CHAPTER - TWO
THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1. Introduction

In the history of foreign language teaching and learning, applied linguists have made several attempts to ease the difficulties of the learners. Several methods of teaching based on different psychological theories of language learning have been proposed and tried out. Such innovations have been more rigorous since the 1950's. The emergence of Contrastive Analysis (CA) in the 1950's and Error Analysis (EA) in the 1960's and 1970's laid a theoretical foundation for the major research works carried out in the second and foreign language teaching and learning from the 1970's to till date. Keeping the importance of such a foundation in view, here follows a detailed discussion on CA, EA and Error Gravity which also serves as the theoretical basis for the present study.

2.2. Contrastive Analysis

As mentioned above, language teaching methods have always been influenced by the psychological theories behind them. If the history of the ELT, in the 1950's is taken into consideration, it is found to be backed by the structuralists who based their theory of language on Behaviourist psychology. CA is the product of the amalgamation. According to James (1980:3) "CA is a linguistic enterprise aimed at producing inverted (i.e. contrastive, not comparative) two-valued typologies (a CA is always concerned with a pair of languages), and founded on the assumption that languages can be compared." His definition of CA, though he calls it provisional, is based on the three criteria of classifying the types of linguistic enterprises such as, generalist and particularist (whether to treat individual languages or language in general) diachronic and synchronic (whether to study language at a period or point of time), and language in isolation and comparison (whether to study language in isolation or use comparative methods).
Fisiak (1981--1) defines CA "... as a subdiscipline of linguistics concerned with the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities, between them". It may be the comparison of sound systems, grammatical systems, etc. The basic purpose of this kind of comparison was originally pedagogic. This has clearly been stated by Fries (1945:9) when he says that "The most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner". This statement directly links with the main purpose of CA originally stated by linguists like Sweet (1899 reprinted 1964). The basic purpose of comparing two languages and cultures is to "... discover and describe the problems that the speakers of one of the languages will have in learning the other" (Lado 1957:vii). The results of such comparisons were used to prepare teaching and learning materials, tests, etc. The main thrust behind designing special teaching-learning materials for the target language (TL) learners was that the differences noticed while comparing two languages cause learning difficulties. Hence the importance of CA in tracing the similarities and differences between the L1 and L2 had been widely accepted by the applied linguists during the 1950's and 1960's.

2.2.1. Basic Assumptions of CA

CA, though itself a hypothesis, is based on a number of assumptions. However, the main assumptions that have often been discussed are:

1. The main difficulties while learning a second language are primarily caused due to mother tongue interference.

II. These difficulties are predicted by CA after accomplishing a comparison between a source language and target language (TL).

III. In order to overcome these difficulties, teaching learning materials are prepared. Such materials help to reduce the effects of interference.
A careful analysis of these assumptions is essential here in order to evaluate the claims made by the advocates of CA. Lado (1957) tries to show the validity of these assumptions through the previous studies carried out on bilingualism. He says "A practical confirmation of the validity of our assumption has come from the work of linguists who study the effect of close contact between languages in bilingual situations. They report that many linguistic distortions heard among bilinguals correspond to describable differences in the languages involved" (Lado 1957:1). He specifically refers to the works of Haugen (1953) and Weinreich (1953) in this regard. Although Lado tries to defend the assumptions behind CA, they are not exempt from severe criticism (cf. 2.2.3). However, an attempt will be made here to clarify these assumptions.

The first assumption deals with the transfer of native habits into the target language. Two types of transfer most frequently referred to in CA are: positive transfer and negative transfer.

Positive transfer refers to facilitation of the native language systems while learning the TL. Dulay et al. (1982:97) define it as "... the automatic use of the L1 structure in L2 performance when the structures in both languages are the same, resulting in correct utterances." Negative transfer refers to the interference caused by the native language while learning the second/foreign language. Dulay et al. (1982:97) further clarify the notion of negative transfer in the following way: "The CA hypothesis held that where structures in the L1 differed from those in the L2, errors that reflected the structure of the L1 would be produced. Such errors were said to be due to the influence of the L1 habits on L2 production". The two words differences and difficulties are synonymously used in CA. The more the differences between L1 and L2, the more the difficulties the learners are likely to face resulting in the erroneous utterances. Another feature of this assumption is that the source language of the learner is considered to be the sole cause of errors that he is likely to commit.
The second assumption of CA is its predictive power in the areas of difficulties in which the TL learners are likely to make errors. It is assumed that the areas in which the source language and target language of a learner differ, he is most likely to face difficulties. Lado is firm in advocating this assumption when he says "... differences are the chief source of difficulty in learning a second language" (1964:21). Banathy et al. (1966) also put emphasis on comparing two languages so that the differences between them can be sorted out in order to predict the areas likely to be difficult for the TL learners. They say that "The change that has to take place in the language behaviour of a foreign language student can be equated with the differences between the structure of the student's native language and culture and that of the target language and culture... The task of the linguist, the cultural anthropologist, and the sociologist is to identify these differences" (Banathy et al. 1966:37). This responsibility, given to the three sectors of people, is to facilitate the work of prediction based on the set assumption of the correlated two words, i.e. differences and difficulties. The task of the foreign language teacher is to become aware of those differences and focus his teaching on them.

The third assumption of CA is more or less directed towards the remediation of the difficulties predicted by the works of CA. The immediate appreciation of CA is in the second or foreign language teaching. The learning materials based on CA address to the areas of difficulties that the learners are likely to encounter. This has clearly been expressed by Fries (1945:9) in the following statement: "The most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of learner." This spirit is further maintained by Lado (1957) who also stresses the need for comparing the native language and target language for preparing teaching materials. He also believes that a teacher who can compare two languages "... will be able to prepare supplementary exercises on those patterns which are important or difficult and have been overlooked or treated inadequately in the book" (Lado 1957:3).
Wardhaugh (1970 reprinted:1975) classifies CA in terms of two versions-- the strong version and the weak version. The strong version deals with the prediction of difficulties that the source language learner will have while learning the TL. It is done on the basis of the contrastive study of two language systems. This version requires a complete theory of contrastive linguistics into which the outcome of the contrasted versions of the languages in question can be plugged in. Wardhaugh finds this version unrealistic and impracticable. While the weak version of CA is less demanding compared to the strong version of it, because "It starts with the evidence provided by linguistic interference and uses such evidence to explain the similarities and differences between systems" (Wardhaugh 1975:15). This weak version of CA is opted for diagnostic purposes because it can be used to detect the errors caused by interference.

2.2.2. Pedagogic Implications of CA

Much has been talked about the pedagogic implications of CA. In the 1950's and 1960's, CA was considered to be the main source of information regarding the preparation of foreign language syllabuses, textbooks and teaching materials. Fries (1945) overtly advocated the use of CA in the production of effective teaching materials. Lado (1957:3) furthers this claim and says that "The most important new thing in the preparation of teaching materials is the comparison of native and foreign language culture in order to find the hurdles that really have to be surmounted in the teaching". Lado also points out the advantage that a teacher may have - he can systematically compare the native language and foreign language because he can prepare supplementary materials in the areas of the foreign language that are likely to be difficult to the learners but are not adequately given in the textbooks.

For many years CA dominated TL activities with a noble aim of helping the TL learners to overcome their learning difficulties. Stressing on the pedagogical implications of CA, Chau (1975:119) says, "These activities (CA) are undoubtedly of great
importance to the course developer, the language teacher, and the
test writer, who, in their tasks of organizing teaching materi-
als, planning teaching strategies, and evaluating progress and
achievement, must unquestionably have a certain knowledge of the
potential problem areas and of the causes and magnitude of the
learning problems." This statement includes almost all the as-
pects of the pedagogical realm.

CA requires the service of a person who is skilful in de-
scribing languages so as to compare the two languages in question
with each other. It also heavily relies on not only adequate
descriptive model of a language but also on how a language func-
tions. Sciarone (1970:118) makes this fact clear thus: "The con-
tribution to the improvement of teaching that CA can be expected
to make, depends - needless to say - on the quality of the analy-
sis of language in the first place, and the way in which this
analysis is executed in the second place." He further suggests
that the Transformational generative grammar is "descriptively
most adequate" (op.cit.p.118) for the purpose of carrying out CA
activities.

Spolsky (1979) finds CA most useful for the development of
pedagogic grammar of the TL. But unlike Fries (1945) and Lado
(1957), he thinks it to be "... safest to sum things up by saying
that there is good reason to believe that a contrastive analysis
is a useful (some would say necessary) preliminary to the devel-
opment of good teaching materials, but none for suggesting that
it is in any way a sufficient condition or a complete basis for a
theory of language learning" (Spolsky 1979:253). He further
claims that CA encourages the linguists to describe the type of
language that a language teacher needs for his teaching.

Despite the ever growing criticism lodged against the use of
CA in foreign language teaching and its basic assumptions, it is
no less valuable. The pedagogic contrastive grammars, if pre-
pared, will be of immense value to the foreign language teachers,
learners, material writers and even translators. Leaving aside
the extreme viewpoints for and against the implication of CA for
pedagogical purposes, it is worthwhile to conclude with the well-
balanced remarks of Marton (1981:169): "We may conclude with a remark that pessimism concerning the pedagogical application of contrastive studies is certainly unwarranted. Although some premature hopes and expectations of dramatic advancements in language teaching connected with the introduction of contrastive studies must be abandoned, these studies will play an important role as a contribution to better organisation and guidance in foreign language teaching and learning."

2.2.3. A Critical Evaluation of CA

The credit for the theoretical foundation of CA goes back to the works of Sweet (1899), Fries (1945) and most importantly Lado (1957). But the hey-days of CA did not last long. Several linguists started criticising even its fundamental assumptions vehemently. The most ardently attacked points are the assumptions of language interference and its predictability.

One mounting criticism against CA is the lack of its theoretical justification. Primarily CA was based on the structural linguistics and psychological interference theory. While reviewing Skinner (1957), Chomsky (1959) made an attack in which he refuted the possibility of using animal experiments and behaviours analogously with human learning and behaviour. Therefore, language learning equated with habit formation was also rejected. Equally rejected was the comparability of two structures in terms of their communicative functions. The proposition of language universals was another question posed against the theoretical aspect of CA.

The predictive power of CA as James (1992:301) observes "... was shown to be limited; some items of high interlingual contrastivity prove to be easily learned, and vice versa. Consequently, attempts to identify a scale of learning difficulty on the basis of language difference were unsuccessful. Fewer errors could unequivocally be traced to NL interference than had been supposed; early claims that 30 per cent of errors were interlingual ceded to almost negligible claims of 3 per cent". This claim is justified by the following table from Ellis (1986:29).
Table No. 6.

Percentage of interference in second language learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>% of interference errors</th>
<th>Type of learner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grauberg (1971)</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>First language German-adult, advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George (1972)</td>
<td>33% (approx.)</td>
<td>Mixed first languages-adult, graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dulay &amp; Burt (1973)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>First language Spanish-children, mixed level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran-Chi-Chau (1974)</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>First language Chinese-adult, mixed level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukattash (1977)</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>First language Arabic-adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flick (1980)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>First language Spanish-adult, mixed level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lott (1983)</td>
<td>50% (approx.)</td>
<td>First language Italian-adult, university</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research carried out by Dulay and Burt (1974 in Dulay et al. 1982:102) shows that "... less than 5% of the errors observed reflected the children's first language, Spanish ". However, the interlingual errors committed by the adult learners fall between 8% to 23%. Such errors committed by L2 learners are also very much like the young child learning his first language. This shows the developmental nature of the errors which is considered inevitable. Dulay et al. (1982:138) also support this view "... that like L1 learners' errors, most of the errors L2 learners make indicate they are gradually building an L2 rule system".

Another often discussed criticism of CA is that a comparative study of two languages as a whole for the preparation of a pedagogical grammar is extremely difficult and painstaking. An experienced teacher is often able to recognize learning problems
of his learners than those suggested by CA. Therefore, a partial comparison of two language systems is not very encouraging for teachers.

2.2.4. Conclusion

Despite several criticisms lodged against CA, there are some linguists who still claim that CA has practical value. As a matter of fact, the assumption regarding the preparation of teaching learning materials based on the outcome of CA has not been criticized because the attention of the linguists was entirely focused on the predictability and interference aspects. Even the emergence of EA has, to some extent, minimized the importance of CA. However, "... the CA element in EA will continue to be a very important one and that very often interpretations will tend to very subjectively be guided by theoretical preconceptions" (Nickel 1989:301). Thus, the importance of CA cannot be undermined. Spolsky (1979) also mentions that CA has contributed a lot in the work of language description and pedagogical grammars.

Unlike in the past decades when CA was attacked more for its negative aspects than accepted for its contribution, it has been attracting a host of linguists from wider areas recently. Studies carried out on CA during the 1980's in Europe have opened up new vistas for related disciplines like contrastive discourse, contrastive pragmatism, pragmalinguistics, pedagogical contrastive socio-linguistics, etc. Such new approaches to the study of CA are coming up in the field of linguistics these days. The major thrust of these approaches is to go beyond the sentence level and contrast the stylistic use of the items in question. It is at this juncture quite appropriate to maintain an unbiased view of Sanders regarding the use of CA in the present day context. She says that "... contrastive analysis is still in use, and of use, in language teaching. The part it can play should be neither exaggerated nor understated, and there is a place for continuing research... Account must be taken of empirical evidence of its usefulness, and the distinction between a linguistic and a pedagogical grammar borne in mind" (Sanders 1981:30).
2.3. Error Analysis

Error Analysis has a long tradition in second/foreign language teaching. It is a field of study that deals with the study of the differences between the speech of a second/foreign language learner and that of the adult native speaker of the language in question. Adult native speakers are considered as norm because of the transitional nature of the child speech.

EA in the past was informally done by the language teachers for the purpose of identification and remediation of errors. Ellis (1986) ensures that the purpose of traditional EA was to collect information in order to sequence the language items for teaching or devising the language lessons for the remedial purposes. The basic purpose of EA at present is not deviated from its notion in the past. However, the resurgence of interest in it in the late 1960's and 1970's has led several applied linguists to conduct empirical research on it (cf. George (1972), Jain (1974), Richards (1974), Abbott (1980), Bebout (1985), Lennon (1991), etc.). Different interpretations of the learners' errors are made by different people working in the field of EA. This section, therefore, deals with the notion of errors, their types and significance followed by their use in language teaching. Discussion will also be focused on different views on learners' errors and the processes of analysing them. Finally, a short note on the limitations of EA will be included. The term learning throughout the study refers either to the second or foreign language learning.

2.3.1. The Notion of Error

An error in language learning refers to a deviant form from the normal speech or writing of an adult native speaker. Corder (1973) refers to it as breaches of code as opposed to the unwanted forms used by George (1972). Corder's breach of code is exclusively used to refer to learners' errors which they cannot correct themselves. However, the word lapse is reserved for the slips of pen and tongue, false start or confusion of structures,
and for the mistake of the native speaker caused by different reasons. Mistake in this sense remains the cover term for both errors and lapses. Thus, the word error is exclusively reserved for consistently and repeatedly deviated forms of the learners' language from the normal adult speech. Such flawed expressions can neither be detected nor corrected by the learner himself.

2.3.2. Types of Errors

This section presents a discussion on the types of errors classified by different linguists. The term type as used here refers to the angles of interpretation or classification of errors applied by linguists. Types vary according to the emphasis laid in the interpretation of errors, for example, a clear distinction is made between global and local errors in terms of the elements that impede comprehensibility whereas such a distinction is not made in the other two.

2.3.21. Expressive and Receptive Errors

Corder (1973) mentions two types of errors—expressive and receptive. By expressive errors, he means such errors as can easily be detected because these represent the imperfect knowledge on the part of the learner. The learner "... leaves traces transient, but recordable, in the case of speech, permanent in the case of writing" (1973:261). On the other hand, the receptive errors, as they are not overt and observable, are difficult to detect because the recipients do not use overt responses. "... smiles, grunts or other paralinguistic behaviour..." (op.cit. p.261) serve the communication purposes. The hearer's understanding cannot be judged unless he answers a question or shows his verbal approval or disapproval to it.

2.3.22. Competence and Performance Errors

In EA competence errors refer to the flawed forms of language produced by a learner because of his incomplete exposure to or limited competence in that language while the performance errors are such mistakes "... as slips of the tongue, omissions,
some spelling mistakes, unnecessary repetitions and so on. The learner makes these errors not because he does not know the language, but because he is in a hurry, he is writing or speaking under stress, or is forgetful or simply careless" (Ngara 1983:35). These mistakes do not represent the mastery in language of the person in question because he can easily correct them. These mistakes are not the concern of the error analyst.

Corder (1973) gives two names to these errors: Performance errors, which are unsystematic, are termed as mistakes, and Competence errors (which he calls transitional competence) are systematic and called errors.

2.3.23. Global and Local Errors

Burt and Kiparsky (1972) make a distinction between a global and local goof (informally used for an error). They define these terms as mistakes in overall organization and minor goofs within clauses (1972:6), respectively. These terms are further clarified by Burt (1975). She states that "Errors that significantly hinder communication are those that affect overall sentence organization" (1975:56-57). She classifies global errors into the following four categories;

i. Wrong word order, e.g.

   English language use many people.

ii. Missing, wrong, or misplaced sentence connectors, e.g.

   He will be rich until he marry.

iii. Missing cues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rules, e.g.

   The student's proposal looked into the Principal.

iv. Overgeneralizing pervasive syntactic rules to exceptions (in transformational terms, not observing selectional restrictions on certain lexical items). For example,

   We amused that movie very much.
Local errors refer to such errors as do not impair communication significantly. They effect "... single elements (constituents) in a sentence" (op.cit. p.57). According to Burt (1975), local errors are the errors in nouns, verbs inflections, articles, auxiliaries and the formation of quantifiers. For example,

Why we like each other?

Regarding the importance to be given to errors, she further opines that priority has to be set first. If the purpose is to make the learner near-native like, the emphasis should be given to the local errors, if the purpose is to make the communication successful, priority should be given to the global errors. In some contexts, teachers give priority to grammatically acceptable language forms first and then only see whether the forms make any sense in the given context. Therefore, priority also depends upon the social context and the constraints in which the errors are to be identified and evaluated.

2.3.3. Significance of Learners' Errors

Errors in the early days were treated as "unwanted forms" (George 1972:2) that need to be avoided. Gradually, changes were introduced in language teaching methodology and concurrently there came a change in the attitude of the people towards errors.

There are two schools of thought, and each treats errors differently. The first school believes that errors should not be allowed to occur and they are the signs of imperfect learning while the other school treats errors as inevitable because one lives in an imperfect world and errors are a part of it. Both these views are based on the behaviouristic principles of learning. While discussing the significance of learners' errors, it is important to consider the attitude of different people towards errors themselves, i.e. whether they consider errors as negative signs of learning or as inevitable features of it.
The school that accepts errors as inevitable outcomes of learning has created a new dimension in the treatment of errors and consequently, errors are viewed as valuable tools for giving new thought into the working of language and learning process. It was Corder (1967 reprinted 1975) who for the first time brings a change in the minds of the applied linguists and language teachers who think that errors are a sign of failure in learning. He clearly specifies that the learners' errors are significant in three different ways: "First to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly, (and in a sense this is their most important aspect) they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn" (Corder 1967 reprinted 1975:96). Thus, Corder tried to justify that errors are significant to teachers, researchers and the learners themselves.

Seliger (1978) also agrees with Corder and stresses on errors' value for both the teachers and learners as well. The feedback they obtain from errors enables the learners "to correct, confirm or reject" (p.24) the new language forms acquired recently. However, Griffin (1982), Vann et al. (1984), and Robb et al. (1986) have different opinions regarding early and late feedback to the learners.

Sridhar (1981) claims that errors are more significant or useful for classroom purposes, that is, to plan materials, present lessons, and devise exercises and tests, etc. in a better way. They also help in material selection and its appropriate ordering. But a teacher dictated by national level syllabuses, nationally controlled examination systems, and nationally approved teaching methods may naturally feel constrained to plan in his own ways.
A full scale sophisticated EA research on the part of every teacher is time-consuming but "... this should not discourage teachers from making their own less formal surveys, which can still be most illuminating" (McKeating 1981:214). This will help them improve their teaching-learning activities.

2.3.4. Attitude to Errors

Errors in language are viewed differently at different times - both positively and negatively. At times they are compared with sins, on other times they are considered essential in language learning. Even two schools of methodology under Behaviourist theory of psychology have two different attitudes to errors - as a sign of inadequate learning or as an inevitable feature of learning. The first viewpoint is highly discouraging because it is against the existence of errors at all which is very unlikely. The second view, though doesn't say anything about the utility of errors in language learning, is rather relaxing because it accepts at least their existence.

Attitude to errors is guided by the goals set for language teaching. If the goal of language teaching is to develop communicative ability, errors are tolerated so long as the desired message is communicated without impeding comprehension. But if the aim of language teaching and learning is to develop accuracy in the target language, errors are not tolerated. They have to be eliminated. A similar view is expressed by McKeating (1981). Based on his personal experience, he thinks that a language teacher develops a dual attitude to learners' errors, i.e. "sympathetic and helpful" and "non-permissive" - sympathetic and helpful because the students feel that the teacher is not harsh to their errors and their fluency is undeterred, and non-permissive because he helps them to eliminate these errors, as they cannot do it without his help.

Another view to look at errors is rather positive in nature. Errors serve as the source of Information about "the process of acquisition" (Ellis 1986:52). Dulay et al. (1982) and others equate L1 acquisition with L2 acquisition believing that the
errors that the L2 learners make are similar to the ones that the children acquiring L1 make. Corder as early as 1967 also finds a similarity between the strategies employed by a language learner and a child acquiring his first language. Gorbet (1979), and Dulay and Burt (1974) express a similar view. The deviated forms produced by the learners are viewed as developmental errors similar to the ones that are found in the children acquiring L1. Such deviated forms automatically disappear as the learners get maturity in the TL.

Bell (1974) treats errors positively while Sridhar (1981) and Norrish (1983) find them essential. Sridhar suggests to make a distinction between productive (systematic) and non-productive deviations; develop criteria in order to see the degree of impairment they make in communication system, and finally re-examine the notion of errors in the non-native contexts where the learners need a second/foreign language to communicate with the members of their own native language groups because they hardly obtain an opportunity to converse with the native speakers of the TL they are studying. Agnihotri (1988:4) observes that "... people in general show greater tolerance for local errors than global errors. The latter may affect the total structure of an utterance while the former are confined to lexical and morphological levels." Thus, errors are not signs of failure but they are the helping tools for language learning, as these tell the teacher the processes and strategies adopted by his learners. To conclude, it is appropriate to mention here the observation made by Gorbet (1979:28) in this context: "... errors are not a cause for alarm but are tools for helping us to help the student progress easily and naturally through the stages of his interlanguage."

2.3.5. The Learners' Language

The concept learner's language is borrowed here from Richards et al. (1974). It is used synonymously for learner's English to refer to the errors committed by a learner while learning language. The same concept is interpreted by different linguists at different times. Lado (1957) calls it language transfer.
Corder (1967, 1971 reprinted 1975) names "transitional competence and idiosyncratic dialects," Nemser (1971) calls it approximative systems but Selinker (1972) names it Interlanguage. All these terms are briefly discussed below.

2.3.51. Language Transfer

The term language transfer refers to the effect of one language on the learning of another. Bilingual studies carried out by Haugen (1953) and Weinreich (1953) are regarded very influential early studies on CA. But the credit for pedagogical influences of such studies goes to the work of Fries (1945) and Lado (1957).

Lado in the late 1950's claimed "... that individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture - both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and culture as practiced by natives" (1957:2).

This observation of Lado drew the attention of the applied linguists to see the transfer of language and culture from one language to another and especially from the native language to the second or foreign language. Several CA studies followed Lado with the aim of finding the similarities and differences between the native language of the learner and the TL he wanted to study in order to develop language learning and teaching materials focusing on the differences between the languages in question with the presumption that differences led to difficulties and thereby resulted in erroneous utterances. This view is in confirmation with Fries (1945). The studies on CA record two types of transfer: positive and negative.

Positive transfer, also known as facilitation, refers to the production of correct behaviour because of the similarity in the new and old behaviour while negative transfer, also called inter-
ference, refers to the transfer as a result of which erroneous behaviours are seen. This is because the old behaviour is different from the one which the learner is going to learn.

Dulay et al. (1982:101) believe that "Both types of transfer refer to the automatic and subconscious use of old behaviour in learning situations". Though both types of transfer have the same source, i.e. the use of old behaviour, the way of viewing them by the linguists differs in terms of emphasis. In the past, especially in the 1960's and 1970's, linguists paid attention to the negative transfer and blamed it for creating problems to the learners. Ringbom (1987) also finds the early linguists regarding mother tongue as an obstacle to L2 learning.

Palmer, as early as 1917, had cautioned the people learning a language of the possible help and danger both from the similarities between two cognate languages compared with two distant languages. But the negativism in the role of the mother tongue while learning a language persisted for many successive decades. The strong attack on CA during the 1970's also minimized the role of mother tongue while learning a language. Even Dulay and Burt (1972, 1973, 1974a, 1974c) showed that mother tongue influence in the TL is very negligible, i.e. less than 5% in case of children, while the studies carried out on the adult learners recorded it as high as 51% (cf. Table No.6, 2.2.3).

Selinker (1969) and Gass (1979) firmly claim that transfer is an inevitable phenomenon and it does take place in language learning. They take it positively. However, clarifying their stand on language transfer, they say that "... the learner is transferring prior linguistic knowledge resulting in IL forms which, when compared by the researcher to the target language norms, can be turned positive, negative or neutral" (Gass and Selinker 1992:6).

Thus, language transfer takes a new turn in the 1980's when people start rethinking on the possible help that a learner might get from his mother tongue while learning a target language. The similarities that exist between the mother tongue and target
language are now taken positively. Corder (1981) observes that similarities between mother tongue and target language are a great help in acquiring the second language and vice-versa. He finds that if the languages are distantly related, there is no inhibition. Corder's view is contrary to the one given by Sweet (1899/1964) and Palmer (1917) earlier. However, his view is in confirmation with Schachter (1974) who also tries to show that learning difficulties are more when a mother tongue and a target language differ from each other.

Ringbom (1987) proposed that both production and comprehension have to be studied while carrying out the research on the influence of the mother tongue on the TL. He thinks it necessary "... to consider the obvious fact that L1 - and L2 - based procedures can occur both in isolation and in mutual interaction" (1987:50). It is essential to see the influence of L1 in comprehending L2 since most of the research works carried out so far concentrated on production aspect only. These studies show that language transfer has a positive influence in language learning. Linguists stress the importance of transfer in language learning. Kellerman (1979) and Gass and Selinker (1992) talk both about the importance and constraints of language transfer.

2.3.52. Transitional Competence

Corder (1967) makes a distinction between errors of performance referred to as mistakes and errors of competence, i.e. systematic errors on the basis of which a learner's knowledge of "language to date, i.e. transitional competence" is reconstructed. This competence refers to the target language system he is using at a particular point in time. This is transitional because it is unstable in nature. If this hypothesis is taken into consideration, the terms used so far to address to learner's language as errors, deviant forms and ill-formed have to be modified because "... whatever the surface form or apparent appropriateness of a learner's utterances, none are the utterances in the target language..., but a language of his own, a unique idiolect... that every utterance of the learner must be regarded as an acceptable utterance in his transitional dialect" (Corder 1971b-. Reprinted: 1981:31-32).
If the learner's grammar is taken as a grammar of his own because it does not resemble the target language grammar, the observation made by Corder above is true, because it does not deviate from any norm at all. Zydatis (1974) supports Corder and finds the learner's language, a well-formed one. The question of the acceptability of such a language to Corder is of no utility as it is compared with the infant's language because of its transitional nature. Therefore, everything that a learner produces is considered grammatical.

2.3.53. Idiosyncratic Dialects

Corder (1971a) gives another name to the learner's language assuming it to be a special sort of dialect. It is based upon his interpretation of the word dialect — in which some rules of grammars of two languages are shared. He clarifies this concept through this diagram:

\[
\text{set of rules of language B} \quad \cap \quad \text{set of rules of language A}
\]

But he seems to be unsure of calling it a dialect in a non-linguistic perspective because a dialect should be shared by a group of people for their interpersonal communication. He also makes a distinction between an idiosyncratic dialect and an idiolect. The former is particular to an individual and the sentences produced by him are not readily interpretative unless the convention underlying them is known to the interpreter, but such a problem doesn't persist in an idiolect since there may be someone in the social group who can share the convention with him.

Corder (1971a) classifies four types of idiosyncratic dialects, such as poetic language, aphasic's language, the infant's learning his mother tongue, and the learner's learning a second language. It is, therefore, unfair to call the learner's language erroneous or deviant so long as it is compared with the poetic, aphasic's and infant's language. The idiosyncratic utterances
are, thus, the outcomes of the learner's use of his own rules while learning the target language. For Corder, erroneous sentences are the ones which are the result of the failure of performance. Such utterances can be corrected by the performer himself because they follow the rules of the transitional dialect. He also gives a reason why he does not like the terms error, deviant or ill-formed to be used to the idiosyncratic dialect because "... they all prejudge the explanation of the idiosyncrasy" (Corder 1971a reprinted: 1975:105).

There is an overlap between the two terms, i.e. transitional competence and the idiosyncratic dialects in Corder's own explanation. They look, more or less, similar. At times, he replaces the term transitional competence with transitional dialect. Therefore, these two terms do not show any significant differences in their analyses.

The purpose of studying the learner's dialects according to Corder is to show why it is as it is and further to elicit the process of language learning. Corder also does not like to use the word ungrammatical to the learner's dialects because, he thinks, "... they are in fact grammatical in terms of the learner's language" (op.cit. p.105).

2.3.54. Approximative Systems

Nemser (1971) gives a different name to the learner's language. He calls it approximative system. It refers to the "...deviant linguistic system actually employed by the learner attempting to utilize the target language. Such approximative systems vary in character in accordance with proficiency level; variation is also introduced by learning experience (including exposure to a target language script system), communication function, personal learning characteristics, etc." (Nemser 1971:116). Unlike Corder (1971a), Nemser likes to use the word deviant to the learner's language and he believes that a learner's language is featured by variation which can be compared with Corder's idiosyncratic dialect. Similarly, his notion of successive changes in the approximative systems can be compared with
Border's *transitional competence*. This system evolves from its rudimentary stage to the stage which is the closest to the TL. However, Nemser thinks that the achievement of perfect proficiency in the adults is rare. But he finds that "The speech of a learner... is structurally organized, manifesting the order and cohesive nature of a system..." (op.cit. p. 116). Therefore, he suggests to study this system independent of the SL and the TL.

As discussed above, Nemser does not believe in the acquisition of perfect proficiency by any adult learner. He thinks that permanent intermediate and subsystems are found and the learner's language is never free from the phonological and grammatical deviance if the learners share the native language. Therefore, he is in favour of conducting a *contrastive* study of the SL and the TL in order to suggest appropriate pedagogy. Nemser finds stability in the speech of the migrants where a new language system develops, for example, German English. Another stable system is formed by *utility system* like the language of taxi-drivers, bartenders, hotel reservation clerks, etc. who communicate with the foreigners. He also likes to refer to the learner's language as *learner pidgin* - a system "... employed by language students who have attained fluency in the target language without mastery of its fundamentals, but have arrived at a stage in instruction where attention has largely shifted from form to content" (op.cit. p. 118).

Nemser tries to settle the problem of stability by giving the examples like the speech of the migrants, the language of the taxi-drivers etc. and the learner-pidgin above quite contrary to his conviction that "... (approximative system) La speakers do not usually form speech communities" (Nemser 1971:126). In the case of the taxi-drivers, etc. this notion can be applied but the immigrants normally settle in a group and form a speech community. If he talks about the immigrants scattered all over the country, the argument will certainly be in his favour. In the case of *learner pidgin*, his argument seems plausible because learners are a part of a community but do not form a separate community. He feels the importance of studying the approximative systems as it is the ever neglected area of study. He is also in
favour of suggesting a better pedagogic strategy to handle the learner's language which, he thinks, is possible by making a contrastive study of the source language and target language and thereby testing the contrastive analysis hypothesis for establishing their validity. Another use of this kind of study can be in formulating a general linguistic theory applicable to child language and the language of the people with speech disorders.

2.3.55. Interlanguage

Irrespective of the various names in practice, Selinker (1972) claims that he introduced the notion Inter language (IL) in Selinker (1969). Selinker (1972 reprinted 1975:117), however, uses the term Interlanguage to mean "... the existence of a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a TL norm." This definition of IL gives a new dimension for viewing the learner's language independently of the native language (NO and TL). The earlier studies on EA and the attitude to errors got a new life to look into the matters in a different perspective.

Selinker (op.cit p.116) assumes that "... there is such a psychological structure and that it is latent in the brain, activated when one attempts to learn a second language." Unlike Chomsky, he does not give any name to the latent psychological structure. However, he tries to establish a psychology of second-language learning which can give an explicit process in the learning of a second language, but he agrees to the fact that he is unable "... to identify unambiguously the phenomena we wish to study" (op.cit 115). It seems that his latent psychological structures are also not that explicit to elicit the process of second language learning. He, however, proposes five processes central to second language learning. They are: language transfer, transfer-of-training, strategies of second-language learning, strategies of second-language communication, and overgeneralization. In addition to these, he also gives a few minor processes such as hypercorrection, spelling pronunciation, cognate pronunciation, holophrase learning, etc.
Sridhar (1981) also finds the term *interlanguage* suitable for the learner's language because of its intermediate status, instability and rule governed nature.

Both Selinker (1972) and Sridhar (1981) seem to be influenced by Nemser (1971) regarding the permanency of the learner's language. Selinker uses the term *fossilization* which refers to the stability of a system in the learner's language similar to the Indian English in India. So fossilizable linguistic phenomena, according to Selinker (1972 reprinted 1975:118-119) are the "... linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular NL will tend to keep in their IL relative to a particular TL, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he receives in the TL". This argument supports the existence of the Black English in the USA which remains a permanent feature in the tongues of the Black American people irrespective of their age and academic background.

Corder (1981) supports Selinker (1972) irrespective of his previous vision of the learner's language as transitional or *diosyncratic*, and finds interlanguage exhibiting *systematic properties* independent of the learner's mother tongue and any other language he knows. But his opinion regarding fossilization is different from that of Selinker. He finds IL developing no norms. However, he proposes to carry out studies in order to see the sequence of IL development but speculates that there could be *general overall similarity* at least in the early age. His speculation is based on the hypothesis of establishing universal properties in human language.

Selinker (1989) reinterprets Nemser (1971) and states that learners sometimes make NL/IL categories equivalent and sometimes do not while creating interlanguage. He also mentions the evidence given by Nemser (1971:134-135) "... for at least partial autonomy of IL systems".

Thus, during these years, applied linguists have proposed hypotheses regarding the learner's language tested, and modified them. Fluctuations in the arguments are obviously noted. These
arguments started from the CA hypothesis to EA and further stretched up to IL system. This viewing and reviewing of the terminologies are ongoing processes and still further studies are needed (cf. Corder 1981) in order to discover the natural sequence of second language learning. Selinker (1989) finds CA studies appropriate to begin with in order to see the facilitative role of the mother tongue for the creation of IL.

The different names given to the learner's language by different linguists are centered to a single theme. Whether or not they agree with each other, it is seen through the discussion above that they find a new system in the learner's language which is ultimately taken positively unlike in the early years.

2.3.6. Procedures or Stages of Error Analysis

Error analysis in the past was done by the teacher for classroom teaching through observation and impression. More specifically, it was done for correction and remediation purposes. But the trend of systematic analysis of errors for a number of purposes other than teaching is comparatively a recent phenomenon. Several works on EA started in the 1960's and continue till date.

The normal procedure applied by the EA researchers is the selection of the corpus, identification/recognition of errors, classification/description of errors, explanation of errors and the suggestions for their remediation. However, a brief sketch of the procedures applied by different EA researchers is given here.

Dušková (1969), though does not specifically mention the stages of EA, gives a detailed classification and causes of errors she finds in the writing of her informants. Corder (1973, 1974) explicitly mentions three stages of EA, i.e. recognition, description, and explanation. However, he also includes two other stages like the data for error analysis and the correction of errors. These will be discussed later from section 2.3.61 through 2.3.64 in detail. Nickel (1972 as quoted in Hammarberg 1974:186)
proposes three aspects of the study of errors such as description, grading and therapy. Sridhar's (1981) stages of EA are similar to Corder's except the inclusion of a step called statement of relative frequency of error typos between description and explanation of errors. He further uses the term therapy for the remediation of errors. Agnihotri (1988) proposes five stages of EA with an emphasis on a quantitative analysis of errors based on the linguistic and psychological predispositions.

Corder's (1974) stages of EA seem to be followed by EA researchers so far with a few terminological changes with the same theme. Therefore, his stages of EA are explained here with the inclusion of others wherever necessary.

2.3.61. The Data for Error Analysis

The data for EA may be spoken or written or both. Corder (1974) refers to the written materials of two types, i.e. spontaneous production (free composition) and controlled production (translations, precis, etc). EA researchers have made use of the both types of materials so far keeping their strengths and weaknesses in view. He further argues that spontaneous production materials exhibit error-avoiding tendency of the learner while controlled production materials tend to be error-provoking.

2.3.62. Recognition of Errors

At this stage, the analyst makes a distinction between a mistake and an error. Though the word mistake covers, in a general sense, all slips, lapses, errors or breaches of code, it is specially reserved for slips and lapses. Slips are the mistakes which are caused by tiredness, carelessness or similar reasons. These slips or false starts or confusions of structures are called lapses (Corder 1973:259). A native speaker can correct them. These are not the concern of an error analyst. Breaches of code for (Corder 1973:259) are systematic, regular, and consistent and most likely committed by the language learners. These are exclusively called errors and a learner cannot detect and correct
them. This stage is crucial because the detection of error is done here which needs a native-like intuition and perception in a researcher.

Recently, two major concepts have become current in the process of recognizing the errors; they are - whether to see the grammaticality or acceptability or both of them. In the case of grammaticality, as it refers to the internal structuring of the code itself, it creates less problems although there is always a division of opinion in the case of judging an item. Gleason (1965) finds it easier to judge an utterance taken out of its context. Such an isolated structure is judged in terms of rules of the language in question. With regard to the latter one, that is, acceptability, an utterance should be "... perfectly natural and immediately comprehensible without paper-and-pencil analysis, and in no way bizarre or outlandish" (Chomsky 1965:10). There is a clear division among the native speakers themselves whether or not to accept a particular utterance (Celce-Murcia et al. 1983). Hymes (1971) gives a four-way division of an utterance including grammaticality to judge an utterance of a learner. They are: grammaticality, feasibility, appropriateness and probability.

Corder (1973:273) raises a doubt in the above division and states: "It is possible that a learner's sentence may be both acceptable and appropriate but nevertheless erroneous ... Learners probably quite often say something acceptable and apparently appropriate but which does not mean what they intend to mean".

This creates a problem to find out what each and every individual knows and what he actually does say. This needs a longitudinal study of the learner in order to find out his inadequacy in a particular area of language and also a long term contact to study his behaviour.

Corder (1973:272) mentions three stages in the development of language in the learner, i.e. pre-systematic, systematic and post-systematic. In his words, "In the ore-systematic stage, since he has not yet realized that there is a system or what its function is, he can neither correct his error nor say what his
problem is; in the systematic stage he cannot correct his error but he can give some explanation of what he was aiming at or trying to do; in the post-systematic stage he can both correct his error and explain what was wrong, i.e. that he had overlooked something, or simply forgotten to apply a known rule." An error analyst has also to know the actual stage of the learner in order to make a distinction between an error and a lapse.

2.3.63. Description of Errors

After the detection of errors, their linguistic classification is required. da Rocha (1975) finds it a very difficult task. Some unclassifiable items which Duskova (1969) calls nonce errors need to be differentiated from the classifiable systematic ones.

Corder (1973) classifies errors into four categories omission, addition, selection, and misordering. He further classifies these categories into different linguistic levels like phonological/orthographical, grammatical and lexico-semantic. He has added a new classification to the above later called referential or stylistic level which requires the learner to possess a very high proficiency in the TL itself. Opportunities are rare for the learners to make use of contextually bound language. Even for a native child, it takes a long time to "... learn to control appropriately the use of features of his mother tongue in relation to social, technical, intentional and emotional differences in situations" (Corder 1973:281).

Dulay et al. (1982) classify errors into linguistic categories such as phonology, syntax and morphology, semantics and lexicon, and discourse: surface strategy, like omission, addition, and misordering of items; comparative analysis - comparison of synonymous items in the L1 and L2 and communicative effect - effects of the utterances on the listeners or readers. The first two classifications above resemble Corder's whereas comparative analysis is taken into consideration while explaining the interference errors. Communicative effect is considered in the evaluation of errors.
A more recent trend becoming popular among the researchers is to classify errors into more general categories like articles, prepositions, tense forms, subject-verb agreement, etc. (cf. Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974b & c), Lennon (1991), Sayed (1994), Tushyeh (1995) etc.).

2.6.64. Explanation of Errors

The description of errors is purely a linguistic phenomenon whereas explanation is a psychological one because it tries to find out the causes of errors "... which must lie within the conceptual system of the individual language user" (Bell 1974:42). Two schools of psychology namely Behaviourist and Cognitive take errors in two different perspectives. For the former, errors are a sign of failure whereas for the latter "... errors provide positive evidence about the nature of the learning process, as the learner gradually works out what the FL system is" (Crystal 1987:372).

The cognitive approach of viewing language learning brings a change in the outlook of the researchers to take errors as not a sign of failure, but inevitable in the process of learning. The cognitivists believe that if deviations are natural in acquiring the first language, they are also natural in language learning. However, EA studies try to find out such deviations in language learning and sort out their sources/causes. Therefore, in this stage of error analysis, causes or sources of errors are explained.

2.3.641. Sources of Errors

Corder (1973), Richards (1971 reprinted 1973) and others point out different sources of errors, though some of them are common to everyone. An attempt is made here to describe them.

The first source of errors is L1 interference. Structural linguists claim it to be the sole cause of errors. However, the researchers have shown that it is only one of many causes. Corder (1973:284) believes that "... not all the rules or habits of the
mother tongue will result in errors." The second source of errors is **overgeneralization**. Corder (1973) thinks it to be an inevitable process in language learning. If a learner **commits** errors because the past learning affects the later learning resulting in the production of erroneous sentences, it is termed as overgeneralization. The third source of errors is the result of partial knowledge in the language. Teaching and learning is a lifelong process. Therefore, Corder says that "... nothing is 'fully' learned until everything is 'fully' learned" (1973:283). The fourth source of errors is the lack of conducive teaching and learning situation. All the learners are not equipped with the same language aptitude. Therefore, their motivation towards learning is also diverse. It is but natural that less motivated learners commit more errors. Equally important **to note** here is that some learners become less motivated because of physical and emotional reasons. All these factors are responsible for **redundant errors** which are committed by the advanced learners as well. The **fifth** source of errors is the **physical resemblance** of a word of the mother tongue that is chosen by a learner in the TL. Corder (1973:290) calls it **false cognates and** states that "It is the physical resemblance which leads to analogical overgeneralization" (Corder 1973:291). This creates a new hypothesis that similarity in mother tongue and TL creates problems for the learners contrary to the theory of transfer in practice.

Unlike Corder above, Richards (1973:97) proposes a threeway **classification** of the causes of errors, that is, interference, intralinguial and developmental.

**Interference errors** are those errors caused by the **influence** of the mother tongue. Chau (1975:133-134) claims that 51% of errors fall in this category and further says "... that first-language interference is the greatest single cause of errors". Dulay et al. (1982:103) do not **support** this claim, but show that only 8% to 23% of the adult errors are ascribed to transfer from the mother tongue. Gorbet (1979) believes that as a two-way affair, interference may be caused by both mother tongue and TL. The learning strategy applied in such cases is that of **analogy**. It is similar to the explanation given by Corder (1973).
Intralingual errors are those errors "... which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply" (Richards 1973:98). The errors in this category are similar to the ones explained by Corder (1973). According to Chau (1975:135) it is the second largest cause of errors, and 29% of the errors come under this category.

Developmental errors refer to the ones which are the outcome of the hypotheses formulated by the learner with a limited experience in the TL (Richards 1973:98). This refers to his incomplete knowledge of the TL similar to Corder's partial knowledge. Dulay et al. (1982:165) observe that "Developmental errors are errors similar to those made by children learning the target language as their first language". They compare L1 examples with L2 errors and give a list of developmental errors based on surface strategies. Such errors are: OMISSIONS (Omissions of Major Constituents - head noun, subject, main verb, direct object, Omission of Grammatical Morphemes - preposition, article, short plural and long plural, auxiliary, copula, progressive-ing, regular past tense-ed, irregular past tense, third person singular, infinitive marker-to), ADDITION (Double marking - present indicative, regular past, irregular past, direct object; Simple addition - third person singular, past tense: -ed, article, preposition) MISFORMATIONS (Overgeneralization reflexive pronoun, regular past, third person singular, Arch1/Alternating Forms - auxiliary, prepositions, subject pronoun, possessive pronoun, negative, quantifiers) and MISORDERING (aux in simple Question, aux in embedded Question, adverb) (op.cit. 166-170). This classification of errors is an attempt to equate L2 acquisition with that of L1. However, they also mention interlingual errors caused by the influence of the L1. Richards (1973) further classifies Intralingual and Developmental errors and their causes in the following way:
1. Overgeneralization

It refers to the transfer of previous learning in the new learning situation. It "... covers instances where the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language" (Richards 1973:99), e.g. He can sings.

Gorbet (1979) observes that overgeneralization errors are caused by the incomplete application of rules, failure to learn the conditions of application for rules or false concepts hypothesized. Richards, of course, deals these causes separately. Jain (1974) thinks that learners make use of prematurely acquired rules in the creation of overgeneralized structures. But Richards (1973) and Gorbet (1979) think that overgeneralized structures are related to the simplification of the utterances and create redundancy reduction. Gorbet (1979:25) gives an example like yesterday I go down town which is a common instance of reduction in the speech of children acquiring their first language. Jain (1974) also confirms that both L1 and L2 learners use the technique of reduction, but at one stage the first language learner leaves this tendency and produces matured adult speech. The continuation of reduction by a second language learner which diverges from the adult speech of the TL creates erroneous utterances. Ervin-Tripp (1969:33, as quoted in Richards 1973:99) suggests that "...possibly the morphological and syntactic simplifications of second language learners correspond to some simplifications common among children (i.e. mother tongue speakers) learning the same language." This observation is confirmed in Dulay et al. (1982). But rigorous studies lack in the field of reduction made by the learners. The pattern of the reduction and the duration that continues in the learner is a matter of real concern for the researchers. A remedy for such fossilized forms, if any, will be needed.

Richards (1973:110) also mentions that overgeneralization is also caused by "Certain type of teaching techniques" which is similar to Corder's interpretation of inappropriate teaching and learning situation or teaching induced errors.
11. **Ignorance of Rule Restrictions**

Richards (1973) believes that errors committed by the learners using previously learned rules in the new contexts where selectional restriction applies fall into this category. They are similar to analogical creations where analogy is the cause of errors in prepositions as well as articles. For example,

He *said* to me ____*> He asked to me* (Richards 1973:100).

111. **Incomplete Application of Rules**

Errors that fall in this category are the ones which show "... the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances" (Richards 1973:102). He says that a learner may use a statement to form a question or just add a question word to it. This shows his inability to use the rules needed for transformation. The use of a question word in a statement is itself an instance of incomplete application of the rules required to form a question. For example:

*What you are doing* today?

iv. **False Concept Hypothesized**

In the course of learning a language, learners interpret a concept in such a way that it makes them create erroneous sentences. Richards (1973:103) puts this category of errors into "... a class of developmental errors which derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language". He gives an example of the past auxiliary verb *was* which may be interpreted as past tense marker producing the following type of sentence:

*One day it was happened.* (op.cit.p.108)

In a similar *circumstance* is may be taken as the present tense marker to produce a sentence like:

*He is speaks* French. (op.cit.p.108)
From the above discussion, it is clear that Richards' classification of errors covers Corder's causes of errors except the false cognates. It also includes many successive studies in the field of EA. Hence, the present study keeps up the same spirit while analysing the errors in the following chapter.

2.3.7. Limitations of Error Analysis

EA emerged in the field of applied linguistics to overcome some of the weaknesses of CA. The focus of criticism addressed to CA was on its claim for predictive ability. The proponents of EA could convince the people of such a serious weakness. However, the limitations that cropped up in EA remain a matter of discussion today. Schachter et al. (1977:442) believe that "... they (the proponents of EA) have to a large extent failed to focus their attention on the possibility that there are corresponding weaknesses in EA which would make error-based theories and materials as inadequate and one-sided as contrastively-based theories and materials are". Some of the limitations of EA are discussed below:

1. Corder (1973), Hammarberg (1974), da Rocha (1975), and Schachter et al. (1977) find the data inadequate for EA. The researchers have so far taken the errors of the learners into consideration, but non-errors are not taken into consideration. The analysis of error and non-error data can tell the success of a learner in learning a language. They suggest that careful consideration should be given to both error and non-error data.

ii. There is a problem in the identification and classification of errors. Native speakers, sometimes, have a division of opinion regarding the acceptability of certain forms produced by the learners.

iii. Schachter (1974) has shown that some learners avoid the areas in which they feel insecure. In such cases, the predictions made by CA fail and no EA can be done. Kleinmann (1977) and Schachter et al. (1977) also support the avoidance factor.
1v. Most of the studies carried out so far have made use of the data obtained from the learner "under a single set of circumstances" (Gleason 1961:391) which is certainly not adequate. Therefore, Corder (1973) emphasises on a need for conducting longitudinal studies.

v. Another criticism labelled against EA is its lack of explanatory ability. Chau (1975:122) believes that "Besides the methodological limitations..., EA has also been criticized for its lack of explanatory function". Schachter et al. (1977) are of the opinion that there are a large number of errors which are ambiguous. A clear distinction as to whether an error is intralingual or developmental is very hard to make.

vi. Some linguists have raised questions in the statistical tools used to count errors of the learners. da Rocha (1975) and Schachter et al. (1977) are of the opinion that a more sophisticated statistical treatment be applied in EA because in such treatment "... the emphasis is on `relative' as opposed to `absolute' frequency of error types" (Schachter et al. 1977:446).

Although the limitations of EA are discussed here, these are supposed to be helpful hints to carry out EA in order to produce desired results. Many of these limitations pointed out in the 1970's have been repaired by the researchers in successive years. Therefore, "... research into errors continues to provide a fruitful way of investigating the processes underlying FL acquisition" (Crystal 1987:373).

2.4. Error Gravity

An error generally refers to the deviated form of a language and gravity to the seriousness of it if it is compared with the adult norm of a native speaker of the language in question. Whether or not an error is a deviated form of the adult speech is not the concern here since it has already been discussed in the previous sections. Therefore, an attempt will be made here to define the term error gravity, and discuss its criteria taking the previous studies into consideration.
Richards et al. (1985:96) define error gravity as "... a measure of the effect that errors made by people speaking a second or foreign language have on communication or on other speakers of the language". This definition lays emphasis on communication aspect of language obviously referring to the communicative approach to language teaching which assesses a learner's language in terms of his success in communication. Johansson (1973) relates error gravity with two goals of foreign language teaching, i.e. comprehensibility and conformity. Comprehension in his sense refers to the intelligibility of an utterance whereas conformity to the effect of it in communication. Thus, the objective of evaluation has to be set accordingly.

Palmer (1980:93-94) defines error gravity as "... a mathematical means of expressing which errors are the most serious, and how serious they are..." He proposes error gravity distribution (EGD) factor to answer to this need. He distinguishes this concept from the others such as the degree of communicative difficulty and the notion of globality of errors since this approach surmises that "seriousness is related to frequency" (op.cit. p.94). But at times, he has not been able to refrain himself from the main stream of communication, when he says "... in practical terms it is actual error frequency which gives the student his communication problems and the teacher his work" (op.cit. p.94). The frequency count itself is taken for setting up of remedial priorities.

2.4.1. Criteria for Error Gravity

It is very difficult to fix a permanent set of criteria for error gravity. According to Johansson (1973), the answers obtained by putting up two questions - whether an error affects the comprehensibility of the message and whether it causes any irritation to the evaluator of the learners' language - will give clues to the seriousness of the error. He gets the following answers to his questions:
i. If a native speaker is not sure of whether a word or a construction is acceptable or unacceptable, it should not be considered an error.

ii. An error should not be considered serious, if it does not impede comprehensibility and cause any irritation to the listener or reader irrespective of its frequency or vice versa.

Apart from the criterion of comprehensibility, Johansson (1973) adds a new criterion called the degree of irritation to measure error gravity. Burt and Kiparsky (1972) bring a two-fold classification of errors, i.e. global and local. They try to show that global errors affect the overall sentence organization and severely impede communication. Therefore, they think that global errors are more serious than local errors. The seriousness of an error depends upon the emphasis given to it, too. Delisle (1982) suggests that the seriousness of an error is judged in the light of the goals set for learning a language, i.e. whether it is to achieve complete correctness or communicative success. In the case of the former, all the errors are equally serious while for the latter a different rating scale is required.

Davies (1983:310) supports this view and says that "... any error evaluation will be coloured by the particular viewpoint from which it is carried out, and thus may not be consistent with evaluations made from other viewpoints". However, she (1985:65) also proposes that "... assessment of a learner's work be made in terms of the extent to which he achieves successful communication..." if the goal of language teaching is communicative.

It can be inferred from the above discussion that while setting up criteria for error evaluation, one has to specify one's goals and then give priority to them. From the studies reviewed so far the following criteria for error gravity can be specified:

1. comprehensibility/intelligibility/communicability/conformity
2. frequency
3. degree of irritation, and
4. acceptability/unacceptability.
Apart from these focal points, assessors have to bear various other factors in mind while evaluating the errors of a learner. Davies (1983) discusses this aspect also because any suggestion should be compatible with the environment in which the teachers have to teach and assess their learners' performance. She mentions that "... the teacher's assessment is unlikely to be based solely on criteria such as frequency or degree of linguistic deviance, which would be equally available to other kinds of evaluator; instead it will be influenced by such factors as his or her own competence in both the target language and the learners' other languages, familiarity with the learners and their background, teaching priorities, the syllabus being used, in short, by the whole teaching and learning context against which he or she will inevitably view the errors" (1983: 310).

2.4.2. Previous Studies on Error Gravity

It has been discussed above that according to Johansson (1973), the assessment of errors is connected with the goals of reign language teaching and accordingly, he proposes two goals of error gravity studies, i.e. comprehensibility and conformity. If the goal is comprehensibility, the errors which impede comprehension should be regarded more serious than the others. Similarly, the errors that impair communication should be evaluated seriously if the goal is conformity. He also thinks that those errors that irritate the listener or reader are treated as more serious.

The research works carried out on error gravity so far have made use of both native and non-native speakers for evaluating the errors made by the learners in order to assess the seriousness of such errors. James (1977) collects errors from the learners of English and makes the native and non-native English teachers evaluate them in terms of their seriousness. He finds that "Non-native judges (nationals) tend to mark more severely than native speakers do" (1977:118). This study confirms an earlier study made by Nickel (1970:19 as quoted in James 1977:118) "... that native speakers are probably more tolerant of learners' errors than teachers of the same nationality as the students..."
Regarding the perception of the instructors towards learners' errors, Chastain (1980:210) says that "Depending upon native speaker linguistic tolerance, insight, interest, and patience, student language errors will be viewed as comprehensible and acceptable, comprehensible but not acceptable, or, in the case of failure to comprehend, incomprehensible". This is how even the native speaking judges differ in their judgement. Reactions of the judges vary from individual to individual, situation to situation and language to language. He also finds the criterion of comprehensibility chosen by his judges. In a different study, Chastain (1981) finds some errors more serious than others from a communicative point of view. Even native speakers sometimes fail to understand what a writer tries to communicate.

Delisle (1982) brought a new personal variable, i.e. age that plays an important role in the evaluation of learners' errors. Although she makes a reference of Politzer's (1978) study in which the variables like sex, age, and educational background are found playing an influential role in the decisions of the respondents, she finds age of the evaluator a very decisive factor in error evaluation.

Hughes and Lascaratou (1982) mention the criteria for error gravity that their three groups of judges, i.e. Greek teachers, English non-teachers, and English teachers followed. The Greek teachers emphasized the basicness of rule infringed, the English non-teachers depended on the criteria of intelligibility, while the English teachers preferred both criteria but gave preference to intelligibility. Hughes and Lascaratou support Nickel (1973) who states that native speakers are more lenient to the errors committed by the TL learners because of their superiority in the TL itself. This argument is further supported by Davies (1983). In the same way those native teachers who are familiar with the learners' language and the learning strategies also get influenced by these factors while assessing it.

Green and Hecht (1985:88) also support the studies mentioned above. Their finding is that "The German markers were much more often than the English markers the more severe judges of errors
in all the grammatical categories except preposition”. In their study native English speaking teachers are more concerned with meaning rather than accuracy. However, the non-native teachers' concern is with the form only. They can share with the learners in their native language, and communication becomes a secondary phenomenon for them while learning English. Therefore, learning a language means acquiring correct forms of it and meaning aspect can be overlooked.

Sheorey (1986:308) confirms the studies discussed so far by stating that "... native speakers (teachers as well as non-teachers) appear to be more tolerant of errors made by ESL students than non-native speakers are."

All these studies indicate that the perceptions of the native and non-native teachers are not the same regarding the assessment of the learners' errors. Now the question arises, Can there be a common consensus regarding the error gravity? It can be reached in the aspects rated by both groups, i.e. native and non-native speaker teachers, uniformly; but bridging a big gap is very unlikely. However, Sheorey suggests that the errors which are most irritating to the ESL teachers should also be taken in a similar way by the non-native teachers. Such consensus can be reached to a large extent if the goal of teaching a foreign language is alike for both native and non-native evaluators. Different countries set different goals for teaching a foreign language. Similarly, teaching and learning environments are also different in different situations which have a big influence in the learning of language. However, meeting of minds is practised by Birdsong et al. (1988) making the students do the job of an evaluator. A neutral label, i.e. seriousness of error criterion was used for the evaluation of errors. Their findings "... suggest that in terms of judging the relative seriousness of errors, students and teachers are in agreement" (Birdsong et al. 1988:8). This kind of study is done to share linguistic background and learning experience (op.cit:2) with a view to making both teachers and learners share the error judgement experience as well. This kind of activity may also help in making the remediation of errors a co-operative enterprise. The limitation
of this kind of evaluation is that the students may not be able to comprehend everything in order to judge the seriousness of a particular language item.

A recent study has been carried out by McCretton and Rider (1993) in the line of the studies mentioned above and especially James (1977), Hughes and Lascaratou (1982), Davies (1983) and Sheorey (1986) to establish a hierarchy of errors that can be used as an aid for teachers to assess the students' written work. However, McCretton and Rider differ from the earlier studies, in that the hierarchies of errors that they tried to establish are "... merely the subjects' conditioned responses to well-established educational practices" (McCretton and Rider 1993:186).

Most of these studies are based on the isolated utterances of the learners in which case, such sentences remain handicapped. Therefore, difficulties naturally arise while evaluating them. This difficulty has also been spelt out by the evaluators themselves. Similarly, an utterance may be quite intelligible and acceptable in one context but may not be so in another. Besides, judging an error is a very subjective task "... which is likely to lead to considerable variations in judgment between one teacher and another" (Davies 1985:68-69). However, as Sheorey (1986) suggests, the non-native teachers have, at least, to compromise with the native speakers wherever possible.

2.4.3. Error Correction

Correction of errors is guided by the attitude of the teachers towards errors. Some teachers take them as punishable sins while others regard them as tools which facilitate learning opportunities. Some teachers take pleasure in correcting errors and overdo them without caring for its psychological impact on the learners while others prefer escaping from this tedious job.

The notion of error correction is also guided by the learning theories behind it. The Behaviourists take errors as unwanted things which need immediate attention before they are fossil-
1?ed, but the Cognitivists take them as inevitable characteristics of learning through which one can infer the learning strategies employed by the learners.

Dulay et al. (1982) compare L2 learners’ errors with those of L1 learners and find more or less the same trends in both of them. Therefore, they prefer calling such errors as developmental. However, a teacher cannot refrain himself from the correction work because the "Skill in correction of errors lies in the direction of exploiting the incorrect forms produced by the learner in a controlled fashion" (Corder 1973:294). But while doing so, care should be taken so that its effect on the learner remains positive. Bolitho (1995:47) observes that "The effect of over-correction or insensitive correction on learners’ confidence is often visible to an observer in the classroom." Therefore, correction work should be encouraging and yielding a positive effect on the learners so that it does not deter their fluency.

Correction work is further viewed in terms of the objective of language teaching and learning. If the objective is to achieve fluency for communicative purposes, correction can be relaxing; but if the objective is to obtain accuracy, errors should be corrected very carefully.

A new trend has been emerging with regard to the correction of errors. The researchers suggest to correct such errors as impede comprehensibility like global errors, but not the local ones which are not serious. However, care should be taken even when correcting the most serious errors.

2.4.4. Error Remediation

The main purpose of EA is to identify, describe, and explain errors. On the basis of the results of the study, relative gravity of errors is measured. The most serious errors are given immediate remediation and materials for such purpose are designed bearing the seriousness of the errors in mind. It is practically difficult to handle materials for the remediation of errors addressed to the individual learner in a large class. However,
errors common to all or addressed to the majority of learners need special attention. It does not mean that the teacher need not pay attention to individual learners, however, individual problems should be dealt with in such a way that other students in the class should not remain stagnant. A careful planning is necessary for making everyone in the class equally active. In this regard Bhatia (1974:347) suggests that "...frequent errors or errors common to a large number of students, can be handled on a group basis; whereas infrequent errors, errors causing trouble to relatively few students, can be handled on an individual basis." She also suggests three types of drill – repetition, substitution and transformation – for the purpose of remedial teaching. However, drills become boring unless they are contextualized. Therefore, communicative drills are suitable for effective remediation.

Task-based language teaching programmes have become very successful these days for classroom practice. Such tasks can equally be useful for remedial instruction also. Though the preparation of remedial materials addressed to individual problems is a strenuous work for an individual teacher, they, if prepared, make everyone in the class active.

2.4.5. Conclusion

This chapter contains the theoretical bases for the present study. It begins with the discussion on CA which brought a revolution in the second or foreign language teaching during the 1940's and 1950's. However, due to criticisms' lodged against it, EA came into practice during the 1960's. Errors are viewed differently at different periods. A change in the attitude towards them brings a subsequent change in the ELT methodology.

A systematic analysis of errors, with a view to observing the learners' learning strategies, is considered essential for preparing syllabuses, textbooks and teaching and learning materials. A new outlook into the sources of errors, previously
claimed to be solely due to mother tongue interference, has emphasized the facilitating role of mother tongue in language learning.

Several studies have been carried out on error gravity in order to distinguish serious errors from non-serious ones. The correction of errors and their remediation are guided by the seriousness of errors. The more serious the errors are, the more attention they need to be paid for their remediation.