CHAPTER THREE

ERROR ANALYSIS

In this chapter the theory of Error Analysis will be discussed. The theoretical and historical background of Error Analysis will also be provided. It will focus on definition, scope, description and levels of errors.

3.1 Introduction

Language is unique to human beings. At the same time, we all know that, "To err is human". Error in language is also a human fact. Language error is "an unsuccessfully bit of language." (Carl James: 1998, p.1) So, Error Analysis is the study of errors, their nature, causes and consequences. Error Analysis is a branch of applied linguistics. Historically it came after Contrastive Analysis. Every learner has his own mother tongue. (MT). While learning a new language i.e. target language (TL), he develops a different approximative system which has some elements of mother tongue and some elements of target language which is a mixture of MT and TL. It is a language unique to the student himself. Linguists call it Interlanguage (IL). In applied linguistics, if there is comparison between MT and TL, it is known as Contrastive Analysis. If there is a comparison between IL and TL it is known as Error Analysis. Similarly, the comparison between MT and IL is known as Transfer Analysis (or) Language Transfer. The following figure clearly clarifies the position of these three types of analysis.

Fig. 3.1

MT -------------------------------------------------► TL
Interlanguage (IL)
MT : TL Comparisons (Contrastive Analysis)
IL : TL Comparisons (Error Analysis)
MT : IL Comparisons (Transfer Analysis)
Contrastive Analysis was popular in 1950's and 60's. The teachers would compare the features of MT and TL and discuss the similarities and differences between the two. By the early 1970's linguists began to think of the reliability of Contrastive Analysis. They questioned its over association with structures of two languages. Another problem was with predictions done by Contrastive Analysis. For example, the Contrastive Analysis of Marathi, Hindi, or Indian languages with English suggests that as Indian languages do not have articles, Indian speakers make an error while speaking in English. They generally omit articles. Though this is true, Contrastive Analysis fails to give the reason for the use of inappropriate articles. In 1972 Selinker propounded a new idea that there exists an interlanguage between MT and TL. So instead of comparing MT and TL, IL and TL should be compared. This notion gave birth to Error Analysis.

Error Analysis existed even before 1970's. In 1929, S.A. Leonard published a book *The Doctrine of Correctness in English Usage*. This book concentrated on the errors done by native speakers. In 1948 Brown and Scragg did a study of the errors done by the second language learners. They published their well known book, *'Common Errors in Gold Coast English'*. There were such several early writings dealing with errors of students without labeling it as systematic branch of applied linguistics. In 1962 D.A.L. Harper submitted his dissertation in applied linguistics to Edinburgh University. He argued that "once a mistake has been made in a second language, to describe and tabulate it is possible in terms of the second language alone" (Harper, 1962, p.19). This approach advocates the need of interlanguage.

Error Analysis became excessively popular in 1970's. S.P. Corder wrote a very influential paper, *The Significances of Learners Errors* in 1967. Error Analysis is an invaluable source of information to teachers. It provides information on students' errors which in turn helps teachers to correct students'
errors and also improves the effectiveness of their teaching. Error Analysis has been conducted to identify strategies which learners use in language learning, to track the causes of learner's errors, obtain information on common difficulties in language learning or on how to prepare teaching materials. Similarly, the systematic analysis of student's errors can be of great value to all those concerned, i.e., teachers, students and the researchers. Corder was of the opinion that mother tongue or first language helps in learning second language. Secondly, learners make errors on the basis of what they have taken in and not on the basis of what the teachers have put in. In other words intake is different from input. So, learners develop their own system. Errors show that the process of learning second language has begun. S.P. Corder distinguishes mistakes from errors. To him, errors are significant for three reasons.

1. Errors tell the teacher what to teach.
2. Errors tell the researcher how learning proceeds.
3. Errors tell the students to correct their notion about second language.

Other important contributions to the development of Error Analysis were done by H.V. George, M. Burt, and C. Kiparsky. According to George, the main causes of learner's errors are redundancy of code, unsuitable presentation in the class and various interferences. He is against the demand of fluency over accuracy. He advocates giving the learner time for reflection. Burt and Kiparsky have discussed six types of errors. They mostly focused on the grammatical aspects of first language and second language. Apart from these works, we can also mention Longman Dictionary of Common Errors (1987) and the research done in various universities discussing the errors done by foreign learners of English.

Today Error Analysis enjoys a wide spread appeal among the students of applied linguistics. The data provided by Error Analysis is more in demand
than the theoretical aspects associated with it. Error Analysis is associated not only with foreign language teaching but also with linguistics and its various branches for example forensic linguistics.

3.2 Scope of Error Analysis:

Error Analysis is not a narrow academic pursuit. It has a wide scope. It is useful for both native speakers and foreign learners. Since 1980's there has been a public concern in Britain about maintaining the standards of English. In a BBC radio talk on 4th Nov. 1985, Lord Tebbit, a former conservative MP said

"We've allowed so many standards to slip..........
Teachers weren't bothering to teach kids to spell and to punctuate properly..... If you allow standards to slip to the stage where good English is no better than bad English, where people turn up filthy.... at school.....All those things tend to cause people to have no standards at all, and once you lose standards then there's no imperative to stay out of crime. (Carl James, 1998, p.25)"

This statement clarifies that standards of language are associated with standard of life. So, loss of standard language is socially and politically alluring. For the native speakers, the demand for standard language without any mixing up of dialects is the result of the political desire to be at the centers. Instead of judging the appropriateness of such a desire, let’s focus on the utility of Error Analysis for the native speakers. Error Analysis gives an opportunity to the teachers of native English to study the difference in the various dialects of English and maintain the norms of standard English. It also becomes useful when we consider the written form of English. Linguists generally allow the use of any dialect in spoken form but so far as the written
form is concerned they demand clarity and effectiveness of expression. Written form needs to be precise and unambiguous. Error Analysis helps in this respect.

For a foreign learner, standard English or at least internationally accepted English is always desirable. The development of new Englishes i.e. the verities of English - American English, Australian English and Indian English is quite welcoming but to avoid confusions created by the local influences, foreign learner needs to aim at a closeness with the standard English. For example, when it comes to accent a neutral accent is the globally accepted one. Students can be taught to speak in neutral accent by showing them the errors that have occurred due to their local influences.

Error Analysis becomes useful to study language change and even language loss. It also helps in studying the deviance in literature. In the literately texts we find the writer breaking the rules of English and experimenting with the language. Though such deviances are allowed under the name of poetic licenses, they suggest the directions of language change. An analysis of these deviances leads to a better understanding of the language.

As said in the beginning, 'To err is human'. Errors can be found and analyzed in all human activities but let's focus on the scope of Error Analysis. Apart from language learning, Error Analysis is also used in forensic linguistics. If there is some utterance written on the side of crime or recorded in tapes, the identification of the criminal is done on the basis of Error Analysis of such utterances. Error Analysis today has left the boundaries of language and linguistics. It is used in instructional science also while teaching mathematics the teachers have found a systematic pattern of errors done by the students. To correct them, Error Analysis becomes a must. Only one example is being cited here. In tabular additions, the errors occur as follows.
3.3 Definition of Error

A native speaker sometimes makes mistakes while speaking not because he lacks the competence but because of extra linguistic features such as memory lapses, physical states such as tiredness and psychological conditions such as strong emotions. A native speaker knows his mistakes immediately. These mistakes are non-systematic and unpredictable. A second language learner also commits such mistakes. But they are not important for Error Analysis. The error analyst is more interested in the systematic errors a learner makes in his attempt to approximate to the target language system. The learner does not know these errors and he cannot correct them without guidance. H. V. George (1972, p.2) defines error as “an unwanted form, specifically a form which a particular course designer or teacher does not want.” Similarly Corder, (1974, p.125) who has contributed enormously to Error Analysis, writes thus:

The study of error is a part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process.

Learners make mistakes or errors in some aspects of language like grammar and acceptability. Linguists like S.P Corder make a differentiation between error and mistake. When a learner utters a grammatically incorrect or
unacceptable sentence if he/she is able to correct the utterance on his/her own, it is not an error, it is a mistake. Corder refers to Chamsky’s rule of competence and performance. Errors are associated with failures in competence. On the other hand, mistakes are related to failures in performance. Corder's distiction between error and mistake is also in connection with his notion of idiosyncratic dialect or the interlanguage developed by the learner. There is another linguist, Edge (1989). He uses the word mistake for all types of deviances. He divides them into three types they are slips, errors and attempts. Slips are caused by carelessness on the part of the learner. The learner can autocorrect them, if pointed out. On the contrary errors are the wrong forms that the learner cannot correct on his/her own. Attempts belong to the third category of mistakes where learner produces a wrong form and an incomprehensible utterance as he/she is totally unaware of the right form. This mistake occurs in an attempt to mean something. Edge praises these attempts. Another scholar is Hammerly(1991). He talks about two kinds of deviances. One is distortion. Another is fault. Distortion occurs with known structures. They are unavoidable for the students. On the other hand, faults are related to the unknown structures. They occur when the students try to go beyond what they have learnt Edge and Hammerly have one thing in common that attempts or faults are the result of the students going beyond the known things. On the other hand they have a point of differentiation. For Edge going beyond the known thing or structures is good but for Hammerly it is not. A more comprehensive labeling of mistakes is found in the classification of deviances given by Carl James(1998). He talks about four classes - slips, mistakes, errors and solecisms. Slips or lapses can be quickly detected and self corrected. Mistakes can be corrected if pointed out by the teacher. Errors cannot be self corrected. Solecism is the result of the difference between the learner’s dialect and the standard English. So, solecism is a deviance found in the utterances of native speakers only.
Though the linguists like S.P. Corder, Edge, Hammerly and Carl James use different terms for the deviances of the students, we can define an error as

1. An unwanted form.  
2. Occurring due to learners interlanguage.
3. Cannot be self-corrected by the learners.
4. Can be explained and understood only in the relation with target language.

3.4 Study of Learner's Approximative Systems

There are new directions of research in second language because the synchronic linguistic theory was preparadigmatic in the late nineteenth century. There emerged the notion of language as a system. So the question of second language acquisition can be seen as the juxtaposition of two systems—the first and second language. The idea of interference between two systems seemed to linguists and teachers interesting because it was related to the problems of second language learning of adults.

Subsequent attempts to rectify theoretical approach to language learning into Error Analysis. But in the Contrastive Analysis there was the lack of attention paid to the analysis of two grammars. Some linguists suggested the study of the performance of actual learners. It is suggested that the linguists should study the process of language acquisition and the various strategies learners may use as Corder (1981, p.12-13) says:

We shall not be able to create such favourable conditions until we learn more about the way a learner learns and what his built-in syllabus is.

Errors should not be seen as problems to overcome. They should be seen as normal and unavoidable features indicating the strategies. He proposed that if a regular pattern of errors could be seen in the performance of all learners, in a given situation and if the learners are doing the progress through this pattern, his errors should be regarded as success and achievement in learning.
Recently there was a suggestion that the errors alone should not be focused. The complete linguistic system of the second language learner should be investigated. So the present research focuses on the learner himself as generator of the grammar of his sentences in the new language. This emphasis deals with the learner’s attempts to internalize the grammar of the language he is learning.

3.5 Significance of Learner’s Errors

The linguists have dealt with the question of learner’s errors and their correction very curiously. They find this matter annoying and troublesome. They do not give much importance to it. The application of linguistic and psychological theory to the study of language gave a new dimension to the discussion of errors. An intensive contrastive study of the systems of the second language was regarded to be the major contribution of the linguist to the language teaching. Out of this the areas of difficulty of the learners would come. This inventory would direct the teacher’s attention to these areas so that they can take special care and try to avoid them.

The field of methodology has two schools of thought regarding the learner’s errors. The first school maintains that to achieve a perfect teaching method, the errors would never be committed. The presence of errors shows the inadequacy of the teaching techniques. The second school maintains that the world is imperfect. So, the errors cannot be even by consciously trying. So the concentration should be on techniques for dealing with errors. Both these points of view are compatible.

The well-established doctrine of the past is now the subject of extensive debate. The result of this for language teaching can be far reaching. Shifting the emphasis away from a preoccupation with teaching towards a study of learning is the first effect. It has proved to be an attack upon the problem of the acquisition of the mother tongue. This has created the question whether
there are any parallels between the process of acquiring the mother tongue and learning of a second language. The usefulness of the difference between acquisition and learning is given the importance by the linguists.

The differences between the two are clear but not clear to explain. The learning of the mother tongue cannot be avoided. But this is not the matter with the second language. Learning of the mother tongue is a process of the child. The second language begins only after the maturational process is completed. Thus, learning of the first language is very different from the learning of the second language.

According to this hypothesis, a new born child has an innate predisposition to acquire language. The child must be exposed to language for the acquisition process. The child has an internal mechanism of an unknown nature. It makes him able to construct a grammar of a particular language. But it is not known how he does this. This is the field of an intensive study at present time by linguists and psychologists. So, the analysis of a child’s performance could be decided after careful analysis of the successive stages of language acquisition by human children. A longitudinal description of a child’s language throughout the course of its development is the first step. These descriptions develop a picture of the procedures adopted by the child to acquire language.

The main feature that makes a difference between the two operations is the presence or absence of motivation. If the acquisition of the first language is a fulfillment of the predisposition to develop language behaviour, then the learning of the second language involves the replacement of predisposition of the infant by some other force. Motivation and intelligence are the main factors for the success in the second language. The strategies used to acquire the second and the first language are the same. But the course of sequence of learning is not the same in both the cases.
Now let's consider the errors made by learners. When a two year child utters a sentence wrongly it is not called as deviant, ill-formed, faulty or incorrect. It is not considered as an error. It is a normal childlike communication. It is thought that this is the age of the child’s linguistic development. The best evidence that a child possesses construction rules is the occurrence of systematic errors. The correct speech of a child indicates that it is the repetition of something what he has heard.

In the process of the second language learning, the input it is largely within the control of the teacher. But it would be proper to introduce a qualification about the control of input syllabus. The simple fact of presenting a certain linguistic form cannot be called the input. The learner controls this input. This can be decided by the characteristic of his language acquisition mechanism and not by those of the syllabus. In the learning of the mother tongue, the situation data available is very vast. The child is free to select his own input.

It is true that the syllabus is based on the impressionistic judgments and vaguely conceived theoretical principles. The suggestion of taking care the learner’s needs in planning the syllabus is old. But it has not led to any investigations because it is difficult to decide what the learner’s needs are. Another important issue is the sequence of learning items. The question is whether the learner generated sequence or the instructor generated sequence is more efficient.

The utterance of a correct form is not the proof that the learner has learned the system because he may repeat the heard utterance. Such behaviour is not ‘language'. It is language like. A superficially non-deviant utterance does not show the mastery of the language. Such utterance can be related to the situational context. The task of the second language learner is simple. He/she needs to test just one hypothesis. He/she needs to see if the system of
the new language is the same or different from that of the language he knew. If it is found to be different, then what its nature is. Most of the mistakes of the learner are related to the systems of his mother tongue. But they are not regarded as the result of the old habits. They are the signs that the learner is investigating the systems of the new language. The internal structure of the language acquisition device is the grammar of the learner’s native language. The learner’s possession of his native language is facilitative.

To sum up it can be said that in the modern times, there is a need of learner-oriented programmes. The focus is shifted from the teacher to the learner. Even the best teacher can only create conditions in which learning can take place. Successful teachers mould themselves according to the needs of the learners. Error Analysis provides an opportunity for this. Errors are unavoidable in the process of learning. They show the nature of the learner’s competence. Error Analysis is an important aspect of pedagogy. It analyses the nature and source of errors while learning the target language, the learner creates his own system. The utterances of the second language user have a communicative purpose. This system is a code. It is used by the native speakers of the target language. The errors show that the learner has a degree of competence in the second language. Talking about the significance of errors Heather Murray (2002, p.189) says:

Since error plays such a major role in teachers’ conceptualization of learner language, teachers who are not aware of learners’ errors and who do not know how to make use of them in their judgements about teaching can be significantly handicapped.

There are some controversies over the relevance of Error Analysis. Error Analysis, based on adequate data will indicate the areas of difficulty for
students. Error Analysis has linguistic, pedagogical and social significance. Some linguists are interested in theories of language acquisition; errors provide the feedback to check the validity of their theories. It gives the data for contrastive linguistic description of potential errors. It may improve the description of the target language.

The purpose of linguistics is to explore the workings of the human mind. Error Analysis plays an important role as it helps to understand the workings of the minds of the learner. The impact of socio-economic background on language could be investigated through Error Analysis. Such study provides fresh insights to language planning in the educational system. Thus, Error Analysis can improve the language teaching situation in number of ways. About the relevance of Error Analysis, Rosenthal (2000, p.215) remarks:

As for Error Analysis, it has become the standard methodological procedure for the investigation of language inference. Over the years, it has been progressively refined.

3.6 Limitations of Error Analysis

Realizing the significance of Error Analysis some critics point out certain limitations that should be overcome. If accurate results are expected in determining the inter-language of the learner, the errors and the correct expressions should be considered. The error analysts should have the right perspective of the learner's system which includes his achievements and his shortcomings.

There is a need of sufficiently large and representative corpus. The generalizations derived from the final results should hold true for all students in similar learning conditions. For the sake of reliability, subjectivity should
be avoided as much as possible. For linguistic descriptions it is necessary to choose the proper model. Superficial descriptions of errors as omissions, additions, wrong selection for ordering has little explanatory value. The explanations should be based on a linguistic theory.

It is believed that Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis are not necessary because they can only show what experienced teachers already know but everyone is not an experienced teacher. But even an educated teacher, is not completely aware of the difficulties of the learner. The major criticism of the Error Analysis is that it does not offer pedagogical insights to the teacher in the classroom. As Wills Edmondson (1999, p.97) says:

Simply to count mistakes is the wrong way of going about trying to understand what the learner is actually doing.

Most error analysts today identify errors and explain their sources but the main thing is to find the task and to find the footholds for the learners. Such information is systematically discarded in the procedure of Error Analysis. To resolve this stalemate the linguist should enter the field of pedagogy or the language teacher must turn into a linguist perforce. Otherwise it would be difficult to get the urgently needed information in second language teaching.

Error Analysis cannot solve all the problems of second language learning, but it can be very valuable in remedial work. It is not the prerogative of a few linguists or research scholars alone. Every language teacher should become an error analyst in his own small way. He would find language teaching very pleasant, fruitful and challenging. The present investigation focuses on the pedagogic implications of the Error Analysis.
3.7 Description of Error

The identification of errors is the next step. In the criminal investigation, the witness is needed. Similarly, in identification of errors, a knower is needed to judge or analyse the utterance. Detection is the first stage of identification. It is more difficult to spot the error in speaking than in writing. The error-detection capacities of native-speaking teachers were compared with nonnative-speaking teachers by Hughes and Lascaratou (1982). They also compared error-detection capacities of teachers and non-teachers. Another experiment has been done by Lennon (1991). After having transcribed the second language English speech of four German advanced learners of English, he was able to identify 568 clear errors; but there were 208 doubtful ones. It means that in error detection, as we pointed out earlier, not more than a reasonably firm yes/no decision is called for. We use the sentence as our unit of analysis and ask our informants to report their intuition.

The police ask an eye-witness to identify the suspect in some other way, such as saying he is the third from left, or simply pointing him out. This is error location. The next step in analytical procedure is describing errors. Instead of asking the eyewitness to indicate the criminal by pointing at him/her, the police might ask the witness to describe him/her. It is applicable for describing errors. Corder describes the two characteristics of this procedure. The first is that the system used for the description of learners errors must be well developed and highly elaborated. The second is that it should be as simple, self explanatory and easily learnable as possible. While describing errors, we do error classification also. In it, we have dictionaries of errors. Dictionaries are made in the alphabetical order. Dictionaries of errors, are no exception to it but it contains lexical and grammatical information. In the study of description of error, error taxonomies play a vital role. Error taxonomy means the branch of science that deals with classification of errors.
The surface structure taxonomy discusses omission, addition, misformation and misordering. In describing error, all these factors should be studied. Omission is nothing but ungrammatical compare. In addition, we see two negatrons or tense markers instead of one. It has some types like regularization, irregularization and simple addition. Misformation is the use of the wrong form of a structure or morpheme. For example - *I seen he yesterday. In this sentence we see the structural error. Sometimes, we observe that in a sentence we have adverbials, interrogatives and adjectives used in the erroneous sequences. They are misordering. For the foreign learner or a native speaker, it is useful to know these factors while learning the language. Taxonomy is based on a comparison of the forms of used by the foreign learner with the forms that a native speaker would have used in the same situation. There is one category which is blend error. When the learner has more than one undecided sentences in his mind or more than two targets are going on in his mind, blend error happens. Sometimes, it is called the contamination or cross-association or hybridization error.

Another important aspect is profiling. Profiling is nothing but a chart which describes an aspect of a person's spoken or written language. Language profiling is based on such instruments like GRARSP, PROPH, PROP, and PRISM. These are the instruments which are used to analysis of FL learners errors. GRARSP taxonomy is the rank of the unit of grammar at which the error was committed. It is for grammar profiling. PROPH is for phonology profiling. It is the instrument that analyses the learners' pronunciation; it observes the RP of the NS not the grammar errors. The first step of PROPH is to record 100 words of spontaneous speech and to transcribe these. The second step of it is to prepare a classification chart where each vowel and consonant is entered according to the position it occupies in the syllable. Then there are three kinds of analysis undertaken in PROPH. They are inventory,
target analysis and phonological process analysis. Thus, GRARSP and PROPH give a basis for developing FL profiling.

There are many aspects which affect the language studies. Birmingham University Corpus is known as the Bank of English. We have a complementary corpus also. It is the international corpus of English. It is at University College in London. It collects samples of English from all over the world. So, it is called new Englishes of India, The Caribbean Malaysia. They have their own native languages so they face the problem while learning other languages like English so we shall consider two projects on the computer analysis of learner language. So we have the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) and Computer- Aided Linguistic Analysis (COALA). ICLE involves English as the TL. We know that learners are having the mother tongues like French, German etc. By taking into consideration, ICLE contains a minimum of 200000 words for each learner variety, representing around 400 essays of 500 words each. It helps the learner to learn English. The COALA project is presented by Pienemann (1992). He aims to handle a corpus of learner language or IL. In it, a sentence is selected. It assigns functions as subject, object, adverbial etc. by observing the utterance. It helps to analyse linguistically the learners language. Thus it is stressing its relevance to EA.

3.8 Levels of Error

The levels of error are substance errors, text errors and discourse errors. They are based on four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing. Some errors are found in encoding speaking and writing. Some are related to listening and reading. They are called as substance errors. There are errors in composing spoken and written text. They are called text errors. There are errors in understanding spoken and written text. There are some errors in formulating or processing spoken and written discourse. They are called discourse errors. We can observe it with the following figure.
1. Errors in encoding in speaking
   (Mispronunciations)
2. Errors in encoding in Writing
   (Misspellings)
3. Errors in decoding in hearing
   (Misperceptions)
4. Errors in decoding in reading
   (Miscues)

5. Errors in Composing spoken text
   (Misspeaking)
6. Errors in Composing written text
   (Miswriting)
7. Errors in understanding spoken text
   (Mishearing)
8. Error in understanding written text
   (Misreading)

9. Errors in formulating spoken discourse
   (Misrepresenting)
10. Errors in formulating written discourse
    (Miscomposing)
11. Errors in processing spoken discourse
    (Misconstrual)
12. Errors in processing written discourse
    (Misinterpretation)

Some errors are seen in misspellings, punctuation and typography. They come under the title of **substance errors**. Language learner wants to
achieve TL. In this process, he makes errors in writing process. The above errors are related to writing process. James and Klein analysed the misspellings of German learners of English. They found that the second language spellers have four routes to spelling second language word: the routes via first language phonology, via second language phonology and via first language and second language graphology. We have two broad categories of misspellings. They are mispronunciation errors and written misencodings. The mispronunciation errors are related to the errors in phonemes of first language as well as second language target sound. Plann (1977) made experiments with the Welsh children’s English sounds like /æ/, /a:/ . He observed that one sound can be uttered in number of different ways. English /z/ is pronounced as /s/, ‘zoo’ is spelt (S00) or (SW). Misencoding has two types. They are interlingual and interalingual misencodings.

We have another level of errors. It is text error that arises from ignorance and misapplication of lexico-grammatical rules of language. It includes how these rules are exploited. Text is nothing but usage. It is of all shapes and sizes. It includes letters, sounds, words, sentences and the combinations of sentences. Some errors relate to them. Chomsky talks of the lexical errors. He states that lexis differentiates from grammar. Grammar is the part of a language. It is described in terms of generalizations or rules. But, the lexis depicts all the particular facts about the language which cannot be generalized into rules. Lexis has now taken a central role in language study. We observe that there is a bond between lexis and grammar. The learners themselves believe that vocabulary is very important in language learning. The most important reason is that lexical errors are most frequency category of error. We see a vital contribution of Grauberg (1971) in lexical errors analysis. He analyses the errors of a group of advanced learners of German with MT English. 102 out of 193 (53 percent) recorded errors were lexical.
We have some format errors of lexis. The first is ‘formal misselection’. It is called as synforms, confusables. In it, the pairs of words that look and sound similar e.g. accession/accessory create lexical problems to foreign learners and native speakers. The second is ‘misformations’. These are errors that produce ‘words’ that are non-existent in the FL. They can originate either in the MT or be created by the learner from the resources of the TL itself. The third is distortions. These are the intralingual errors of form created without recourse of first language resources.

There is another vital type of errors. It is semantic error. It has two types. The first one is ‘confusion of sense relations’. We all know that vocabulary in terms of lexical systems reflects the meaning relations existing between words. There is considerable neuro-linguistic evidence to suggest that human beings store words in the mental lexicon in terms of such sense relations. The second is ‘collocation errors’. It is may be intralingual or interlingual. The psychologists’ word association tests rely on collocation language, especially when syntagmatic associates are in focus. Whitaker (1992) observed that French learner of English as a second language make errors in selecting come and go despite having a similar contrast in their first language. He did the comparative study of some collections in English and French. Some errors are related to Grammar, especially with morphology. Some are related with syntax. They are phrase structure errors, cause errors, sentence errors and inter-sentence errors (cohesion). Morphological errors are related to handling word structure. Phrase structure errors depend on NP, VP, Adj Phrase, etc. Some errors relate to clause also. The cohesion errors have in the corpus involved in reference to conjunctions. Coherence comes under the discourse errors. We have topical, relational and sequential coherences. Topical coherence refers to the need for the components of discourse to be relevant to its general topic or goal. Relational coherence
refers to the requirements for the propositions constituting a discourse to be related to each other. Sequential coherence refers to the need for constituting propositions to be arranged in some effective order.

There are other levels of errors such as pragmatic errors and receptive errors. Pragmatic errors happen when speakers misencode or hearers misencode a message, not to the detriment of its meaning but to the detriment of its pragmatic force. There is a gap or difference in understanding the sentence. e.g. *Bring me a glass of water!* In this sentence, there is confusion whether it is a command or request. It depends on utterance of the speaker and understanding nature of hearer. Receptive errors depend upon the misunderstanding, mishearing and reflect failures to process linguistic items - phonological, lexical and grammatical.

3.9 Classification of Errors

All errors are not of equal importance. The teacher has a limited time. So, he has to consider carefully what errors he should take for correction. This creates the question of the classification of errors. Linguists have opposed different categories for the classification of errors. Errors have two broad categories those which can be predicted and those which are unpredictable.

There is another classification - global and local. Global mistakes are those that violate rules involving the overall structure of a sentence, the relations among constituent classes, or in a simple sentence, the relations clause of a complex sentence. Global mistakes are not found in native language acquisition.

The linguists (Celce-Murcia, M. and others, 1996, p.20) have proposed a three way classification of language learning errors. They are as follows
1) Interlingual Errors: Those errors caused by negative transfer from the learner’s first language.

2) Intralingual Errors: Those errors stemming from marked or complex features in the structure of the target language itself and which thus seem to be committed by all second language learners of the target language regardless of their native language.

3) Developmental Errors: Those second language errors that reflect the same problems and strategies that young children encounter and use in acquiring the target language as their first language.

3.10 Criticism of Error Analysis

There are some doubts about the correctness of the assumptions of Error Analysis and its methodology. Roger Bell (1974, p.25-26) calls it ‘pseudo procedure’. He quotes Abercrombie’s definition of pseudo procedure:

I intend the term pseudo procedure to be taken quite literally. I mean by it something which masquerades as a procedure, but which is not one. If ‘procedure’ is taken to mean ‘way or method of conducting an investigation, then a pseudo procedure is something which is put forward as a way of conducting an investigation, but which in fact, is impossible, or at best a completely impracticable way.
Roger Bell gives many arguments to support his claim. He says that we cannot know whether 'a correct form' has occurred in a text produced by a learner by chance, or through the application of the appropriate rule. The same is true of errors.

One of the basic assumptions of Error Analysis is to deal with regular and systematic errors. It is difficult to judge utterances because suitable judges are not available. It is difficult to judge what is right and what is wrong in the performance of the students. In some of the situations even a native speaker is not sure of himself. But the error analysts do not pay attention to these points. They are interested more in fundamental issues. The teachers are the best judges. So a teacher-turned analyst can be the ideal judge. He has the required linguistic and the pedagogical background. Recognition and description of errors are linguistic tasks. The explanation of errors is an impressionistic and psycho-linguistic undertaking. So the explainer is forced into hypothesizing about the nature of a system to which he has no direct access. So he must qualify his explanations more strongly than his descriptions. A linguist has no direct access to the human mind. He attempts to reconstruct the workings of human mind through the construction of a grammatical model. Scientific investigation has a series of successive hypotheses. Each disapproves the previous one. It is imperative that the error analyst form hypotheses about the learner's inter-language and then test their validity.

Error analysts hold two incompatible views on the question of autonomy. The inter-language is one and at the same time the unique result of the individual's research and an example of some kinds of research. This is like the distinction between an idiolect and a dialect. Each individual has his idiolect. It is also the manifestation of a particular dialect. Teachers are not concerned with setting right the idiosyncrasies of every individual learner.
They are more interested in the group. It is difficult to conduct the analysis quickly. The learner moves on faster than our analysis.

It is believed that the students don't commit the same mistakes and move on to newer ones. But the teachers have different experience. They try to correct the same mistakes again and again. The error analysts are not concerned about the errors of a particular student. Course designers and curriculum planners do not change their concepts with every set of students. Rod Ellis (1994, p.48-50) has criticized the studies of Error Analysis for the following reasons:

Many studies do not include the evaluation of learners errors, (It) has generally been handled as a separate issue with its own method of enquiry....Insufficient attention was paid to identifying and controlling the factors that might potentially influence the errors that learners produced.
3.11 Works Cited


