**CHAPTER TWO**

**THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

2.1. Introduction

Language acquisition takes place through two main phases, viz. pre-linguistic and linguistic. The pre-linguistic phase constitutes the basis for the linguistic one. Thus, the pre-linguistic phase begins when infants employ a variety of nonlinguistic means of attention-directing and attention-sharing, including among other things pointing to interesting events and holding up objects to show them to other people. In fact, these species-specific communicative behaviours set the stage for language acquisition by establishing the “referential triangle,” i.e. me, you and object, within which all the future linguistic communication, viz. the linguistic phase, will take place. After their birth, children begin to make their first serious attempts to acquire and use “pieces” of a conventional language (Tomasello 2007:1092-1093). These attempts are not aimed at learning words, quite simply because infants at this age do not know what words are (Cook 1991). They are aimed at learning the communicative behaviours, namely, utterances by means of which adults attempt to manipulate other persons’ attention. Children, thus, learn first to comprehend and produce whole utterances they have heard other people using, though they may do this initially in a child-like form, i.e. they may learn just one part of the adult’s utterance to express the entire communicative intention. This has been referred to as one-word stage (Mitchell and Myles 1998). Over time, children then learn to extract from these utterances words and other functionally significant “pieces” of language for future use as constituents in other utterances.

Chomsky (1968:100) holds that to study human language is to approach what is called “the human essence, the distinctive qualities of mind that are, so far as we know, unique to [humans]” because knowledge of language may be the most abstract piece of knowledge. One way to account for how children acquire their L1 in an early age when they are unable to grasp abstract concepts lies within Universal Grammar (UG) which holds that there is an underlying predisposition in the human brain which enables children to acquire language in that early age as opposed to behaviourism which sees LA as a matter of habit formation. Whether the same view is extended to account for SLA is still a matter of controversy and hot debate. One UG-based hypothesis is that while UG principles remain available through life, post-critical-period learners have no access to UG parameters unless these have previously
been “triggered” by L1 input (Hawkins and Chan 1997). In addition, other SLA theories such as Cognitivism, Interactionism and Acculturationism have also dealt with SLA and each expresses its own perspective regarding when, where and how a SL is acquired. From a pedagogical perspective, studies in SLA have made language teachers and curriculum designers aware that language learning consists of more than rule-memorisation but rather rule-formulation, more importantly, perhaps, it involves learning to express communicative needs. In fact, the details of this new conceptualisation of language learning have resulted in methodologies which emphasise communication success rather than linguistic accuracy.

2.2. Second Language Acquisition

In SLA, there are many more questions unanswered than those answered. The SLA process takes place when there is an already existent language in the brain. In fact, studying SLA has been attempted by a great number of linguists and researchers. Every researcher or linguist has tackled it from the perspective he/she sees appropriate and defined it accordingly. For instance, Ellis (1997:3) tracing the development of the field holds that SLA is the “systematic study of how people acquire a second language” belonging only to the 2nd half of the 20th century. He adds that SLA emergence is not accidentally in this time but because of “the Global Village” and “the World Wide Web” when communication among people has expanded beyond their local speech communities. It is because of these fast and vast changes all over the globe, it has been necessary to learn a second language. Other researchers (e.g. Gass and Selinker 2008, Brown 1994, Chun 1980, Schachter 1996) maintain several reasons behind SLA the most salient of which is getting closer to the “Other” culturally, socially, economically and so forth. What can be implied here is that SLA involves learning any language “subsequent” to the first language of the learner. Ellis (1997) holds that second language in this sense does not contrast with ‘foreign’ language. What Ellis means by this is that there is no difference between to learn a language in a natural setting and to learn a language in the classroom. Ellis’s view of SLA contrasts considerably with the view held by Krashen who strongly argues for an inevitable difference between SLA and SLL (cf. Krashen 1981, 1982). In this way, SLA can be understood as learning any language other than the native language the learner already possesses.

Saville-Troike (2006:2-3) sees SLA as referring “both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language” holding that the language to be acquired subsequently may be second, third,
fourth, etc. She adds that language can be acquired in a formal or an informal setting without distinguishing between learning and acquisition. In this view, Saville-Troike supports Cook’s (2003) and Ellis’s (1997) views of SLA and contrasts with Krashen’s (1981). According to her, there are two types of acquisition, viz. formal and informal. The former occurs when, for instance, a Russian student takes a class in Arabic and vice versa and the latter occurs when an Arab child is brought to Japan and hence, “picks up” Japanese when he/she attends school and plays with his/her Japanese peers. So for the latter to take place, communication is a necessary step in the acquisition process while for the former “specialized instruction” is maintained. Apart from this, she questions three basic issues central to SLA, viz. a) the exact knowledge L2 learners come to know, b) the way in which such a learner acquires this knowledge, and c) the reasons behind the native speaker-like acquisition by some but not by all L2 learners. She believes that there is no complete consensus among SLA researchers regarding such phenomena ascribing such controversy to the different methodologies applied in studying SLA which are different in nature and that researchers who study SLA come “from academic disciplines which differ greatly in theory and research methods.”

Gass and Selinker (2008:xv-5), who take a multidisciplinary approach to the study of SLA, hold that SLA is a field “about which everyone seems to have an opinion.” What this implies is that like Saville-Troike (2006), Gass and Selinker point out, on the one hand, to the complexity underlying defining SLA and that there is no consensus among SLA researchers as to how to study it, on the other hand. They hold that to define SLA is to “state what it is not.” In addition, to them, SLA is not a simple field but rather a complex one “whose focus [is understanding] the processes underlying the learning of a second language.” SLA, in Gass and Selinker’s view, refers to the process of learning a language after L1 of the learner is being acquired. What can be considered an addition introduced by Gass and Selinker to the field of SLA study is that they have used the term acquisition as referring to acquiring or using a second or foreign language. In addition, they hold that there is a strong relationship between L2 acquisition and L1, i.e. L1 acquisition underlies the basis of SLA and that many questions put forth by SL research stem from the same questions in child LA. From a pedagogical perspective, they see SLA as a process making “language teachers and curriculum designers aware that language learning consists of more than rule memorization [and that]…it involves learning to express communicative needs.”
Dulay et al. (1982:3-6) hold that SLA “can be excited and productive ….or painful and useless.” What they mean by this is that it is “[o]ne’s efforts [that] can end in the acquisition of native-fluency or a stumbling repertoire of sentences soon forgotten.” They have ascribed this difference to the role of the learner in acquiring the new language and that of the teacher who teaches it. The learner does not need particular “inborn talent” to be successful in learning that language. Rather, what the learner and teacher need is only to “do it right.” (emphasis mine). Further, Dulay et al. hold that it is Chomsky who has “upset the prevailing belief that language is learned by imitating, memorizing and being rewarded for saying the correct things.”

Now, an issue worth addressing is whether or not L1 and L2 acquisitions are related, similar and/or different. In fact, many SLA researchers have tackled this issue. For instance, Chun (1980:287) maintains that there is a similarity between L1 and L2 acquisition which is that “both processes result in a language system” which is not like that of the adult or native speaker’s norm (see section 2.12). In addition, learners of both systems progress through a series of stages by means of internalising rules about each linguistic system and making use of them in their production (Schumann 1983, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a, Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, Larsen-Freeman 1991, 2000, Sato 1985). Further, Brown (1973), in his morpheme studies, has shown that learners of L1 and L2 develop through similar stages. He has concluded that and as far as English as SL is concerned, acquiring the plural morpheme –s/–es or the past morpheme -ed, L1 and L2 learners pass through similar stages. However, L1 and L2 are still different in many ways. As stated so far, L1 acquisition takes place when learners are still young enough to deal with such an abstract process which involves internalising linguistic structures and rules. L1 takes place when the brain is “empty” but L2 comes while there is an existent language in the brain. Further, L2 learners are different and find themselves in very different situations more than children learning their L1. Many researchers (e.g. Han 2004, Dulay et al. 1982, Gass and Selinker 2008) point out that L2 learners are older and smarter, already have some knowledge of at least one language, and probably have a very different motivation for learning L2 than they did for learning their L1. Thus, the most salient two differences between L1 and L2 learners are related to age and previous linguistic knowledge which have generated considerable research and controversy. In short, SLA is a complex process that has not been fully accounted for yet, there are as many questions remaining as there are many facts that have been discovered.
2.3. Second Language Acquisition Theories

Acquiring an L1 is something every child does successfully in a matter of a few years and without the need for formal lessons. However, L2 acquisition seems to be of a mysterious and controversial nature; probably no other topic has aroused such a controversy. Many researchers (e.g. Towell and Hawkins 1994) hold that such issues as how people acquire a second language in addition to the already existing one they possess, when, where and what factors that affect such a process have been the main concern investigated by a great number of researchers and have been the main focus of theoretical linguists, applied linguists, researchers and even teachers in such a field. In SLA literature, there are several theories the most influential of which are Behaviourism, Mentalism, Cognitivism, Interactionism and Acculturationism. Such theories have attempted to account for how SLA process takes place. These theories will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

2.3.1. Behaviourism

In the 50s and early 60s of the 20th century, behaviourism, a psycholinguistic approach to language acquisition, was dominating the learning-teaching scene. In the behaviourist view, (Bloomfield 1933, Skinner 1957), language acquisition is seen as any other type of learning, i.e. as the formation of habits. This view, in fact, has initiated from work in psychology which sees the learning of any kind of behaviour as being based on the notions of stimulus-response-reinforcement. In this view, human beings have been regarded as being exposed to numerous stimuli in their environment. The responses they give to such stimuli will be reinforced if successful, that is if some desired linguistic outcome is obtained. Thus, L1 acquisition, from a behaviourist perspective, involves a process of learning a set of habits as humans respond to any stimuli in their environment.

However, L2 acquisition, according to the behaviourist language theory, is seen as running into problems because L2 learners have already a set of well established responses in their L1. In fact, behaviourists view L2 acquisition as involving replacing the old linguistic sets of habits with new ones and thus the behaviourists believe that L2 acquisition consists of learners imitating what they hear and develop habits in the L2 they are learning by routine practice. In this view, L2 learners are thought to relate what they know of their L1 to what they recognise in the L2 which results in language transfer, including both positive and negative transfer (see section 2.8) where the latter results in errors. In fact,
such errors result from using \textit{habits} of L1 in L2 especially those which do not exist in L2. What happens here is that those old linguistic \textit{habits} will intervene either \textit{facilitating} or \textit{disfacilitating} the acquisition process. In other words, when the L1 structures are the same as those of L2, acquisition will take place without any difficulty but if not, it will be the otherwise. (Lado 1957:58-59) further describes such a process saying “\[w\]e know from the observation of many cases that the grammatical structure of the native language tends to be transferred to the foreign language…we have here the major sources of difficulty or ease in learning the foreign language…Those structures that are similar will be easy to learn… [and] those structures that are different will be difficult.”

On the other hand, behaviourism as a theory or approach to language acquisition has been attacked and criticised. This criticism has been initiated when linguistics has witnessed a shift from structural linguistics that was based on the description of the surface structure of large corpus of language to generative linguistics. Generative linguistics has emphasised the \textit{rule-governed} and \textit{creative} nature of human languages. The pioneer of this shift was Chomsky who proposed this thesis in his \textit{Syntactic Structures} in 1957. In fact, Chomsky criticised Skinner’s book \textit{The Verbal Behaviour} (1957) which was a critique of not only Skinner’s views but also of behaviourism as a whole. In Chomsky’s own words, “I had intended this review not specifically as a criticism of Skinner’s speculations regarding language, but rather as a more general critique of behaviorist (I would now prefer to say “empiricist”) speculation as to the nature of higher mental processes”(Chomsky 1959:26). He argues that children acquiring their L1 do not by any means learn and produce a large set of sentences (i.e. corpus). Rather, they create sentences they have never learned and/or heard before. What they do is internalise rules rather than strings of words (Chomsky 1965, 1968). He further argues that if children learn language by imitation, then how it is that they produce sentences like \textit{Tom goed} and \textit{it breaked} which they have never heard or come across. This, in fact, shows that children are not copying, or in \textit{parrot-like} imitating, language from their environment but applying rules. In fact, Chomsky was upset by the idea of comparing the behaviour of rats in labs learning to perform simple tasks to that of children learning a language which involves complexity and abstraction.

Pedagogically, behaviourist approach has twofold implications: behaviourists strongly believe that \textit{practice makes perfect}, i.e. learning will take place by imitating and repeating the same structure time
after time and teaching should focus on difficult structures, viz. those L2 structures that are different from those of L1. Therefore, the behaviourist approach leads to comparisons between L1 and L2 to find out the points of difference so as to make teaching address those differences in which the difficulty lies. This actually has been termed as Contrastive Analysis (see section 2.7).

2.3.2. Mentalism

As has been stated above, the behaviourist view of language learning was, to some extent, not adequate because of its failure to account for the occurrence of language which was not in the input learners are exposed to. Therefore, researchers attempt to look towards an alternative theoretical framework (Long 1983, 2003). Here, researchers have abandoned looking at ‘nurture,’ i.e. how environmental factors shape learning but they look at ‘nature,’ i.e. the role of innate properties of human mind in shaping learning. This new paradigm is referred to as mentalist or nativist in orientation. In the mentalist theoretical framework of LA, there are many things emphasised like the fact that only human beings are capable of learning language. In that, the human mind is equipped with a faculty for language learning, i.e. LAD and input is needed but only to “trigger” the operation of the language acquisition device (Ellis 1997).

Now, taking the complexity and abstraction of language to which Chomsky has provided examples such as the rules underlying the formation of wh-questions in any language and the use of reflexive pronouns in English, (Chomsky 1968), one feels embarrassed by the quick acquisition of these given the limited input the children are exposed to. This has been termed as the poverty of stimulus (Cook 1991) and referred to by Chomsky as Plato’s Problem which explains the difference between what a child knows and his/her lack of experience as input. Chomsky (1987) adds that there are too complex linguistic structures that cannot be learned so quickly from the environment. To explain such a phenomenon, Chomsky holds that children have an innate faculty which is responsible for and guide children to master these complex linguistic rules in an early age. When children hear stretches of speech around them, they are, as Chomsky claims, programmed to discover the linguistic rules underlying such stretches. Muma (1986:xii) has noted that the mentalist theory of SLA is characterised by (i) the structure of language modular, i.e. it has its own unique formal properties, distinct from those of other domains such as cognition and perception. (ii) These properties are innate, part of a unique faculty commonly referred to as
(iii) Acquisition can be conceptually viewed as instantaneous in the sense that these properties will appear in the child in their adult state with virtually no change over time. In fact, this leads Chomsky to propose his UG theory.

2.3.2.1. Universal Grammar

Most researchers and linguists argue that knowledge of language may be the most abstract piece of knowledge. However, Mitchell and Myles (1998), Schachter (1988, 1996), White (1996, 2003), Radford (2004), Cook (1983, 2003) among others hold that children acquire their L1 in an early age when they have difficulty to grasp abstract concepts. Then, how to account for this lies within UG theory which ascertains that there is an underlying predisposition in the human brain which enables children to acquire language in that early stage. This biologically endowed UG would make the task of acquisition facing children easier. The role of UG in children’s acquisition, as mentalists believe, lies in equipping children in advance with a clear set of specifications about the shape language will take. Mitchell and Myles (1998) hold that this could explain why different languages of the world are strikingly similar in many aspects. In addition, it may well explain the fact that any child of any L1 would acquire any language provided that he/she is exposed to sufficient and efficient input of such a language. For instance, a Chinese child can acquire Arabic if he/she is exposed to sufficient and efficient Arabic input. The mere explanation for this is that there is a set of UG rules predisposed innately in the child’s mind. SLA researchers like White (1989, 2003) hold that L2 acquisition process, like that of L1, is dominated by UG. She sees UG as part of an innate biologically endowed language faculty. Thus, Chomsky defines UG as “the system of principles, conditions, and rules that are elements or properties of all human languages not merely by accident but by necessity” Chomsky (1975:29). It “is taken to be a characterization of the child’s prelinguistic initial state” (Chomsky 1981:7).

UG, according to researchers (e.g. Chomsky 1965, 1981, White 1992, 1996, 2003, Schachter 1988, Cook 1983, Cook and Newson 2007, Gregg 1996, Hawkins, 2001), consists of principles and parameters. Principles are language-universal whereas parameters are language-specific. According to Mitchell and Myles (1998:33) the principles of UG “specify some limited possibilities of variation” such as the structure-dependency which specifies that language is highly “organised in such a way that it crucially depends on the structural relationships between elements in the sentence.” In fact, this principle seems to
hold true for all languages all over the globe which are hierarchically organised in terms of phrases such as NP, VP, AP, etc. Parameters, on the other hand, are language specific, i.e. every language chooses from a set of available two possibilities. To put it the other way around, if all languages had the same parameters, they, then, would have worked similarly. An example of these language-specific parameters is the head-position parameter. This parameter specifies the relationship between the head in a phrase and its complement. For instance, English and Arabic are head-first languages whereas Japanese and Tamil are head-last languages. What this means, actually, is that while in English and Arabic the head of a phrase, be it NP, VP, PP, etc. comes first, in Japanese and Tamil the head of such phrases comes last. In fact, we will not delve deeply in discussing such properties of UG as this is beyond the scope and limit of this study. However, for the purpose of the study at hand so as to make the idea clearer, Figure (1) below illustrates the issues in question.

![Diagram of Universal Grammar (UG) Principles and Parameters]

**Figure (1): UG Principles and Parameters based on Hawkins (2001:355)**

However, this does not mean that what has been expressed by *menatlism* is absolutely true. There are many scholars, for instance, the psychologist, Bruner (1983), who maintains that while there is, as Chomsky suggests, a LAD, there must also be a LASS (see section 2.3.4). Bruner holds that Chomsky appears to reduce language to its grammar. He seems to regard meaning as a secondary element. For instance, Chomsky’s famous phrase *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously* may be considered as part of the English language, for it is syntactically well-formed, and therefore worthy of study by Transformational Grammarians. A sentence such as *My brother, she no cook food*, on the other hand, is of no interest to the Chomskyan school. In fact, what Chomsky does is disregard meaning and hence, the social situation in which language is normally produced. Specifically, Chomsky disregards the situation in which the child learns his/her L1 albeit somewhere else he attributes very little to environment in language acquisition as has been noted by (Cook 1983, Cook and Newson, 2007). Cook and Newson (2007) hold
that it is this reciprocal and affective nature of language that Chomsky appears to leave out of his hypotheses. By the same token, Macnamara (1972) and Carroll (1999) add that children, rather than having an in-built language device, have an innate capacity to read meaning into social situations. Supporting Macnamara and Carroll, Kivinen and Ristela (2003) state that it is this capacity that makes children capable of understanding language, and therefore learning it with ease, rather than only LAD.

2.3.3. Cognitivism

Cognitive theory has been initiated by Piaget which views SLA as a cognitive process. McLaughlin (1987) holds that SLA is a matter of two concepts, viz. automaticity and restructuring. Automaticity implies that to learn an L2 is to learn a skill because language must be practiced since it involves internal representations that guide performance. Humans have the ability to process information but this ability is limited, so, to be efficient, the processing has to become automatic. Automaticity, in principle, implies that we must integrate a series of sub-skills that have to become automatised. McLaughlin (1987:133-135) sees memory as being composed of “complexly interassociated” nodes (the complexity increases as learning progresses) containing information. These nodes become activated either through automatic processing, viz. appropriate input releases learned responses which are stored in long-term memory after enough training or through controlled processing, i.e. where all the attention of the subject is required since it does not involve learned responses. The use of controlled processes normally leads to automaticity. Gass and Selinker (2008:230-237) see automaticity as referring to “control over one’s linguistic knowledge.” They add that “in language performance, one must bring together a number of skills from perceptual, cognitive, and social domains. The more each of these skills is routinied, the greater the ease with which they can be put to use.” In addition, there are a number of ways that automaticity can be conceptualised but the most central of these is that there is fast, unconscious, and effortless processing. When there has been a consistent and regular association between a certain kind of input and some output pattern, automatisation may result; that is, an associative connection is activated. Thus, it is the automaticity of controlled processes that regulate the information from short-term memory to long-term memory through information processing.

The second concept within the cognitive framework of information processing is that of restructuring which takes place when qualitative changes occur in a learner’s internal representation of
the SL or in the change in the use of procedures—generally from inefficient to efficient. In terms of child language acquisition, McLaughlin (1990:117) describes restructuring as “characterized by discontinuous or qualitative change as the child moves from stage to stage in development. Each new stage constitutes a new internal organization and not merely the addition of new structural elements.” In addition, McLaughlin (op.cit:139) states that cognitive theory of SLA is inductive, “like any other complex cognitive skill [that] involves the gradual integration of sub-skills as controlled processes” initially predominate and then become automatic. Thus, the initial stages of learning involve the development of skills and the gradual elimination of errors as the learner attempts to automatise aspects of performance. Several researchers (e.g. Muma 1986, McLaughlin 1990, Gass and Selinker 2008) agree that a natural order exists in SLA, i.e. certain structures are acquired before others reflecting the fact that learning is gradual. To conclude, it is obvious that cognitivism, to some extent, incorporates both behaviourism and mentalism agreeing with the mentalists that children must make use of innate knowledge but disagrees about its nature. In other words, cognitivism, on the one hand, admits the active processing by the learner, and on the other hand, attaches much importance to the input and the interaction between internal and external factors in SLA.

2.3.4. Interactionism

Interactionism as a theory of LA arouses when (Bruner 1983), criticising Chomsky’s LAD, proposes Language Acquisition Supporting System, i.e. LASS. What Burner means by this is that the family and “entourage” of the child play a central role in the acquisition process. Farther, Pinker (1995:33-35) looks closely at the way a child interacts with the adults around him/her and he has found that adults constantly provide opportunities for him/her to acquire his/her L1 and hence, it is not merely LAD that enables children to learn a language. Parents provide “ritualised scenarios’ - the ceremony of having a bath, eating a meal, getting dressed, or playing a game- in which the phases of interaction are rapidly recognised and predicted by the infant.” It is within such clear and emotionally charged contexts that the child first becomes aware of the way in which language is used. In addition, Pinker (1989) ascertains that the parents’ utterances are themselves “ritualized,” and accompany the activity in predictable and comprehensible ways. Gradually, the child moves from a passive position to an active one, taking over the movements of the caretaker, and, eventually, the language as well.
In fact, Chomsky’s ideas have been and continue to be enormously influential. Since the late 1950s, there has been an explosion of research into children’s language, some of which has been aimed at finding evidence to support Chomsky’s ideas (Masataka 1998). Other research has been aimed at finding counter-evidence for his ideas or evidence for different approaches. In fact, many researchers (e.g. Ferguson 1964, Foster-Cohen 1999, Snow 1986, 1995) hold that research into motherese or Child Directed Speech (CDS) and the early social interaction between mothers and babies was a response, at least in part, to Chomsky’s view that the poverty of the stimulus, viz. the fact that real speech contains numerous hesitations, false starts and grammatical errors, makes it impossible for children to acquire a system as abstract and complex as human language without some prior inborn knowledge about the way it works. However, as far as SLA is concerned, interactionism postulates that interaction between L2 learners and their native interlocutors makes language learning process easier and far stable, providing the L2 learners with the sufficient input in L2 which will make such learners develop their linguistic, communicative and strategic competence in L2.

2.3.5. Acculturationism

Acculturationism, a sociolinguistic approach to SLA, has been defined by Thornbury (2006) as “the process by which a person integrates into a particular culture.” SLA researchers (e.g. Schumann 1978, McLaughlin 1987) have claimed that success in SLA has a lot to do with the learner’s degree of acculturation into the second language culture. In that, Schumann (1978) believes that Alberto’s pidginised IL is due to his social isolation and his lack of any apparent desire or need to acculturate. In other words, Alberto does not feel any expressive needs to proceed acquiring English simply because the amount of language he possesses satisfy his actual needs to communicate with his interlocutors. Thus, the acculturation hypothesis was one of the first theories of SLA which attempt to prioritise social factors over purely cognitive ones and although ignored for a number of years, it has been now partly rehabilitated under the name socialisation.

McLaughlin (1987:109) states that acculturationism as a theory of SLA emphasises “sociolinguistic and social psychological factors” in addition to purely linguistic ones. He adds that several researchers and applied linguists investigating SLA without formal instructions got stuck by the relationship between social psychological acculturation and degree of success in learning L2. According
to several researchers (e.g. McLaughlin 1987, Schumann 1978, 1990, Mitchell and Myles 1998) among others, language is viewed as constantly changing over time. In that, there is a “dynamic paradigm” which contrasts with “static paradigm” maintained by structuralism and the transformational approach. Thus, the focus on pidgin-creole communities is consistent with the dynamic view because language change in these contexts is variable and accelerated. McLaughlin (1987:110) describes **acculturation** as involving modification in attitudes, knowledge and behaviour. These modifications require not only the addition of new elements to an individual’s background but also the elimination of certain previous elements and the reorganisation of others. Thus, the overall process of **acculturation** demands both social and psychological adaptation and thus part of this process involves learning the appropriate linguistic habits to function within the L2 group.

The relationship between acculturation and SLA has been characterised by Schumann (1978:34) stating that SLA is “just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language.” As such, acculturation and hence, SLA is “determined by the degree of social and psychological distance, between the learner and L2 culture” (McLaughlin 1987:110). McLaughlin adds that the social distance pertains to the individual as a member of the social group being in contact with another social group whose members speak a different language. It is the result of such factors as domination vs. subordination, assimilation vs. adaptation vs. preservation enclosure, size, congruence and attitude. However, **psychological distance** is the result of various affective factors concerning the learner as an individual such as resolution of language shock and culture stress, integrative vs. instrumental motivation etc. Further, according to Schumann (1978), **acculturation theory** sees SLA as just one part of adapting to a new culture, namely, the L2 group culture to which the L2 learner will acculturate.

Schumann (1978:29) has identified or defined two types of acculturation stating that “[i]n type one of acculturation, the learner is socially integrated with the TL group and, as a result, develops sufficient contact with TL speakers to enable him to acquire the TL.” Further, the learner is psychologically open to the L2 such that input to which he/she is exposed becomes intake. Type two of acculturation has all the characteristics of type one, but in this case the learner regards the L2 “speakers as a reference group whose life styles and values he consciously or unconsciously desires to adopt. Both types of acculturation are
sufficient to cause acquisition of the TL, but the distinction is made to stress that social and psychological contact with the TL group is the essential component in acculturation (as it relates to SLA) that that adoption of the life style and values of the TL group (characteristics traditionally associated with the notion of acculturation) is not necessary for successful acquisition of the TL.”

Thus, the acculturation theory, as characterised by many researchers (e.g. McLaughlin 1987, Chumann 1978), is concerned with the issue of why L2 learners, unlike L1 learners, often fail to gain native or native-like proficiency in L2. In fact, an explanation to this phenomenon within acculturation theory is given in terms of “distance” discussed above. In that, the L2 learners may get cut off from exposure to L2 native speakers and hence, to the necessary input because of social “distance” and/or because of the psychological “distance.” Accordingly, the learner’s development fossilises and hence, no development will take place in their IL (see section 2.13). Central to acculturation theory of SLA are the notions of pidginisation and creolisation. These will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

2.3.5.1 Pidginisation

Schumann (1978:40) sees the importance of acculturation as deriving from the phenomena of pidginisation and creolisation. He states that pidginisation “occurs when speakers of different languages come into limited contact and when an auxiliary vehicle of communication develops to facilitate interaction between them.” In fact, acculturation produces a pidginised IL characterised by simplifications such as the loss of inflectional morphology and the elimination of certain grammatical transformations and this has been observed in the case of Alberto. Schumann believes that it was Alberto’s lack of acculturation that causes his pidginised IL. Alberto’s lack of acculturation lies in the fact that he used to work at night having no TV and no native English speaker to converse with. Thus, Alberto’s pidginised form of English has been characterised by uniform negative no which has been used for most negative utterances, questions were not formed, auxiliaries were lacking, possessives were uninflected, verbs were not marked for tense and subject pronouns were often deleted.

In addition, Schumann (1990) holds that a pidgin is a hybrid language of two or more languages. It is a simplified language that develops as a means of communication between two or more groups that do not have a language in common and which results as a consequence of second language development
under conditions of limited acculturation. Further, Schumann has elaborated the pidginisation model
depending that social and psychological distance from the target language group causes persistence of
pidginisation in the speech of a SL learner. Some researchers (e.g. Naro 1978, Schumann 1978, 1990,
Holm 2004, Faracas 1996, Ushioda 1993) among others maintain that there are several purposes for
which a pidgin is created among the most salient of which are of a commercial, political and social nature.
The following are examples of Nigerian English Pidgin taken from (Faracas 1996:5-7)

Dem tok ‘Wi layk yù.’ ‘They said, “We like you.”
Dem tok dem layk mi. ‘They told me that they like me.’
Dem tel mi watìng dem chop. ‘They told me what they ate.’
Yù go maket. ‘You went to the market.’
Abi yù go makèt ? ‘Did you go to the market?’
Prâmeri na klas. ‘Primary is a class (in grade school).’
Abi prâmeri nà klàs ? ‘Is primary a grade school class?’
Prâmeri nà klas àbi ? ‘Primary, is it a class?’ OR ‘Is primary a class?’

2.3.5.2 Creolisation

Schumann (1978:40-41) states that “[w]hen a pidgin becomes the native language of a group of
speakers, it is called a creole.” In other words, a creole is a stable language that originates seemingly as a
nativised pidgin of a group of speakers. Schumann adds that in the process of creolisation “the former
pidgin complicates and expands so that it functions not just as an auxiliary vehicle of communication but
as genuine native language of a particular group. However, the complication and expansion that takes
place in creolisation is not goal directed.” In addition, Hummel (1990:2) holds that a creole as a language
“arises when a pidgin becomes the mother tongue of a speech community.” Unlike pidgin, a creole is a
comprehensive language that is capable of expressing all communicative needs of the speakers. Its
development includes both communicative and developmental processes. Any development on the part of
the creole towards the standard form of the language is socially motivated and not communicatively
determined. Naro (1978) states that creolisation serves as a model for the later stages of SLA. To
conclude, English based creoles are found in such areas as the Bayhamas, Hamica, Barbados, Triniada, the
English-speaking Windward and Leeward Islands, in South Africa and so on. The following are some examples exemplifying West African English Creole taken from Hopper and Traugott (2003:216-217):

- **Mi bai di buk** (I bought the book [that you already know about])
- **Bi bai wan buk** (I bought a [particular] book)
- **mi neva sii notn in dat bilin** (I never saw anything in that building)
- **mi witnis da wid mi ai wo gaad gi mi...** (I witness that with my eyes that God give me...the cousin)
- **dii kozn**
- **Pieter taiga en pikin taki/dati/fu** (Pieter told his child to open the door.)
- **a sa opo na doro**

2.4. Second Language Acquisition Models

In SLA literature, there have been several models that try to account for how second languages are acquired. However, three most influential models will be briefly discussed here. In fact, the models looked at below have tackled SLA from a different perspective each. These will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

2.4.1. Spolsky’s Model

Spolsky (1989) has proposed a model in which he integrates various conditions for L2 acquisition to take place. This model is based on preference rules in which cognitive processes play an important role. In Spolsky’s view, three types of conditions apply to SLL: necessary conditions, gradient conditions, and typicality conditions. A necessary condition is one that is required for learning to occur. Necessary conditions in SLA include TL input, motivation and practice opportunities. The gradient condition is one in which the more frequently the condition occurs, the more likely learning is to take place. The third type of conditions is one that typically, but not necessarily assists learning. An example of a typicality condition might be of risk taking; thus, outgoing personality tends to be of a good language learner as a rule (O’Malley and Chamot 1990). Thus, Figure (2) below summarises Spolsky’s model where social context leads to attitudes of several kinds which in turn constitute motivation for the learner to learn a language. This motivation is integrated with some personal characteristics of the learner such as age, personality, previous knowledge and so on until the acquisition has been attained.
2.4.2. Ellis’s Model

Ellis (1993) provides a model for L2 acquisition in which a weak interface position is incorporated. As can be seen in Figure (3) below, input, intake, and implicit L2 knowledge are distinguished. Input, for instance, refers to the samples of the L2 that the learner is exposed to as a result of the contact with the language in communication (oral and written). Formal instruction can also provide input, i.e. general exposure to the L2. Intake, however, indicates the linguistic properties in the input to which the learner is attended. Not all of these properties will be immediately incorporated into the learner’s IL system; only those features that are finally incorporated become implicit knowledge of the L2. Further, the model shows that implicit knowledge can be internalised in two ways. The main way is by
deriving intake from the input. A secondary way is directly from the explicit knowledge that is learned through formal instructions.

Figure (3): Ellis’s Model of Second Language Acquisition. Source: (Ellis 1993:97)

2.4.3. Krashen’s Monitor Model

Krashen’s model of SLA encompasses five modules or hypotheses. The first is the Acquisition-Learning Distinction which states that adults have two different ways to develop competence in a SL, viz. language acquisition and language learning. According to Krashen (1982:10-27), there are many differences between learning and acquisition, the most important of which are (i) acquisition takes place in informal settings where the input is authentic whereas learning takes place in formal settings such as classrooms. (ii) Acquisition is a subconscious process whereas learning is a conscious one. The second module is the Natural Order Hypothesis in which Krashen claims that the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early, others late, regardless of the L1 of the speaker. In the third, viz. Monitor Hypothesis, Krashen states that the language that one has subconsciously acquired initiates learners’ utterances in a SL and is responsible for their fluency whereas the language that learners have consciously learned acts as an editor in situations where the learner has enough time to edit, is focused on form, and knows the rule, such as on a grammar test in a language classroom or when carefully writing a composition.

Krashen’s fourth module is Input Hypothesis which states that a language acquirer who is at “level i” must receive comprehensible input, that is at “level i+1.” Krashen’s fifth hypothesis of the model is the Affective Filter Hypothesis which states that a number of ‘affective variables’ play a facilitative role in
SLA. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in SLA and vice versa. Figure(4) below illustrates Krashen’s model of SLA. This model, Cook (1996) claims, incorporates a combination model of acquisition and production.

![Figure (4): Krashen’s Model of Second Language Acquisition, adopted from (Krashen1982:32) (Image)](image-url)

### 2.5. Competence and Performance

If a learner’s production closely reflects L2 norms of speaking, can’t it be assumed that the learner’s competence is manifested in his/her performance? It seems that this question is difficult to answer. In fact, many researchers (e.g. Clark 1974, Brown 2004) warn about the dangers of ‘performing without competence’ where a learner uses correct chunks of the language without analysis, giving the impression that the norm has been attained. Conversely, Sharwood-Smith (1986) points out that it is equally possible that a learner may have 100% competence but 90% performance, i.e. ‘competence without performance.’ For example, a rule may be ‘acquired’ (competence) without showing itself due to semantic redundancy or because of processing problems. Further, a learner may be able to hear the sound very clearly and know that it is the correct phonological representation of /θ/ in the word *think*, nevertheless, produces the sound /ð/ instead Sharwood-Smith (1986). In addition, Radford (2004:2) states that “[v]ery often, performance is an imperfect reflection of competence.” This clearly rejects the simplistic notion that performance reflects competence and hence, the answer to the question raised above. Thus, the most related types of competence to SLA will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

#### 2.5.1. Linguistic Competence and Performance

Cook (1996) holds that two scholars having helped structure what we think about language today are Saussure and Chomsky. Saussure, for instance, studies the relationship between many terms frequently
used in the literature such as *langue-parole*. Chomsky investigates *competence-performance* relationship. Chomsky (1965:3) first draws the distinction between competence and performance as a “[l]inguistic theory is primary concerned with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech community who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of language in actual performance.” In addition, performance can be simply defined as the production and understanding of utterances in particular languages in concrete situations (Cook 1996, Schachter 1996).

However, Chomsky rejects Saussure’s concept of *langue* as merely a systematic inventory of items and returns rather to a more traditional conception of underlying competence as a rule-governed system of generative processes (Chomsky 1965:4). The distinction between the use and the product of the language system can be identified as the former with what Chomsky calls performance, viz. the use of language in concrete situations and the latter with what Saussure calls *parole*. A question to be raised here is how linguistic competence is acquired or stored in the brain? To answer such a question, therefore, competence must be distinguished from performance and the directionality of the relations of presupposition of dependency within this trichotomy (Alptekin 2002). In fact, the acquisition of linguistic competence allows for the possibility that the acquisition of competence is partly or even wholly dependent on performance. However, to distinguish between sentences as abstract theoretical entities and sentences as the products of utterance is to introduce what is arguably a false distinction between grammar and language, on the one hand, and between what Chomsky has distinguished as the I-language, i.e. internal mental language, and the E-language, viz. external language, on the other hand. Further, Chomsky draws what is at first sight a puzzling distinction between grammars and languages or alternatively between I-languages and E-languages, arguing that whereas the former are real and can be the object of scientific enquiry, the latter are indeterminate, amorphously suspect or mysterious.

In addition, Lyons (1996) holds that linguistic competence defines the system of rules that governs an individual’s tacit understanding of what is acceptable and what is not in the language he/she speaks. The empirical and formal realisation of *competence* would be *performance*, which thus corresponds to diverse structuralist notions of *parole* or so. Chomsky argues that the unconscious system of linguistic
relations, which Saussure named *langue*, is often mistakenly associated with *knowledge* or *ability* (or know-how). Performance, therefore, is a poor mirror of competence. In addition, McEnery and Wilson (2001:5-6) hold that “performance may be affected by other factors than our competence,” e.g. short-term memory limitations, fatigue, drunken state, etc. This, in fact, brings one to Chomsky’s initial criticism: a corpus is, by its very nature, a collection of externalised utterances, it is, actually, performance data and is therefore a poor guide to modeling linguistic competence. In this, Chomsky claims that ‘competence’ is an idealised capacity and so different from the production of actual utterances, viz. ‘performance.’ Further, Dornyei (2005) holds that competence, in the sense of being an ideal, is located as a psychological or mental property or function.

### 2.5.2. Communicative Competence

Opposing Chomsky, Hymes (1972) has proposed and developed what is known as *communicative competence*. Hymes (1972) holds that *communicative competence* reflects the learner’s ability to exchange information in a foreign language with the native speakers of that language. Further, communicative competence involves a range of skills for using language to accomplish social actions, including social aspects of language use such as knowing when, how, and with whom to engage in conversational activities. As has been discussed above, Chomsky has proposed linguistic competence maintaining that it is a property of an *ideal* speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his/her language. However, to Hymes, Chomsky’s conceptualisation of linguistic theory is inadequate. In fact, Hymes criticises Chomsky’s linguistic theory depending on the inefficiency of Chomsky’s linguistic theory in explaining the language problems of disadvantaged children and the communicative capacity of normal children. Neither, however, is Chomsky’s concern in his specification of the linguistic theory. Such a theory, Chomsky claims, would require methodological and theoretical limitations. Such a limitation, in principle, is necessary since the system of language or linguistic competence has distinct characteristics specific to itself like *phrase structure* and *inflectional system*.

Thus, while Hymes considers Chomsky’s conceptualisation of the language system a limitation and attempts to formulate a communication theory, he puts the language specific processes in the same scale as the communication processes which show characteristics different from the language system. In addition, Hymes considers it necessary to distinguish *linguistic competence* that deals with producing and
understanding grammatically correct sentences and *communicative competence* which deals with producing and understanding sentences that are appropriate and acceptable in a particular situation. As such, Hymes (1972:277) coins the term *communicative competence* and defines it as “knowledge of the rules for understanding and producing both the referential and social meaning of language.”

### 2.5.3. Strategic Competence

Perhaps the most related kind of competence to SLA is strategic competence. What is meant by strategic competence is to know how to recognise and repair communication breakdowns, how to work around gaps in one’s knowledge of the language and how to learn more about the language in context (Rababah 2002). Strategic competence attempts to answer such questions as how does one know when he/she misunderstands or when someone has misunderstood someone else? What does he/she say then? How can one express his/her ideas if they do not know the name of something or the right verb form to use? Thus, Canale and Swain (1998:30) define strategic competence as a strategy made use of by learners or speakers of SL to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence. For some researchers (e.g. Dornyei 1991), this definition arouses two problems: (1) there are many situations in which strategic processes play an *offensive* rather than a *defensive* role and (2) a definition of strategic competence that focuses exclusively on language use may encourage the assumption that there is a psychological disjunction at the strategic level between language use and language learning. Moreover, Bachman (1990) has pointed out that strategic competence embraces all aspects of the assessment, planning and execution of communicative tasks. He considers strategic competence not only a component of communicative competence but also a more general cognitive capacity. In addition, Rababah (2002:26) argues that strategic competence refers to “the individual’s ability to use ‘communicative strategies’ [such as] circumlocution, paraphrase, literal translation, lexical approximation” and so on to obtain their message across and to compensate for a limited or imperfect knowledge of rules or the interference of such factors as fatigue, distraction etc.

As far as SLA is concerned, it has been widely believed that language learners use communication strategies (see section 2.6.2) more often to cope with difficulties they encounter while trying to speak a second/foreign language. In fact, language learners attempt to solve these problems by avoiding a certain language form or grammatical items, abandon the message, paraphrase certain utterances among other
strategies when they do not have the appropriate form of language to communicate. They even try to compensate for a lack in their communicative competence by inserting a word from their L1 and sometimes apply their L1 morphology, phonology and/or syntax. In short, strategic competence consists of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that the speaker may resort to when breakdowns in communication take place due to performance variables or to insufficient competence. These strategies may relate to grammatical competence, i.e. how to paraphrase, how to simplify, etc. or to sociolinguistic competence, i.e. how to address strangers when unsure of their social status. Such strategies along with learning strategies will be looked at in the following sections.

2.6. Language Acquisition Strategies

One of the critical debates in L2 acquisition research has been how L2 acquisition proceeds and what strategies are followed. A strategy refers to the conscious or unconscious process which students employ in learning and using a SL (Oxford 1990). Some researchers (e.g. Cook 1983, Cook and Newson 2007, Kaplan 1998) argue that UG plays a significant role while others argue that, instead, it is general learning strategies which play the crucial role, i.e. L2s are learned in ways similar to learning any random skill. In addition, Kaplan (1998) holds that general LSs do not play a notable role in distinguishing L2 from L1 acquisition. Thus, several L2 acquisition researchers (Faucette 2001, Kaplan 1998, Gan 2004, Chamot and Kupper 1989, O’Malley and Chamot 1990, Oxford 1990, Gass and Selinker 2008, Corder 1981, Selinker 1972, Mitchell and Myles 1998, Bialystok 1981) among others have ascribed L2 acquisition process to involving psycholinguistic and cognitive strategies. These strategies are known as learning strategies and communication strategies.

2.6.1. Learning Strategies

Gass and Selinker (2008) hold that the term ‘learning strategies’ is commonly used in the SLA literature to refer to what learners do that underlies their learning process. Selinker (1972) believes that the endorsement for the separation of language LSs and CSs is, in principle, laid out, being postulated as basic processes leading to the formation of IL, though LSs and CSs are not always easy to disentangle. In addition, Gass and Selinker (2008:439) hold that the centrality of “the intersection of structure and strategy use is still robust and can be used as a springboard to integrate the formation of SL knowledge
with strategic use of structural information on the part of learners.” While some researchers (e.g. Faucette 2001, Kaplan 1998, Taylor 1975a, Gan 2004, Gass and Selinker 2008) have distinguished LSs from CSs, some others (e.g. Chamot and Kupper 1980, Chamot 1993, Oxford 1990, Dornyei and Scott 1997, Koda 1993) have confusingly conflated one over the other without recognising that they are theoretically different in research focus and purpose.

A strategy refers to the conscious or unconscious process learners employ in learning and/or using an L2. It is the way in which a learner attempts to figure out the meanings and uses of words, grammatical or spelling rules. A learning strategy may be applied to simple tasks such as learning a list of new words or more complex involving language comprehension and production (Saltourides 2005). Thus, language LSs have been classified by many scholars (e.g. O’Malley et al. 1985, Oxford 1990, Stern 1992, Ellis 1997, Tarone 1981, Hurd and Lewis 2008), however, most of such studies reflect more or less the same categorisations of language LSs without any radical changes. In fact, LSs have been classified into three major categories, viz. metacognitive, cognitive and socioeffective. Metacognitive strategies are those used in information processing theory. This category employs executive function strategies engaging planning for learning, thinking about such processes, ‘monitoring one’s production’ and finally evaluating learning after performing learning activity. Further, cognitive strategies are those that are ‘more specific to exact learning tasks,’ while socioeffective strategies are particular to social mediating activities (O’Malley et al. 1985, Brown 1994). Table (4) below shows a classification of LSs based on O’Malley et al. (1985:582-584).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advance Organizers</strong></td>
<td>Making a general but comprehensive preview of the organizing concept or principle in an anticipated learning activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directed Attention</strong></td>
<td>Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore the irrelevant distractors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selective Attention</strong></td>
<td>Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-Management
Understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions.

Functional Planning
Planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task.

Self-Monitoring
Correcting one’s speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary or for appropriateness related to the setting or to the people who are present.

Delayed Production
Consciously deciding to postpone speaking in order to learn initially through listening comprehension.

Self-Evaluation
Checking the outcomes of one’s own language learning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Repetition
Imitating a language model including overt practice and silent rehearsal.

Resourcing
Using target language reference materials

Translation
Using the first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the second language.

Grouping
Reordering or reclassifying, and perhaps labeling, the material to be learned, based on common attributes.

Note taking
Writing down the main idea, important points, outline, or summary of information presented orally or in writing.

Deduction
Consciously applying rules to produce or understand the second language.

Recombination
Constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known elements in a new way.

Imagery
Relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar, easily retrievable visualization, phrases or locations.

Auditory Representation
Retention of the sound or signal sound for a word, phrase or longer language sequence.
Keyword

Remembering a new word in the second language by 1) identifying a familiar word in the first language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word and 2) generating easily recalled images of some relationship between the new word and the familiar word.

Contextualisation

Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence.

Elaboration

Relating new information to other concepts on memory.

Transfer

Using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task.

Inferencing

Using available information to guess meanings of new items, predicting outcomes, or fill in missing information.

SOCIOAFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

Cooperation

Working with one or more peers to obtain feedback, fill in information, or model a language activity.

Question for Clarification

Asking a teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation, and/or examples.

2.6.2. Communication Strategies

It was Selinker (1972) who coined the term ‘communication strategies’ in his seminal paper “Interlanguage” in discussing the strategies of SL communication as one of the five central processes involved in L2 learning (see section 2.9.3.5). While defining CSs, Tarone (1980:420) holds that CSs “relate to a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared.” She adds that “CS[s] are seen as tools used in a joint negotiation of meaning where both interlocutors are attempting to agree as to a communicative goal.” In addition, Faerch and Kasper (1983:36) provide a very comprehensive definition, i.e. “[c]ommunication strategies are potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal.”
Thus, it is difficult to find consensus on a specific definition of CSs among researchers. Perhaps the only criterion for the definition of CSs that keeps recurring is problematicity which arises from the disparity between the interlocutors’ ends and means as expressed by Faerch and Kasper’s (1983) definition above. Furthermore, some researchers (e.g. Oxford and Nyikos 1989, Macaro 2006) go even further stating that CSs are one of the main sources of errors in SLA as such researchers argue that regardless of having CSs in L1 or L2, L2 learners may not use them often enough, appropriately, efficiently and spontaneously in L2 (Macaro 2006). This is due to the fact that CSs are processes of interlingual transfer used by SL learners when attempting to convey a communicative message to their interlocutors whereas LSs are meant for L2 learning (Macaro op.cit). According to O’Malley and Chamot (1990), CSs, for instance, changing the topic, using gestures or asking for help among other strategies, are used to achieve communicative goals. Thus, CSs result in communication success (Oxford 1990) as they lead to a speaker’s staying in the conversation and thus provide the opportunity for further learning as well as further communication.

From a pedagogical perspective, teachers are advised to encourage and help students cultivate CSs habits. Faucette (2001) holds that teachers can still remind learners of what they have already done in their L1 and encourage them to do the same in L2. Dornyei (1995:62-64), therefore, states that even if learners use CSs effectively in L1, communication strategy instruction could aid strategic transfer by raising awareness of CSs, providing training in how to properly use them in L2 and providing opportunities for practice. Such practice should help learners develop SL communicative competence. In fact, CSs would serve as an excellent means for less proficient learners to have the tools to maintain the conversation, resulting in the opportunity to receive more language input and improve their language ability. Thus, there are many classifications of communication strategies in the literature including those by (Tarone 1977, Faerch and Kasper 1983, Kellerman 1991, Dornyei and Scott 1995, Rababah 2002) among others. However, Table (5) below illustrates the classification of communication strategies based on (Dornyei and Scott 1995) including the type of the strategy, definition/description and examples.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. message abandonment</td>
<td>leaving a message unfinished because of some language difficulty</td>
<td>it is a person er... who is responsible for a a house. for block of house..I don’t know…. [laughter]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Message reduction (topic avoidance)</td>
<td>Reducing the message by avoiding certain language structures or topics considered problematic language wise. Or by leaving out some intended elements for a lack of linguistic resources.</td>
<td>[Retrospective comment by the speaker.] I was looking for “satisfied with a good, pleasantly tired,” and so on, but instead I accepted less.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Message replacement</td>
<td>substituting the original message with a new one because of not feeling capable of exceeding it.</td>
<td>[Retrospective comment after saying that the pipe was broken in the middle instead of “screw thread was broken”:] I didn’t “and well, I had to say something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Circumlocution (paraphrase)</td>
<td>Exemplifying, illustrating or describing the properties of the target object or action.</td>
<td>it became under instead of “melt”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Approximation</td>
<td>Using a single alternative lexical item, such as a superordinate or a related term, which shares semantic features with the target word or structure.</td>
<td>plate instead of “bowl”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Use of all-purpose words</td>
<td>Extending a general, “empty” lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking.</td>
<td>The overuse of thing, stuff, make, do, as well as words like thingie, What-do-you-call-it; e.g.: I don’t work until you repair my …thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Word-Coinage</td>
<td>Creating a non-existing L2 word by applying a supposed L2 rule to an existing L2 word.</td>
<td>[Retrospective comment after using dejunktion and unjunktion “street clearing”]: I think I approached it in a very scientific way: from ‘junk’ I formed a noun and I tried to add the negative prefix “de-”: to “unjunk” is to ‘clear the junk’ an “unjunktion” is ‘street clearing’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Restructuring</td>
<td>Abandoning the execution of a verbal plan because of language difficulties, Leaving the utterance unfinished, and communicating the intended message according to an alternative plan.</td>
<td>On Mickey’s face we can see the … so he’s he’s he’s wondering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Literal Translation (transfer)</td>
<td>Translating literally a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1/L3 to L1.</td>
<td>I’d made a big fault [translated from French]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Foreignizing</td>
<td>Using an L1/L3 word by adjusting it to L2 phonology, i.e. with an L2 pronunciation and/or morphology.</td>
<td>reparate fro “repair”[adjusting the German word’ reparieren’]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Code-switching (language switch)</td>
<td>Including L1/L3 words with L1/L3 pronunciation in L2 speech; this may involve stretches of discourse ranging from single words to whole chunks and even complete turns.</td>
<td>using the Latin ferrum for “iron.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Uses of similar sounding words</td>
<td>Compensating for a lexical item whose form the speaker is unsure of with a word (either existing or non-existing) which sounds more or less like the target item.</td>
<td>[Retrospective comment explaining why the speaker used cap instead of “pan”:] Because it was similar to the word which I wanted to say:”pan”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Mumbling
swallowing or muttering inaudibly a word (or part of a word) whose correct form the speaker is uncertain about.

And uh well Mickey Mouse looks surprise or of XXX [the 'sort of marker indicates that unintelligible part is not just a mere recording failure but a strategy].

14. Omission
Leaving a gap when not knowing a word and carrying on as if it had been said.

Then...er the sun is is... hm sun is... and the Mickey Mouse... [Retrospective comment: I didn’t know what 'shine' was]

15. Retrieval
In an attempt to retrieve a lexical item saying a series of incomplete or wrong forms or structures before reaching the optimal form.

It's broke... it's broken broked broke.

16a. Self-repair
Making self-initiated corrections in one's own speech

Then the sun shines and the weather get be... gets better.

16b. Other repair
Correcting something in the interlocutor’s speech.

Speaker... Because our tip went wrong... [...] interlocutor: Oh, you mean the tap. S: tap, tap...

17. Self-rephrasing
Repeating a term, but not quite as it is, but by adding something or using paraphrase.

I don’t know the material... what it's made of...

18. Over-explicitness
Using more words to achieve a particular communicative goal than what is considered normal in similar L1 situations

(this CS was not included in Dornyei & Sett’s, 1995a, 1995b, taxonomy)

19. Mime
Describing whole concepts nonverbally, or accompanying a verbal strategy with a visual illustration.

[Retrospective comment:] I was miming here, to put it out in front of the house, because I couldn’t remember the word.

20. Use of filters
Using gambits to fill pauses, to stall, and to gain time in order to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse at times of difficulty.

Examples range from very short structures such as well; you know; actually; okay, to longer phrases such is Rather difficult to explain; well, actually, it’s a good question.

21a. Self repetition
Repeating a word or a string of words immediately after They were said.

[Retrospective comment:] I wanted to say that it was Made of concrete but I didn’t know 'concrete' and this is Why “which was made, which was made” was said twice.

21b. Other repetition
Repeating something the interlocutor said to gain time.

Interlocutor: And could you tell me the diameter of the Pipe? The diameter. Speaker: the diameter? It sabour er... Maybe er... five centimeters.

22. Feigning understanding
Making an attempt to carry on the conversation in spite of not understanding something by pretending to understand.

Interlocutor: do you have the rubber? Speaker: the rubber washer?... No I don’t. [Retrospective Comment: I don’t know the meaning of the word and finally I managed to say I had no such thing.]
23. Verbal
Strategy markers Using verbal marking phrase before or after a strategy To signal that the word or structure does not carry the intended meaning perfectly in the L2 code
E.g.: (strategy markers in bold): (a) marking a circumlocution: on the picture… I don’t really know what’s it called in English… it uh this kind of bird that… that can be found in a clock that strikes out [laughs] comes out when the clock strikes; (b) marking approximations: it’s some er… it’s some kind of er… paper; (c) marking foreignizing… A panel [with an English accent], I don’t know whether there’s a name in English or not[laughter] just it’s a panel flat; (d) marking literal translation: it’s er… a smaller medium flat and in, we call them blockhouse, but it’s it’s not it’s not made of blocks; (e) marking code switching: the bird from the clocks come out and say “kakakk” or I don’t know what; see also the example for message abandonment

24a. Direct appeal for help Turning to the interlocutor for assistance by asking an explicit question concerning gap in one’s L2 knowledge. it’s a kind of old clock so when it struck ser… I don’t know, one, two Or three ‘clock then a bird is coming out. What’s the name?

24b. Indirect appeal for help Trying to elicit help from the interlocutor indirectly by expressing lack of a needed L2 item either verbally or nonverbally. I don’t know the name… [rising intonation, pause, eye contact]

25. Asking for repetition Requesting repetition when not hearing or understanding Something properly. Pardon? What?

26. Asking for clarification Requesting explanation of an unfamiliar meaning structure. What do you mean?, You saw what? Also ‘question repeats,’ that is, echoing a word or a structure with a question intonation

27. Asking for Confirmation Requesting confirmation that one heard or understood something correctly. Repeating the trigger in a ‘question repeat’ or asking a full question, Such as You said…? You mean…? Do you mean…?

28. Guessing Guessing is similar to a confirmation request but the latter implies a greater degree of certainty regarding the key word, whereas guessing involves real indecision. E.g.: Oh. It is then not the washing machine. Is it a sink?

29. Expressing non-understanding Expressing that one did not understand something properly either verbally or nonverbally. Interlocutor: What is the diameter of the pipe? Speaker: The diameter? I: the diameter. S: I don’t know this thing. I: how wide is the pipe? Also, puzzled facial expression, frowns and various types of mime and gestures.

30. Interpretive Summary Extended paraphrase of the interlocutor’s message to check that the speaker has understood correctly. So the pipe is broken, basically, and you don’t know what to do with it right?

31. Comprehension check Asking questions to check that the interlocutor can follow you. And what is the diameter of the pipe? The diameter. Do you know what the diameter is?
32. Own-accuracy Check  Checking that what you said was correct by asking a concrete question or repeating a word with a question Information.  

33a. Response: Repeat  repeating the original trigger or the suggested corrected form (after an other-repair)  

33b. Response: Repair  Providing other-initiated self-repair.  

33c. Response: Rephrase  Rephrasing the trigger.  

33d. Response: Expand  Putting the problem word/issue into a larger context.  

33e. Response: confirm  Confirming what the interlocutor has said or suggested.  

33f. Response: Reject  Rejecting what the interlocutor has said or suggested without offering an alternative solution.  

From a historical perspective, the term contrastive linguistics was suggested by (Whorf 1941 cited in Fisiak 1981) for a comparative study which emphasises linguistic differences between L1 and L2. Meanwhile contrastive linguistics has been redefined as “a subdiscipline of linguistics concerned with the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities between them” (Fisiak 1981:1). In fact, it is Fries (1945) who first calls for applying scientific descriptions of the language to be learned vis-à-vis a parallel scientific description of the learners’ L1 on the basis of which efficient teaching materials should be designed and hence, prescribed. However, the real beginning of modern applied contrastive linguistics is attributed to Lado (1957). Thus, James (1980:3) defines contrastive analysis (CA) as “a linguistic enterprise aimed at producing inverted (i.e. contrastive, not comparative) two-valued typologies (a CA is always concerned with a pair of languages), and founded on the assumption that languages can be compared.” In fact, CA was used extensively in the field of SLA in the 1960s and early 1970s as a method of accounting for why some features of the L2 were more difficult to acquire than others.

According to Lado (1957:2), “those elements which are similar to [the learner’s] native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult.” This involves describing the languages, comparing them and predicting learning difficulties. Thus, CA proponents have assumed that learning L2 is facilitated whenever there are similarities between L1 and L2. In addition, learning may be interfered with when there are marked contrasts between L1 and L2 (Nickel 1971). Cultures of both L1 and L2 have also been considered. In that, Lado (1957:vii) states that “we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student.” In addition, Fries (1945:9) states: “[t]he most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner.” One of the most frequently applied techniques of CA is the search for L2 distinctions which are lacking in the L1 (Hadlich 1965). On the phonological level, for instance, the investigation reveals points in the system at which new sound
distinctions must be learned. For example, Arabic speakers learning English must learn to distinguish /p/ from /b/ in English, where /p/ does not exist in Arabic.

Empirically, there are three major sources contributing to a general rationale for conducting CA studies: 1) the observation by learners of language contact of the phenomenon of interference. Such a phenomenon was defined by Weinreich (1953:1) as “those instances of deviation from norms of either language which occur in speech of bilinguals as the result of their familiarity with more than one language.” 2) The practical experience of teachers of foreign languages and their identification of deviations attributed to the learner’s L1 provides the second source. 3) The learning theory of interference within L1 based findings in psychology constitutes the third dimension in question. Given the above argument, Lee (1968:2) holds that CA is largely based on five assumptions: i) the prime cause of difficulty and error in language learning is interference from the learners’ native language; ii) these difficulties are due mainly to the differences between the two languages; iii) the greater these differences, the more acute the learning problems will be; iv) a comparison between the two languages will predict difficulty and error; and v) this comparison should determine what is to be taught. Thus, central to CA is the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis which will be briefed in the following section.

2.7.1. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

According to several CA scholars (e.g. Fisiak 1981, James 1980, Sridhar 1981, Wardhaugh 1970, Vizmuller-Zocco 1990, Oller and Richards 1973, Hakuta and Cancino 1977), there are two versions of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), viz. strong and weak. Within the strong version of this paradigm, researchers believe that errors in L2 learning could be attributed to patterns in L1. As such, it was considered theoretically possible to predict what errors would be made by making a careful detailed comparison of the learner’s L1 and the L2 he/she is learning. Thus, differences would constitute potential sources of errors. The weak version, as claimed by Wardhaugh (1970), is a model with an explanatory power as opposed to a predictive power of the strong version. In other words, within the weak version, researchers can look at errors once they have been committed, and according to that offer an explanation based on a contrastive analysis of that area of grammar as to why those errors have occurred. This view, in fact, has been associated with error analysis approach (see section 2.9).
In spite of the initial enthusiasm shown for CA, its value has been questioned by several researchers and applied linguists (Vizmuller-Zocco 1990). In fact, CA has been criticised by many researchers. (Johansson 1973:77) for instance, states that “(1) CA is not necessary since teachers are interested in known difficulties rather than theoretical predictions. (2) The requirements of CA have not been adequately met, i.e. CA provides no formal way of determining which elements of one language are to be compared with those of the other. (3) CA cannot account for everything within its domain since, for example, it cannot formally indicate which of these differences will lead to difficulties and which will not.” In addition, Lee (1968) maintains that the best way to predict errors is through actual classroom observation by trained teachers since many errors are not revealed by CA and since some points of contrast do not cause confusion concluding that in planning and teaching a language course, the language itself should be kept in mind rather than the differences between L1 and L2. CA is valuable but it should not be overemphasised in language learning process. Similarly, Johansson (1975:334) concludes that “[l]inguists can only furnish part of the information which has to be taken into account. Finally, we must be careful not to overestimate the value of CA.” He adds that “[t]he analysis must not lead to an over-emphasis of points of difficulty at the expense” of L2 learning as a complete system of communication.

Further, Hakuta and Cancino (1977) report that the predictive power of CA appears to be quite poor in the light of the evidence collected by (Oller and Richards 1973) that purports to show that a large portion of learners’ errors are not predicted by CA. It thus becomes clear that CA could not predict learning difficulties, and was only useful in the retrospective explanation of errors (Sheen 1996). These developments, along with the decline of the behaviourist and structuralist paradigms considerably weakened the appeal of CA. Wardhaugh (1970:124) calls the strong version “unrealistic and impracticable.” The weak version is explanatory in nature and “does have certain possibilities of usefulness.” Thus, “the strong version moves from CA to the prediction of errors whereas the weak version moves from the observation of errors to a contrastive analysis to uncover possible causes of these errors.”

In spite of the criticism directed against CA, current studies show a revival of interest in CA as a complementary and necessary part of the theory of SLA, and that it is a method that can never be
ignored (Fisiak 1981). Johansson (1975:330) holds that “[w]e can never achieve a full explanation of learners’ errors by error analysis alone. There are also other difficulties. As always when a corpus is used,… one cannot expect [such a corpus] to provide complete coverage of possible errors. The best approach is probably to supplement the corpus by information gained from experiments. Tests can be constructed on the basis of a contrastive analysis”(emphasis mine). Further, some researchers (e.g. Duskova 1979, Fisiak 1981, Obeidat 1986, Lardiere 2009) have investigated the possibility of carrying a generative grammar into CA arguing that CA should rest on language universals. Otherwise, there is only ‘arbitrariness’ in the surface manifestation of the contrast. These researchers ascertain that the purpose of CA is to show that universal deep structures manifest themselves in surface structures via transformational rules. At this level, transformational rules must be contrasted to see where the problem areas lie. In addition, (Obeidat 1986:61) claims that “[CA] can be of value even to the theoretical linguist who seeks some support for his theory of language.” In addition, Duskova (1979) attempts to find an answer to the question whether CA of L1 and L2 can be replaced by Error Analysis. Utilising a corpus of written papers of 50 Czech postgraduate students, Duskova summarises all sources of errors in foreign language learning. Her conclusion is that the value of CA cannot be underestimated, as a means of both preventing and remedying errors. She adds that the teaching materials based on CA will be much improved if they can merely include the most common errors predicted by CA. This actually proves it true that CA can be exploited efficiently in L2 learning theory with ramifications in pedagogy as well. While contrasting the features of English, Mandarin Chinese and Korean, (Lardiere 2009:175) has concluded that CA has an inevitable role in SLA when L2 learners base their learning on their L1. This is due to the fact that “the second-language acquirer brings to the SLA task an already-fully-assembled set of (L1) grammatical categories.” The way in which these features have been combined and configured in the native language will to some (presumably non-arbitrary) extent differ from that of the target L2” and these categories will to some extent affect such learners’ acquisition of L2.

From the present researcher’s viewpoint, it seems that the truth lies between the two extremes. In other words, CA does not have the exaggerated power which claims that what the student has to learn equals the sum of differences between the two languages established by CA. However, to deny the possible insight of the prediction and explanation of CA is to dispute a fact which has been recognised by second language teachers and students everywhere particularly in phonological levels...
(Richards 1972). For instance, Arab learners of English tend to make serious errors in pronouncing the English /p/, /v/ and /ȝ/ as /b/, /f/ and /š/ respectively due to the fact that the sounds, viz. /p/, /v/ and /ȝ/ do not exist in Arabic and hence, it is what CA goes to. Any contrastive analysis of English and Arabic could easily discover these problematic areas. Moreover, it has been found that those speakers of languages using articles, experience positive transfer from their native language in learning English (Al-Johani 1982:12). Al-Johani (op.cit.) also supports the idea of the usefulness of CA stating that CA “requires less effort and time [than error analysis] because it starts with already acquired knowledge of the learner.”

2.8. Language Transfer

If an Arabic-speaking learner of English produces such sentences as *My friend he went to school yesterday, *This car took my attention or *after finish firemen, return the fire again, one is likely to observe that these sentences are not English. Neither are they even English-like. What the learner here does is just transfer some features or rules from his/her L1, viz. Arabic, into English. Since native speakers of English do not produce such sentences, it is unlikely that this learner is simply reproducing English sentences he/she has heard or come across. More likely, the learner’s anomalous string of English words reflects his/her idiosyncratic mental representation or grammar of English. In fact, many researchers and applied linguists have questioned the issue vis-à-vis the role of the L1 in L2 acquisition. For instance, in Selinker’s own words, questioning the phenomenon of transfer, “as what transfer consists of, as to what actually is transferred, as to what types of transfer occur have not been adequately treated in a scientific manner” (Selinker 1966:1).

Thus, there is a somewhat consensus among cross-linguistics researchers (Tarone 1978) that L1 influences L2 at least at the beginning stages of acquisition in ways that extend beyond borrowing or falling back on the native language, however, there is little agreement among them about what and how much of the L1 is transferred into the L2. Language transfer is defined as the process of using an L1 rule, structure or element in learning an L2 rule, structure or element. For instance, learning a task; let’s say X in L1 will affect the subsequent learning of a task Y in L2. In fact, one of the key concepts in behaviourist theory was the notion of transfer. In that, L2 learning, according to the behaviourist theory, is seen as developing a set of new habits and L1 as interfering with the development of these habits (cf.
section 2.3.1). Behaviourists view language transfer as an indispensable strategy that underlies L2 acquisition and hence, an important source of errors because L1 habits have been deeply rooted in the learner’s brain and replacing such habits, the behaviourists believe, will result in interference and hence, errors. From a pedagogical perspective, Fries (1945:9) argues that because learners are strongly influenced by their L1, the most efficient materials for teaching are those based upon a scientific description of L1 vis-a-vis a parallel description of L2. In this respect, Lado (1957:2) has supported Fries in his conception suggesting that individuals transfer the knowledge of their L1 into the L2 they are learning. Lado claims that transfer can be observed in both production, viz. when learners attempt to speak and reception, viz. when learners attempt to grasp the language spoken by natives.

2.8.1. Factors Affecting Language Transfer

Several researchers and applied linguists (e.g. Gass and Selinker 2008, Long 1983, Pica 1991, Cummins 1980, 1991, Gass and Selinker 1992, Selinker and Lakshamanan 1992, Odlin 2005, 2008, James 1994, Fisiak 1981, Rosansky 1975, Zobl 1980, 1992, Kubota 1998) hold that there are several factors that affect the amount and kind of transfer which takes place in SLA. One of such factors is age of the learner. Thus, it has been pointed out that differences between child and adult second language learning may be tied to the Piaget’s stage of formal operations. In that, the formal operation of adult’s consciousness of differences, compared to the child’s focus on similarities, may make transfer more likely in adults. In addition, Carroll (1968) ascertains that children are less subject to interference than adults are because their L1 is not as strongly enriched as that of the adults. However, children also show evidence of negative transfer. Hatch (1974), for instance, has found that interference occurring in most of the studies of the child SL learners seems less than that of adults. Hatch attributes this to the fact that children know very little about their L1 that can affect their learning of L2.

Another factor affecting transfer is the amount of interference in the level of language ability of the learner. In syntax, for instance, Taylor (1975b) demonstrates that there is more syntactic interference at the beginning level of acquisition than at more advanced levels. At the beginning stages of language acquisition, learners know very little of L2 so they have to rely on the syntactic rules and patterns of their L1 and as they learn more, they can rely on their acquired knowledge of L2. On the phonological level, Major (1987), for instance, holds that interference predominates at the beginning
In addition, **level of proficiency** is another factor affecting transfer. It is believed that the more proficient students are, the less they are likely to resort to their L1 (Gass and Selinker 1992, Selinker 1992, Han 2000, Zobl 1982, 1992, Sharwood-Smith 1991, 1993, Odlin 1989, 2003, Gass 1979, Gass and Selinker 1992, 2008, Long 1983, 2003, James 1980, Fisiak 1981, Sridhar 1981). This is due to the fact that proficient learners have, to a great extent, internalised the linguistic system of the TL. In other words, why learners resort to their L1 is merely because they have not yet had that much of knowledge in the TL that qualifies them not to need any assistance from their L1. In fact, learners fall back on their L1 only when their knowledge in the L2 is not sufficient to enable them to perform and express their communicative needs successfully and properly.

### 2.8. 2. Negative vs. Positive Transfer

Within L1 transfer lie two types of transfer, viz. **negative transfer** which is referred to as **disfacilitation**/**interference** and **positive transfer** which is referred to as **facilitation** (Gass and Selinker 2008). The former takes place when learners transfer rules and norms from their L1 to the L2 and hence, resulting in errors. In fact, what makes researchers and applied linguists alike call this type of transfer **interference** is the fact that L1 intervenes with the expected acquisition of the L2 being learned. As a strategy, learners resort to transfer from their L1 trying to compensate for the lack of insufficient knowledge in L2 by falling back to their L1 for the purpose of successful communication. This type of transfer happens when learners apply an L1 rule in building up an L2 structure in which such a rule does not exist and hence, producing an error (LoCoco, 1976 cited in Dulay et al. 1982:143).

**Positive transfer**, on the other hand, takes place when an L1 rule or norm is applied in L2 structure rendering a well-formed structure and not the otherwise. In other words, **positive transfer** happens when learners apply an L1 rule in building an L2 structure and this rule exists in L2 (Richards 1974). In fact, both terms, viz. **negative** and **positive** transfer, refer respectively to whether transfer results in something incorrect or something correct, and, to repeat a point stated earlier, do not imply
two distinct cognitive processes. For instance, if an Arabic speaker learning English produces the utterance *Then, went he to college early*, he/she just transfers an Arabic word order, viz. VSO into English in which such a word order does not exist. This exemplifies the **negative transfer**. To exemplify **positive transfer**, an Arab learner may produce the sentence, *If you study hard, you will pass the exam* which is a well-formed sentence in English. Here, it is likely that the learner has applied the Arabic structure to form such an English sentence. With regard to negative transfer or interference, (Gass and Selinker 2008:94) have identified two types and called them (a) “**retroactive inhibition**”—where learning acts back on previously learned material, causing someone to forget (language loss)—and (b) **proactive inhibition**—where a series of responses already learned tends to appear in situations where a new set is required” (emphasis in the original). They add that this characterisation is more akin to the phenomenon of SLA because L1 in this framework influences/inhibits/modifies the learning of the L2.

To conclude, there has been a debate as to whether ‘transfer’ is a valid concept for use in discussing language acquisition at all. Extremes range from Lado (1957) proposing that SL learners depend almost entirely on their L1 in the acquisition of the L2 to Dulay and Burt (1973:251) who have suggested that transfer was largely unimportant in the creation of IL. According to Dulay and Burt’s (op.cit.) empirical study, only 3% of the learners’ errors reflect their falling back on their L1. However, Dulay et. al. (1982:102) state that interference errors constitute 4-12%, in the case of children, and 8-23% in the case of adults. In fact, the issue of how much L1 transfer plays a role in committing errors is very controversial (cf. section 2.9). In addition, both types of transfer, viz. negative and positive refer to the automatic and subconscious use of old linguistic behaviours in new learning situations. Specifically, semantic and syntactic transfer of this nature reflects the most commonly understood uses of the term. Further, Corder (1981) has suggested the need for a word other than ‘transfer,’ viz. **Mother Tongue Influence**, which he has claimed, belongs to the school of behaviourist learning theory. Some researchers (e.g. Leung 2009, Sharwood-Smith 1991) have refined the idea still further by suggesting **Cross Linguistic Influence**, which would take into account the potential influence of L3 on L2 where another learned language, but not the L1 might have an effect on the learning of the L2.
2.9. Error Analysis

Looking at its pros and cons, CA has been criticized by many applied linguists, teachers and SLA researchers on the basis of the assumptions it has been based on. The criticism directed against CA has been because of the lack of its theoretical justifications, its failure in predicting that the difficulty lies in the difference between L1 and L2, and thus researchers were interested in finding out what accounts for such a phenomenon. Teachers in classrooms have found that constructions that were different in L1 and L2 are not necessarily difficult to learn and that constructions similar in both languages are not necessarily easy to learn, either. In addition to that, difficulty sometimes occurs in one level but not in another. Thus, if CA could not appropriately foresee the areas of difficulty, it actually fails to fulfill its premises. Furthermore, supporting this claim, Lee (1972:59) holds that “[i]t seems doubtful whether wholly reliable prediction of errors can be based on an L1/L2 comparison alone; an error which might be expected does not always occur.”

Based on these findings, applied linguists and researchers become more interested in looking closely at the learner errors per se rather than focusing on the influence of L1 on L2 when explaining L2 errors. This was the very beginning of EA. EA has been defined as the systematic investigation of SL learners’ errors developing for the purposes of identification and remediation of such errors. In fact, it was Corder (1967) who was the first to concentrate on the study of learners’ errors as it has been evidently proved that learners’ errors are not all originated from the L1 but rather there are other sources as opposed to the predictions of CA. Thus, several studies have clearly proved that the majority of learner errors can under no circumstances be traced to the influence of the L1 per se. Besides, the areas where the L1 should have prevented the occurrence of errors were not always error-free. For instance, if one considers the plural morpheme in Spanish and English which is realised as the same morpheme in both languages, many studies (e.g. Hernandez-Chavez 1972, cited in Mitchell and Myles 1998) show that Spanish learners of English continue to make errors in that particular issue. Ellis (1985), further, has concluded that most of the errors committed by L2 learners are not ascribed to L1 interference alone. However, there is no consensus among EA analysts on the exact proportion of the errors that can be ascribed to L1 interference. While Dulay and Burt (1973:251) have concluded that 3% of learner errors can be traced to L1, in another study, namely, Dulay and Burt (1974a:132) the
percentage is more, viz. 4.7%, Grauberg (1971) has found 36%, Flick (1980) 31%, Dulay et al. (1982:102) 4-12% by children and 8-23% by adults and in our study, it is 34.63% (cf. section 6.5). EA, therefore, has shown that the majority of learner errors are not caused by L1 interference.

Therefore, the major question concerning EA researchers to find an answer to is where do such errors come from? Many researchers (e.g. Corder 1981, Selinker 1972, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a, Dulay et al. 1982, Taylor 1986) have concluded that these errors must be ‘learner-internal in origin.’ In addition, many EA researchers have attempted to classify those errors for the purpose of understanding them and try to compare them to those made by children acquiring their native language. As will be discussed later on, studies on IL have found that leaner errors belong to a system having its own rules developing systematically and dynamically. Tracing the development of EA, Ellis (1997:48) states that “it was not until the 1970s that EA became a recognized part of applied linguistics, a development that owed much to the work of Corder.” Before Corder (1967), linguists observed learners’ errors, divided them into categories, tried to see which ones were common and which were not, but not much attention was paid to their role in SLA. Thus, it was Corder who showed how the information about errors would be helpful in SLA.

2.9.1. The Concept of Error

From an EA point of view, the term error is used in SLA to refer to a systematic deviation from a selected norm of the TL (Dulay et al. 1982) or set of norms and thus distinguished from what is called in the literature a mistake. Corder (1981:10) distinguishes between errors as “systematic” and “competence-based” and mistakes as “unsystematic” and “performance-based.” Mistakes are self-corrected while errors are not. In other words, the term error is exclusively restricted to repeatedly and consistently deviated forms of the learner’s language from the norms produced by adult native speakers of the language being learned. A very significant definition of the term error has been provided by (Lennon1991:182) as “a linguistic form or combination of forms which, in the same context and under similar conditions of production, would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speaker counterparts”(emphasis mine).
2.9.2. Significance of Learner Errors

As has been stated above, Corder was the first to initiate the new movement, viz. EA arguing that a learner’s errors are to be looked at as evidence of his/her knowledge rather than units of difficulty to be eliminated. From an EA point of view, errors are not seen as bad formation but as something indicating the learners’ transitional process in language learning process. While describing the significance of errors, Corder (1981:12) points out that “they are best not regarded as the persistence of old habits, but rather as signs that the learner is investigating the system of the new language.” He also adds “the learner’s possession of his native language is facilitative and errors are not to be regarded as signs of inhibition, but simply as evidence of his strategies of learning.” One of the main arguments in favor of EA in general has been that, unlike CA, EA deals with the actual errors that are made by the language learner and hence, EA is based on empirical data and permits a realistic, as opposed to probabilistic, analysis of errors.

Almost all EA researchers hold that L2 learners’ errors are to be taken seriously and with great interest and much importance due to the significance they imply. These researchers are interested in errors because they are believed to contain valuable insights as to why, when, where and how SLA is acquired. In fact, researchers in SL learning process have recently started looking at the value of errors committed by language learners from another angle. They believe that errors play an important role in the study of LA in general and in examining second and foreign language acquisition in particular as opposed to the view that errors are negative signs on the part of the learners which have to be eradicated (Richards 1974, Taylor 1975b, Dulay and Burt 1974a). Errors are also associated with the strategies that learners employ to communicate in a language. Errors are also believed to be an indicator of the learners’ stages in their target language development. From the errors that learners commit, one can determine their level of mastery of the linguistic system of the language they are learning. In addition, errors indicate that the learner is an active processor of the linguistic system of the language being learned. Error committing also shows the fact that the learner is trying to “build up” or internalise the L2 linguistic system. (Corder 1967, 1981, Selinker 1992, 1973, Nemser 1971, Richards 1974, Dulay and Burt 1974a, Dulay et al. 1982). Thus, from an EA perspective, the investigation of errors has thus a double purpose: it is diagnostic and prognostic. It is diagnostic because it can tell us the
characteristics of the learner’s language system (Corder 1967) or what (Selinker1992) calls IL at a
given point during the learning process and prognostic because it can tell course organisers and
designers to reorient language learning materials on the basis of the learners’ current problems.

2.9.3. Types of Errors

In the course of talking about errors committed by L2 learners, there are several types of errors
investigated and classified by applied linguists and researchers. The following are the most prominent
types of errors which will be discussed in some more detail.

2.9.3.1. Competence vs. Performance Errors

As has been alluded to above, there are two types of deviations made by a language learner, viz. errors and mistakes. On one extreme lie competence errors which have been attributed by Corder (1981) to a lack of knowledge in L2 manifested as a sign of lack of competence in L2. Thus, committing such errors, the L2 learner finds him/herself having no sufficient and efficient knowledge in L2 and thus these errors are characterised as “rule-governed,” “systematic” and repeatedly committed. This has been proved true by the evidence that competence errors are not self-corrected and the learner is unaware of. This type of errors is evident in the learner’s IL during the committing of which the learner believes that what has been said or written by him/her is correct (Selinker 1992, 1972, Richards 1974, Corder 1973, Long 1983, Mitchell and Myles 1998, Gass and Selinker 2008, Taylor 1986) among the many others. On the other extreme lie what has been termed as performance errors or mistakes.

Contrary to competence errors, performance errors are not “systematic.” Nor are they “rule-
governed” and the learner is aware of their committing. Moreover, errors of performance are mistakes attributable to the learner’s fatigue, distraction, or inattention and occur in the speech of native speakers. What makes this true is the fact that the learner is able to correct him/herself after committing them, provided that his/her attention has been drawn to. Corder (1973, 1981) describes such a type as slips of tongue, omissions, some spelling mistakes, repetitions and so forth. Further, committing such mistakes does not mean that the learner lacks the appropriate knowledge in L2 he/she is learning rather
he/she commits them because “he is in hurry, he is speaking or writing under stress, or is forgetful or simply careless” (Ngara 1983:184).

2.9.3.2. Global vs. Local Errors

Several researchers (e.g. Dulay et al. 1982, Ellis 1997, Burt and Kiparsky 1972, Burt 1975, Hendrickson 1978) have made a distinction between global and local errors. Dulay et al. (1982:35), for instance, have defined global errors as “those that affect the overall sentence organisation such as word order errors and involving sentence connectors.” Global errors, as stated by Dulay et al. (op.cit.), block ‘successful communication.’ They prevent the message from being comprehended as in *I like bus but my mother said so not that we must be late for school. However, those errors not blocking successful communication but affect only a “single element” in the sentence are called local errors. Local errors do not prevent the message from being understood because there is usually a minor violation of one segment of a sentence that allows the hearer to guess the intended meaning as in *The man which came yesterday is my friend where the relative pronoun which is used instead of who. In addition, Burt and Kiparsky (1972) have distinguished between a global and local goof (an informal term used for error). They view the former as errors in overall organisation of the sentence but the latter as errors in relative clauses. Hendrickson (1978:391) has referred to global errors as “those that cause a listener or a reader to misunderstand a message or consider a sentence incomprehensible.” On the other hand, Hendrickson (op.cit.) defines a local error as “a linguistic error that makes a form or structure appear awkward but, nevertheless, causes a proficient speaker of a foreign language little or no difficulty in understanding the intended meaning of a sentence given its contextual framework.”

In addition, Burt and Kiparsky (1972:73) state that global errors are higher on the hierarchy than local ones. Thus, a sentence with both global and local errors improves much more when a global error is corrected than a local one or even a group of local ones. For instance, …*but my friend said that not take this bus, we are late for school. This sentence contains three local errors. The first one occurs as it omits the subject of the clause that not take this bus which should be that we not take this bus. Still this clause is deviant since it omits the auxiliary do. The correct form should be that we do not take this bus. The third local error is wrong tense, i.e. we are late for school must be rendered into we will be late for school. Thus, the whole sentence will be …that we do not take this bus, we will be late for
school. In addition, Ellis (1997:20) considers local errors as those affecting only a single element in the sentence and are perhaps less likely to create any processing problems. Global errors, as maintained by Ellis are defined as those that violate the overall structure of a sentence and for this reason may make it difficult to process or understand. Thus, Burt (1975:56-57) classifies global errors as follows:

1. **Wrong word order** as in:
   
   *English use many people.* (Many people use English.)

2. **Missing, wrong or misplaced sentence connectors** as in:
   
   *Not take this bus, we late for school.* (If we do not take this bus, we will be late for school.)

3. **Missing cues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rule** as in:
   
   *The student’s proposal looked into by the principal.* (The students’ proposal is looked into by the principal.)

4. **Regularization of pervasive syntactic rules to exceptions** as in:
   
   *We amused that movie very much.* (We enjoyed that movie very much.)

Further, local errors are classified by Dulay et al. (1982:191-192) into the following types:

1. **Errors in noun inflection** as in:
   
   *We have many car.* (We have many cars.)

2. **Errors in verb inflection** as in:
   
   *He sing well.* (He sings well.)

3. **Errors in articles** as in:
   
   *We eat a apple everyday.* (We eat an apple everyday.)

4. **Errors in auxiliaries** as in:
   
   *Why we like each other?* (Why do we like each other?)

2.9.3.3. Interlingual vs. Intralingual Errors

Selinker (1974, 1992) has argued that there are two types of errors characteristic of an L2 learner, viz. *interlingual* and *intralingual* errors. He ascribes the former to the interference of L1 in the learning process of L2 and the latter to the gradual development in learning due to the influence of L2 itself. Further, the former are called transfer errors committed as a result of L1 interference because the learner having no sufficient knowledge in L2 resorts to his/her L1 as a strategy for successful communication. However, the latter are called developmental errors divided into overgeneralisation and simplification. These errors are committed because the learner again has no sufficient knowledge in L2 he/she is learning and as such he/she tries to simplify and/or overgeneralise a particular rule in L2. In
fact, either case is vivid evidence that the learner is no more a passive participant in the learning process but rather an active one. Thus, such a learner, in fact, tries to internalise the L2 linguistic system so as to express him/herself in a given situation. Thus, in committing both types, the learner tries his/her best to “build up,” internalise and comprehend the linguistic system of the L2 so as to be able to use it appropriately and accurately.

Moreover, interlingual errors may occur at different levels such as transferring phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic elements of L1 into L2. These different levels can be explained with some possible errors of Arab learners which will be discussed below. Suffice here to say that it is the learner’s L1 which causes such errors. On the other hand, intralingual errors result from faulty or partial learning, false conceptions, hypothesis testing and/or internalising the L2 system rather than language transfer. They may be caused by the influence of one TL item upon another. For example, learners attempt to use two tense markers at the same time in one sentence since they have not mastered this aspect of the language yet. When they say: He is comes here, it is because the singularity of the third person requires is in present progressive, and -s inflected to a verb in simple present tense. In short, intralingual errors occur as a result of learners’ attempt to “build up” concepts and test hypotheses about the TL from their limited experience in it. Learners may commit errors due to such reasons in many ways as exemplified below:

1. He made me to smile. (He made me # smile.)

2. I want learning English. (I want to learn English.)

3. The meat smells freshly. (The meat smells fresh.)

4. Doctors always give us good advices. (Doctors always give us good advice.)

5. I don’t know why did he go. (I don’t know why he went.)

2.9.3.4. Developmental Errors

While describing developmental errors, Dulay and Burt (1973:247) hold that L1 interference has nothing to do with the committing of these errors. Rather, these errors are committed as a result of the learner’s “restructuring the new language independently of his knowledge of the structures of his first language…. [these] error types should be the result of the processing strategies [he/she] uses to organize and produce the new language. These would be “developmental” errors similar to those
committed by children learning that language natively.” In fact, such errors are called developmental errors because children acquiring their L1 also commit such errors at different stages. This view is held due to the fact that interference from the students’ L1 is not the only reason for committing errors (Dulay and Burt 1973, James 1998, Corder 1981, Ellis 1997, Dulay et al. 1982) among the many others. Ellis (1997), for instance, states that some errors seem to be universal, reflecting learners’ attempts to make the task of learning and using the target language simpler. He adds that developmental errors help diagnose learners’ learning problems at any stage of their development and to plot how changes take place.

Richards (1974:173-179) states that developmental errors are committed due to ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application rules and false concepts hypothesised. Errors resulted due to ignorance of rule restriction include, for instance, *The man who I saw him which “violates the limitation on subjects in structures with who. Errors as in *I made him to do it ignores restrictions on the distribution of make.” Incomplete application of rules includes “structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances” as in *He have to do write the address as a response to what does he have to do? Here, the incomplete application of rules lies in using have instead of has and do is overused where it is not required since it is used in a statement. False concepts hypothesised result in developmental errors “which have to do with faulty-rule learning at various levels, there is a class of developmental errors which derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. These are sometimes due to poor gradation of teaching items [whereby] the form was may be interpreted as a marker of the past tense, giving one day it was happened and is may be understood to be the corresponding marker of the present tense: he is speaks French” (emphasis in the original). In short, many researchers (e.g. Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a, James 1998, Richards 1974, Dulay et al. 1982) have ascertained that developmental errors are those that occur naturally as learners gradually develop more insights into the L2 linguistic system.

2.9.3.5. Overgeneralisation and Simplification Errors

Selinker (1972) considers overgeneralisation one of the five prominent processes in L2 acquisition, namely, language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication and overgeneralisation. In addition, Richards (1974:174)
defines **overgeneralisation** as a process involving the creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures based on the learner’s experience of other structures in L2; thus producing such utterances as *He can sings, *We are hope, *It is occurs, *He come from. He adds that it may be the result of the learner’s reducing of his/her linguistic burden. In omitting the third person singular morpheme –s, overgeneralisation/simplification removes the necessity for third person agreement and hence, getting the learner rid of considerable burden. Moreover, overgeneralisation sometimes may involve errors explainable in terms of **hypercorrection** (James 1998) such as *There does not comes anyone to the party where the learner tries to correct his utterance and hence, using double marking. Richards (1974) has associated overgeneralisation with ‘redundancy reduction’ as in the case of the –ed marker in narrating stories where ‘pastness’ is generally indicated lexically in such stories. Such errors include *Yesterday I go to school and find my classmates there. In fact, the generalisation phenomenon is closely related to simplification. This is due to the fact that when generalising, learners try to simplify the linguistic code of L2 when they internalise the linguistic system of the L2 as in the examples just mentioned. Dulay and Burt (1973:251) define overgeneralisation errors as those committed due to “applying a regular rule in the language to exception, such as the plural form –s in foots (for feet), the past –ed in eated (for ate)” etc.

Moore and Stenning (2001:720) hold that L2 learners “recover from these errors, in spite of the lack of negative evidence and the infinity of allowable constructions that remain unheard; it has been argued that this favors the existence of a specific language-learning device.” In addition, Onnis, et al. (2002) holds that children are exposed to linguistic structures that they subsequently overgeneralise, demonstrating that they capture some general structure of the language. Dulay et al. (1982:157) have viewed regularisation as a more narrowly defined term than overgeneralisation which covers all types of developmental errors. They note that overgeneralisation is manifested in cases where, for instance, the past form of the verb eat is not eated but ate and the plural forms of some irregular nouns in English as sheep is not sheeps but sheep among others. Dulay and Burt (1973) hold that children overgeneralise rules as in I goed home, and they simplify their speech into telegraphic forms as in Mummy water. Thus, it is clear that there is probably a far greater proportion of oversimplification errors. On the other hand, **simplification errors** have been referred to by (James 1998:185-186) as **undergeneralisation** exemplifying such a phenomenon as in Nobody knew where *was Barbie where
the learners have “applied only two components of the interrogative formation rule: they have selected and fronted a wh-element (rule components 1 and 2), but have omitted to invert subject and verb.” A correct form of such an example should be Nobody knew where Barbie was.

2.9.4. Attitudes towards Errors

All ESL/EFL teachers expect their students to speak fluent English. In Burt’s (1975:53) words, “one of the joys of being an EFL teacher is to hear a student speak flawless English. It is unfortunate that most of us are more familiar instead with the frustrations of teaching English-correcting the same mistakes over and over, or having to teach parts of Lesson 3 again when the class is on Lesson 20.” This clearly shows how researchers, applied linguists and teachers look at errors but the issue is still to date a matter of controversy. In fact, there are two linguistic schools which deal with errors almost differently from each other. One of these schools, viz. behaviourism, views errors as a sinful feature on the part of the learner. This school also believes that errors should not be permitted to occur at all because they are indicators of imperfect learning. Thus, it has been widely argued that in the 50s and well into the 60s of the 20th Century, committing errors was viewed (Brooks 1960 cited in Hendrickson 1978) as something sinful on the part of the SL learners which have to be eradicated. Brooks also sees errors as a negative aspect in the language learning process and hence, they must be eradicated. In addition, George (1972) sees errors as “unwanted forms.” In fact, this school claims that errors are a clear sign of failure in the learning process and it is the duty of teachers to eradicate or at least eliminate them to a considerable degree.

On the other hand, the other school, viz. mentalism looks at errors as an indispensible and inevitable outcome of the learning process. Accordingly, errors are viewed as a valuable instrument providing insights about the teaching-learning process. As has been discussed earlier, it was Corder who was the pioneer of this school. In his seminal paper “The Significance of Learner’s Errors” (1967), he has brought about a realistic change in the fields of applied linguistics and language teaching. Corder (1967:167) argues that the errors committed by the language learner are significant in three different perspectives: “first to the teacher, in that they tell him if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far toward the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies
or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly, (and in a sense this is their most important aspect) they are indispensible to the learner himself because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is a way the learner has of testing his hypothesis about the nature of the language he is learning.”

Sridhar (1981:219-220) also supports the view of looking at learners’ errors as something valuable in the learning process. He attests that errors have their most importance in classroom purposes for planning lessons, preparing drills, exercises and tests appropriately and effectively. They also play a prominent role in designing materials as well as material selection. What Sridhar seems to suggest here is that when a teacher finds errors in his/her students’ writing and/or speaking, such errors provide him/her with the feedback as to whether he/she is using the appropriate teaching method, planning his/her lessons well and selecting materials to be taught in the right order and so forth.

Sridhar, further, calls for making a distinction between ‘productive,’ i.e. systematic, and ‘non-productive’ errors to develop criteria so as to observe the degree of impairment they make in communication system. He also proposes to reexamine the concept of errors in the non-native contexts where learners need to communicate with their peers in their own native language because of the lack of exposure to L2.

Further, Seliger (1979:361) agrees with Corder and stresses the value of errors for teachers and learners alike. Seliger’s viewpoint comes from the feedback errors can provide to the learners. According to Seliger, errors enable learners “to correct, confirm or reject” the new language forms which are acquired recently. In fact, the variation in opinions or attitudes towards errors comes from the aims and goals set forth by the teacher for language teaching. Accordingly, if the main aim of language teaching is to develop communicative skills in the process of which errors will be made, such errors will be tolerated. This is so because if the desired message is conveyed in the communication situation, then, errors do not impede communication. Indeed, this view is ascertained by those who call and stress communication as the end aim of the language learning-teaching process. However, if the main goal of language learning-teaching process is accuracy and linguistic correctness in L2, then, errors are no more tolerated. Hence, they have to be eradicated or at least reduced.
2.9.5. Stages of Error Analysis

Corder (1967) marks the paradigm shift in linguistics from a behaviouristic view of language to a more rationalistic one and claims that in language teaching, one noticeable effect is to shift the emphasis away from teaching towards a study of learning. He emphasises great potential for applying new hypotheses about how language is acquired, be it L1 or L2. He says, “[w]ithin this context the study of errors takes on a new importance and well I believe contribute to a verification or rejection of the new hypothesis” (Corder 1967:167). Based on the above view, Corder argues that for conducting EA studies, there must be a procedure or procedures and thus, Corder (1973) mentions three main stages of EA, viz. recognition, (also called identification), description, (also called classification) and explanation. In fact, he also adds two stages like data collection and error correction necessary for doing a successful EA. These stages will be briefed in the following sections.

2.9.5.1. Data Collection

Data collection is the first procedure necessary for doing EA. The data for EA can be collected from spoken and/or written TL. Further, Corder mentions two types of written materials, namely, spontaneous production and controlled production. By the former, he means free composition and by the latter, he means translation, précis among others. Each of these two types has its advantages and disadvantages, however. Corder, states that while the former shows error-avoiding tendency because learners here are free and can avoid error making, the latter is error-provoking as the learner here is controlled and has no choice to alter for alternatives.

2.9.5.2. Identification of Errors

Identifying or recognising an error is not that easy task. It requires proficient skills. Thus, as linguists pay attention to the distinction between an error and a mistake, it is necessary to go over the definition of the two different phenomena. According to many researchers (e.g. Corder 1973, 1981, Gass and Selinker 2008, Selinker 1992, Richards 1974), a learner makes a mistake when writing or speaking because of lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspects of performance. As has been discussed so far, mistakes can be self-corrected when attention is called. A mistake is similar to those made by native speakers of the TL. A mistake, in addition, encompasses slips and lapses. Slips
are a result of tiredness, carelessness etc. When slips are manifested as *false starts, confusions* of structures, they are called *lapses* (Corder 1973:259). However, an error is the use of a linguistic item in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language regards it as showing faulty or incomplete learning (Ellis 1997, Lennon 1991). To distinguish an error from a mistake, Ellis (1997) suggests two ways. The first one is to check the consistency of learner’s performance. If he/she sometimes uses the correct form and sometimes the wrong one, it is a mistake. However, if he/she always uses it incorrectly, it is then an error. The second way is to ask a learner to try to correct his/her own deviant utterances, where he/she is unable to do so, the deviations are errors; where he/she is successful, they are mistakes.

However, Chomsky (1965:10) has proposed two linguistic terms to judge an error, viz. *grammaticality* and *acceptability*. *Grammaticality*, as Chomsky postulates, refers to the ‘internal structuring’ of the language itself and thus provoking less problems in the judgement of an item. Regarding *acceptability*, Chomsky states that an utterance should be “perfectly natural and immediately comprehensible without paper-and-pencil analysis, and in no way bizarre outlandish” (emphasis mine). Chomsky refers to errors caused by fatigue, and inattention as *performance factors* and errors caused by a lack of knowledge of the rules of the language as competence errors. On the other hand, Corder (1973:273) has doubted the above procedure stating “[i]t is possible that a leaner’s sentence may be both acceptable and appropriate but nevertheless erroneous” and adds that “learners probably quite often say something acceptable and apparently appropriate but which does not mean what they intend to mean.” Further, Corder argues that there are three developmental stages of language the learner has to pass through. These three stages are *pre-systematic, systematic* and *post systematic*. Now, describing these three stages, Corder maintains that “[i]n the pre-systematic stage, since he has not yet realized that there is a system or that its function is, [the learner] can neither correct his error nor say that his problem is: in the systematic stage he cannot correct his error but he can give some explanation of what he was aiming at or trying to do; in the post-systematic stage he can both correct his error and explain what was wrong, i.e. that he had overlooked something, or simply forgotten to apply a known rule” (Corder 1973:272). Some researchers (e.g. Ellis 1997) go even further suggesting that an error analyst has to have a native speaker’s ability to be able to distinguish between an error and a mistake.
This stage has also been referred to as error classification. Accordingly, a number of different categories for describing errors have been identified. Firstly, Corder (1973) classifies the errors in terms of the difference between the learners’ utterance and the reconstructed version. In this way, errors fall into four categories: omission of some required elements; addition of some unnecessary or incorrect elements; selection of incorrect elements; and misordering of such elements in the sentence. Nevertheless, Corder himself adds that this classification is not enough to describe errors. That is why he includes the linguistic level of the errors under the sub-areas of morphology, syntax, and lexicon. Ellis (1997:47) maintains that “classifying errors in these ways can help us to diagnose learners’ learning problems at any stage of their development and to plot how changes in error patterns occur over time.” This categorisation can be exemplified as follows:

**Omission:**

Morphological omission as in:
*A strange thing happen to me yesterday* (A strange thing *happens* to me.)

Syntactical omission as in:
*# must also say the names* (*He/She* must also say the names.)

**Addition:**

In morphology as in:
*The books is here.* (The *book* is here.)

In syntax as in:
*The London is a good place to visit.* (London is a good place to visit.)

In lexicon as in:
*I have stayed there during five years.* (I have stayed there *for* five years.)

**Selection:**

In morphology as in:
*My friend is oldest than me.* (My friend is older than me.)

In syntax as in:
*I want that he comes here.* (I want *him to come here.*)
Ordering:

In spelling as in: *sifignicant* (for significant); *prulal* (for plural)

In morphology as in: *getter upping* (for getting up)

In syntax as in:

*He is a dear to me friend.* (He is a *dear friend to me*)

In addition, there are two related dimensions of error, viz. *domain* and *extent* (Lennon 1991). *Domain* is the rank of linguistic unit from phoneme to discourse that must be taken as context in order for the error to be understood, and *extent* is the rank of linguistic unit that would have to be deleted, replaced, supplied or reordered in order to correct the sentence. Further, Corder (1973:281) adds what he has called *referential* or *stylistic* level requiring the learner “to control appropriately the use of features of his mother tongue in relation to social, technical, intentional and emotional differences in situations.” Moreover, Dulay et al. (1982) have pointed out that errors can be classified into *linguistic categories*, such as *phonological*, *morphological*, *syntactic*, *semantic* and *lexicon* and *discourse*: *surface strategy* like *omission*, *addition* exemplified above. On the other hand, some researchers (Lennon 1991, Ellis 1997, Gass and Selinker 2008, Doughty and Long 2003, Kroll and Schafer 1978, Tice 1997) among the many others have been classifying errors into general categories like *articles*, *subject-verb agreement*, *prepositions*, *tense forms*, *word order*, *collocation* which are in turn classified into *omission*, *substitution*, *addition* etc. based on the errors indentified.

### 2.9.5.4. Explanation of Errors

Many researchers (e.g. Corder 1981, Richards 1974, Ellis 1997, Dulay et al. 1982, Dulay and Burt 1974a, Gass and Selinker 2008) advocate that explanation of errors consists in knowing the sources of errors. As has been observed above, the description of errors is a *linguistic process* whereas explanation of errors is a *psycholinguistic* one. This is due to the fact that explanation of errors attempts to answer such questions as why, how, and where do errors committed by language learners come from? In fact, the answer to such questions lies in knowing the source of the errors committed by L2 learners. Thus, in what follows, an attempt will be made for discussing explanation of errors in terms of their sources and causes.
2.9.5.4.1. Sources of errors

Taylor (1976:190) holds that the immediate cause of a deviance can be the general muscular ability, L1 habits, psychological states, teaching methods, styles of course materials or introduction of written language. However, Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974a) have found that there are four sources of errors, viz. interlingual, intralingual, ambiguous and unique. These will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

2.9.5.4.1.1. Interlingual Errors

Interference from L1 is a significant source for language learners’ errors. L2 researchers advocate that interference or interlingual errors are the result of language transfer, but not the only source of errors (Richards 1974, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a). However, EA does not regard them as the persistence of old habits but rather as signs that the learner is internalising and investigating the system of the new language. Interlingual errors may occur at different levels, such as phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic. These different levels can be explained with some possible errors of Arab learners learning English. At the phonological level, the English sounds that do not occur in Arabic cause the learners to mispronounce such English sounds. For instance, Arab learners of English tend to pronounce the English /p/ as /b/ since the former does not exist in Arabic. Or else, since Arabic does not allow two-consonant clusters at the beginning of a word, learners tend to insert a vowel between them as in /siteišn/, instead of /steišn/ for the word station. In the syntactic level, Arabs tend to omit auxiliaries in wh-questions as such a phenomenon is not applicable in Arabic as in Why you came yesterday?

In the semantic level, Arabs translate some Arabic expressions into the target language, viz. English, as in *This car took my attention instead of This car attracted my attention. This is because in Arabic took my attention is used to mean attracted my attention. However, as has been stated earlier, interference or transfer from L1 is not the only source of errors (Dulay et al. 1982, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a, James 1998, Corder 1981, Gass and Selinker 1992, 2008). While Dulay and Burt (1973:251) have concluded that 3% of learner errors can be traced to L1, in another study, namely, Dulay and Burt (1974a:132), the percentage is more, viz. 4.7%. However, Dulay et al. (1982:102) state
that interlingual errors constitute 4-12% by children and 8-23% by adults. In fact, the percentage of the errors caused by L1 interference is arguable and there is no clear consensus (cf. section 2.9).

### 2.9.5.4.1.2. Intralingual Errors

In addition to what has been mentioned in (section 2.9.3.3) above, intralingual errors according to Richards (1971:14), are those “which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply.” In fact, Richards’s categorisation is similar to Corder’s (1973). In addition, Richards (1974:6) holds that intralingual errors refer to “items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the target language but generalisation based on partial exposure to the target language.”

Intralingual errors, in fact, are those resulting from the formulation of hypotheses or hypothesis testing by the learners. Having no sufficient knowledge in the TL, especially in the early stages of learning process, the learner tries to internalise and/or “build up” hypotheses to comprehend the L2 linguistic system. In the words of Dulay et al. (1982:165-170), describing intralingual errors state that they are “similar to those made by children learning the target language as their first language.”

According to Dulay et al. (op.cit.) intralingual errors include:

**Omissions**: Such errors are subdivided into omissions of major constituents such as head noun, subjects, main verb, direct object; omission of grammatical categories such as preposition, article, short plural and long plural, auxiliary, copula, progressive -ing morpheme, regular past tense –ed, irregular past tense, third person singular morpheme –s/-es, infinitival marker to, etc.

**Addition**: Addition errors include double marking which is subdivided into present indicative, regular past morpheme -ed, irregular past, direct object and simple addition subdivided into third person singular morpheme –s/es, past tense morpheme–ed, article, preposition, etc.

**Misformation**: These encompass overgeneralisation errors subdivided into reflexive pronoun, regular past morpheme -ed, third person singular morpheme –s/-es, and archi/alternating forms which are subdivided into auxiliaries, prepositions, subject pronoun, possessive pronoun, negative, quantifiers, etc.
**Misordering:** These errors include *auxiliary in simple questions, auxiliary in embedded questions, adverb*, etc.

### 2.9.5.4.1.3. Ambiguous Errors

The errors that have been discussed earlier can, irrespective of their type, be attributed to either L1 interference or L2 influence. However, while describing the errors committed by their subjects Dulay and Burt (1972:115) recognise that sometimes one cannot determine whether an error can be ascribed to one such source. Therefore, they have established a category called *ambiguous errors*, which is defined as “those that can be categorized as either Interference-like Goofs or L2 Developmental Goofs” They provide examples in negative constructions made by their Spanish subjects. Such examples include:

*I not have a bike.*

*Jose no wanna go.*

These constructions do reflect Spanish negation structure as in the Spanish counterparts of the above English ones:

*Yo no tengo bicicleta.*

*Jose no quiere ir.*

However, these constructions are also produced by children learning English as their L1. Due to the fact that such errors are both L1-like and L2-like, Dulay and Burt (op.cit.) call them *ambiguous*. In addition, among the errors he has classified, James (1998) called such errors *compound* errors as they combine more than one source and reflect both the MT of the learner and the TL he/she is learning. He draws our attention to the fact that there may be a combination of sources or even inability to determine the true source of an error and attribute it to one single source. Gass and Selinker (2008:108) have found that such errors do occur in their data. They provide the example *Terina not can go*, produced by a Spanish speaker learning English which can be explained in terms of “either an interference error because it reflects the Spanish structure or as a developmental error because it is also found in English-speaking children” learning English as their L1. In our corpus, it has been found that *ambiguous errors* have been committed as in *

*Ali not like swimming* which can be attributed to Arabic since its Arabic counterpart *?ali-un la: yuhib-u ?alsiba:hat-a* (literally: Ali not like swimming) is grammatical
in Arabic. However, such errors do occur in English children’s language when acquiring English as their L1. Thus, such errors are called *ambiguous* due to their ambiguous nature or source.

2.9.5.4.1.4. Unique Errors

Dulay and Burt (1974a:132) have collected speech samples from 179 Spanish-speaking children learning English with varying amounts of English as SL instruction in three different areas in the U.S. They tallied errors that could be *unambiguously* classified as being either *interlingual* or *intralingual*. The results were dramatic and straightforward: of the 513 *unambiguous* errors only about 4.7% were *interlingual*, while 87.1% were *intralingual*, and the rest was termed as *unique*.

Dulay and Burt (1973:248) define *unique errors* as “those errors that are neither ‘developmental’ nor ‘interference’ but which appear in our sample” since it was clear that these errors could be attributed neither to Spanish, the subjects’ L1, nor L2, i.e. English. *Unique* errors as investigated in Dulay and Burt (1974a:132) score 8.2% out of the *unambiguous* errors they investigated which is significant compared to those ascribed to L1 *interference*. Thus, Dulay and Burt have interpreted this finding as evidence that children do not use their ‘first language habits’ in the process of learning the syntax of the new language. While distinguishing *developmental errors* from *unique errors*, McLaughlin (1987:67) states that *unique errors* are “those errors [that] cannot be categorized as due either to interference or as developmental errors.” In addition, Ellis (1997:60) attributes *unique errors* to “instruction [that] may constitute one source of what Dulay and Burt call ‘unique errors’.” Arab learners commit such errors as in *Either Ali Fatma reads first* where *or* has been omitted. Here it should be noted that neither Arabic nor English allows such structure. For instance, the Arabic counterpart of such an utterance is *?ima ِ?ali-un  #  fatmat-un yaqra?-u  ?wal-an* which is ungrammatical. This error cannot also be attributed to English since it is neither *overgeneralization* nor *simplification* error. Thus, such error is *unique* since it is unexplainable either in terms of Arabic or English.

2.9.5.5. Error Correction

The final stage of EA proposed by many researchers (e.g. Corder 1973, James 1998, Hendrickson 1978) is *error correction*. As has been discussed so far, errors have been looked at from different perspectives. However, after the *Communicative Approach* has come into “vogue,” it was
commonly held that errors were not important as long as they do not affect communication (Littlewood 1981). On a pragmatic level, Long (1990b) suggests that much corrective feedback is erratic, ambiguous, ill-timed and ineffective, while Truscott (1998) maintains that error correction is ineffective and even harmful. In addition, Hendrickson (1978, 1980) has questioned the issue of error correction as to which, when, how and who should correct which errors and whether errors should be corrected at all.

Thus, many researchers (Hendrickson 1978, 1980, McCretton and Rider 1993, Corder 1967, Selinker 1972, James 1994) among others have proposed a criterion for error correction. This criterion looks at different factors necessary for correcting learners’ errors. First, exposure which states that if one of the objectives in the L2 classroom is to promote linguistic creativity, then learners should be encouraged to make inferences and guesses about L2 using new, unfamiliar, or little-studied structures when they speak. On the contrary, learners should be truly asked and encouraged for attempting to push the boundaries of their language abilities. Moreover, encouraging signals from the teacher can also serve as motivation for other students to attempt new language in unfamiliar linguistic levels. Seriousness is the second factor which persists whether or not a particular error is serious and hence, requires correction. Again, the objectives of the L2 classroom should be considered before determining the gravity of an error (McCretton and Rider 1993). If a constant flow of communication is one of the objectives, the error must impede communication before it should be considered an error that necessitates correction (for a detailed discussion of error seriousness see section 1.13.3). In fact, within the confines of the classroom, and under the pressure of having to produce accurately in the L2, learners may be nervous, anxious, upset, or excited, causing them to stumble, even with familiar structures. Corder (1967) considers such performance slips as mistakes, hardly of a serious nature. On the other hand, “true” errors cannot be self-corrected without some additional information because there is a lack of understanding by the language learner. Hence, it is wise to allow learners as many opportunities and sufficient time to self-correct their errors as possible.

Third, an important factor that must be considered by the teacher is individual learners’ needs. The importance of this factor is mentioned in Corder (1967) who in turn notes that this idea had been suggested previously by (Carroll 1955, Ferguson 1966 cited in Corder 1967). Indeed, each student is different and thus may react differently to error correction. Walz (1982:15-27), therefore, claims that
the teacher must perform two main tasks: first, he/she has to assess some specific character traits of
students such as self-confidence and language acquisition capability. Walz holds that self-confident and
capable students can profit from even minor corrections, while struggling students should receive
correction only on major errors. The teacher’s second task, according to Walz, is to listen to learners’
L2 utterances to determine where errors occur, i.e. which linguistic forms cause students’ difficulties,
their frequency and their gravity (according to the seriousness criterion mentioned above). Only then
can the teacher combine the outcome of these tasks and decide on correction techniques for individual
learners.

Walz (op.cit.) also proposes consistency as the fourth and final factor. In fact, consistency is
placed at the pinnacle of importance when addressing errors in the classroom. Without it, thus,
corrections will be offered arbitrarily, depending solely on the teacher’s patience, mood, motivation, or
attitude. Thus, consistency takes into account (a) self-correction with the teacher’s help, (b) peer-
correction, and (c) teacher correction. Self-correction with the teacher’s help is an excellent way to
address errors. The first type, Walz offers, is pinpointing, whereby the teacher localises the error by
repeating the learner’s utterance up until the point where the error has occurred, and exaggerates the
word which has preceded the error with a rising intonation and finally the student him/herself will
notice the error and self-correct it. In addition, peer-correction, as proposed by Walz, is a way whereby
the learner’s peer notices the error and hence, corrects it. If, however, both ways do not come up with
the correction, then the teacher him/herself has to play the role of correction.

2.9.6. Error Analysis Criticised

In the 1980s, EA gradually lost its popularity as more and more criticism was made against its
approach and method. According to Chau (1975:122), the most serious of these is the lack of
objectivity in its procedures of analysis, of defining and categorising errors. Another limitation of EA is
its lack of explanatory function, as most error analyses just classify lists of categories of errors
according to their frequency of occurrence, rather than giving an explanation. In terms of
categorisation, (Lennon 1991, Sridhar 1981) claim that some errors are obvious, but many are either
multiple errors, viz. partly syntactic and partly lexical or are difficult to categorise in a clear-cut way.
Another major criticism against EA, made by Schachter (1974), is that most of the error analysis just focuses on errors and does not deal with avoidance. A learner who, for one reason or another, avoids a particular sound, word, structure or discourse category may be assumed incorrectly to have no difficulty therewith. For example, Schachter (op.cit.) found that it was misleading to draw conclusions about relative clause errors among certain learners of English including Arabs and Japanese. In addition, native speakers of Japanese and Arabic were usually avoiding relative clauses and thus, not manifesting nearly as many errors as some native Persian speakers. Furthermore, EA does not deal with what students are doing that causes them to succeed; that is, it does not deal with what leads to learning. Brown (1994) draws our attention to one danger of EA, i.e. it may overstress the importance of production data. That is, many researchers pay attention to production data, but comprehension data is also equally important in developing an understanding of the process of SLA.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:61-62) have summarised the most significant weaknesses of EA as (i) studying learner’s errors but not what makes him/her successful, i.e. researchers and error analysts “[b]y focusing only on errors, were denied access to the whole picture,” (ii) impossibility of identifying the unitary source of an error as in *The doges ran home where the source of such an error is “ambiguous.” That is, “it could be due to overgeneralization of the syllabic plural, but it is also a developmental error of the type children learning English as their native language (NL) commonly make,” and (iii) the difficulty to explain why learners avoid certain structures. Larsen-Freeman and Long agree with Schachter (1974) that EA fails to account for why Arabic and Japanese learners, for instance, avoid using relative clauses in their composition or why Arabic speakers learning English tend to avoid passive sentences in their writing or spoken English. These EA drawbacks have initiated the need for approaching the learner’s performance as a whole and not merely his/her errors per se. This leads to Performance Analysis.

2.10. Performance Analysis

What has led to EA is the fact that CA fails to account for errors that are not explainable in terms of the differences between L1 and L2. As has been seen above, EA is also criticised for its failure to account for some errors produced by L2 learners, the difficulty of determining the unitary source of some errors and why learners of some languages tend to avoid certain structures. This, as ascertained
by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:62), however, does not “lead to the demise of EA, but rather to its incorporation into performance analysis an analysis of the learners’ IL performance” and not their errors per se. In fact, Performance Analysis (PA) allows us to see the development of a learner and the changes in his/her way of using the language give us cues about L2 learning. Thus, Larsen-Freeman and Long state that PA includes the following types:

2.10.1. Morpheme Studies

The study of grammatical morphemes has been particularly fruitful for understanding the mechanisms involved in SLA by adults. Apart from merely telling us in what order certain structures are in fact acquired, these studies have also been of value in revealing the domain of the learned grammars, when performers appeal to conscious learning and when they do not. In fact, morpheme studies in LA begin with Brown’s (1973). Brown’s morpheme studies of Adam, Eve and Sarah show that there is an order through which acquisition of L1 proceeds. He demonstrates that children acquiring English as a first language show a similar order of acquisition for grammatical morphemes in obligatory occasions. In that, certain morphemes, such as -ing and the plural -(e)s, tend to be acquired relatively early, while others, such as the third person singular -s on verbs in the present tense or the possessive ’s marker tend to be acquired late (Brown 1973:51-57). This discovery was extended to child SLA by Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974a). The child SL order was not identical to the child L1 order, “but there were clear similarities among second language acquirers” (Krashen 1982:51).

In fact, L2 researchers (e.g. Dulay and Burt 1974a, 1974b) have adopted methodologies from these L1 acquisition studies and applied them to L2 acquisition to find out whether the sequence children pass through while acquiring their L1 morphemes is the same in L2 morphemes. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:62) hold that morpheme studies deal with the “suppliance of grammatical morphemes in obligatory contexts, i.e. contexts…where the TL requires a particular linguistic structures, such as the plural marker at the end of a common English noun preceded by a cardinal number.” In Dulay and Burt’s (1974a, 1974b) studies conducted on L2 learners, they look at the issue of whether an obligatory morpheme has been correctly supplied in such contexts, supplied but not correctly formed, or not altogether. Based on such empirical studies, Dulay and Burt have concluded that there is an evidence of a morpheme acquisition order. This conclusion has been based on the
relative suppliance of eleven English morphemes in obligatory contexts similar to that found by Brown (1973) as noted above.

2.11.2. Developmental Sequences

In this type of PA, investigation of developmental sequences involves longitudinal studies in which the speech of one or more subjects is recorded and transcripts are analysed for particular structures. Such studies include Ravem’s (1974:138-141) study in which he tackled the development of English Wh-questions in first and second language learning in the speech of his Norwegian-speaking children over a period of four months. He found that, like monolingual children, his subjects used structures like *Where Daddy go? and *Where Daddy is going? before they produce the adult form, viz. Where is Daddy going? According to Ravem (op.cit.), this did not reflect interference from their native Norwegian, which would probably have led to a form like Where go Daddy? Instead they produce Where Daddy go? just like first language learners.

In fact, most of the research concerned with developmental sequences in L2A has been conducted on syntactic processing. There seems to be good evidence that many of the same strategies are employed in L2A as used in L1A. For instance, word order regularities are of prime importance in both L1 and L2. In both cases, children appear to work from simpler and gradually to more complex structures, to use meaning and to prefer simpler word orders to more complex order strategies such as verb-subject inversion (Ervin-Tripp 1974). Ravem’s (1974) study referred to above lends support to the hypothesis that L2 development in children progresses through stages similar to L1 development. Thus, Ravem’s study confirms findings ended up with by Brown (1973) and Dulay and Burt’s (1974b) study in natural sequences in child SLA where they have found that their children subjects follow the same stages as they do in acquiring their L1 irrespective of which this L1 is. Thus, Dulay and Burt (op.cit.) have concluded that the similarity between the developmental sequences in both L1 and L2 and the errors produced reflect what they termed as “creative processing, more specifically, the process in which children gradually reconstruct rules for speech they hear, guided by universal innate mechanism which cause them to formulate certain types of hypotheses about the language system being acquired” (Dulay and Burt 1974b:37, emphasis is in the original). However, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:65) hold that this “similarity between L1 and L2 developmental sequences is not without opposition
[holding that] there were differences, that the differences were systematic and that they were due to the children’s relying on their L1 only under a structural condition where there was a ‘crucial similarity.”

However, PA has been criticised and the main criticism against PA is that it is too limited. That is, it deals only with the learner’s performance without tackling the input to which such a learner is exposed. For instance, Wagner-Gough (1975:301) pinpoints this criticism through his subject, Homer, who produces utterances such as *Where are going is house which is not interpretable if we limit ourselves to examining his performance unless we look at the input preceding his utterance. Homer’s utterance, in fact, is offered as a response to an adult’s question Where are you going, Homer? Homer’s utterance, thus, incorporates the question asked in his response. This is actually a strategy referred to as incorporation (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991:69). This criticism actually leads to Discourse Analysis which incorporates also the input to which a learner is exposed by paying more attention to the context.

2.11. Discourse Analysis

The basic idea of Discourse Analysis (DA) is that the study of language in context will offer a deeper insight into how meaning is attached to utterances than the study of language in isolated sentences. DA is the examination of language use by members of a speech community. It involves looking at both language form and language function and includes the study of both spoken interaction and written texts (Sato 1985). It identifies linguistic features that characterise different genres as well as social and cultural factors that aid in our interpretation and understanding of different texts and types of talk. Thus, DA of written texts might include a study of topic development and cohesion across the sentences while an analysis of spoken language might focus on these aspects plus turn-taking practices, opening and closing sequences of social encounters, or narrative structure. In fact, the study of discourse has developed in a variety of disciplines, viz. sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology, and social psychology which are beyond the scope of this study. Suffice here is that DA includes two types, viz. conversation analysis and composition analysis which will be discussed in brief in the following sections.
Larssen-Freeman and Long (1991:70) hold that *conversation analysis* is “[o]ne sub-area of Discourse Analysis.” They have also examined the extent to which L2 learners can learn “when engaged in ‘collaborative discourse.” In fact, conversation analysis is a significant domain that interprets the patterns through which people handle conversations. Everyday conversation is one of the indispensable functions of a language. In addition, the understanding of the flows and structures of everyday language is essential to language learning (Sato 1985). Therefore, incorporating conversation analysis into language class is important in that it could facilitate learners’ understanding of how real-world communication happens and is carried on. In addition, conversation analysis takes a close look at unplanned, spontaneous and interactive conversation, and thereby provides an ample database for probing the organisation of conversation.

Larssen-Freeman and Long (1991:70) have exemplified this in the following conversation between Takahiro (T), a non-native speaker and H, a native speaker of English.

T:  
  this  
  broken  

H:  
  broken  

T:  
  broken  
  This /az/ broken  
  Broken  

H:  
  Upside down  

T:  
  upside down  
  this broken  
  upside down  
  broken  

Larssen-Freeman and Long (1991:70-71) state that “[t]his conversation provides a good a example of ‘vertical’ conversation…where Takahiro and his interlocutor collaborate to produce a combined social discourse, with Takahiro relying on the strategy of scaffolding …or building his utterances on those of the native speaker.” Thus, they have ascertained that “through the negotiation of such vertical conversation, learners acquire the ‘horizontal’ word order of the TL.” In Larsen-Freeman and Long’s view, there are other processes that contribute to L2A which are non-linguistically crucial to the learners’ “discovery of linguistic elements that make up the system.” They state, in addition, that “the connection between conversational integration and IL development is, unquestionably, a complex one.” Moreover, in her longitudinal study which investigates the *IL development* of two Vietnamese
children acquiring English, Sato (1985) states that there are aspects of conversation which help acquire particular linguistic structures such as adverbial expressions.

2.11.2. Composition Analysis

The second type of DA deals with the analysis of compositions which are written texts. Analysing compositions aims at knowing the techniques such as mechanics, organisation, and paragraph development L2 learners deployed in writing such compositions (James 1998). Compositions, as has been stated by James (op.cit.), can be analysed in terms of cohesion and coherence. Coherence refers to the underlying relationships which link the meanings of the sentences in a text. To exemplify these links in terms of the speaker-hearer’s shared underlying knowledge, let’s consider the following example:

A: Could you give me a lift home?
B: Sorry, I’m visiting my sister.

where there is no grammatical or lexical link between A’s question and B’s reply but the exchange has coherence because both A and B know that B’s sister lives in the opposite direction to A’s home. In addition, coherence refers to the way a text makes sense to the readers through the organisation of its content and the relevance and clarity of its concepts and ideas. In general, a paragraph has coherence if it is a series of sentences that develop a main idea with a topic sentence and supporting sentences which relate to it (Gee 2005:49). On the other hand, cohesion refers to the grammatical and/or lexical relationships between the different elements of a text. This may be the relationship between different sentences or between different parts of a sentence. For example:

1. A: Is Jenny coming to the party?
   B: Yes, she is.

In (1) above, there is a link between Jenny and she and also between is and coming.

In the sentence (2) below,

2. If you are going to London, I can give you the address of a good hotel there.

It is obvious that the link is between London and there. The way that textual cohesion is achieved is best learned through paying close attention to the way sentences are linked in texts. Several researchers (e.g. Truscott 2007) hold that there are a variety of cohesive devices, both lexical and grammatical, of which linkers (and, so, but) are just one. The exact relationship between cohesion and coherence is a
matter of contention, however. While it is true that a sequence of unlinked sentences can hardly make sense, it is often the case that some form of linking with cohesive devices such as and, but, so, can make it easier for the reader to process and to make sense of what they read. Nevertheless, a text which is basically poorly organised is not going to be made more coherent simply by “peppering” it with moreover, however and notwithstanding (Gee, 2005:51). Thus, there are three major means for creating cohesion, viz. structural, syntactical, and lexical.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:72) hold that in analysing composition as a discourse unit, the analyst’s concern should focus on “how coherence and cohesion are achieved at the superasentential level, i.e. in written texts composed of more than one sentence.” They add that “[s]tudies have been conducted on how SL learners learn to comprehend and produce these texts.” In addition, James (1998:161) states that coherence is related to “communicative function, involving the writer’s intention and the reader’s interpretation.” He adds that a discourse analyst has to analyse a composition or a written text in terms of “relevance, clarity, development, and even originality.” He thus distinguishes between cohesion and coherence as the former is “value-as-text,” and the latter as “value-as-message” shared between the writer and the reader.

Thus, to be coherent, a text needs a discourse and accordingly, we can classify errors under text and discourse (James 1998:161). James adds that errors can be distinguished “in terms, first, of discourse being a process and text as its product, and secondly in terms of meaning versus interpretation. It is your discourse you read into my text… discourse is what the reader or listener does with the text.” James relates coherence “primarily to content, to the conceptual relatedness of proposition. We are no longer looking at ‘markers’ on the surface: we are looking for underlying ‘conceptual relationships.’ That is what we do as analysts, and that is what we do as readers: the analyst steps into the reader’s boots” (ibid:162). He adds that the first task we have to do as analysts is to identify these relationships to be able to see “where the writer has failed to conform or adhere to the optimum relationships.”

Thus, after discussing the different types of analysis that have been employed in studying language learners’ errors beginning with CA and ending in DA, it is obvious that there is a kind of complementarity between these methods. In other words, it has been seen how each new type of
analysis broadened our perspective and made its own contribution to the field of L2 acquisition. Therefore, it would be untrue to say that each type of analysis replaced its predecessor. Rather, we could argue that it *subsumed* or incorporated what came before it. For instance, those who used EA appealed to CA to explain a portion of the errors that learners commit (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991). Likewise, since learner errors are part of a learner’s performance, EA has a role to play in PA. And finally, the learner’s total performance must be taken into account in any DA which considers the input to which the learner is exposed. This type of complementarity, in fact, makes it clear that to get best results; an analyst should employ different kinds of methods when analysing the language learners’ errors, though each type may be of more value than any other depending on the type of the text he/she is analysing.

2.12. Interlanguage

It has been widely held that learner language is a distinct linguistic system from both L1 and L2. Selinker (1972), for instance, argues that there is a latent ‘psychological structure’ in the brain activated when one attempts to learn a second language, i.e. whenever one tries to produce sentences in the SL using meanings one may already have. When such an attempt is made, the utterances which are realised are not identical to those which would have been produced by a native speaker of the TL. Nor are they identical to the sentences having the same meaning in the learner’s L1. Thus, an independent linguistic system is hypothesised to account for the actual realised utterances. This system is called *interlanguage*. Interlanguage (IL), a term coined by Selinker (1972), is manifested in different levels of the linguistic system of the language being learned, be it in phonological, morphological, syntactic or semantic forms in the speech and/or writing of a speaker of a SL that do not conform to the TL norms even after years of instruction and exposure to the standard forms of such a TL.

Selinker (1972) defines IL as an emerging linguistic system that has been developed by an L2 learner independent of both L1 and L2. Accordingly, IL seems to make somewhat stronger claims than Corder’s (1971) *idiosyncratic dialect* or Nemser’s (1971) *approximative system*. It makes even clearer the similarity to L1 acquisition studies by focusing attention on the learner’s knowledge of the TL as a whole, and provides “room,” through the notion of fossilisation, for an ultimate connection with various sociolinguistic studies of language variation with communicative competence (Selinker 1972).
Further, many researchers (e.g. Chun, 1980, Adjemian 1976, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974b, Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, Long 1983, 2003, Han 2004, Mizuno 1999, Nakuma 1998) hold that L2 learners are also found to go through similar stages in acquiring it, be it English, French, Russian, German or any other language to be learned as an L2.

In addition, Corder’s (1971) use of an alternative term for IL, viz. idiosyncratic dialect, emphasises that individual learners do not share the same ILs, although research showing commonalities across learners may make it feasible to talk of mini-dialects for a group of learners in the same class. Looking at Arab students learning English, Scott and Tucker (1974:72-75) find it very hard to discover some degree of regularity in their errors. Their conclusions suggest some confusion, however. They “found errors that were sufficiently frequent and regular, as well as instances of correct usage apparently following standard English rules, for us to assume that we were dealing with a rule-generated language system.” Though they have done two studies in two different periods of time, they have had different results. Based on Arabic two known dialects, standard and colloquial, they thought that they could claim that they were dealing with “two approximate systems: although, recognizing all the differences that did occur,” they recognised that they were dealing with “twenty-two idiosyncratic dialects.” This is, in fact, because of the twenty-two dialects Arabs have, i.e. every Arab country has its own dialect which, to a considerable extent, is different from the other’s and sometimes may be unintelligible, too. Thus, every dialect has a direct influence on the IL of its speakers. This conclusion may sound well and as far as English is concerned, linguists used to talk about Egyptian English, Yemeni English, Iraqi English and so forth. Another study done by Zughoul (2002) in the IL syntax of Arabic speakers learning English in the area of noun phrase, in which he has focused on the closed system elements that can occur before or after the noun head, is cited here. Zughoul has analysed 500 words of the respondents who were 25 Arabs from 7 different Arab countries. The respondents are from different backgrounds, i.e. they are from different linguistic backgrounds as every one of them speaks different dialect of Arabic because they are from different Arab states. Zughoul concludes that every dialect has its influence on English.

However, in a study on the speakers of four languages, viz. Arabic, Spanish, Persian, and Japanese, Larsen-Freeman (1975) has found a high level of agreement in the kinds of errors made, but
still a great deal of evidence of apparent individual and language group variation is still to be noticed. To deal with some of these contradictory results, Dickerson (1975:407) proposes that ILs, like real languages, should be seen as having variable rules: “Like native speakers, second language learners use a language system consisting of variable rules. Their achievement of the target language comes about through gradual change by using overtime, greater proportions of more target like variance in an ordered set of phonetic environments.”

To prove this, Nemser (1971) cites Serbo-Croat learners of English who will produce *What does Pat doing now?* and thus this construction belongs neither to English, nor to Serbo-Croat. What has to be learned from this example, suggest applied linguists such as Nemser, Corder and Selinker, is that one needs to understand the learner’s language as a system in its own right. This is both possible and interesting because learners tend to go through a series of ILs in systematic and predictable ways. However, a question to be addressed here is that how does the learner create his/her interlanguage? According to Selinker (1972), there are a number of basic processes but, particularly in his later work Selinker (1993), he insists upon learning strategies (cf. section 2.6.1), that is, activities that the learner adopts or employs in order to help him/her acquire the language.

Consequently, there are certain characteristics of IL that make it different from both L1 and L2 as an independent linguistic system of its own. Selinker (1972), for instance, has ascertained that IL has three main characteristics: (i) IL is independent in the sense that it comes from the native language and the target language of the SL learner; however, it is not the simple hybrid of the two languages. (ii) IL is systematic and thus it is not haphazardly developed. In that, Adjemain (1976:332) argues that the IL systematicity means that there exists an internal consistency in the rules and feature system which makes up the IL. (iii) IL is dynamic in the sense that it does not jump from stage to the next, but rather slowly and constantly revises the systems to accommodate new hypotheses about the TL systems. This usually takes place through the introduction of a new rule, first in one context and then in another and so on. In fact, IL is a process reflecting learning psychology. In that, (Piaget 1983 cited in Long 2003) holds that cognitive learning theory sees learning as basically a matter of meaningful dynamics whereby individuals constantly reconstruct their ‘cognitive structures’ or schemata and hence, learning occurs when the learner relates new information to previously acquired knowledge. As such, L2
learning involves assimilation and accommodation. In addition, Long (2003:513) argues that IL consists psychologically of reconstructing as an L1-dependent process and creating as an L1-independent process. In short, IL is a creative-construction process involving hypothesis testing activity since the perception of an L2 learner shifts from holistic to analytic and hence, showing the psychological process of IL.

2.13. Fossilisation and the Plateau Effects

The issue of why almost all L2 learners never attain native-like or near-native-like proficiency and only few, if any at all, can achieve it has been addressed by several researchers and applied linguists. This phenomenon has been referred to as fossilisation or learning plateau which attempts to visualise the issue of why the L2 learner ceases to stop-short of the native speaker’s competence/proficiency. This phenomenon has, in fact, been dealt with by different scholars. For instance, it has been referred to as backsliding, (Ellis 1985, Schachter 1988, Selinker 1972), stabilized errors (Schumann 1978), persistent non-target-like performance (Mukattash 1986), typical errors (Kellerman 1984), ingrained errors (Valette 1991), systematic use of erroneous forms (Allwight and Bailey 1991), variable outcomes (Slobin, 1993), cessation of learning (Odlin 1993), structural persistence (Selinker and Lakshmanan 1992), errors that are impervious to negative evidence (Lin and Hedgcock 1996), long-lasting free variation (Ellis 1999), persistent difficulty (Hawkins 2000), ultimate attainment (Birdsong 1992) and plateau effect in learning (Richards 2008, Yi 2009). In addition, the present researcher presumes that fossilisation involves recurring IL forms which are not necessary to be always erroneous. However, as far as erroneous forms are concerned and which are resistant to correction, one can call such recurrent erroneous forms irrecoverable errors.

These different concepts imply that getting stuck at a particular point in language learning process is not easy to determine. It is rather a mysterious and challenging area of study. Selinker (1993) classifies fossilisation into two categories, viz. individual fossilisation and group fossilisation. While the former is the persistence of individual learner’s IL development, the latter is the plateau in the diachronic development of a community language. According to Wei (2008:127), individual fossilisation is divided into two kinds, namely, “error reappearance, and language competence fossilization.” The former refers to the inadequate IL structures which are “thought to have been
corrected but continue to appear regularly.” This type of fossilisation is clearly observed in the IL of learners with low proficiency. The latter, however, refers to the “plateau in the development of L2 learners’ phonological, grammatical, lexical and pragmatic competence” who spend a longer period of time learning such an L2 till reaching a relatively high level and then stopped for several reasons. However, L2 learners under the plateau effect can continue learning only if they are subjected to extensive learning by following appropriate learning strategies and techniques. Agreeing with Selinker (1993), Wei (2008) holds that if competence fossilisation becomes “pervasive in a community, group fossilization comes into being. Such pervasion often leads to a new dialect. Indian English and Singapore English are good cases in point” (Wei op.cit:128).

In addition, Selinker and Lakshmanan (1992) have also classified fossilisation into temporary fossilisation and permanent fossilisation. Temporary fossilisation has been termed by them as **stabilisation**. They state that stabilisation indicates that fossilised IL consists of learning plateaus where development of given L2 features is simply ‘arrested’ or ‘inhibited’ for shorter or longer periods of time. Permanent fossilisation, however, occurs as a result of social, psychological and interactive variables. Wei (2008) states that fossilisation is a terminology of educational psychology and that in the process of learning a new structure, the learner cannot make a noticeable progress whatever effort he/she tries to exert. Further, Yi (2009:137) contends that “[o]n the learning curve, big improvements come very quickly; then the rate of improvement slows right down to almost nothing.” He adds that in early stages of learning, SL learners of average intelligence do not experience much difficulty due to their high motivation and curiosity. In fact, it is believed that L2 learners, whatever their L1 may be, have been seen to be successful in the early stages of language learning. However, unfortunately, as they proceed in their learning process, this success begins to deteriorate or slow down. This has been accounted for by referring to the learners’ early activities when they imitate, memorise, practice, speak and/or write eagerly. In addition, Yi (2009:141-142) argues that plateau effect on language learning is observable in terms of learners’ *behaviour* and *psychology*. In the former, for instance, “the learners do not make active response to the teacher’s instructions as they used to do.” In that, learners often feel the difficulty of learning and they feel unable to remember new structures and words in a language. In the latter, however, L2 learners reject “new linguistic input.” Learners feel the difficulty of recalling new words, patterns and usage under the influence of short-term memory. Yi has interpreted this by stating
that whatever the learners learn in the classroom is hardly processed by long-term memory. In addition, such learners find it difficult to apply their language knowledge automatically into performance. In spite of their long experience in the TL, they find it rather difficult to use what has been learned before “spontaneously and unconsciously to communicate.” Their ability of creating novel utterances gets stuck. In other words, their acquired language knowledge remains in “the conscious and cognitive level; it is not efficiently transformed into language competence, forming an unconscious communicative ability.”

Recently, effective and personality factors in language learning have been paid much more attention to (Stern 1983). Gardner et al. (1959), for instance, consider attitudes and motivation an essential cause of more or less successful L2 learning. That is, whenever L2 learners are well-motivated and have a positive attitude toward the language they are learning, they are successful learners. Researchers (e.g. Guiora 1972) have accounted for this phenomenon by proposing the concept of ‘language ego’ or what has been referred to as ‘personal image’ which a learner develops about him/herself in his/her language development process. In this regard, Yi (2009:142) holds that “[j]ust as a child acquires a ‘body image,’ every individual acquires his language ego.” He adds that during the puberty “the language ego is fluid and its boundaries are not rigid.” To Yi, this is the main reason why children acquire a new language, accent, dialect whatever the language in question might be more easily than adults. However, as an individual grows, “the language ego becomes less flexible and loses its permeability.” He sees language ego as a “defensive barrier, psychologically protecting the identity and dignity of the individual.” As far as L2 learners are concerned and getting on plateau, they have strong language ego arousing “frustration, depression, anxiety and embarrassment.”

What has been discussed above shows how learning plateau differs from fossilisation. While the former is temporary, the latter is permanent. In this, learning plateau is similar to stabilisation used by (Selinker 1993, Selinker and Lakshmanan 1992). Selinker and Lakshmanan (1992) point out that stabilisation is the first sign of (putative) fossilisation, and if the only difference between stabilisation and fossilisation is permanence (Bley-Vroman 1989, Vigil and Olle 1976), then including persistent “fluctuation” as a legitimate index of fossilisation creates another problem. However, not all stabilisation is a precursor to, or an indication of fossilisation (Gass and Selinker 2008, Han 2000,
In addition, Han (1998:86) views stabilisation and fossilisation as two parts of a continuum. She considers fossilisation a cognitive process, properly inferable only from long-term stabilisation, demonstrable only by longitudinal studies, occurring at the level of IL subsystems rather than the entire system. Accordingly, stabilisation, like plateau effect can be overcome and is not the end of learning as in the case of permanent fossilisation which cannot be overcome whatever efforts learners exert. Long (2003:521) adds that fossilisation manifests itself in three ways: “invariant appearance of IL forms over time, backsliding over time, and stabilized variations over time.” As in any area of SLA theory construction, one way to account for plateau effect and fossilisation is to subject them to empirical tests: “[s]hort of other problems, any that can survive such testing are candidate explanations of [the latter] and any that cannot are probably of [the former]” In addition, fossilisation has been seen by Richards (2008:19) as referring “to the persistence of errors in learners’ speech despite progress in other areas of language development. They are errors that appear to be entrenched and difficult to eradicate, despite the teacher’s best efforts.”

In the case of learning plateau, learners for one reason or another lose motivation to continue learning and this, unlike fossilisation, can pedagogically be overcome by creating new purposes and motivation for the learners. Richards (2008) points out that learning plateau can be moved over. In other words, learners under certain conditions can pursue their learning in the same track provided that they undergo particular pedagogical techniques and effective learning strategies which can create the required motivation, attitudes and interest in L2 learners. Fossilisation, according to Richards (op.cit.), is permanent in the sense that when L2 learners get stuck in a particular domain, they cannot move forward in spite of motivation, desire and new stimuli. This is clearly manifested in the case of Professor Wu who in spite of her proved intelligence could not overcome her difficulties with English (Han 2004). In fact, Professor Wu has spent 56 years in the U.S. which furnish her with excellent exposure to English but she remains suffering from the difficulties with English she has experienced since her early life. Unlike learning plateau, the fact that fossilisation is a permanent secession of learning has been proved true by a considerable number of researchers (e.g. Vigil and Oller 1976, Han 1998, 2000, 2004, White 1998, 2008, Ellis 1997, Long 2003, Selinker 1993, 1996, Gass and Selinker 1992, 2008, Selinker and Lakshmanan 1992, Birdsong 1992, 1999, Wei 2008, Yi 2009, Lardiere 1998, Richards 2008).
Several researchers do not submit to fossilisation but attempt to provide solution to prevent fossilisation to occur and others have proposed methods for changing fossilised levels in L2. Such researchers as (e.g. Acton 1984, Valette 1991, Nakuma 1998, Lardiere 1998) argue that the key strategy for the prevention of fossilisation lies in providing a maximum degree of accurate and appropriate input in early levels of instruction. This input is of three types: teacher input, recorded input and student input. In teacher input, for instance, teachers should attempt to prevent fossilisation, viz. only those teachers who have a good command of the L2 being taught and near-native accent should teach beginning classes. Unfortunately and as far as Arab world is concerned, untrained and incompetent teachers are teaching beginning classes. Those who have native-like or near-native competence teach advanced classes. Regarding recorded input, the best of this type of input is video-recorded for correct pronunciation. For student input, when communicating with their peers, students should focus on and acquire the patterns they hear from them.

In addition, Acton (1984:71) has proposed a method for changing fossilised pronunciation. He feels that when a learner reaches puberty, it seems axiomatic that his/her “ability to learn a second language, including the possibility of acquiring a native-like accent, begins to deteriorate.” He adds that learners’ pronunciation becomes “inevitably and irrevocably” fossilised when they have achieved a level of competence which indicates that they become functionally bilingual. The method proposed by Acton consists of seven steps: 1) conversation control in which learners have to be relaxed and feel not threatened in conversation, 2) monitoring strategies which specify that “[f]ossilized learners generally find it necessary to do some type of conscious monitoring in order to be able to ultimately affect change in everyday conversation,” 3) non-verbal correlates of pronunciation, 4) dictionary use in which the learners have to focus on “the relationship between pronunciation and orthography” for which dictionary use is emphasised for checking especially the pronunciation of vowels, many of which the learners are not aware of, 5) oral reading in which learners are advised to prepare 200 to 300 word texts for revising their pronunciation, 6) informant use where each student solicits the assistance of an informant, a native speaker of English for improving pronunciation, and 7) integration which is a phase that
entails using, in an “on-the-job conversation,” i.e. what learners have ‘corrected’ in isolation, in formal exercises and oral readings they have gone through previously (ibid:76-78).

As far as plateau effect is concerned, several researchers and applied linguists have concerned themselves with how to make their learners overcome learning plateaus and what effective techniques and learning strategies they can apply to help them move from the plateau dilemma. For instance Wei (2008:130) has proposed that to overcome learning plateau, L2 learners should be involved in extensive learning by creating motivations and enhancing their attitudes toward the L2 they are learning stating that “successful language learning involves attention to both form and meaning.” He adds that curricula should provide stimulating, sufficient and optimal input. From acculturation point of view, learners should be immersed in authentic or pseudo-authentic situations in which learners will be involved to identify themselves with native speakers. Thus, objectives can be set for such learners providing them with the advantages of communicating with native speakers and the value of communicating fluently. In addition, Richards (2008:20) holds that teachers can involve learners in learning situations for “becoming active monitors of their own language production through listening to recordings of their own speech and through having others monitor their speech for fossilised errors in focused listening sessions” applying noticing and output hypothesis. He adds that teachers should be selective, i.e. they should focus on “error correction and the issues of what kinds of errors to correct and when and how to correct them.”

As far as activities to be involved in classroom to overcome learning plateau are concerned, Richards (2008:20) suggests three main techniques or activities: (i) incorporating a more explicit treatment of grammar within the curriculum, (ii) building a focus on form into teaching through the use of activities centering on raising consciousness, or noticing grammatical features of input or output and (iii) using activities that require stretched output (i.e. which expand or “restructure” learners’ grammatical systems through increased communicative demands and attention to linguistic form). As far as learners are concerned, Richards (op.cit:21) provides the following techniques to be paid much attention to and achieved by them.

1. Expand their grammatical competence, including acquiring new ways of using known forms, as well as adding more complex language resources to their linguistic repertoire.
2. Become more fluent and accurate language users.
3. Develop the capacity to monitor their own language use as well as that of others, and to notice the gap between their productive competence and those of more advanced language users.
4. Continue to develop their vocabulary, particularly at the 5,000 to 6,000 word range.
5. Develop a greater awareness of and familiarity with patterns of lexical collocation.
6. Master the use of conversational routines and other means of participating actively in conversation and other forms of spoken discourse.
7. Further develop their proficiency in listening, reading, and writing.

However, Richards (2008:21) stresses that to achieve these objectives, learners should be provided with “a rich source of language learning experiences that allow for the gradual development of language skills across the different modalities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.” He adds that such experiences will make learners “successful monitors and managers of their own learning, aware of the limitations of their current level of language ability, but also aware of the means by which they can move beyond the intermediate learning plateau to more advanced levels of language use.”

2.15. Conclusion

Thus, in this chapter, the very important theoretical foundations which underlie the study at hand have been discussed. SLA, its theories and models, UG, linguistic, communicative and strategic competence and performance, SLA strategies among many other related issues have been discussed. Very salient theories related to the concept, analysis and the committing of “error” such as CA, CAH, EA, PA, DA, IL, fossilisation, learning plateau and the different views on these areas enriching the study of errors through different eras which contribute to the development of this very essential field of research have also been examined and discussed. As has been discussed so far, the study of errors and their gravity is not only important to teachers and students but also to linguists, syllabi designers and textbook developers due to the essential pedagogical insights it provides them with. In short, the study of errors and their gravity is nowadays the cornerstone of successful language learning process and understanding its essential aspects and secrets.