to continuous.</td>
<td>He is walks quickly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) **Ignorance of Rule Restriction:** This refers to the ‘application of rules
of context where they do not apply. For example ‘The man who I saw him’ and ‘I made him to do it’ violates the restriction on subjects in sentence structure with ‘who’ and ignores restrictions on the distribution ‘make’. Richard (1985) states that rote learning and analogy are responsible for the following sentences:

‘He said to me’ becomes ‘He asked to me’.

(e) **The Learner’s False Concepts Hypothesized:** Faulty rule-learning at various levels and stages and faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language are the root cause of this class of development errors. For example, ‘was’ is understood by the learner as past maker and ‘is’ is present maker which results in sentences like:

One day it was happened.

He is speaks French.

The above discussion clarifies the ‘error situation’ in the learning of second language from the point of view of grammatical rules.

### 2.5.4 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:

This type of errors can be traced to the stress of communication. When the learner is under pressure to communicate, he tends to simplify the syntax, vocabulary and phonology. As a result, errors creep in because the rules of language are not taken into consideration. The speaker of second language is involved in conversation but does not have full confidence to carry out the conversation as he lacks appropriate vocabulary and finds it difficult to express himself. He tries out various ways of putting his meaning across and tries to cope up with the situation. In fact, he uses diverse means to compensate for the weakness that lies in his linguistic repertoire. According to Littlewood (1984) he uses the following strategies:

(a) **Paraphrasing:** When he is unable to recall a suitable word. For example, ‘bucket’ is spoken of as ‘the thing that you carry water in’.
(b) **Approximation:** The learner tries to use a word which expresses a meaning as close as possible to the relevant word. For instance ‘some bird’ instead of ‘sparrow’.

(c) **Hybridetion:** Sometimes to fill in the gap, the obvious strategy is to create new words by literally translating the element in a native language like the words 'lathicharge', 'policewalla', 'goondaism', 'respected doctor sahib', 'court kachari', etc.

(d) **Code mixing:** It means incorporating a word from native language into the target language. For instance:

   Spice hai, to life hai.

   In a bilingual society, the classroom teaching-learning process often makes use of it.

(e) **Use of non-linguistic resources:** Sometimes a speaker conveys the meaning through gestures and expressions. The other easier way is to avoid any kind discussion if one does not have the necessary vocabulary at his disposal.

### 2.5.5 COMMUNICATIVE ERRORS:

‘Error study’ is done in terms of communicative effect. It is believed that these strategies give birth to ‘fossilized error’ because the focus is on ‘communicative competence’ rather than ‘grammatical competence’. The speaker’s whole energy is channelized in one direction only i.e. communication. Two types of errors affect communication—Global and local errors. Global errors are generally more problematic than local errors. A global error is one in which the whole sentence is messed up. The word order is wrong. Even the message may not come across and there are always chances of a break down in communication. In case of local errors, they are fewer distractions than global errors. For instance, ‘He is sitting on chair’. The article is missing here but meaning comes out clear.

Recently, there has been a shift from formal learning to functional
learning. In communicative approaches ‘errors’ are tolerable to some extent but traditionally errors were regarded negatively. The use of these strategies means that learner does not have mastery over the second language. In free conversation focus is on meaning rather than form. Fluency is aimed at and is considered more important than accuracy.

2.6 THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE:

The term ‘communicative competence’ first was used by Hymes in contrast to Chomsky’s concept of linguistic competence. In the words of Hymes “It is a competence, when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about, with whom, when, where, in what manner” (As quoted in Stern, 1987: 229). It means the competence to use grammar in a real life communicative situation after learning it. He stressed that to acquire linguistic competence alone is not sufficient, but to use language in given social context is equally important. It has been defined by Yule (2006: 169) as the general ability to use language accurately, appropriately and flexibly. The situation in which language has to be used became relevant in language teaching i.e. the learner should not only acquire the knowledge of language but should also know how to use that knowledge of language in a given context. Applying Hymes concept of ‘communicative competence’ to Punjabi teaching it becomes clear that it is not sufficient to teach the first, second, or third person pronoun what is required is the knowledge to use it as well. The learner should have the knowledge also to use the pronoun ‘ju’ and ‘tusi’ in a given context. There are four dimensions of communicative competence- grammatical, socio-linguistic, discourse and strategic competence. ‘Grammatical competence’ refers to the knowledge of rules and structures of grammar, and the accurate use of words and structures. ‘Social linguistics’ implies using the language meaningfully in the social context, for instance ‘May I have some milk’ or ‘Give me some milk’. ‘Discourse competence’ means having the knowledge of how to carry out the various functions of language and ‘Competence strategies’ denotes the adoption of the various strategies to cope up with the
situation when there is a chance of failure in communication. This approach is characterized by the fact that teaching material should be based on the concept of ‘assessing and replying for things in different social contexts.

2.7 THE ROLE OF THE LINGUISTICS ENVIRONMENT:

Errors can also be traced to other factors as well. External conditions influence the rate of learning if they do not affect the learning process itself. If a learner with a rural background gets a favourable environment, he excels in his studies. There is no doubt that ‘LAD’ i.e. language acquisition device, or ‘the innate capacity’ is essential to acquire a language but if a good and comfortable learning environment is provided then this capacity will show better results. It is often seen that when two learners are placed in identical conditions, they show different levels of achievement. Research shows that there are certain factors responsible for causing errors in the course of learning second language and these may be summarized as follow:

2.7.1 MOTIVATION:

There are various factors that can be added in a profile of a successful second language learner. Obviously, the motivation to learn is most important. Motivation means ‘desire to achieve or to do something in life’. If his desire is not immediate or for practical purpose, it will be reflected in his level of motivation and the amount of hard work that he puts in to fulfill his dream of acquiring proficiency in a second language. A well motivated learner will try his best to master the language in the best possible way in contrast to those who are less interested in language learning. Motivation plays an important role in second language learning rather than in first language because as far as second language is concerned, there is no pressure on the speaker as the daily communicative requirements are fulfilled through the use of first language. When no such pressure or motivation exists, achievement level is low. A language learning situation is one that provides
support, encouragement and motivation to the learners to use whatever second language skills they have acquired. Two types of motivation have been suggested for second language acquisition: ‘integrative and instrumental’. The distinction is essentially based on what functions the second language learner envisions for the acquired language. If the learner’s motivation is integrative then the desire is ‘to identify with the members of the other linguistic cultural group.’ There is also a willingness to take on all the subtle aspects of their language or even their style of speech. On the other hand, the instrumental approach has been defined as basically ‘utilitarian’, a language is acquired as a ‘linguistic tool’, not as an instrument for ‘cultural integration’ (Kachru, 1983: 151). In the case of instrumental motivation, the learner masters the language quickly. The learner with instrumental motivation learns the language to pass an examination, to get a job, for communication purposes, for higher studies, or simply because it is a part of the college curriculum. In contrast, ‘integrative motivation’ has a social purpose. A learner with integrative motivation has a soft corner for second language culture; he has a desire to live in a foreign country, curiosity to know about the values and tradition of the people who profess that language or to become an accepted member of that community.

### 2.7.2 ATTITUDES:

The attitude of the learner towards the English language is also an important factor. A language is not simply a means of communication, but a medium of expression as well. Thus learning second language does not simply mean acquiring a new set of symbols of communication. Littlewood (1988: 95) says that “to adopt new speech patterns, we are to some extent giving up markers of our identity in order to adopt those of another cultural group.” In some respect too, we are accepting another culture’s ways of perceiving the world. If we are agreeable to this process, it can enrich us and liberate us. If not, it can be a source of resentment and insecurity. One of the factors influencing how we experience the process is our attitude towards the
foreign culture itself. If this attitude is negative, there may be strong internal barriers against learning, and if learning has to take place because of external compulsion, it may proceed only to the minimum level required by these external demands. This type of situation is faced by the learner of the English language in India. He feels that the study of this language has been imposed on him without due regard to his interest, needs etc. Such learners have an indifferent attitude towards language. Their sole aim is just to pass with the bare minimum of marks. In India, English is a compulsory subject. One has to study it, most students simply read the so-called ‘Guides’ (the help books) and they are unaware of good quality study material. They simply read the Punjabi version of English lessons. This attitude hinders the learning process and chances of improvement are very rare. On the other hand, those who have a positive attitude towards language, and are keen to learn it, show better results. Students' interest, their learning habit, aptitude and attitude also affect the teaching of English. They may differ in respect of personal goals and motivation. Keeping the goals in mind, they put in varying levels of effort into language learning. Some students are good listeners and pick the language quickly. An extrovert student with an outgoing personality performs better in the classroom. He can interact with the teacher better than those who feel shy and are hesitant to ask questions in class.

According to Krashen’s (1981), ‘affective filter hypothesis’ the ‘learner attitude’ consists of a psychological attitude towards learning, for example, if the learner attitude is positive he is inclined to pick up the language easily and quickly i.e. if the learner’s attitude is positive towards learning, then, in spite of a negative aptitude, he will learn faster and quicker than those who have a negative attitude. No doubt, socio-psychological factors have an effect on the ultimate learning of language but they do not change the route and path of learning.

Language is also being turned into a much politicized issue. English is taken as a ‘foreign’ language. Some of the learners have a pre-conceived
notion that Punjabi is a harsh language and English is a difficult language. This kind of a stereotyped idea affects the attitude and interest of the learner. At the same time, everybody has a desire to acquire knowledge of the English language. This love-hate attitude to English has a marked influence on the learning process.

2.7.3 EMOTIONAL CLIMATE:

Littlewood draws our attention to the fact that emotional climate of the learner is an important factor in language learning. Lazanovo (1978) ‘suggestopedia’ and Curran (1972) ‘counselling learning’ all are based on the theory that the learners psychological problems should be taken into consideration (As cited in Rivers, 1988). The learner will commit less errors and his level of learning will rise in an anxiety free environment. If the learner feels uncomfortable, he will not be able to concentrate on his studies. The fear of being insulted and pinpointed occasionally in the class creates an inferiority complex in the learner. He suffers alone and this is likely to affect his output. But these factors are largely overlooked in the Indian situation. There is no doubt that the learner is exposed to the target language in two spheres. One is the classroom and the other is the second language community. If inspired by the teacher, his confidence level increases, and feels motivated to learn it well. The sympathetic attitude of the teacher boosts his moral level. Unfortunately, the typical language classrooms in educational institutions of Punjab are teacher-dominated with little opportunities provided to the learner for interaction. The learner’s state of ignorance and dependence make him feel insecure, shy, helpless and shaky when he is asked to produce unfamiliar sounds in front of an audience. He feels de-motivated with the teachers' comments. Occasionally, the keen and daring learner who, with the desire to learn, approaches the teacher, often has to face harsh comments like ‘you don’t know the basics, ‘you, cannot learn, English’. This closes all doors of interaction. Such comments make students feel embarrassed, in front of the
peer group and snap even a minimal chance of improvement. Students coming from the rural background are already scared of English having been given the false notion that it is a very difficult language to learn. The attitude of teachers who, in order to establish their superiority, frighten the young mind, is questionable. A relaxed and co-operative atmosphere is needed for smooth language learning. Teachers should discard their authoritarian approach towards learners and make them approachable to the students. The classroom learning in India is associated with the old school traditions like ‘teacher driven method’ or ‘lecture-method’. Such methods leave no room for interaction. Teaching is one-sided and students are passively at the receiving end. As sensitive teachers, we should help them realize their dreams. We should avoid humiliating the students in front of their classmates and not make them feel that making a mistake is ‘bad’.

2.7.4 EXPOSURE:

Exposure to the target language is helpful in learning second language. The schooling of the learner matter a lot as it indicates his ‘circle’ and the kind of language he is exposed to. For instance, reputed English medium schools aim at ‘Received pronunciation’ and discourage ‘Code-mixing’. On the other hand, for students coming from rural background or government schools, the level of exposure to the target language is not up to the mark. They do not engage in extra co-curricular activities, do not read the newspaper, do not watch Standard English channels and do not indulge in extra reading. In most of the cases, exposure is limited to the atmosphere prevailing in the class. This limited classroom situation adversely affects their level of achievement. The root cause of the errors, they commit is their faulty schooling. We, as teachers, have noticed that such students stick to ‘Help Books’. They are just not interested in reading the original prescribed texts.

At the undergraduate level, two clear cut streams are discernible one coming from the English medium schools and the other from the schools
where the medium of instruction is not English. Different levels of acquisition and motivation do affect the language teaching process especially in the case of English in the classroom situation. As there is no segregation on the basis of proficiency in English, a strange situation is faced by the teacher. He or she has to cater to very divergent requirements of students coming from backgrounds which are diametrically opposite. Very often the teacher finds himself switching from English to Punjabi and vice versa within a span of forty five minutes.

2.7.5 EFFECTS OF FORMAL INSTRUCTION:

The nature of instruction also affects the course of learning. Sometimes the fault lies on the part of the teachers also. They fail to understand the problem faced by the learner. Some of them are so used to the passive lecture method; they are not prepared for any kind of change in curriculum and methodology. Their old traditional way of teaching sometimes makes the classroom boring and monotonous. Teachers should adopt such methods and techniques that encourage the learner to interact, discuss and express his views. A good example of activities centered programme is Prabu's task based model (1987). That will make teaching not only interesting but entertaining also. But, in the institutions of Punjab a passive non-practical method is considered normal and memorization is the most favourable learning style. Apart from this, it is not possible in colleges, as the pressure to finish the syllabi on time, an inordinately large number of students (100-110), with no aids and unpleasant classroom surroundings prevent interaction and opportunities to explain or correct the errors of the students.

2.7.6 AGE:

A lot of research has been carried out in this respect. The common hypothesis is that with increasing age there is a decreasing capacity for language learning. The evidence that children can learn second language better than adults comes from neurophysiology. Penfield has argued that ‘the
brain of a young child is much more receptive to the development of speech mechanism than the adults’ (Stern, 1987: 362). For an adult, learning a new sound system is a problem as the tongue gets stiff from pronouncing one type of language. He cannot adjust his speech organ according to the new sound system of second language. It has been observed that after the critical period of language-acquisition has passed, around the time of puberty, it become very difficult to acquire another language fully (Yule, 2006:164). Some suggest that adults achieve great expertise in the written language but not in spoken language. They can be successful in some features of second language, such as vocabulary and grammar and can concentrate more than children. On the other hand, children are better off than adults as far as phonology is concerned. They acquire better pronunciation and show better results in accent too. It is observed that despite an ideal acquisition situation, a very few adults can be seen achieving natived-like proficiency in using second language. The brain loses its flexibility with age. This is the logic behind teaching of second language at the primary age. The ‘Akali Govt.’ in Punjab decided to teach English at the primary level. But, there is no evidence to support the view that after reaching the teens it is difficult to acquire another language fully. It is a matter of debate.

2.7.7 SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT:

It is assumed that the learner will be able to translate the knowledge and skill of the second language into practical reality. Khanna (1994, 101) states that ‘learner must have the ability to operate language as a finite system of rules and use these rules in a variety of socio-cultural settings’. In the regional colleges of Punjab, the learners have been imparted knowledge of grammar rules and structures of English but they are unable to use it when faced with the demands of real life. There is no doubt that many learners are capable of producing perfect sentences in the ‘controlled situation’ but they feel nervous and shaky and do not have the confidence to use in real life situation. For instance, it is observed that they often use the correct form of
verb in the class when it is part of a drill or exercise, yet make errors and are unable to use the appropriate and correct form of verb in a given social context. The need is to provide them with a rich variety of linguistic and socio-cultural teaching techniques.

Language teaching should be context based. Students should be given opportunities to interact with the native speakers of the language. Recently, a new trend of introducing ‘study abroad’ programmes, and ‘exchange programmes’ is becoming popular as a part of the learning process. The motive is to provide a chance to the learner, to interact with the native speakers of target language and to use the language in a given cultural context. Such programmes not only bridge the cultural disconnects between the students the target language society but also help them to better understand the norms of behaviour and to use the target language in a more effective manner. In Punjab, educational institutions are welcoming such programmes and encourage the students to interact with the locals of the target language and to attend their weddings and festivals, not only to understand the cultural difference but also to use the language in a new cultural context.

In each language, the meaning is culture-determined. For instance, Eskimos have four different meanings of the English word ‘snow’. The meanings of words are internal to the language to which they belong. Each language has its own semantic structure just as it has its grammatical and phonological structure (Rivers, 1988: 133). Schumann's (1978) ‘accultural Model’ describes that if the target language community is accessible to the learner, he will learn it faster and commit less errors than those who are deprived of such opportunities.

2.8 NEED ANALYSIS:

It is being correctly said that ‘necessity is the mother of invention’ or ‘where there is will, there is a way’. The distinction between ‘need’ and
‘desire’ is analogous to ‘one has to’ and ‘one wants to’. If one has a ‘need’ to do something or ‘desire’ to learn something then he is motivated to achieve his target. If a learner wants to learn English in the same manner in which he learns his favourite activities like cooking, painting, music, dancing etc then the extent of his motivation with a different kind because he simply has a desire to learn it but not for utilitarian purpose. The learner who needs to learn English for practical purposes will have a multiplied level of motivation and the effort will be different from those who only want to learn it. Learner’s needs are of significance because if he has a ‘need’ for something only then he is motivated to achieve it.

Need analysis is the main component of language learning methodology. The only question that arises is to what extent our category of learners needs English. The motive of ‘need analysis’ is to design the various courses according to the needs of learners. The aims of a need analysis are thus to determine the types of situations in which learners will be using English, the tasks and activities they are expected to carry out or take part in English, and their existing language skills or abilities with respect to those tasks (Munby, 1978).

Richard (1985) recommended need analysis as it is helpful in defining the goals, objectives and content of language programmes, it is useful in designing and implementing a language programme and it provides data for reviewing and evaluating an existing programme. For instance, many learn English simply for communicative purpose, to build social contacts or for professional reasons. There are some who need minimal proficiency to satisfy their basic requirement. The Indian learner is not fully aware of his needs and is unable to express them except in some vague terms. Keeping in mind the learner’s need, colleges of Patiala have introduced various ‘spoken English courses as ‘add on course’ or ‘functional English’ etc. There is a move to design a separate curriculum according to the needs of the learner. It has been suggested that it should be flexible to suit the slow learners. Two
separate syllabi should be framed for the two different streams coming from English medium and vernacular schools. Students needs depend on the social demands and job opportunities that it creates. Kachru (2005) goes to extend of suggesting a ‘Native Model’. He states that since English is learnt as second language without exposure to the native speakers of the tongue, it is learnt not to converse with the native speakers but to facilitate communication between people who do not share their mother tongue. In India, where a local variety of English has cropped up, there is no need to learn complexities of ‘Received Pronunciation’ and its vocal system. So, in the Indian education system, ‘Indian English’ should be used. There are others who hold a contrary view. They maintain that the value of English as an ‘international language’ should not be underestimated. Introducing a regional variety of English in education will result in Chaos.

2.9 METHODOLOGY:

The present study aims at studying and analyzing the errors committed by the students of undergraduate classes. Students’ errors can be of many types reflecting the four levels of skills required in language acquisition i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Accuracy of the study depends on the calibrated tools. Apart from other things, correctness of the result depends on the tools and techniques employed in the study. Reliability and validity are two essential requirements of any test. To ensure high reliability and validity, the tools in the study were first tried out on a sample of fifty undergraduate students. Necessary changes were made where required. Later, similar tests were used for the final study. It is a survey type study. The present researcher decided to use a variety of different methods in order to arrive at decisive results.

As stated earlier, the object of the present study is to analyse the errors committed by the students at the undergraduate level. The researcher prepared a language-exercise based questionnaire in order to have conclusive
knowledge of the grammatical skills of students using English as second language in the region of Patiala. The exercises were designed keeping in mind the average student of B.A. To identify the errors at the grammatical level, the test consisted of various different exercises, as, for instance, exercises based on the use of articles and tenses, translation etc.

In order to judge their command over spoken English and to see the effect of their mother tongue on their pronunciation, a long list of words containing vowels and consonants segments of the ‘Received pronunciation’ variety of English was prepared. All types of words were taken, for example nouns, adjective and verbs. The words were simple and familiar to the students as they were taken from their prescribed text books. They were asked to go through them and then read them out aloud. Their speech has recorded and then analyzed on an in-depth basis.

Some reading material was provided to the subject group. A passage from the standard prescribed text book was given to them and time was given to them to have a look at it. Then, they were asked to read it out aloud. To test their ability to read and comprehend, they were asked to write answers to the questions that were prepared for them. Finally, the subjects were taken to the language lab. A BBC Cassette was played to all the groups. The subjects were asked to respond to the questions which were prepared regarding the content.

2.10 OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the present study is to analyse the errors committed by the students of Patiala region and to observe:

- The effect of the mother tongue on the pronunciation of English words.
- The impact of their native language in their style of writing English.
- To pin point whether the errors are progressive or developmental.
- To find out the students’ ability to comprehend the second language and language usage.
• To examine the role played by medium of instruction in the students' ability to master the English Language.
• To study the effect of rural and urban backgrounds on acquiring the four language skills mentioned earlier.
• To suggest remedies for improving the language skills of the students.

A hundred undergraduates were selected from various colleges of Patiala region. Random sampling was done in order to avoid sampling error, so that each standard has equal opportunities. Eight students were selected from the various colleges of Patiala region. Forty-five were boys and thirty-five were girls. Among 35 girls, 25 belonged to rural and the remaining was urban. Twenty-five boys were from a rural background and twenty were urban. The selected participants were divided into four groups of twenty each. Two parameters formed the basis of the division, viz. their medium of instruction Punjabi vs. English at school and the location of their school Rural vs. Urban. They were, thus, divided into four groups. Group A-vernacular medium urban, Group B-vernacular medium rural, Group C-English medium urban and Group D-English medium rural. Criteria for determining rural and urban background were the school from which they passed their last examination i.e. 10+2.

Patiala, being a prestigious centre of education, students comes here from different directions and diverse sections of society to study. The students were selected from various colleges in order to have a fairly well represented group of the student population so that the aims and objectives of the present micro study are fulfilled. The subject groups were university undergraduates with Punjabi and Hindi as their first language. The age group was 17 to 20 years.

The methodology discussed above was extremely helpful in arriving at an accurate conclusion.