III. Review of CA and EA literature

A. Contrastive Analysis Development: a short history

Contrastive and error analysis have made large and in some situations fundamental contribution to the field of language teaching and analysis. They have been applied both theoretically and pedagogically to overcome some basic and meanwhile essential problems of language learning and teaching. In fact, the two schools in their development have greatly assisted linguists to develop their theories, material designers to prepare linguistically based textbooks and materials in order to give a logical hierarchy of presentation to their teaching sequences, and language teachers to give the required emphasis to each part and test makers to recognize the major problems of the given learners and to provide their tests with appropriate content and sequence. For example, CA provides information about the linguistic system of the learners’ L1 and their L2, and in the same manner, the similarities and differences of the two systems are illustrated. These are useful to predict some areas of learning difficulties which may prove useful for selecting, ordering, and grading the content of the pedagogical grammar and as a subsequent step to present suitable exercises for each component with appropriate size, shape, and emphasis.

EA in the same manner can contribute in determining the sequence of presentation of L2 items in textbooks and classrooms and identifying the level of
emphasis, explanation, and practice by identifying and classifying L2 learners and locating the plausible sources of errors.

In the following section, the short history of CA and EA, their relevance and development, as well as the drawbacks will be discussed.

Contrastive studies have a very long history. Ziahosseiny has stated that as early as 1000 AD Aelfric wrote his *Grammatica*, a grammar of Latin and English, based on the implicit assumption that "the knowledge of one language may facilitate the learning of another language". Besides, it is claimed that the systematic study of contrastive analysis (CA) begins in the 15th century, and it is not called so until 1941.

The word "contrast", as it is stated by Krzeszowski, had not appeared in literature until the end of the 18th century which was first used to indicate the comparison of two languages for pedagogical purposes. Besides, John Hewes in the 17th century was the first to state the idea that the knowledge of the native grammar can not only facilitate learning a foreign language but also interfere with it. His book which was published in 1624 was devoted to a long introductory section to presenting fundamentals of English. However, CA has been developing on a large scale since the late sixties, and in the same way, the interest in contrastive linguistics has grown in Europe since 1980. This can be proved by looking at different journals and publications discussing CA throughout this period.

Contrastive studies are not very recent phenomena. They can be traced back to fifties or even sixties when most published studies were theoretical. Although they did not receive the present name until 1941, it goes back to the last decade of 19th and the beginning of 20th century. J. Rusiecki states that in 1954

---

Ibid. PP. 1-2.
Op Cit, P. 19.
Zellig Harris presented the idea of *transfer grammar* which later on was adopted by others. He holds that the first pedagogical contrastive study of two languages in which the term “contrastive analysis” was used was Robert Stockwell’s *Contrastive Analysis of English and Tagalog*. Banathy et al\(^1\) state that a number of studies in order to contrast English with other languages such as German and Spanish have been undertaken by the Center for Applied Linguistics including two English-German studies by Moulton (1962) and Kufner (1962). She, moreover, adds that among some earlier studies, the Belasco series (Cardenas, 1961; Hall, 1961; Magner, 1961; Marchand, 1961; Valdman, 1961) and Politzer’s work (1961) can be mentioned.

Meanwhile, as Rusiecki\(^2\) states the term “contrastive study” was already used by Hockett (1948) and the term “general contrastive linguistics” was proposed by Trager (1949). On the whole, writers to indicate any type of linguistic comparisons have been applying different terminology to refer to nearly the same discipline. For instance, we can point out to “Bilingual Description (Haugen, 1954); Comparative Analysis of Structural Patterns of the two Languages (Sitachitts, 1955); Interlingual Comparison (Politzer, 1958); Parallel Descriptive Structural Analysis, (Fries, 1959); Syntactic Descriptive Comparisons of Languages (Lado, 1960), and finally Descriptive Comparisons (Catford, 1968). It is moreover claimed that since 1959 the terms “contrastive linguistics” and “contrastive analysis” or “contrastive study” have been proposed, some writers have preferred not to adopt the terms cited above.

The year 1953 is of great importance in the history of contrastive linguistics because of the publication of Uriel Weinrech’s *Language In Context*. He, for the first time, discussed the phenomenon of bilingualism as it is observed in their social contexts where two languages are used. Weinrech in his studies came to the conclusion that “The greater the difference between the two systems, i.e., the more


\(^2\) Op Cit. P.14.
numerous the mutually exclusive forms and patterns in each, the greater is the learning problem and the potential area of influence.”

Charles Fries and Robert Lado have been considered as two leading structuralists who have had great impact on developing CAH. Pedagogical contrastive studies may be said to date from 1945, the year of publication of Charles Fries’ *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*. It is believed that after Fries, it was R. Lado whose work, *linguistics across cultures* soon became a classic field manual for practical CA. In fact it can be claimed that modern CA starts with Lado and his work and in the same way contrastive linguistics reached maturity in 1957, with the publication of Robert Lado’s source. On the other hand, along with the linguists of his time, Fries subscribed to the behaviorist analysis of linguistic competence as a series of habits. To Fries, native language influence was thus influenced by old habits while some of them potentially helpful and some others harmful. Anthony\(^\text{12}\) asserts that Charles Fries, as a strong proponent of audiolingualism has proposed two important premises of structural linguistics as far as the nature of language is concerned: “Language is primarily oral, and language is a system of contrasting structural patterns” B.F.Skinner, as a pioneer of behavioristic psychology proposed operant and instrumental learning as basics of behaviorism. He adds that verbal behavior exemplifies operant behavior, and that the habits already acquired in first language acquisition tend to interfere with the process of acquiring the target language (TL) habits whenever the first language (L1) and the second language (L2) are in conflict. His psychological conclusions are reflected in the following:

1) Memorization and practice drills are used extensively to establish the new language skills as habits.
2) Materials take into account contrasts between the native language and the foreign language system.\(^\text{13}\)

As a consequence of these assumptions about language and language behavior, materials have been provided which above all employ sound linguistic

description and contrastive analysis to select and order language features to be taught.

Jackson\(^{14}\) believes that the first contrastive studies done in America were on English/German, English/Spanish, and English/Italian and with work on English/French and English/Russian unpublished. He, moreover, adds that contrastive projects currently running are mostly in European countries, contrasting their native languages with English/Polish, Finish, Serbo, Croat, and German. It can be understood from the published materials that the first studies focused on contrasting English and other languages while in later years, specially in Europe, other non-English languages are contrasted. In other words, CAH is applied so extensively throughout different countries that they prefer to use its principles to scientifically modify the languages in comparison.

In the following years, as contrastive studies quantitatively increased, various terms have been applied by different writers. For example, the successive linguistic system that a learner constructs on his way to the mastery of a TL has been referred to as Corders’ idiosyncratic dialects, Nemsers’ Approximative system, Sampson & Richards’ Learner Language System and Selinkers’ Interlanguage. The term interlanguage is used vastly in the literature to donate different purposes and for the following reasons: 1) it captures the intermediate status of the learners’ system between his L1 and TL. 2) it represents the instability of changes of the learning processes. 3) the term language can be meaningful enough to indicate the rule-governed nature of the learner’s performance and its functional, communicative system. Moreover, J.B. Carroll\(^{15}\) uses the term facilitation and interference to discuss CA: “facilitation and interference are spoken of as representing positive or negative transfer, respectively”. He moreover

\(^{13}\) Ibid, P. 46.


adds to maximize positive and minimize negative transfer, some steps must be taken, one of which is asking questions about the age of the learner. He believes that young children are less subjective to interference than the old. To him, the intelligence and motivation of the learners are important factors in determining the degree of interference. Odlin\textsuperscript{16} confirms that the pedagogical practice proposed by Fries and others encourage the vast use of contrastive studies for pedagogical purposes. Many books, articles, and graduate thesis from 1950 to 1970 reflect the growth of such study.

After Fries and Lado presented their propositions from a structural view point, it was the Chomskian revolution in linguistics against structuralism and operant learning which gave a new way to teaching methods as well as CA. His ideas made CA to be more explicit and precise and subsequently the linguistic foundation centered around “Language Universals.” To this proposal, it is claimed that one important reason because of which CA is supported and its validity is confirmed is the fact that facilitation may occur as the result of similarities in different languages which made learning a language an easy activity, so the grammarians become interested in discovering what various languages have in common.

B. Theoretical Assumptions of Contrastive Analysis

CA has always been following specific goals and procedures in its development, and its assumptions have had both theoretical and pedagogical applications in ELT. The goal of this chapter is to consider the underlying principles which govern the most dominant changes in the development of these theories.

The two terms “contrastive linguistics” and “contrastive analysis” are defined. The former is a name for the discipline as a whole, while the latter is used to refer both to the process of comparing languages and to the complete result of

any such investigation. Besides, the aim of contrastive linguistics, in the broad sense of the term, is to provide a comparative description of pairs or groups of languages and that the immediate goals of contrastive studies are in most cases practical rather than theoretical, and the terms contrastive linguistics or contrastive analysis are generally understood to indicate applied studies.

Catford assigns an explanatory function for CA, not a predictive one. To this, he adds that CA can provide some insight into the language where the teacher may see it necessary to provide his learners with more intensive explicit instruction for the specific cases of the language having been taught. The following traditional objectives have been enumerated for CA and the goals that it follows:

One) Providing insights into similarities and differences between languages,
Two) Explaining and predicting problems in L2 learning,
Three) Developing course materials for language teaching.

Considering contrastive analysis from a traditional viewpoint, we can introduce an applicable and utilitarian purpose for it. What the student has to learn equals the sum of the differences established by the contrastive analysis. The change that has to happen in the language behavior of an L2 learner can be equated with the differences between the structure of learner’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. The task of the writer of a foreign language teaching program is to develop materials which will be based on a statement of these differences and finally the duty of the teacher is to be aware of these differences.

Ziahosseini has proposed the following applications for CA:

1. Contrastive linguistics can reformulate the existing grammatical descriptions.
2. Contrastive data may help the linguist draw generalizations about language and apply explanations for errors in error analysis.


\(^{18}\) Op Cit, P. 8.
3. It can play an important part in the study of second/foreign language acquisition, for example, in determining the role of interference and generalization.

One great concern of contrastive linguists has been defining the goals and functions of CA. To fulfill this goal, there have been two major areas of debate and controversies: theoretical and applied contrastive linguistics. As it can be understood from the related literature, the theoretical studies of CA were carried more seriously by Prague School of Linguistics. Meanwhile, it is believed that the theoretical assumptions are useful for learners, teachers, course designers, and textbook writers.

It is, moreover, added that theoretical studies are not directional and they merely look for the realization of universal categories present in the language.

Yarmohammadi \(^{19}\) puts forth the idea of contrastive pedagogical grammar, a byproduct of applied linguistics and introduces the following goals for a contrastive pedagogical grammar of English and Persian:

1. To provide information about grammatical facts of the English language needed for the desired proficiency of Persian learners at a given level;
2. To illustrate similarities and differences between the two linguistic systems involved, with special elaboration and emphasis on differences of Iranian L2 learners of English;
3. To predict and specify some of the possible major learning difficulties;
4. To apply the information obtained from 2 and 3 for selecting, ordering, and grading the content of the pedagogical grammar and to provide suitable exercises for each component with appropriate size, shape, and emphasis.

Besides, the objectives mentioned above, pedagogical CA can be applied to preparing textbooks for learners of different L1s and by resorting to CA, the structure of the textbook, selection of teaching and testing items, degree of emphasis, kinds of practice, etc. will be geared to learners' native language. Above all, it is asserted that the materials based on CA entail a more mentalistic teaching technique, i.e., "explicit presentations of points of contrast and similarity with the native language involves an analytical, cognitive activity"\(^{20}\).

---


One prevailing application of CA has been stated to be the predictive power of contrastive studies. The scientific comparison of the two languages in question can help the analysts to predict many ideas about them. This can happen before the researchers resort to real subjects in their investigations based on speakers of the languages. In other words, the differences and sometimes similarities can be predicted by contrasting the languages in question.

C. Trends and Approaches in Contrastive Analysis

Linguistic comparisons have various contrasting forms such as contrastive error, performance, and discourse. These comparisons have witnessed several approaches throughout their development. Historical linguistics aiming at finding the common genetic background for whole group of languages has characterized the 19th century. The next approach following it is “typological linguistics” when languages were grouped on the basis of various characteristics which they share. The goal of this approach is comparative investigations in order to find underlying similarities among very different languages. Later on contrastive linguistics which is concerned with similarities and differences in languages rather than grouping them genetically and typologically emerged. To differentiate between contrastive and typological linguistics, we can refer to the fact that the latter mainly focuses on clusters of languages united by some common features while the former centers around pairs of languages and explores similarities and differences between them. However, it is believed that early contrastive analysts did not base their work on any particular methodology and the analysis was provided in a more or less intuitive way, like folk medicine, without much theory and without much explanation. Theoretically-oriented contrastive studies were continued from the late twenties throughout the inter-war period and later on into the sixties supported by Prague School specifically V. Mathesius (1928) and his followers. In later periods, contrastive analysis was heavily affected by the proponents of

22 Op Cit, P: 3.
structuralism who applied it for many purposes and provided it with fundamental basis and principles which were regarded as the building blocks of the contrastive analysis for the years following it.

1. CA and Structuralism

The early phases of CA are closely related to American structuralism, and many of the early CA were written under the influence of Bloomfieldian type of structuralism. This school leaves a strong emphasis on differences between languages and since contrastive linguistics is often related with the audio-lingual approach to language teaching, and since the linguistic theory behind audiolingualism was structuralist, it is common to find statements on the effect that contrastive analysis in the forties and fifties were written in the Neo-Bloomfieldian influence.23

Charles Fries24, among other structuralists, provided his materials on scientific description of the native language. To this purpose, he states:

The most effective materials (for teaching an L2) 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.

He, moreover, may be said to have been the pioneer of modern CA. Fries overemphasizes the idea that for a foreign language learner to move satisfactorily toward mastery of a foreign language, it is highly necessary to provide materials based on “adequate descriptive analysis of both the language to be studied and the native language of the student”.25

25 Ibid. P: 5.
The close association of contrastive analysis to behaviorism and stimulus-response theory has brought about the relationship between interference theory and structuralism. Dulay and Burt have elaborated the idea in the following:

Interference theory until at least 1959 rests on the assumption of the association of context and/or stimulus with response. Learning a new response to the same stimulus and/or in the same context would require ‘extinction’ of the old association. Otherwise, the old habit would prevail. The prevalence of an old habit in attempting to perform a new task is called ‘negative transfer’.

Contrastive linguistics developed in 1950s in America out of behaviorism which was the dominant school of psychology interested in second language learning theories. Behaviorists believed that only externally observable behavior was psychologically relevant for study and that internal mechanism responsible for that behavior could not be investigated scientifically. The behaviorists influenced proponents of the American linguistic school of structuralism in the way that these linguists viewed language. Structuralists thought that language itself consisted of externally conditioned habits. The knowledge of a language is made up of that set of habits demonstrated by the language user. CA in 1960s was based on surface structuralist description of the two languages concerned. The procedures which was above all at work at that time includes 1) the description, i.e., a formal description of the two compared languages was presented ,2) selection, i.e., certain areas or items of the two languages were selected in order to be compared in details, 3) comparison, i.e., differences and similarities are identified and 4) prediction, i.e., the areas which may cause errors are introduced or predicted.

Contrastive analysis is based on the theory of psychology and language learning and supports the assumption that language is habit and its acquisition involves the establishment of new set of habits. According to behaviorism, if the

structures of the first and the second language are the same, learning is facilitated, and if they are different, errors will emerge.

Soon after the revolutionary ideas of Chomsky and his followers and their criticism of Structuratism and behaviorism, cognitive learning and generative-transformational grammar find their way into linguistics and subsequently into language teaching. James, opposing the ideas that CA has been linked to cognitive psychology, believes that CA originates in behavioristic psychology, and not in cognitive psychology. On the whole, in its way to develop, CA has benefited from a few leading versions which have been actively used in pedagogy. As a consequence, the ideas proposed by the proponents of cognitive learning cast doubt on the assumptions of behaviorism supported for two or more decades on rote and motor learning.

2. Different Versions of CA

Based on the linguistic outlook supporting CAH, the strong version (SV), weak version (WV), and moderate version (MV) of CA emerged. Each of these versions, having nearly the same goal, follow certain procedures in their methodology. According to Lee, the SV of CAH is based on the following assumption: “the differences of the two languages make the most difficulty for the learners”. In order to follow outcomes of CAH from a structural point of view, one set of knowledge (first language) came into contact through the learning process with a second set of knowledge (the target language). If the structures in comparison matched, learning was easy, and if they differed, the outcome was

difficulty and this is generally termed as Language Distance condition. The idea implies that the learning of similar items in the foreign language is easy and that of the different items is difficult and that the degree of difficulty depends on the degree of differences. In the strong view, it was concluded that predictions can be made about learning an L2 and about the degree of success of language teaching materials based on a comparison between two languages. The strong form of CAH claims that on the basis of differences, learning problems can be predicted. Ellis maintains that according to Behaviorists, the main obstacle on learning was the interference from prior knowledge. "proactive inhibition" happens when old habits interfere with the attempts to learn new ones. This is why, behaviorist theory of L2 learning emphasized the idea of "difficulty" which is defined as the amount of effort required to learn an L2 pattern. The degree of difficulty was supposed to depend, first of all, on the degree to which the target language pattern was similar to or different from a native-language pattern. When the idea of transfer was introduced, its manifestation in behaviorism is demonstrated as being:

Where the two (languages) were identical, learning could take place easily through positive transfer of the native-language patterns, but where they were different, learning difficulty arose and errors resulting from negative transfer were likely to occur. Such errors or bad habits were considered damaging to successful language learning, because they prevented the formation of the correct target-language habits. The commonly held view was that "like sins, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence is to be expected".  

Two main assumptions on which the SV of CA has been established are that first of all the chance of L2 learning problems occurring will increase due to the increase of linguistic differences between L1 and L2 and as a result linguistic differences give rise to interference. Second, the chance of L2 learning problems occurring will increase due to the absence of linguistic difference between L1 and L2 meaning that absence of linguistic differences give rise to facilitation.

---

31 Op cit. 341.
Later on it became evident that many errors were not the result of transfer and as a result the weak version (WV) of CA was proposed. The WV, emerging because of the pitfalls of SV, is elaborated by Ziahosseini\textsuperscript{33} as being "diagnostic and explanatory." In this respect errors are explained and interpreted after they are committed by learners. According to the WV, only some errors are traceable and consequently CA needed to be used together with error analysis (EA) as some errors are committed as the result of intra-lingual effects. In other words, the source of these errors has very little to do with the learners' L1. In fact, the WV of CA begins with an analysis of learners' recurring errors. It begins with what learners do and attempt to account for those errors on the basis of NL-TL differences. The important contribution of this approach was the emphasis which was given to the learners, the forms they produced, and the strategies employed to arrive at their interlanguage (IL) forms. In subsequent years, after some studies and research work and observing some controversies among both versions and when the problems of both the SW and WV were detected and elaborated by the scholars, a third version called the moderate version of CA was introduced by Oller and Ziahosseini\textsuperscript{34} on the basis that "...the language learner who is learning a different system or language, pays more attention to different items which is a motivating principle in learning; thus, the different items must be significantly easy to internalize". It is ,moreover, added that when learning patterns are minimally distinct in form or meaning in one or more systems, confusion may result. Conversely, when patterns are functionally or perceptually equivalent in a system or systems, correct generalization may occur. This notion is termed, as Kleinmann has asserted in Gass & Selinker\textsuperscript{35} "novelty effect" as when something in the L2 is very different from the L1, learners pay more attention to the differences which are

\textsuperscript{33} Op cit. P: X

new to them. Ellis\textsuperscript{36}, having termed the moderate version of CA as minimalist theoretical position, has emphasized the similarities that exist between the L2 and L1 acquisition. However, this assumption can be confirmed that contrastive analysis in any form or version does not offer any explanation of order or rate of acquisition because there is no theoretical basis to predict which areas should be more problematic than others. In other words, as different versions of CA assert, any area of difference or similarity between L1 and L2 may lead to difficulty or vice versa.

3. Approximative System

A thorough study of errors led to the formation of the theory known as ‘approximative system’ developed by Nemser\textsuperscript{37}. It means “the deviant linguistic system actually employed by foreign language learner in an attempt to utilize the target language.” He maintains that this system has various forms in accordance with proficiency level, learning experience, communication function, etc. It can be expected too that the errors for which we can introduce no source either in L1 or L2 build up the approximative system of the learner. In other words, this is the system which is a combination of L1 and L2’s unique errors and are capable of constructing a distinct system, something which is assumed to be particular to an individual and this has the result that some of the sentences produced are not easily interpretable. These types of errors, as you will later on see, will constitute a class of errors called “unique errors”. On the whole, this theory is founded both on linguistics and psychology and later on was replaced by Selinker’s ‘Interlanguage’.

4. CA and Interlanguage

The term “interlanguage” having been coined by Selinker introduces the language employed by the language learner which is something between his L1 and the target language. To validate the claim, Selinker gives reference to a large

\textsuperscript{36} Op cit. P: 307

number of errors which are committed as a result of the process of transfer. In postulating Interlanguage hypothesis, Selinker\textsuperscript{38} states:

\begin{quote}
\ldots\ldots \text{then in the making of constructs relevant to a theory of second language learning, one would be completely justified in hypothesizing \ldots 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 linguistic system we will call "Interlanguage".}
\end{quote}

Being an important issue in CA, interlanguage has had its fundamental effects and contribution to the theoretical aspects of language and linguistics, a few of which will be considered in the following.

\textbf{a. Interlanguage and Fossilization}

Fossilization is observable is L2 learners who unlike L1 learners do not reach the same level of competence and consequently certain rules and items 'fossilize'. In the same way, Selinker\textsuperscript{39} discusses that "Fossilizable linguistic phenomena are 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." Any fossilizable item can be traced in the learner's interlanguage and in fact the greatest errors of most speakers are linguistic fossilized items. The term fossilization has been used to label "the process by which non-target forms become fixed in interlanguage." Nickel\textsuperscript{40} has discussed the close relationship between IL and fossilization. He claims that only less than 5\% of second language learners acquire a native language competence and normally others will have to be using their fossilized IL and this indicates that any fossilized form can be taken as an example of IL phenomenon. Moreover, it has been observed that the fossilized learners experience a frustrating learning situation as a result of fossilization when


\textsuperscript{39} Ibid. P: 36.
they do not feel any progress in their linguistic competence. To overcome this problem, directing learners toward more specific teaching programs such as ESP can be proposed. Besides, the way fossilized items function is discussed by Selinker in the following:

"...fossilizable structures tend to remain as potential performance, re-emerging in the productive performance of an IL even when seemingly eradicated. Many of these phenomena reappear in IL performance when the learner's attention is focused upon new and difficult intellectual subject matter or when he is in a state of anxiety or other excitement, and strangely enough, sometimes when he is in a state of extreme relaxation."  

Meanwhile, some possible causes of fossilization have been identified. They include either internal or external factors. The internal factors are the age and lack of desire to adopt the target language norms. To these ideas it can be added that as learners arrive at a critical age, their brains lose plasticity and at result certain linguistic features cannot be mastered and besides learners do not show any tendency to adopt TL forms. On the other hand, the external factors include communicative pressure, lack of learning opportunity, and the nature of the feedback on learner's use of L2. These factors all together have their own effective role in establishing fossilized items in L2 learners.

b. Systematicity in Interlanguage

Systematicity is investigated on the ground that the learners' interlanguage, the same as first language, is systematic in nature. Corder, proposing that learner language can be considered as an idiosyncratic dialect, adds that this language is systematic because certain rules can be drawn out of it and that as the nature of any idiosyncracy, the rules are systematic but unstable and creative. In other words, these rules may take variations of their own and change over time and are not necessarily borrowed from the native language; rather they might be unique in themselves. To support this viewpoint, Spolsky postulates that if IL is

---

41 Op Cit. P: 36  
43 Op Cit. P: 122
governed by the rules of any natural language, then it is possible to prove that variability in IL can be the same as other natural languages. In other words, it is possible to observe systematic rules in ILs. This idea has been moreover studied by a few other researchers and some conclusions have been drawn. Dulay and Burt in their study came to the conclusion that learning L1 and L2 is nearly the same and children in leaning their L1 employ the same strategy as TL. To this they add “learner language was systematic because large groups of learners could be shown to acquire elements of the target language in a statistically verifiable sequence.”

Labov and Dickerson in Tarone in defining variability and systematicity of IL, following a sociolinguistic method, have discussed that any form which can be predicted by rule can be viewed as systematic- whether it predicts 90 percent or 20 percent accuracy. In the same way, an attempt to develop TL systematicity was taken by Hakuta in Tarone when the second language of a five-year-old Japanese girl was being studied. This research proposed that the process of second-language acquisition, here English:

is a dynamic, fluid process in which the system of the learner is constantly shifting: shifting in a slow and gradual manner either toward the maintenance of an internal consistency within the structures which the learner possessed, or in the direction of an external consistency, where the learner attempts to fit the internal system into what is heard in the input.

However, the controversy that Hakuta has been dealing with in studying IL is whether an IL has to be studied independent of the TL system and all occurrences of a given form should be selected, or considering target language norms is essential and the IL system has to be studied through the norms of TL.

c. Variability in Interlanguage

Rod Ellis, in discussing variability in interlanguage, has proposed two major areas: systematic & non-systematic variability. To Ellis, the systematic
variability can be explained and normally predicted and includes individual and textual variability. Individual variation refers to the individuals who in their L2 production perform differently from one another and these individual differences are the result of different learning effects such as motivation, age, aptitude, etc. The other type of systematic variability, including both linguistic and situational contexts, is contextual variability which can be identified by the situation and context in which it occurs. They contain the stylistic, linguistic, and social variations. On the other hand, non-systematic variations may occur in IL as they are most of all random and unpredictable. They are unique in form and impossible to explain.

The additional sources of variability in IL, as Littlewood quoted in Spolsky, are formulated to be 1) the communicative function 2) the linguistic environment and 3) socio-situational factors that the learner bears according to which the variations of different forms appear. To all these we have to add the pedagogic norms which introduce their own effects in school situation.

Furthermore, the varying forms do not show a common underlying linguistic norm, rather they demonstrate several linguistic norms, a continuum of styles ranging from a 'superordinate' style produced when the speaker pays the most attention to form, to a vernacular style produced when the least attention is paid. Tarone has proved in her studies with Japanese and Arabic learners that style shifting occurs between narration and interview as well as between speaking and writing. In other words, these learners try to be accurate or shift their style when they are put in formal context (interview and writing) or the same learners demonstrate their careless application of L2 rules when they feel more free in their use of language. In other words, variability is affected as a result of different factors, either linguistics or non-linguistics, and the numberless variations of languages are the product of these interfering factors.

48 Op Cit, P: 37
d. Interlanguage and Pedagogical Implications

Surprisingly, IL can contribute to language teaching in different ways. One major application is the data provided by the errors committed by the learners at different ages, levels, and areas. It was not until 1960s that the impact of transfer in language teaching was revealed. The assumption was primarily on the ideas that the existence of cross-linguistic differences made second language acquisition extremely different from first language acquisition. The most important contributors are introduced to be Charles Fries and Robert Lado. These scholars as well as some others regarded as extremely important the development of materials specifically designed for different groups of students. Because, for example, the problems of the Chinese student are very different from those of the Spanish speaker, it is quite plausible that the sequencing and the emphasis will normally differ. As a consequence of this idea, the materials that are prepared for these students reflected cross-linguistic differences.

Likewise, the data on language transfer can provide significant applications for researchers, language teachers, textbook designers, etc. Since the teacher of English has to be convinced that it is inevitable for L2 learners to produce errors of different types at different levels of competencies and as these learners develop their learning strategies, they build up their own interlanguage systems which is of significance to the researchers. On the other hand some errors are the result of inappropriate training or teaching strategies and therefore they can signify some indications about the methodological changes, the use of the mother tongue, and selecting certain teaching techniques will influence the degree and acquisition of the language. Mere concentration on errors is not a suitable strategy as in any IL, there are other useful bodies of information i.e. the correct responses, which can have a lot of useful indications to the teacher, and this can be achieved through considering the problems of the specific learners.
D. The Transfer Effect of CAH

As a result of their work and studies, contrastive linguists finally came to the position to use the notions of “transfer” and “interference” having been borrowed from psychological learning theory and were applied to second-language learning. Transfer in its simplest form refers to the hypothesis that the learning of a task is either facilitated (positive transfer) or impeded (negative transfer) by the previous learning of another task, depending on the degree of similarity or difference between the two tasks. In other words, positive transfer is transfer of a skill X which facilitates the learning or has a positive influence on the acquisition of a skill Y because of their similarities. Negative transfer is transfer of a skill X which impedes the learning and has a negative influence on the acquisition of a skill Y because of their differences. In the same manner, Els⁵⁰ proposes two types of transfer, pro-active transfer: the transfer of existing skills onto new skills, and retro-active transfer: transfer of new skills into existing skills.

One reason, because of which the shift in emphasis in language transfer studies in late 60s and early 70s occurred was both the psychology and linguistics which had been associated with the dominant theoretical schools of the time, i.e., structural/behaviorism whereas research in the late 60s was strongly influenced by a Chomskian generative-transformational framework which had clearly been anti-behaviorist. Furthermore, the behaviorist notion of transfer is quite different from the notion of native language influence. From behaviorist view point, transfer means “the extinction of earlier habits”, but the acquisition of L2 need not end in replacing the learner’s L1. Thus, this and other relevant considerations suggest that behaviorism may never have been relevant to the study of transfer. On the other hand, transformational grammar is a key to contrastive studies, both as a theoretical basis and as a technique of analysis and therefore, it establishes the required background for a change from structuralist taxonomy, which had become

the classical model for contrastive analysis and offered, a new, process-type approach to language comparison.

Odlin\textsuperscript{51} casts doubt on the source of transfer by stating that transfer is not simply a consequence of habit formation and defines it as being "...the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other languages that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired". One of the concerns of learning psychologists is the effect of one task on a subsequent one. The observation that prior learning effects subsequent learning leads to the hypothesis of transfer, and this seems to be a plausible interpretation for transfer in its different forms.

Gass\textsuperscript{52} believes that the instances of transfer are the cases when there might be a form used by a learner which resembles a form in the learner's native language. She continues that if we see the same elements in the speech of learners whose native language does not have this form, then we must question transfer as the sole explanation.

The studies made by Dulay & Burt (1974) and Richards (1971) have confirmed that L1 and L2 acquisition can be very similar. Besides, the studies of children acquiring their L1 showed that parents rarely corrected their children's linguistic errors, thus questioning the importance of reinforcement in language learning. These studies suggested that language learning was developmental, being controlled from the inside as from the outside. In other words, new approaches to contrastive studies have been trying to choose an L1 learning-model for the acquisition of an L2, and thus confirming the fact that errors on learning a language are inevitable and besides they cannot be reliable sources of learners' difficulties. This and some other related criticism bring about serious reactions against CAH which finally causes language analysts to turn to more reliable approaches.

\textsuperscript{51} Op Cit, P: 27.
As a more recent study is the one conducted by Arb and Homburg (1983-1992) cited in Gass & Selinker. They have tried to prove transfer as a facilitator of learning. In their study with Arabic and Spanish speakers of English, they compared the responses of these learners to the vocabulary section of a standard test of English. Considering the fact that there are a lot of similarities (cognates) among the words of English and Spanish, they conclude:

The Spanish speakers, because so many cognates exist between their NL and the TL, can focus more of their “learning time” on other aspects of language (...). It is the concentration on other vocabulary that results in a facilitation of learning. Thus, knowing a language that is related in some way to the TL can help in many ways, only some of which can be accounted for by the mechanical carryover of items and structures.

This approach is moreover supported by the study performed by Henkes quoted by Zobl in Gass & Selinker. In this study, three children (French, Arabic, and Spanish) were observed in the acquisition of copula, a form which exists in French, Spanish, but not is Arabic. Henkes attempted to prove that not using copula by the Arabic child is not related to his native language as the other two learners also failed to use the copula consistently and it was suggested that “although the same phenomenon of copula was observed in all three children, it took the Arabic child longer to get the facts of English straightened out due to the absence of the category in the NL [Arabic].” Finally, this notion leads to the conclusion that transfer can function as a facilitation of learning an L2 although this aspect demands more elaboration and experimental work to verify.

E. CA and Pedagogical Applications

The present literature in its attempt to discuss the relationship between pedagogy and CA has emphasized most of all the following issues:

One. CA and material preparation
Two. CA and testing procedures

---

53 Op Cit, P: 91.
54 Ibid. P: 92.
Three. CA and teaching sequence

Four. CA and translation

Five. CA and curriculum designer

One of the most important objectives of CAH in pedagogy has been stated to be its application in test and material preparation. R. Lado (1957) as one of the most influential characters in ELT and CA, after criticizing testing procedures preceding CAH, contends that linguistic comparison has had rewarding application in constructing text books and language tests. Besides, explanatory power should be the ultimate goal of all contrastive linguistics as they provide information for the textbook writer in the selection of the actual teaching material on the basis of several criteria such as frequency of occurrence and teachability. Here grading is also considered by textbook writer when he decides to divide the language course into time segments, and to give more teaching and learning time to items being more difficult.

The relation between CA and pedagogy is further elaborated by Rusiecki by stating that:

- to provide materials for linguistically oriented dictionaries and reference grammars; they are used to help translators; they can provide basic data for writing programs for machine translations.
- However, the main purpose being introduced here is language teaching.

Following the strong version of CA in language teaching throughout 1960s, some course developers were provided with the ideas on the differences and normally the difficulties of learning an L2. In fact, the analysis were based on surface “structuralist” description of the two languages concerned, and they implied pedagogical implications for the language teacher. The procedure is made up of the following steps:

1) Description: formal description of the two languages
2) Selection: certain areas were selected for comparison
3) Comparison: differences and similarities were identified

---

55 Op Cit, P: 13
4) Prediction: determining which areas were likely to cause errors

In the same manner, Robert Lado\textsuperscript{56}, based on his earlier studies, states that the fundamental assumption of his book, *Linguistics Across Cultures*, is the fact that individuals transfer the linguistic forms as well as meaning and culture of their native language to the foreign language and culture. He advocates CAH as a procedure that can help both language teacher and text book writer to rely their teaching process and the content of their materials on predicting teaching-learning difficulties. A learner will find some features of L2 quite easy as they are similar to his L1, and those different will look difficult. Besides, textbooks should be graded as to grammatical structures, pronunciation, vocabulary, and cultural content. And grading can be done best after the kind of comparison we are presenting here. The teacher who has systematically compared the two languages will have the ability to provide those exercises which center around the differences or important points. On discussing the learning problems of foreign language grammatical structure, Lado\textsuperscript{57} presents four major domain of difficulties: 1) transfer 2) similarities and differences as determiners of ease and difficulty, 3) production versus recognition, 4) what constitutes “difference” and therefore difficulty as to form . Additionally, structuralists saw as extremely important the development of materials specifically designed for different groups of students. They believed that the similarities of L1 and L2 will facilitate L2 learning, and this similarity can be related to all areas of language especially syntax. All similarities in syntactic structure can facilitate the acquisition of grammar: learners speaking a language with a syntax similar to that of target language tend to have less difficulty with articles, word order, and relative clauses.

These assumptions although being useful in the description of the given language, suffer from some deficiencies, the most important of which is that the prediction does not sufficiently and thoroughly reflect areas of errors. Or in a sense, differences do not simply indicate difficulty or even easiness. In other words,

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, P. 59.
to follow all these steps does not lead to the scientific predictions which have been claimed.

F. Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH)

Eckman, considering the deficiency of CAH in explaining certain facts about language acquisition, discusses that MDH is a more suitable device to predict the levels of difficulties which CA is not capable to predict. He claims that CAH alone is not a good predictor of certain difficulties and if “typological markedness is incorporated into the CAH, it is possible to predict not only the areas of difficulty for a second language learner, but also the relative degree of difficulty.”

As a definition of MDH, Eckman proposes:

A phenomenon A in some language is more marked if the presence of A in a language implies the presence of B; but the presence of B does not imply the presence of A.

Ellis defines markedness as “Some linguistic features are ‘special’ in relation to others, which are more ‘basic’”. To make the point clear, the following example is presented by him. The adjectives ‘old’ and ‘young’ can be considered unmarked and marked respectively because whereas ‘old’ can be used to ask about person’s age: How old is she? = (What her age is?) ‘young’ cannot, except in some very special sense: How young is she? = (Is she as young as she makes out?)

Taking an example from syntax, Eckman states that the languages such as Arabic, Greek, Serbo-Croatian, and Persian have passive sentences without expressed agents like 1 below or do not have passive sentences with expressed agents like 2.

1) The door was closed.

2) The door was closed by the janitor.

There are, on the other hand, languages such as English, French, and Japanese which have both types of passives. However, there are not any languages which have passives with agents without also having passives without agents. As a conclusion, having passives with agents implies the presence of passives without agents, but the reverse is not true. Therefore, sentences like 1 are more marked than 2. Considering the definition and example above, the following hypothesis are proposed by Eckman:

**Markedness Differential Hypothesis**

The areas of difficulty that a language learner will have can be predicted on the basis of a systematic comparison of the grammars of the native language, the target language and the markedness relations stated in universal grammar, such that,

One) Those areas of the target language which differ from the native language and are more marked than the native language will be difficult.

Two) The relative degree of difficulty of the area of the target language which are more marked than the native language will correspond to the relative degree of markedness.

Three) Those areas of the target language which are different from the native language, but are not more marked than the native language will not be difficult.

The ultimate goal of MDH is that this is not possible for language learners to predict their learning difficulties by resorting to the mere differences of the two languages, and that only some of these difficulties can be predicted through CA. In other words, areas of difficulty are more suitably predicted from markedness relation.

To establish a relationship between markedness hypothesis and transfer, Hyltenstam\(^6^0\) postulates that:

Unmarked categories from the native language are substituted for corresponding marked categories in the target language...Marked structures are seldom transferred, and if they are transferred, they are much more easily eradicated from the target language.

---

\(^{59}\) Ibid. P. 321.

Another more interesting definition of markedness is found in language typology. In fact, as Ellis\(^6\) claims, there have been some attempts to use typological universals to make claims about which features are marked and which ones unmarked. It is added that "those features that are universal or present in most languages are unmarked, while those that are specific to a particular language or found in only a few languages are marked."

Zobl in Ellis\(^6\) offers three senses in which rules can be marked. The first is "typological specialization" and the second is "structural inconsistency". This idea is supported by providing an example from German and Dutch word order which are not consistent in dependent and independent clauses. In this case, English has a consistent word order in these clauses. Thus, German and Dutch word order can be considered marked but English is unmarked. The third is "typological indeterminacy". This means when learners of a particular language predict a structure in their L2 on the basis of a language’s overall typology but this structure is not found. For example, English as a SVO language might be expected to include a N+ Adj form, but this is not true. These typologically indeterminate features are considered marked.

To make the point clear, an example may be useful. Zobl indicates how learners tend to resort to their LI if the corresponding L2 rule is obscure because it is typologically inconsistent or indeterminate. He notes that the following errors are common in French learners of English:

ED: They have policeman for stop the bus.
ED: He do that for to help the Indians.

The ‘for’ + infinitive error corresponds closely to the LI structure of these learners. He continues by stating that this ‘for + to’ creates a "structural predisposition" for transfer. In other words, this can be considered unmarked in relation to the modern English structure.

\(^6\) Op Cit, P: 320.
\(^6\) Ibid, P: 320.
The idea discussed by Zobl and mentioned above pertains to Iranian L2 learners of English when they substitute the unmarked structure of 'for' + bare infinitive to indicate purpose as they appear in the examples below:

ED: She came for visiting her parents.
ED: We left home early for going to the airport.

As it will be discussed later on, one major reason of overusing 'for' + gerund among Iranian students pertains to the corresponding structure in Persian. The second plausible interpretation can be the fact that it is an unmarked structure and as a result is transferred into L2. Besides, the inconsistency of rule application in using 'for' as a preposition + gerund can be interpreted as one cause of overgeneralization of this structure.

G. Appraisal of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

1. Theoretical Problems

As behaviorism and structuralism throughout 60s and 70s became unpopular and subsequently drastic shift in both linguistics and psychology occurred, disfavor against CA and its consequences began to appear. Some linguists, in general, accused CA of being based on the behaviorist concept presented by structural linguists such as Fries, Lado, and Brooks. Finally, in 1960s and 1970s, both behaviorism and structuralism became unpopular because major changes happened in linguistics and psychology. Gass & Selinker make the assumption that the claim strongly made by structuralists that L1 rules are the same as a set of habits basically learned by imitation was to be criticized and language was seen not as a set of non-thoughtful habits, but as a set of structured rules which are not learned by imitation, “but by actively formulating them on the basis of innate principles as well as on the basis of exposure to the language being learned”. Moreover, because of the declining importance of the structuralist school and its displacement by the cognitive oriented theory of transformational-

---

64 Op Cit, P. 61.
generative grammar, the specific role of first language influence and the general validity of contrastive analysis was called into question.

To Ellis, the concept of transfer is not so clear and that it is a very complex notion which is best understood in terms of cognitive rather than behaviorist modes of learning. Besides, based on the extensive studies fulfilled by Turving and Madigan (1970) quoted in Duyay and Burt the validity of "the operation of transfer in paired-associate learning has been questioned." In the same manner, Odlin has confirmed that as a serious pitfall of the theory of transfer is the notion that "...theories of transfer are inextricably linked to theories of habit formation".

CAH is, above all, based on a general view of learning according to which prior learning affects subsequent learning, and this can leave negative effects when they oppose in some qualities. However, language structures are not comparable in their entireties, and cultural, lexical, and phonological elements do not always have direct counterpart in the opposed system.

The theoretical criticism of early contrastive studies as enumerated by Sajavaara reads as under:

(a) CA is mostly established upon translation equivalents introduced by bilingual informant.

(b) The theory of transfer has played an important role in the development of error analysis and applied contrastive analysis. However similar to the problems connected with translation equivalence, it has proved rather difficult to tell which kind of units and at which level this transfer takes place.

(c) The independence of the description of structures in two languages is illusory only.

(d) The abstract nature of the analysis has always been a fruitful source of criticism.

---

65 Op Cit, P: 98.
66 Op Cit, P: 23.
Traditional contrastive analysis is based on a static view of the interlingual contrasts indicating that 1. Language variations are disregarded. 2. Source and target language are taken as equal. 3. Learner’s position is taken as stable. 4. Not much attention has been paid to the role of speaker and hearer and their shifting.

Marton also presents the causes that disfavored CA. He says that contrastive studies first of all present fragmentary descriptions of two language systems and little attention is given to syntactic descriptions. Also, most studies have a highly theoretical nature which are not applicable to language teaching.

However, most of the criticism concerning CA centers around the following:
1. Focusing mainly on language differences, CA ignores many other factors which affect the SL learner’s performance, such as his own learning strategies, the training procedures, over generalization of TL rules, and so on.
2. Learning... is approached statistically,... as an instantaneous imprinting, the role of storage from a prior stage being ignored. Consequently, CA cannot predict, for instance, the types of error caused by interference from TL materials previously learned.
3. Some “universal” learning strategies are observed to have taken place in both child and adult learning.

2. CA & Universal Grammar

The concept of universal grammar (UG) has increased disagreements against CAH. In fact, the underlying similarities of some languages have motivated some linguists to become interested in the notion of UG. This has led them to come to the conclusion that some errors are common in emerging second language of speakers of any native language. To make the point clear, Odlin presents the example that the omission of *it* in cases such as *that very simple* is an
error made not only by Spanish speakers but also by speakers of Chinese, Japanese, and other languages.

Early Structuralists, however, having no clear notion of underlying structure and semantic representation from which surface structure in different languages are derived, interpreted UG as being "Language is a system, and within this system the role of contrast is central. There is no universal system which is yet known to be true of all languages, indeed no two languages are structured in the same way. They, moreover, believe that each language is a self-sufficient system in that every element has a value which is uniquely determined by the structural relations of that system (Buren)\(^71\). In other words, for structuralists, it was essential for successful contrastive analysis that the two languages were first described in terms of one and the same model and structuralism for its part concentrated on features which were language specific. As a result, it was not surprising that structural contrastive analysis could not succeed in meeting the applied objectives. When it became clear that CA cannot concentrate on distinctions alone, and that it should pay the necessary attention to similarities, structuralism turned out to be a rather odd bed fellow.

Chomsky\(^72\) gives a definition of UG by saying that it is "the system of principles, conditions, and rules that are elements or properties of all human languages...". UG states that all languages are alike at an abstract, underlying level which provides theoretically at least a basis for comparability. Equivalent sentences across languages have identical semantic representations, and this idea can suggest the conclusion that all sentences in all languages are derived from a universal semantic base. Considering the ideas stated on the universal properties of languages in comparison, too much concentration on surface differences provided by contrastive analysts seems to be irrelevant.

\(^70\) Op Cit, P: 19.
On the other hand, opposing the UG hypothesis and its relationship with CAH, there is a hypothesis called Fundamental Difference Hypothesis (FDH) which states that what happens in child language acquisition is not the same as what happens in adult second language acquisition. It discusses that child and adult language learning is not similar at all and to support this idea of FDH, some reasons are enumerated. For example, it is stated that the ultimate attainment reached by children and adults differ, or the second language learner masters a full command of the linguistic system of his L2, while the L1 learner is not aware of the system of his language, and also that the motivation and attitude of these learners are not the same at all. The concluding part of this discussion is that adult second language learners have no access to UG. Rather what they know of language universal is constructed through their NL.

The studies performed by Dulay and Burt quoted by Seliger have proved that children belonging to different language background applied “universal, developmentally determined processes to learn a second language”. Besides, Seliger states that Bailey, Madden, and Krashen (1974) have performed a similar study but this time with adult learners of English. Following all these studies, the conclusion was that the learning of a second language did not involve what was called “creative construction”. This meant that the process of acquiring a second language was controlled primarily by universal cognitive principles that determined how the learner would approach the language regardless of previous knowledge. The evidence for this universality, as Seliger discusses was “the order of acquisition for speakers of different first language and for learners of different ages, and the consistent qualitative nature of the errors themselves.”

On the failure of CA to predict errors, Eckman reflects that as a more convenient device, MDH can be applied more successfully. To this he adds:

---

^Op Cit, P: 329.
What seems an uncontroversial position on language universals is that languages, and hence, language universals, are a reflection of the structure of human cognition (...). Thus it is the nature of human cognition that no language will have only passive sentences with agents, but a language may have only passives without agents. Moreover, if one makes the additional assumption that humans learn to do things which are less complex before they learn to do things which are more complex, and further, that no human being learns to do things which are more complex without also a fortiori learning to do related things which are less complex (...), then typological markedness is an accurate reflection of difficulty.

He finally concludes that as a result of these considerations, and incapability of CAH, typological markedness or MDH should be incorporated into a theory of second language acquisition.

3. Priority of Errors in CA

One major pitfall of transfer is the fact that it focuses too much on errors. It is stated that although errors play an important role in determining the strength or weakness of a particular language influence, they are not the only cause and evidence of difficulty. However, this idea being related to EAH is considered one major pitfall of both CA and EA hypotheses and therefore will be discussed in details in the following.

4. Different Versions of CAH

Considering different versions of CA, it is stated that the weak version is problematic because it makes little sense to undertake a lengthy comparison of two languages, and it is unable to predict areas of difficulty (Ellis). One major criticism of the WV of CA is that this hypothesis lacks the predictive power and without it, the hypothesis is a contradiction. Moreover, it has to be understood that the WV of CA in most situations is hard to support because when regarding languages and their deep diversities, to present generalizations is not to the point.

See also Odlin, 1989 and Whitman & Jackson, 1972.

Op Cit, P: 308.
We can, moreover, hypothesize that the SV is hardly capable of providing the needed data for foreign language course designers. Nemser\textsuperscript{77} on the other hand, claims that the SV of CA suffers from some pitfalls, the most important of which are that:

(i) different analysis: different predictions, (ii) predictions are often ambiguous, and (iii) the various levels of linguistic structure are dependent, with the result that predictions of phonetic interference...must take into account not only the phonologic systems of Ls [source language] and TL [target language] but their morphophonemic, grammatical and lexical levels as well.

The causes of these failure are cited to be immediate usefulness, simplicity, motivational strength, all of which will affect the sequencing of items and structures in a foreign-language course. Besides, this hypothesis, as Els et al\textsuperscript{78} discuss, suffer from the following drawbacks:

•CA predicted L2 learning problems which do not occur;
•CA turned out not to predict learning problems which do occur;

In other words, linguistic differences between L1 and L2, as the SV of CA claims, do not automatically lead to L2 learning problems, and not all L2 learning problems can be retraced.

5. The Question of Difficulty in CA

It has strongly been claimed by the proponents of CAH that the notion of difficulty is almost always equated with the degree of errors. The more L2 learners make errors in their acquisition of L2, the more it is assumed to be difficult and consequently the more the target and native languages are different. However, Gass and Selinker have questioned this assumption by quoting the following situation:

Consider the following example from Kellerman\textsuperscript{79} in which a student wrote:

\begin{quote}
"Op Cit. PP: 60-61."
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
"Op Cit. P: 50."
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
ED: But in that moment it was 6:00.

In a conversation with the student, the teacher wanted her to comment on her use of the preposition *in*. The student insisted that the correct form was *in* but questioned whether it should be it *was* 6:00 or it *had been* 6:00. Clearly the learner was having difficulty in the sense of struggling with something that was hard for her to do, but in this case the struggle was with tense usage, even though there was no error reflecting that difficulty. On the other hand, there was no doubt in her mind about the correctness of the preposition. In other words, although the student had committed an overt error, she observed no difficulty in it, and so difficulty cannot be unilaterally equated with errors.

Spolksy\(^0\) suggests that the main difficulty with CAH was its failure to put its basis on a supportable theory of difficulty. By quoting Briere (1968) he adds that difference by itself does not predict difficulty and “often there is more difficulty in practice with structures that are similar than with structures which are different.” Additionally, it has to be regarded that the notion of difficulty naturally differs for each learner and for each language background. In other words, learning a language is a complex phenomenon and a large number of factors such as innate principles of language, attitude, motivation, aptitude, age, and so forth influence learning and as a result the notion of difficulty is in direct relationship with all these factors.

Richards\(^1\) adds to this by stating that the concept of difficulty by itself is not clear enough. Prediction of difficulty in terms of interlingual differences indicates that it is feasible to compare categories across languages, a comparison which in practice may not be possible as what is syntax in one language may be vocabulary in another and also what the learner finds difficult is interpreted on the basis of the degree and nature of what he has acquired of the L2.

---

\(^0\) Op Cit. P: 120.

Seliger\textsuperscript{82} casts doubt on the assumption proposed by structuralists that learning difficulty will be the result of differences of the two languages of L1 and L2. He continues that although the order of adjective and head noun is different for Spanish and English, native speakers of English and of Spanish almost never have any problem with the difference in the other language. It is moreover added that near similarity is sometimes more difficult to overcome than clear difference.

Up to this point we have unfolded the following cases as possible explanations for a structure being difficult. They involve the notions such as its saliency, its communicative value to the learner, the extent to which it is marked or unmarked, or the ease with which it can be processed in production or comprehension, the degree of distinction between L1 and L2, learners' learning background, motivation, etc.

6. The Pitfalls of CA & Pedagogy

One major application of CA has been stated to be using it to construct teaching materials. To fulfill this goal, too much emphasis is usually placed on certain elements which may cause learners to learn certain fragments of the TL instead of the whole system. Meanwhile, Marton\textsuperscript{83} replies that using CA as a basis for pedagogical grammar does not imply ignoring the whole system and focusing on certain fragments. On the other hand, CA has been criticized as a basis for providing a hierarchy of difficulty, but this type of sequencing of teaching materials is only partly valid. To this Sanders\textsuperscript{84} adds that it is worthwhile to devote some sort of emphasis to items which have a high frequency in the TL, but deciding which of these and to what extent is the duty of contrastive analyst.

One great claim of CA has been its usefulness for language teachers. However, Marton\textsuperscript{85} criticizes that:

\textsuperscript{82} Op Cit, P: 25.
\textsuperscript{83} Op Cit, P: 157.
\textsuperscript{85} Op Cit, P: 157.
contrastive studies are of no use for language teaching, because in the first place, a complete analysis involving only two languages is already an extremely difficult and painstaking task, and the second place, all of this is not worth that much effort, as any experienced language teacher knows where errors mostly occur, anyway.

Besides all these facts, it can be inferred that second-language learning today is different from the traditional foreign-language teaching. One major difference is that learners in ESL classrooms may not share the same language, and they normally will not be expected to experience the same kind of interference. And also when the teacher of English does not know the learners' native language, and his L1 will be the TL of his students, it is impossible for the language teacher to use his predictive power to analyze learners' difficulties.

Additionally, CA has been criticized as it has been teacher-centered rather than being learner-centered. It can be concluded that too much occupation with the role of teacher has given an inferior role to the learner. This notion clearly opposes newly-introduced teaching methods such as James Asher's The Total Physical Response or Caleb Gattegno's The Silent Way, or Lazanov Suggestopedia which above all give the centrality of the activity to the learner, the notion which has been neglected and in most cases de-emphasized as a result of habit-formation theory of audiolingualism throughout 60s and early 70s.

Ellis\textsuperscript{86}, having questioned the validity of transfer, refers to different studies which have proved the fact that the learner's L1 can facilitate learning L2. For example, he quotes the studies fulfilled by Odlin(1989), Gass(1979), and Kellerman(1985) who try to propose that the facilitative effect of the L1 is evident in other aspects of L2 acquisition. In many cases, when two languages share a large number of cognates, learning is facilitated. For example, Chinese learners of L2 Japanese have an enormous advantage over English learners because of their writing systems similarity.

To refer to one important pitfall of contrastive analysis hypothesis, it can be assumed that the effect of transfer is most observable in production, and not so

\textsuperscript{86} Op Cit. PP: 302-3
significant in recognition skills. In other words, it is possible to trace L2 learning problems on production level, but their comprehension failures are neglected as in this case CA is unable to trace the errors. Subsequently, this claim is valid when it is stated that CA is capable of following production difficulties, but not comprehension ones.

7. Criticizing the Predictive Power of CA

The predictive power of CA has always been questioned both theoretically and empirically. Studies have revealed that most difficulties and naturally most errors are not caused by transfer. They also indicate that many errors predicted by contrastive analysis did not actually happen. Dulay and Burt note that most valid CA evidence seems to work on phonological differences and quoting Richards continue that “studies of second language acquisition have tended to imply that contrastive analysis may be most predictive at the syntactic level” and this is a major cause of disfavoring CAH when the goal is working on syntactic components of L2.

In a similar study carried out by Tran-Thi-Chau, it was proved that most errors committed by learners are inter- not intra- with the proportion of 51 to 29 percent. This claim is also supported by Richards as 53 of inter to 39 of intra. This can, therefore, be concluded that CA can explain or predict not more than half of the errors and other error types are the result of intra-lingual effects.

Odlin, criticizing Lado and Fries’ claim on CA’s predictive power, states that the differences of languages do not always lead to certain learning problems. Giving some examples of Spanish verbs, Odlin claims that the lexical differences for example between the English verb “know” for which there are two in Spanish,
i.e. **conocer** and **saber**, creates learning difficulties for English speakers learning Spanish, but not for Spanish speakers learning English. Thus, the difference between Spanish and English is not in itself enough to allow for accurate prediction of difficulty. Learning difficulties do not always arise from cross-linguistic differences and that difficulties which do arise are not always predicted by CA. The predictive power of CA has been questioned as when comparing native-target languages, we can obtain certain information on why some errors occur, but when there’s no access to actual data about learner’s errors, our reliable prediction is very small. It was later revealed that interference or transfer from the native language is only part of the problem because a large number of errors made by L1s seem to be unrelated to the learners’ native language, rather they showed signs of the same kind of overgeneralization or hypothesis testing that has been proposed for native language learning.

Another drawback of CAH is its failure to identify the sources of difficulty other than the learner’s L1. Difficulty does not necessarily manifest itself in errors. Rather, it can be demonstrated in other areas. Odlin\(^{92}\), by giving reference to studies on Spanish speakers by Peck 1978, Butterworth and Hatch; Schumann 1978; Shapira 1978, and Richards (1971, 1974), states that one more problem of CA is the occurrence of errors that have little to do with native language influence. Concerning this notion, Dulay and Burt\(^{93}\) in their study have quoted George who has concluded that two-third of the goofs collected could be traced to L1 structure, but in the same place they present D. Lance and J. Richards’ ideas who believe that most errors made by L2 learners of English can not be traceable to their native language, rather they are non-contrastive errors, including performance goofs, overgeneralizations, etc.

As mentioned above, one serious pitfall of the SV of CA is that it can never predict the intralingual errors. Intralingual problems are not predicted on the basis of CA: they can’t be traced back to differences between L1 and L2, but they

---

\(^{92}\) Ibid. P: 17.

\(^{93}\) Op Cit, P: 105.
relate to a specific interpretation of the target language and manifest themselves as universal phenomenon.

Gass & Selinker, in their attempt to prove that CA is unsuccessful in its predictability, discuss that “not only did errors occur that had not been predicted by the theory [of CA], but there was evidence that predicted errors did not occur”. In other words, CA had not been able to anticipate the errors which actually occurred in non-native speech. Besides all these facts on the failure of CA to predict L2 learner’s errors, they have questioned the validity of the notion that similarities can imply ease and differences imply difficulty and to support this claim they have quoted Kleinmann (1977) who asserts that when something in the L2 is very different from the L1, there is the “novelty effect”. Kleinmann in his study showed that this was the case with the progressive which is absent in Arabic; however, Arabic speakers learned this early and well and in fact they have showed no serious difficulty to learn this tense. In fact what Kleinmann has been trying to prove is the moderate version of CAH which Oller & Ziahosseiny have proposed in their study. Regarding the studies in this field, it can be understood that CA suffers from the following pitfalls:

1. Many of the difficulties predicted by CA do not show up in the actual learner performance at all.
2. Besides, most of the errors produced by learners are not predicted by CA.

Consequently, regarding the discussions mentioned above, it is possible to claim that the only valid version of CA has to be “a posteriori”, i.e., the role of CA has to be explanatory, not “a priori” or predictive.

8. Simplification Hypothesis

Some errors, when committed by learners, may indicate the idea that they are the evidence of a strategy by the learner to simplify their expressions; therefore,

95 Ibid. P: 99.
they do not indicate transfer of L1 and L2. Errors such as omitting articles, copulas, and other forms often seem to involve simplification rather than transfer. The notion indicates that language learners in their attempt to simplify their learning process and to convey their ideas delete some of the items from a sentence. However, it is highly difficult to identify the difference between transfer and simplification and in some cases they overlap.

Dulay and Burt seem to support the idea that simplification is the result of a general learning strategy common to both children and adults. To this idea, they propose that the language learner possesses a specific type of innate mental organization which causes him to use a limited class of processing strategies to produce utterances in a language. This implies that the system resorts the learners to simplify their utterances as they do in their L1.

Simplification, as Richards states, tends to increase the generality of rules through extending their range of application, and through dropping rules of limited application. In a study on Indonesian and Malay subjects, Richards traced the process of simplification and complexification. He believes that the analysis of learner’s errors indicate that the learner develops for himself a universal learning strategy by which he can do the maximum amount of work by fewest number of rules. This strategy is observable in both child language and second language learner. However, he asserts “Both child and adult learning of a foreign language illustrate another universal principle- the tendency toward simplification of the rules of the language by the language learner, accompanied by a parallel pressure towards complexification of the rule system”. He moreover claims that the cause of one type of overgeneralization of rules is the strategy that the learner employs in order to reduce his linguistic burden or in other words, to simplify his learning processes.


Simplification, having been called facilitation, has been ignored by most scholars in their studies. The reason is that they have concentrated on errors and this indicates the differences or the difficulties. It leads us to the idea that the facilitative effect of language is more distinctive when the two languages such as English-French or Chinese-Japanese share a large number of cognates.

To investigate facilitation in language learning, Ellis\textsuperscript{99} refers to some studies, one of which was performed by Gass. She investigated 17 adult learners of L2 English with diverse language backgrounds. The data related to their performance of relative clauses were gathered, and resumptive pronoun as the evidence of transfer effect could be observed. She classified her subjects into two groups according to whether their LI allowed pronoun retention (Persian or Arabic) or did not (French and Italian). It was concluded that the first group showed a tendency to preserve the pronoun in the relative clause construction. The learners in the second group, whose languages, like English, did not allow pronoun retention, made fewer errors in a sentence-joining task. All this implied that pronoun retention is a facilitative device performed by the first group.

Having the same goal, Hyltenstam (1984), stated in Ellis\textsuperscript{100}, fulfilled a study on 45 adult learners from five language groups learning Swedish as their L2. Swedish, like English, does not allow pronoun retention. Hyltenstam used pictures to elicit oral sentences for each relativizable function. The results indicated that pronominal retention occurred among all, irrespective of their LI, but the frequencies differed. The Persian learners produced the most than the Greek, and then Spanish and finally Finnish learners the fewest. The results of this study are, in fact, in proportion with structural properties of the learners’ native language.

\textsuperscript{99} Op Cit, P: 303.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid, P: 303.
9. The Ignorance Hypothesis

As a further problem of CA, the ignorance hypothesis, indicates that some errors emerge as a result of training or learner’s lack of enough knowledge on the specific subject. This is asserted that some errors are not the result of language transfer, but they emerge from other sources such as “transfer of training” i.e., the influences that arise from the way a learner is taught\textsuperscript{101}. Moreover, Newmark and Reibel\textsuperscript{102} elaborate this phenomenon as being:

A Person knows how to speak one language, say his native one; but in the early stages of learning his new one, there are many things that he has not yet learned to do.... What can he do other than what he already knows to make up for what he does not know? To an observer who knows the target language, the learner will be seen to be stubbornly substituting the native habits. But from the learner’s point of view, all he is doing is the best he can do: to fill in his gaps of training he refers for help to what he already knows.

James\textsuperscript{103} postulates that “The Ignorance Hypothesis” is proposed by Duskova. He, in observing Czech learners, concludes that learners refrain from making errors on the production level simply because they escape from using certain forms. He continues that “Learners who have had bad experience of failure or of tenacious difficulty over some L2 structures will not go on committing errors, but will avoid the structure in question by resorting to paraphrase, or to some near-equivalent”.

In late 60s and early 70s the criticism against the validity of CA especially the strong claim of CAH began. It was first questioned if CA could correctly predict all the errors due to native language interference and also its usefulness to language teachers, curriculum designers, and textbook writer was questioned. It was stated that many errors were due to other causes. It significantly fails to predict the intralingual errors as well as the errors arising from the particular teaching and learning strategies and other causes. These criticisms and others mentioned above finally led to the theory of error analysis which provided the

\textsuperscript{101} See Selinker, 1972; Stenson, 1974; Felix, 1981.
\textsuperscript{102} L. Newmark, and D. Reibel. 1968. “Necessity and Sufficiency in Language Learning.”
necessary background to analyze the sources of errors more clearly and help theorists and textbook writers to resort to reliable hypothesis for the interpretation of the sources of errors.

H. Error Analysis

1. Theoretical Assumptions

In the 1970s, EA which sought to predict the errors that learners made by identifying the linguistic differences between L1 and the TL supplemented CA. Because of the drawbacks discussed in the previous chapters, CA became unpopular, and EA was introduced as a remedy. Like the child struggling to acquire his language, the second language learner is also trying out successive hypothesis about the nature of the target language and from this view point, the learner’s errors (or hypothesis) are not only inevitable, but are a necessary part of the language-learning process. Besides errors help the teacher to understand how close he is to the goals and what has to be emphasized, they provide the required data to the researcher to understand how language is learned, and finally they bear helpful indications to the learner himself. However, it was not until 1970s that EA became a substantial part of applied linguistics, a development that owed too much to the work of S. Pit Corder. He by presenting a different notion of ‘error’ states that an error is based on the ‘substantial similarities between the strategies employed by the infant learning his native language, and those of the second language learner’.

Gass & Selinker\textsuperscript{104} argue that errors are not just the product of imperfect learning, nor are they a reflection of faulty imitation. Rather, they can be considered as learner’s attempt to impose an underlying system which is rule-governed.

One of the most important application of EA is using its results in language teaching. The position of EA in pedagogy is justified by stating that the study of

\textsuperscript{103} Op Cit, P: 22.
\textsuperscript{104} Op Cit, P: 99.
errors is a basic part of applied linguistics. It provides a validation of the findings of contrastive linguistics. Wilkins\textsuperscript{105}, quoting the results of some studies, has argued that there is no necessity for a prior comparison of grammar and that an error-based analysis is satisfactory enough, more fruitful, and less time consuming. It is added that bilingual comparison is based on the theory that it is the difference between the mother tongue and the second language which the learner is to learn. Contrastive studies are undertaken in order to discover or describe the differences while EA confirms or falsifies the predictions of the theory behind bilingual comparison.

\textbf{a. Error Analysis Significance}

Errors, as Corder\textsuperscript{106} believes, can be significant in three ways: 1) they provide the teacher with information about how much the learner has learned; 2) they provide the researcher with evidence of how language is learned; 3) they serve as devices by which the learner discovers the rules of the target language. He postulates that “errors provide feedback; they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques, and show him what parts of the syllabus he has been following have been inadequately learned or need further attention.”

The notion of using errors as a major pedagogical tool was based on three arguments:

1) EA does not suffer from the inherent limitations of CA restrictions or errors caused by interlingual transfer

2) EA, unlike CA, provides data on actual, attested problems and not hypothetical problems and therefore forms a more efficient and economical basis for designing pedagogical strategies.


3) EA is not confronted with complex theoretical problems encountered by CA e.g. the problem of equivalence.

Moreover, EA has to concern itself with the applied goal of correcting and eradicating the learner’s errors, the systematic study of which gives valuable indications of language learning strategies and hypothesis. The systematic analysis and classification of errors can be of great application in error prediction which is of great importance and utility to language teacher.

Sridhar\textsuperscript{107} claims that the goal of EA is quite pragmatic. By identifying the areas of difficulty for the learners, EA could serve in the following ways:

1. determining the sequence of presentation of target items in textbook and classroom
2. identifying the level of emphasis, explanation and practice
3. providing complementary lessons and exercise
4. selecting items for testing the learners’ proficiency.

It is important to know that EA does not explain anything explicitly. It shows error types, not why they occur. In order to understand why they occur the information provided by CA is necessary. In other words, both CA and EA have to be incorporated for the analysis of errors and identifying the sources of those errors.

The significance of errors and their frequent occurrence can bring a lot of indications for the language teacher. If a regular pattern of errors could be observed in the performance of all learners in a certain context, the errors could be interpreted as not evidence of failure, but of success and achievement in learning. They signify the points which are considered difficult, and where the L2 learners show more resistance in learning a certain item as a result of various factors by casting light on the high frequency of errors.

As the first step to understand what an error is, let's differentiate between a mistake and an error. A mistake takes place when learners fail to perform their competence. It is a performance phenomenon which can be the result of memory limitation, competing plans, and lack of automaticity, or it can be a one-time-only event, and the speaker who makes a mistake can recognize it as a mistake and correct it if necessary. But an error is systematically produced by a learner and is not recognized as an error. Corder defines an error as being: "...error tends to be reserved for witful and negligible breaches of a rule which is known, or ought to be known, or is thought to be known by the offender." On the other hand, Els believes that it is not always easy to identify errors. He adds that "the notion of error presupposes a norm, and norms, in turn, are dependent on, amongst other things, the medium (spoken or written language), the social context (formal or informal), and the relation between the speaker and the hearer (symmetrical or asymmetrical)." In the same way Nickel confirms that it is not easy to clearly differentiate between an error and a mistake. Strevens in Tran-Thi-Chau claims that the identification of an error in nature is subjective, and adds that for two educated native speakers it is possible to differ whether items are acceptable or unacceptable and whether they should be counted as errors or not. Besides, the strategy employed by Tran-Thi-Chau in order to determine acceptability or non-acceptability of an error is using native speakers. Tran-Thi-Chau believes that an acceptable utterance is one that has been or might be produced by a native speaker in a context. However, it is stated that there may be certain sentences that are grammatical but meaningless or that there are many sentences found in fairy tails and science fiction which would be unacceptable in everyday English.
Jain\textsuperscript{113} states that errors, being systematic and asystematic, can be emerged in a third form which can be labeled as mistakes. To this idea, it is added that:

Besides systematic and asystematic errors, the learner, like the native speaker, seems to make unsystematic errors too. They are slips of tongue or pen caused purely by psychological conditions, such as intense excitement, and/or physiological factors, such as tiredness, which change from moment to moment and from situation to situation: errors under these circumstances are \textit{ipso facto} unsystematic. From the pedagogic point of view, one may usefully dismiss them as ‘mistake’...

Lennon\textsuperscript{114} in interpreting error definition, identification, and distinction believes that there are a lot of controversies in these issues and finally he tries to present his own definition of what an error is in the following way: “a linguistic form or combination of forms which, in the same context and similar conditions of production, would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers’ native speaker counterparts.”

It has to be understood that errors are only errors from a teacher’s or researcher’s perspective, not from a learner’s, meaning that an error by referring to the learner’s interlanguage can not be interpreted as error, but regarding L2 norms, they are considered as deviant forms. In fact this is the learners’ interlanguage which may determine the domain of the error and its seriousness, and judgments based on some already determined norms will not suffice.

2. Sources of Errors

The most dominant classification of errors, as it has been observed up to here, is categorizing them into two groups of interlingual or intralingual. Intralingual errors, also known as developmental 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

\textsuperscript{113} Op Cit, P: 206.
apply. But interlingual errors are defined to be those errors which result from the
transfer of learner's native language rule into the L2.

a. Types of Intralingual errors

Intralingual errors demonstrate the learner's effort to build up hypothesis
about the L2 based on his limited experience or training. These errors, as
Richards' suggests, have been classified into four basic groups:

1. Over-generalization or transfer happens when the learner uses a "previously
available strategy in new situations". In other words, these errors are the instances
of the cases where the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his
experience of other structures in the target language. Although these over-
generalizations can sometimes be useful and help the L2 learners, there are some
others which can be impossible to apply to any context and as a result will become
misleading. The examples, as Richards states, are the cases such as *he can sings*, or
*we are hope*. He discusses that sometimes overlearning of a certain structure,
simplicity, and redundancy reduction can be introduced as the main causes of this
phenomenon.

2. Ignorance of Rule Restriction is the application of rules to contexts where
they do not apply. *I made him to do it* or *the man whom I saw him* ignores
restrictions of certain rules which are not suitable for this context. However, it
may be noted that these are also the result of analogy or overgeneralization.

3. Incomplete Application of Rules is "the occurrence of structures whose
deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce
acceptable utterances." For example, a question form sentence may be produced in
statement form. The question marker, i.e., the auxiliary is taken as a redundant
feature and as a result dropped out. The cause of this phenomenon is explained by
Richards as being: "The second language learner interested perhaps primarily in
communication can achieve quite efficiently communication without the need for
mastering more than the elementary rules of question usage." He adds that
motivation to achieve communication may exceed motivation to produce grammatically correct sentences.

4. False Concepts Hypothesized is in fact the faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. For example, any -ing form among Iranian learners of English, as we will observe in the following chapters, is an indication of progression. Or as what Richards states for example, the form was may be taken as a marker of the past tense and one day it was happened can be an indication of the past.

b. The diversity of Inter-Intra classification

It has also been claimed that it is not always possible to distinguish the sources of errors as interlingual, or intralingual.\footnote{Op Cit, PP: 174-177.} There can be observed a lot of controversies among the scholars who have discussed the sources and the main causes of errors. In the following, some of the assumptions concerning the sources of errors committed more frequently and the way these errors can be interpreted will be brought into view.

Ellis\footnote{See also Els, 1984; Ellis, 1994; Richards, 1974; Lennon, 1991.} suggesting that an error can be applied to both these two phenomena, i.e. inter and intra, proposes a doubtful account of the difference between the concept of transfer as it is and intralingual: “where one researcher identifies the source of an error as transfer, another researcher identifies the source of the same error as intralingual.” As a result, one major criticism of the WV of CA is that this hypothesis lacks the predictive power and without it, the hypothesis is a contradiction. Moreover, it fails to determine the exact source of errors. Of these controversies, it is concluded that if clear explanatory statements about errors are often not possible, the value of EA as a tool for investigating L2 acquisition is questionable.

\footnote{Op Cit, P: 62.}
Ellis\textsuperscript{118} adds that CA from the very beginning of its development has shown a strong tendency to assert that any L2 error that showed a similarity to an L1 item was the result of transfer. To make the point clear, Ellis quotes an example of Jackson who believes that non-inverted wh-questions i.e., how I do this? were evidence of the L1 influence in Punjabi-speaking learners of English. It is concluded that the results like this are not valid unless we can prove that these errors are not developmental. In other words, it seems to be a controversial issue to assign a certain source to most errors that are committed by most L2 learners of English and the tendency to assign both sources of inter and intra to most errors is in fact overcoming this great deficiency of error classification.

Odlin\textsuperscript{119}, to present his own taxonomy of errors, suggests three classes or sources for learners’ errors:

1. Substitution when using native-language forms in the target language.
2. Calques are errors that reflect very closely a native language structure.
3. Alternation of structure which may also cause hypercorrection.

Dulay and Burt\textsuperscript{120} have claimed that most of the errors they have observed in their study with children studying English as a second language were ‘developmental’, like those made by native speakers in learning their own first language, and a few could be considered “genuine cases of interference.” They put errors under three categories: developmental, interference, and unique, the errors which are neither developmental nor interference.

Errors, contrary to what they look, are not easy to identify. In other words, to decide if a language form is erroneous or not depends on some factors which in most cases is hard to decide. There are some reasons for this claim. For example, for something which is assumed to be an error in isolation can be acceptable in context. The notion of context in distinguishing errors is very important. A sentence may have no apparent and formal sign of error, and may still be regarded erroneous. It is in fact the context that determines an utterance faulty or not. Well-

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, P: 339.
\textsuperscript{119} Op Cit, PP: 37-38.
formed sentences produced by native speakers are mostly ambiguous when taken out of context.

Likewise, Lennon\textsuperscript{121} has asserted that identifying errors is not always possible and to support this, he presents the experiment conducted by Hughes and Lascaratou (1982). They presented thirtytwo erroneous and four correct sentences to a panel of thirty judges, ten of whom were Greek teachers of English, ten native-speaker teachers of English, and ten native-speaker non-teachers. The panel found that one of the ‘correct’ sentences, \textit{neither of us feels quite happy}, was judged erroneous by two Greek teachers, three native-speaker teachers, and five of the non-teacher native speakers. There was also another sentence over which the panel did not come to an agreement and that was the sentence, \textit{the boy went off in a faint}, taken from Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English. It was judged erroneous by two Greek teachers, nine native-speaker teachers, and nine native speaker non-teacher\textsuperscript{122}. And as a result, Lennon concludes that because of the considerable variations which can be found even among native speakers, identification of errors is not an easy task.

Ellis\textsuperscript{123}, quoting Corder, asserts that an error can be overt or covert. An overt error, as he states, is easy to identify because the deviation is not always clear. On the other hand, a covert error occurs when an utterance or piece of writing is apparently well-formed, but “which do not mean what the learner intended them to mean e.g. ‘it was stopped’ is grammatically correct, but ill-formed as it refers to ‘the wind’.”

Jain\textsuperscript{124} presents three distinct types of errors according to the patterns under which they occur. The errors, being rule-governed, fall into definite patterns and show a consistent system. These systematic errors are internally principled and are free from arbitrariness. On the other hand, there are instances of errors, called asystematic errors, as opposed to systematic and unsystematic errors, which above

\textsuperscript{120} Op Cit. P: 131
\textsuperscript{121} Op Cit. PP: 180-196.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid. P: 182.
\textsuperscript{123} Op Cit. P: 52.
all are not consistent, nor are they rule-governed. In other words, it is not possible to give any hypothesis for production and formation of these errors. Unsystematic errors or mistakes have no consistency in their production and it is not possible to trace their sources according to certain rules.

Ellis\textsuperscript{125} postulates that the taxonomy proposed by Corder in judging the sources of an error has been considered as a promising one having been adapted by most analysts. He distinguishes three types of errors according to their systemacity:

1. Presystemic errors occur when the learner is unaware of the existence of a particular rule in the target language. They are random.
2. Systematic errors occur when the learner has discovered a rule but it is the wrong one.
3. Postsystematic errors occur when the learner knows the correct target language rule but uses it inconsistently. He can correct himself.

To what Corder suggests Ellis adds that type one errors occur when the learner can not give any account of why a particular form is chosen. Type two occurs when the learner is unable to correct the errors, but can explain the mistaken rule used, and type three occurs when the learner can explain the target language rule that is normally used.

Another approach which above all "provides an indication of the cognitive processes that underlie the learners’ reconstruction of the L2" is the one proposed by Duly, Burt, and Krashen\textsuperscript{126}. They put errors into four categories:

1. Omission: the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance
2. Addition: the presence of an item that must not appear
3. Misinformations: the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure
4. Misorderings: the incorrect placement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes in an utterance.

\textsuperscript{124} Op Cit, PP. 202-203
\textsuperscript{125} Op Cit, P. 56.
Ellis\textsuperscript{127}, meanwhile, casts doubt on Duly, Bert, and Krashen's taxonomy as it presupposes that learners operate "on the surface structure of the target language rather than create their own, unique structures." He moreover adds: "if a surface strategy does not represent mental processes, it is not clear what values it has."

To overcome the pitfalls of the taxonomies, mentioned here, the following is proposed as a more promising classification:

1) 'Overextension of analogy' occurs when the learner misuses an item because it shares features with an item in the L2. 2) 'Transfer of structure arises when the learner utilizes some L2 features rather than the target language. 3) 'Interlingual/intralingual errors arise when a particular distinction does not exist in the L1.

It has to be pointed out that over-generalization of target language rules is a phenomenon in which a language learner extends an already learned rule to other contexts. The examples below can make the point clear:

*What did he intended to say?

*Max is happier than Sam's these days.

It can be understood that in these errors one rule is extended or overgeneralized to other situations.

Jain\textsuperscript{128} examines different aspects of errors of different types and tries to shed light on not the errors but on some teaching learning strategies because of which errors find their way in learners' performance. To this purpose, Jain states that second language learners in their attempt to acquire L2 system reduce the target language rules into simpler system through generalizations which are most of the time "restricted in nature and carry with them potential errors through over-application of these generalizations." One significant example of over-application of rules is discussing the noun class in English as having been generalized either as count or non-count. Meanwhile, examples are presented from the contexts where this rule can not be easily applied and consequently errors of various types emerge.

\textsuperscript{127} Op Cit. P: 56.
\textsuperscript{128} Op Cit. PP: 190-91.
Dulay and Burt\(^{129}\) in a study proved that most errors, contrary to what behaviorists believed that errors were viewed as the result of the negative transfer of L1 habits, were intralingual. As an example, they in their study gathered five hundred and thirteen unambiguous errors of Spanish children. They occurred in six syntactic structures which differed in English and Spanish. The errors were classified as ‘developmental’, ‘interference’, and ‘unique’. In each case, the developmental (intralingual) errors outweighed the interference ones. This suggested the idea that “L1 and L2 acquisition were very similar.” A similar study was carried out by Tran-Thi-Chau\(^{130}\) who proved that most errors committed by learners are inter not intra with the proportion of 51 to 29 percent. This claim is also supported by Richards\(^{131}\) when he asserts that one-third of the deviant sentences could be attributed to transfer. This can be concluded that CA can explain or predict not more than half of the errors.

The study performed by Dommergues et al\(^{132}\) tried to trace the sources of two major type of errors: Interlingual or over-generalization or analogy errors and errors as a result of interference. They conclude that “Relatively errors decrease monotonically with increasing mastery of the second language whereas analogy [intra-] errors first increase and then decrease.” They finally suggest that morphosyntactic errors are highly predictable when the involvement of both interference and analogy are taken into account. They continue by adding that when a student is presented with an ungrammatical sentence in his second language, the chance that he will accept it as correct depends not only on interference and analogy but also on the stage he has reached in mastering that language. Consequently, it has strongly been supported throughout the literature that in early stages, analogy contributes little to errors while interference is more


\(^{130}\) Op Cit. P: 135.


active, while in later stages, i.e., intermediate and advanced, intra- or analogy is more active. In the same manner, Ellis\textsuperscript{133} quotes Taylor (1975) whose idea is in proportion with what was stated above. He has claimed that learners at elementary levels produce more transfer errors rather than intra. But this is reverse when learners are at intermediate and advanced levels. At these levels, errors are intralingual (over-generalization).

On the whole, this is a hard task to identify the sources of intra-errors. The cause of this problem is diversified and complex such as the chronological order or introduction of the structures, teaching techniques, type of learner, and so on and it is not possible to reveal these errors by the techniques of EA and therefore are judged subjectively by any individual analyst.

Lennon\textsuperscript{134} in his attempt to define and distinguish errors has initiated a new dimension to the field. In this respect, he gives an account of the domain and extent of errors. He states that the domain of the error refers to the amount of (linguistic or non-linguistic) context the hearer needs to recognize the error while extent refers to the amount of linguistic context that the speaker needs to refashion in order to repair the error. In other words, the domain of the error, as he postulates, is the rank of linguistic unit which must be taken as context in order for the error to become apparent. The unit discussed here may extend from the morpheme to the sentence and to the units of discourse. On the other hand, the extent is applied to the rank of the linguistic unit, from minimally the morpheme to maximally the sentence, which have to be deleted, replaced, reordered, or supplied in order to repair production. For example, morphological, prepositional, and article errors have the same extent which is limited to the word but to understand the domain of the errors, some larger linguistic units are necessary.

On the whole, a number of different sources of competence errors can be concluded from the discussion made here:

\textsuperscript{133} Op Cit. P: 62.
\textsuperscript{134} Op Cit. PP: 180-196.
1) **Interference errors** which occur as a result of the use of elements from one language while speaking another.

2) **Intralingual errors** which "reflect the general characteristics of rule learning like faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply" have been considered as the main source of errors. These type of errors are most of all observable when learners apply deviant L2 rules on the basis of other structures in the TL. This phenomenon is applicable to all aspects of language such as phonology, syntax and lexicon.

3) **Developmental errors** occur when the learner attempts to build up hypothesis about the target language on the basis of limited experience.

As can be understood from the classification presented here, most of the studies follow the same strategy and consider one goal in depth: concentrating on two major error types of inter and intra as they build up the majority of the corpus of errors committed by different learners although different terms have been used to label them. Two great disagreements observable among these studies are that the proportion of inter and intra errors differ from one study to the other and the other is the inability of pertaining certain sources or causes to these errors.

### 3. Criticism of EA

#### a. Priority of Errors in EA

The most important problem of EA has been stated to be its too much concentration on errors.\(^{135}\) To this idea, Els adds that we, in our analyzing learners' errors, concentrate on what they haven't been able to do correctly, and no attention is paid to what they are successful at. In other words, as Brown\(^{136}\) puts it, "the danger of EA goes to the teacher who gives too much attention to the errors committed by their learners, and ignoring the value of positive reinforcement of clear, free communication." He moreover adds that another defect of EA is concentrating on specific languages rather than viewing universal aspect of

---

\(^{135}\) See also Els, 1984; Ziahosseini, 1994; Brown, 1994.
language. Ziahosseini\textsuperscript{137}, referring to some deficiencies of EA, states that EA above all is concerned with errors and learners’ success is neglected. It is not preventive indicating that it allows learners to commit errors.

Meanwhile, Nickel\textsuperscript{138} on the use of IL and its application in language teaching states that any IL consists of a great quantity of correct items that are normally worth mentioning, but it is observed that “in many school systems all over the world there is unfortunately still more importance given to the negative [errors] than to the positive aspects.”

b. The Problem of Classification

Another deficiency of EA is stated to be its inability to clearly determine the area in which any definite error occurs concerning learners having different L2. For Example, omitting an article in English may be a case of simplification with a Spanish speaker but a case of transfer with a Korean Speaker. However, as it is hard enough, EA is not capable of classifying errors under certain categories such as syntactic, morphosyntactic, or lexical. In most cases they overlap.

Additionally, EA has been criticized as 1) it has methodological deficiencies; 2) it lacks explanatory ability; 3) the output of most error analysts are simply lists of categories of errors classified according to frequency of occurrence. Besides, it is criticized as it does not differentiate between explicit ideas that a language learner knows and the implicit application of rules in actual performance; thus, most of it is based on the explicit rules the language learner recognizes and alters his errors, but at the same time retains them in actual L2 use.

Moreover, Ziahosseini\textsuperscript{140} maintains that a learner, in his struggle to learn, has to go through three stages: learn the wrong item, forget the wrong item, and relearn the correct one while the third step does not always happen. Besides, there

\textsuperscript{138} Op Cit. P: 131.
\textsuperscript{140} Op Cit. P: 131.
exists high correlation between difficulty and avoidance and to clearly identify learner's errors is not a workable procedure as there is the danger of escaping from what is called learners' errors. EA does not help beginners who have not learned enough to make errors.

Another pitfall of EA, as it is put by Brown\(^1\) is that only production errors are extracted and discussed, not comprehension ones. He adds that the reason is clear: errors of production are capable of being investigated, but there has been no serious attempt to consider comprehension errors.

Lennon\(^2\) likewise criticizes the traditional error analysis as it is not capable of distinguishing the errors and their areas as well. To support this claim, he conducts an experiment in which he investigates a spoken L2 corpus of approximately 21,000 words for errors. They were produced by four female advanced German learners aged between 20-24 based on picture story sequences. Of these words, 568 unambiguous errors were identified. 208 doubtful errors and these were submitted to a panel of six native speakers for acceptability judgments. To provide panel members with the extra-linguistic context, they were given the relevant picture story as a handout. They did not consult with each other. The result showed disagreement in many cases among panel members. For example, 103 cases were rejected by all six members but 53 cases by five members and 22 only by four members and finally 14 cases rejected by three and 5 by two members of the panel. This diverse disagreement among the members of the panel indicated the idea that first distinguishing errors and also their areas is not a simple task.

The results of this experiment and other ideas confirm that classification of errors suffer first from methodological deficiencies and second to identify errors clearly and with enough certainty in some situations is a difficult task. The labels which are used to define errors also overlap and they differ from one group of learners with a certain L2 background to another group with another L2

\(^1\) Op Cit, P: 206.  
background and therefore, to make generalizations about the errors types of learners with different L2 experience is not possible.

c. Cross-sectional or Longitudinal Studies

Ellis referring to one serious limitation of EA, observes that one main problem of EA studies is that most studies concerning error analysis and classification are cross-sectional. To this he adds that little care has been taken to separate out the errors made by learners at different stages of development. As a result, EA has not proved very effective in helping us understand how learners develop a knowledge of an L2 over time. He, moreover, suggests that EA can be used in longitudinal studies. To elaborate the difference between cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, it has to be pointed out that a cross-sectional study generally consists of data gathering from a large number of speakers at a single point in time while longitudinal studies are generally case studies with data being collected from a single speaker (or a small number of speakers) over a prolonged period of time. Because cross-sectional data involve large numbers of subjects, there is an experimental format to the researcher. Results tend to be more quantitative and less descriptive than in longitudinal studies, with statistical analysis and their interpretation being integral part of the research report. However, both these types of studies have their own advantages and disadvantages. Tarone postulates that cross-sectional data provides reliable information about the shared patterns which are most frequently repeated among large bodies of learners; however, there is this danger that the final data may obscure important patterns of variation over time and across individuals, and patterns such as the influence of one part of the IL system upon another. One advantage of cross-sectional approach is the disadvantage of longitudinal data. Because there are large number of subjects in the former, it is possible to generalize the results to wider groups.

143 Op Cit. P: 98.
The disadvantage has been stated to be the fact that detailed information about the subjects and their environment is not provided.

Avoiding errors has been considered as one of the most important deficiencies of EA and this is assumed to be one major difficulty that the error analysis deals with in investigation of all L2 learners in general and Farsi learners of English in particular. Their avoiding strategy affects their performance which will have its own effects on the obtained data and the results of the studies.

d. The Avoidance Hypothesis

Avoided errors are those types of linguistic forms which language learners, as a result of some strategies, prefer to escape from. These linguistic forms, if applied by these learners, will have them produce erroneous utterances. Therefore, they prefer not to use them. As Brown puts it “they (learners) refrain from expressing their ideas freely using any possible and necessary structure, the acquisition of which has been judged to be more complicated. This happens very frequently as correct forms are overstressed, and learners’ communicative fluency is ignored”. Moreover, he, quoting Jacqueline Schachter (1984) and others, states that one disadvantage of error analysis is its disability at revealing learners’ specific errors which they escape from. This procedure is called “The Strategy of Avoidance”.

Ellis observes that three manifestation of transfer are: facilitation or simplification, avoidance (underproduction) and over-use. In other words, he believes when learners employ a certain language form more frequently or less than usual, it will normally be an evidence of transfer. It is, however, added that the identification of avoidance is not easy and “it only makes sense to talk of avoidance if the learners know what they are avoiding.”

---

145 Op Cit, PP: 206-7
146 Op Cit, P: 302.
Odlin\textsuperscript{147} confirming this idea contends that two manifestation of avoidance are ‘underproduction’ in which learners may produce very few or no examples of the TL structure or ‘overproduction’, being sometimes the consequence of underproduction, in which some structures are overused.

Corder\textsuperscript{148} observes that one important defect of error analysis is the incapability of this procedure to measure what learners refrain from revealing. He asserts that “…the learner himself will place limitations upon the data we work with by selecting from his actual repertoire, where possible, only those aspects of his knowledge which he has most confidence in.” He finally concludes that the learner “will not reveal his hand.”

When ESL students do get to write, teachers tend to view the resulting text as final product to evaluate, which conveys to students the message that the function of writing is to produce texts for teachers to evaluate, not to communicate meaningfully with another person; Thus, when the learners are struggling with the notion of evaluation, the tendency to avoid certain forms seems to be expected or in some situations inevitable.

Schachter\textsuperscript{149} in her study comparing Persian, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and American learners of English in using adjective clauses, has concluded that Chinese and Japanese learners have control over adjective clauses and make fewer errors in using them while Arabic and Persian learners do not. She reasoned out that the use of adjective clauses in Persian and Arabic is similar to English while this is different in Chinese and Japanese. In this case, the latter group place the adjective clause before the noun it modifies, and as a result of this difference, Japanese and Chinese learners on the one hand do not use these clauses very frequently, and on the other hand, they use it cautiously and with a high degree of accuracy. To this idea, Schachter in Seliger\textsuperscript{150} has claimed that her study has proved that Japanese and Chinese speakers had avoided relative clauses, which

\textsuperscript{147} Op Cit. P: 37.
\textsuperscript{148} Op Cit. P: 60.
were troublesome for them, because of the differences between their L1 and English. We can reason it out that one major cause of committing fewer errors by these learners is their avoiding strategy and applying those structures which can fulfill their needs. This supports the fact that the number of errors committed by language learners does not always indicate difficulty as they can simply avoid most structures assumed to be difficult.

However, CA can be a fairly good predictor of avoidance. In other words, different and normally difficult items are avoided by language learners and this can be an almost valid indication of the items more frequently escaped from by the L2 learners.

The phenomenon of avoidance is discussed by Ellis151 by quoting Kamintoo, Shimura, and Kellerman's study (1992) in which they have argued that even demonstrating knowledge of a structure is not sufficient. They state that Hebrew speakers of English may know how to use the passive, but their infrequent use of it in the L2 may simply reflect their preference for active over passive in L1 Hebrew rather than avoidance. To this Seliger152 adds that avoidance is a purposeful activity and continues that we can be certain that avoidance has taken place if the learners know what they are avoiding and he adds that having the knowledge of a particular structure is not enough. This notion supports the study performed by Kamintoo, Shimura, and Kellerman with Hebrew learners of English.

Moreover, to support this idea, Kleinmann153 conducts a study including three groups of learners: Arabic versus Spanish/Portuguese speakers comparing the use of passive, present progressive, infinitive complements, and direct object pronouns among these learners. The point to be noticed here is the fact that Kleinmann, in his study, ascertained that these learners already knew the structures in comparison concluding that the differential behavior between them in terms of

151 Op Cit. P: 305.
using or not using a particular language form or structure could not be attributed
to the lack of knowledge but rather it could be traced back to their L1.

Kellerman\textsuperscript{154} believes that there are three types of avoidance in language
learners. Type 1 occurs when learners know or anticipate that there is a problem
and have at least a sketchy idea of what the target form is like. Type 2 can occur
when learners know what the target is but find it too difficult to use in the
particular circumstances. To make the point clear, the researcher can make a
reference to the situations in which Iranian learners are questioned as to why they
don’t use certain linguistic forms in their writings and seriously try to avoid them
although they are already familiar with these forms. They simply answer that it is
only the difficulty of these forms which prevents them from applying them and
sends them towards avoidance. And finally type 3 happens when learners know
what and how to say, but they don’t show any tendency to use it which is against
their own norms of behaviour. He concludes “the extent of learner’s knowledge of
the L2 and the attitudes learners hold toward their own and the target language
cultures act as factors that interact with L1 knowledge to determine avoidance
behaviour.”

One major reason of applying cloze tests by Henning\textsuperscript{155} in his study with
Iranian students is the fact that in such a case learners cannot escape from their
problems. In other words, Henning exposes the learners to the problematic
linguistic forms which they normally prefer to escape from. It implicitly indicates
that other possible test forms naturally suffer from one major defect : learners’
avoiding to reveal their problems.

Els\textsuperscript{156} on discussing the drawback of EA contends by stating that “some L2
learners phenomena can not be captured at all by EA.” He adds that “avoidance
does not lead to errors, but to under-representation of words or structures in L2
elements for various reasons.”

\textsuperscript{154} Op Cit, PP: 82-3.
\textsuperscript{155} G. H. Henning. 1978. A Developmental Analysis of Errors of Adult Iranian Students of
Another remedy, as suggested by Oller in gathering data in error analysis is resorting learners to free composition production. In this case, "the learner can deliberately avoid linguistic areas in which he feels uncertain. He adds that like tests, productive material (translation, precis, paraphrase, re-telling stories) is error-provoking whereas spontaneous production (free composition) is error-avoiding.

To confirm what Corder suggested, according to an unpublished study performed by the author in Kerman Islamic Azad University, 142 writings belonging to Persian English learners (PELs) in their third term of majoring English were analyzed in the use or avoidance of certain clauses and it revealed interesting facts about them. These learners aged between 18-27, fourteen male and 128 female, having been classified into four teaching groups instructed by the same teacher, were wanted to respond to a few topics presented to them. The topics included the titles such as:

- University cafeteria should be able to provide meals at lower cost than private restaurants.
- Smoking is harmful to our health.
- Traveling is refreshing.
- To want to is to be able to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The area of usage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjective Clauses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who in subject position</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whom in object position</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whose in any position</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of-which pattern</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional adjective</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb Clauses</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun Clauses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Subject position</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun Clauses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Object Position</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicating the areas avoided by PELs

156 Op Cit. P. 63.
In this analysis, the number of adjective, adverb, and noun clauses, which are assumed to be difficult and are escaped from more frequently, has been investigated. Table 2 demonstrates the results.

As the frequencies indicate, the avoided structures are clearly observable among these learners. It is noticeable that the adverb and noun clauses are used very cautiously in limited forms, and the adjective clauses appear only in one major form: when the relative pronoun is in the subject position while other forms are perfectly neglected. Clearly applying noun clauses in subject position and in the same way, using relative pronoun in object position or as object to preposition and as of-which patterns are both similar and to a large degree different from Persian. In other words, the learners prefer to resort to simple and similar structures rather than taking the risk of using the language forms which might have them produce erroneous forms. As the data indicates, the traces of over- and under-production as two manifestation of avoidance can be observed among these learners.

i) The Sources of Avoidance

There is enough dispute about the sources or the causes of avoidance among different learners. Some have regarded the deep difference between L1 and L2 as the main cause of avoidance. In other words, when errors do not occur so frequently as it is expected, it may provide evidence that the learner is avoiding the use of problematic structures. However, Gass & Selinker believe that the opposite can be correct. They believe that similarities may also cause avoidance as the learners may doubt that these similarities exist between L1 and L2.

Laufer and Eliasson in a study with Swedish learners of English concentrated on the use or avoidance of phrasal verbs by them. The results were compared with Hebrew learners of English and the researchers finally came to the conclusion that “the best predictor of avoidance is the L1-L2 differences.” And it is

159 Op Cit. P: 90.
added that “although L1-L2 similarity and inherent complexity (...) have a role, the only factor that consistently predicts avoidance is L1-L2 difference.”

Another study by Dagut and Laufer in Gass & Selinker with Hebrew speakers has confirmed that avoidance above all is related to the complexity of the structure being used in L2. On working with these speakers in using phrasal verbs which do not exist in Hebrew, Dagut and Laufer proposed that these learners “preferred the one-word equivalent of the phrasal verbs (enter, remove, save, stop, disappoint, confuse). Within the category of phrasal verbs, they preferred those that are more semantically transparent (e.g. come in, take away) to those that are less transparent (let down, mix up).” They finally came to the conclusion that the complexity of the target language structure had a greater impact on learners’ avoiding certain forms than did the differences between L1 and L2.

In a similar study with Dutch learners of English, similar results were drawn. Knowing that Dutch like English applies phrasal verbs, it was concluded that learners did not accept phrasal verbs when there was close similarity between Dutch and English. In this way, learners demonstrate their disbelief that another language could have a structure so similar to their L1.

In the light of the above discussion it can be concluded that the learners know that there is enough difference between the elements in L1 and L2 and also that this difference is sometimes very significant and that avoidance exists at three levels: 1. avoidance happens when learners know or anticipate that there is a problem. 2. when learners know what the target is but find it hard to use in the particular situation 3. when learners know what to say and how to say it but are unwilling to actually say it because it will result in violating their own norms of behavior. On the other hand, the non-occurrence of errors does not indicate that the prediction of errors in error analysis is invalid.

161 Ibid, P: 90.