Chapter Two

Language Transfer as a Communication Strategy


Chapter 2

LANGUAGE TRANSFER AS A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Every day we come across instances which indicate that “learner’s performance in a second language is influenced by the language or languages that they already know.” (Mitchell, Myles, Marsden, 2013:16). One such instance is the foreign accent of learners. For e.g. when a British tries to speak Hindi, he does so with his/her own peculiar accent. Also learners make some characteristic mistakes which originate from the knowledge of their native language. For e.g. when Sahil, a native hindi speaker is introducing himself to someone in English, he says ‘Myself, Sahil’, which is grammatically incorrect. Instead he should have said, ‘Hello, My name is Sahil’. Sahil is literally translating the Hindi way of introducing to someone i.e. ‘Mai, Sahil’, which is why we have said that his mistake originated from the knowledge of his native language.

This kind of phenomenon is often called ‘language transfer’. It is one of the most intriguing areas for second language acquisition researchers. The questions which have been perplexing and haunting researchers for long are “how important language transfer is and exactly what is being transferred?”

Before going to these questions we must have some idea about the genesis and progression history of language transfer.

2.2 DEFINING LANGUAGE TRANSFER

Language transfer is perhaps the most well established technical term used to explain the interaction between different language systems in the mind of the individual. The concept of transfer originated from behaviourist views which believed that Second Language Acquisition comprises overcoming L1 habits. Another term, often referred to in the same context as language transfer, ‘Interference’ was used by Haugen (1950, 1953) to explain the phenomenon of language overlap in bilingual performance. Haugen (1950, 1953) also talked about ‘Integration’ when a similar situation is associated with ‘language change’ (Haugen’s three stages of diffusion, code-switching, interference, and integration). Clyne (2003) coined the term ‘transference’
and said transfer is a consequence of ‘transference’. Researchers have attempted to incorporate these multiple facets of ‘language transfer’ in one single definition.

The process of incorporating elements from one language to another has been referred to as language transfer (Ellis, 2000: 301), cross-linguistic influence (Sharwood et.al 1986:1) or interference (Rajagopalan, 2005: 401) which is used interchangeably in many literatures for negative language transfer. (Jaroszek, 2008)

Brown (1987) defines transfer as a common term used to explain the influence of previous knowledge to future learning. (Brown, 1987:81)

Transfer can also be defined as a ‘Psycholinguistic procedure by means of which L2 learners activate their L1 knowledge in developing or using their Interlanguage’ (Faerch & Kasper, 1987:112)

The word ‘transfer’ is derived from the Latin word ‘transf erre’ means ‘to carry’, ‘to bear’ or “to imprint’, ‘impress’ or otherwise ‘copy’ (as a drawing or engraved design) from one surface to another”. Transfer can also mean “the carry- over or generalization of learned response from one type of situation to another”, especially “the application in one field of study or effort of knowledge, skill, power or ability acquired in another.”

(Webster’s Third New World International Dictionary, 1986) as cited in (Liu, 2001: 1)

As previously mentioned the term transfer was unacceptable to Sharwood-Smith and Kellerman (1986:1), therefore they came up with a new term “Cross-Linguistic Influence”, which includes other phenomena such as ‘transfer’, ‘influence’, ‘avoidance’, ‘borrowing’ and L2 related aspects of language loss. Instead, they believed that the term should be limited to the process involved in transfer of elements from one language to another. “Sharwood-Smith and Kellerman (1986) have argued that a subordinate term that is theory-neutral is needed and suggest cross -linguistic influence” (Ellis, 1994: 301). They comment

“...the term ‘cross-linguistic influence’...is theory neutral, allowing one to subsume under one heading such phenomena as ‘transfer’, ‘interference’, ‘avoidance’, ‘borrowing’ and L2 related aspects of language loss and thus permitting discussion of the similarities and differences between these phenomena (1986:1)”.

48
Presently, transfer can be seen with a broader scope which involves all the components discussed in Sharwood-Smith and Kellerman’s (1986) notion of ‘Cross-Linguistic Influence’ (Franch, 1998). Beebe et.al (1990) refers to transfer as the L1 socio-cultural competence of the learners’ which they employ in their L2 conversation.

Some scholarly definitions of transfer are given below-

Kasper (1992) talks about Pragmatic transfer and defines it as- “the influence exerted by learners’ pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information”. (Kasper, 1992:207) as cited in (Franch, 1998:4)

Odlin (1989) says- “transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously, and perhaps imperfectly acquired”. (Odlin, 1989:27)

The above definitions suggest that transfer can take place at any levels- strategic, linguistic, discoursal and pragmatic. Nonetheless, the definition of transfer still remains vague. There is still no agreement on whether language transfer is merely “a matter of interference or of falling back on the native language”, (Ellis, 2000: 301) or whether it also involves the incorporation of language mechanisms. As far as the scope of transfer is concerned, Takahashi and Beebe (1992) consider that it possesses both cross-linguistic influence as well as cross cultural transfer elements. (Liu, 2010)

2.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Language transfer and its role in second language acquisition have a long and interesting pedigree. Fries (1945) proposed that teaching a foreign language should be, “based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner” (Jaroszek, 2008: 55). In 1950s and 1960s, the Contrastive Analysis (CA) paradigm was popular regarding language transfer. Contrastive Analysis (CA) hypothesis was given by Lado (1957) which was based on behaviourist theory of language learning. The behaviourist theory hypothesised that when the first and second languages exhibit different language mechanisms, as a result of negative transfer, the learner is likely to commit an error, the avoidance of which requires a formation of positive learning
habit. The behaviourist theory viewed language transfer as “an important source of error and interference in L2 learning, because L1 ‘habits’ were tenacious and deeply rooted.” (Mitchell, Myles and Marsden, 2013:16). It was proposed that learner’s errors can be predicted by comparing L1 and L2. This theory of language learning was based on the assumption that learning is a process of habit forming, and learning a L2 means acquiring new linguistic habits (Bloomfield 1933, Skinner 1957, Thorndike 1932, Watson 1924). As Brooks (1960) put it “the single paramount fact about language learning is that it concerns, not problem solving, but the formation and performance of habits (1960: 49) as cited in (Ellis, 1994: 299). When we are exposed to our mother tongue for first time then this L1 habit forming poses no problem. But while acquiring a second language this L1 habit causes a resistance if they differ from L2 habits. These different L1 habits were called errors or ‘bad habits’ and they were considered detrimental for successful language learning. As Brooks said “like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence to be expected” (Brooks 1960) as cited in (Ellis, 1994: 300).

Thus researchers started comparing pairs of languages in order to pinpoint those areas which are different and thus would cause difficulty in L2 acquisition. For the same reason they would also need more rigorous training and teaching in order to learn them. This arduous task of pair wise language comparison was termed as Contrastive Analysis (CA). Thus contrastive analysis implied that most of the “L2 errors made by learners could be predicted by identifying the differences between the target language and the learners first language (similar language patterns = positive transfer, different language pattern = negative transfer)” (Ellis, 1986:23).

But soon it was realised that behaviourist views were simply extrapolation of animal behaviour to the language behaviour of humans and flaws were inevitable in such an approach. As was observed by Ellis (1994) “Analogy could not account for the language user’s ability to generate totally novel utterances” (Ellis, 1994; 300). Also L1 acquisition by children, although parents rarely correct their errors, raised doubts on the importance of ‘reinforcement’. Such findings soon led to the demise of Behaviourist Hypothesis and Creative Construction Hypothesis came into existence.

In North America, in early 1970s the Contrastive Analysis (CA) paradigm was replaced by the Creative Construction (CC) paradigm which believed that L2
acquisition is largely unaffected by L1 transfer (Burt & Dulay, 1980). According to creative construction hypothesis both first and second language acquisition are guided by creative construction i.e. while the learner is acquiring a language he/she is constantly and simultaneously creating a hypothesis about the language pattern that he/she is learning. This model was based mainly on the study by Dulay and Burt. However their study itself was critically dissected after it was published.

In Europe, Corder (1967) and Selinker (1972) shifted the paradigm from CA to Interlanguage hypothesis. This hypothesis shared some of its views with the Contrastive analysis hypothesis. Interlanguage hypothesis was formulated by Selinker (1972) in his famous work ‘Interlanguage’. Unlike Creative Construction hypothesis and like Contrastive Analysis hypothesis, Selinker’s hypothesis included Interference as a possible source of error. According to him, during second language acquisition, learners develop their own set of linguistic system rules, known as ‘Interlanguage’. This ‘Interlanguage’ derives from both the native and target language and this is where this hypothesis differs from contrastive analysis hypothesis.

Selinker (1972) suggested that there are five principal processes operated in interlanguage. These processes are-

1) Language transfer (this was listed first, perhaps in defence to the contemporary importance attached to L1 interference).
2) Overgeneralization of target language rules.
3) Transfer of training (i.e. a rule enters the learners system as a result of instruction).
4) Strategies of L2 learning (i.e. ‘an identifiable approach by the learner to the material to be learned’).
5) Strategies of L2 communication (i.e. ‘an identifiable approach by the learner to communicate with the native speakers’).

(Selinker, 1972:37) as cited in (Ellis, 1986: 48).

It has been observed that the process of interference plays an important role in interlanguage. These processes enable the learners to internalize the L2 systems and minimise the learning problems by systematic manipulation. Widdowson (1975b) further suggests classifying them under the process of ‘Simplification’. Selinker, later introduced the term ‘fossilization’ when he noticed that most of the learners are
unable to arrive at target language competence. That is, they refrain from learning the
target language rules when some rules are already present in their interlanguage (Ellis,
1986).

In recent years there were three noteworthy developments regarding Contrastive
Analysis hypothesis as mentioned in Ellis 1986.

- It was recognised that the difficulty predicted by contrastive analysis might be
  realised as avoidance instead of error.

- Interference was found more likely to take place when there was some similarity
  between the first and second language items than when there was total difference.

- It was recognised that error was a multifactor phenomenon and interference, as
  one of the factors, interacted in complex ways with other factors. (Ellis, 1986:32)

Recent wider acceptance of the role of linguistic environment in L2 acquisition,
which was outright rejected by Chomsky, does not mean that we have returned to
behaviourist views. It only “emphasises the relationship between the input and
internal processing in order to discover how each affects the other” (Ellis, 1986: 14).
This concept will be further elaborated later in this research.

As the limitations of CC hypothesis became increasingly apparent (Tarone1974,
Kennedy & Holmes 1976, Rosunsky 1976), the Michigan conference on language
transfer in 1981 (cf. Gass & Selinker 1983) marked the beginning of a new era in
transfer studies.

It was Chomsky, on whose affirmation, a comprehensive view of the cognitive
approach of learning to SLA was introduced which emphasized the features and
importance of L1 in language acquisition within a mentalistic framework. This gave
birth to two ways of defining the role of L1 in SLA. In the first one, transfer is
regarded as an important process responsible for L1 influence in SLA, moving from
product oriented to process oriented approach. Even, Selinker (1972), Nemser (1971)
and James (1971) followed the same approach when they observed that learners’s L1
is the major determining factor responsible for L1 influence. This approach of transfer
helps the researchers to further analyze how it interacts with other processes. The
other way of determining the role of transfer is viewed in Ellis (1994:309) in which he
Chapter 2

talks about ‘minimalist approach’. This approach highlights the process of universal language learning such as hypothesis testing, emphasizing the similarity between L2 and L1 acquisition while reducing the significance of L1.

Other reasons for the association of transfer with notions not in accordance with behaviourist theory of language learning as discussed by Franch (1998:3) are

- “L1 transfer is not adequately explained in terms of habit formation.
- The notion of transfer must also account for phenomena such as avoidance caused by L1 influence.
- Languages other the L1 (L3...) can also have a linguistic influence on SLA and use.”

(Franch, 1998:1-16)

Behaviourist theory discarded any active mental processing of input by the learner. Thus it was assumed that “language learning- first or second- was an external not an internal phenomenon” (Ellis, 1986: 12). Chomsky was of the opinion that “in many instances there was no match between the kind of language to be observed in the input and the language that the learners produced” (Ellis, 1986: 12). To explain this Chomsky gave ‘mental view of language learning’, in which he gave the term ‘language acquisition device’ of the learner. It is a mental process inside learners’ mind which is responsible for the reception of input, its processing and production or output. Since the 1960s study of Second Language Acquisition has been diversified in two foci: internal and external. Noam Chomsky and his followers primarily worked on the internal focus. “Chomsky argued convincingly that the behaviourist theory of language acquisition is wrong because it cannot explain the creative aspects of our linguistic ability” (Troike, 2012:26). He suggested that children begin with an ‘innate capacity’ of language acquisition and gave the framework of ‘Transformational Generative Grammar’ (Chomsky 1957, 1965). This was followed by Principles and Parameter Model and the Minimalist Program. The Minimalist Program incorporated principles and constraints common to all human languages in addition to the concept of ‘innate capacity’ and gave the concept of ‘Universal Grammar’.

MINIMALIST POSITION AND IGNORANCE HYPOTHESIS- Redundancy of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis led to evolution of ‘Minimalist Position’ regarding
L1 and also to Ignorance Hypothesis, proposed by Newmark and Rieble (1968). According to this hypothesis “L1 functions primarily as a communication strategy for filling in gaps in the learners competence” (Ellis 1994; 342). Minimalist position is criticised for underestimating the significance of L1 in Second Language Acquisition.

2.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF LANGUAGE TRANSFER

As it has been previously discussed, history of language transfer originates from an influential work of Lado (1957), in which he gave principles underlying learner’s behaviour. The study led to Contrastive Analysis hypothesis which emphasised target and native language differences in language transfer studies, as Lado (1957:2) put in:

“Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to foreign language and culture – both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and respectively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and culture as practiced by natives.” (Gass, 1984)

As researchers gradually started to question the credibility of language transfer as the only dominant force in second language learning, Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis came under scrutiny. There were mainly three points of criticism:

1) Several studies raised doubts concerning the ability of contrastive analysis to predict errors.

2) There were a number of theoretical criticisms regarding the feasibility of comparing languages and the methodology of contrastive analysis.

3) Several authors had reservations about whether contrastive analysis had anything relevant to offer as far as language teaching is concerned.

(Ellis, 1986:27)

It was observed that all the speech of the learners cannot be referred to transfer from native language and furthermore where transfer was expected, it did not take place. Soon researchers shifted their focus on similarities in the acquisition process rather than dissimilarities. This caused a loss of interest in language transfer. In the past few years, with this recent emphasis on cognitive mechanisms underlying second acquisition, there has been again a surge in interest as well as research in this field (Gass, 1984).
What greatly increased interest in the field was the concept of ‘psychotypology’ a term coined by Kellerman (1979, 1983). Psychotypology refers to learner’s metalingual awareness of language distance. This concept is a crucial factor which forms the crux of Psycholinguistic criteria of transferability given by Kellerman (1983) (Faerch and Kasper, 1987).

In contrast to previous studies which led to decline in popularity of language transfer, Kellerman argued that language transfer is indeed a cognitive process. This is because when we are studying language transfer, what we are dealing with are individuals, with their own decision making processes with various factors affecting it, and not just the linguistic similarity/dissimilarity of the native and target languages. According to Kellerman two major factors which decide the transferable elements in the language are:

- Learner’s perception of L1-L2 distance.
- Degree of markedness of an L1 structure.

Kellerman further categorised some items of language as language-specific and language neutral. They are part of one’s language which native speaker finds irregular or infrequent. Then there are some parts which learner believes to be common to at least the native and target language. Former are language specific and they are highly marked and are less transferable. Latter are language neutral and they are less marked and more transferable. L1 and L2 distance refers to learner’s ‘psychotypology’, which refers to the cognitive component of language transfer and depends a lot on the decision making process of the learners.

Another interesting and superficially contradictory to Kellerman’s work is the perspective of Rutherford (1983). He advocated the role of discourse in second language acquisition. But he correlated his findings with that of Kellerman’s by speculating that learners may perceive discourse-related information as being less marked than syntax related information and hence more available for transfer.

### 2.5 MANIFESTATIONS OF TRANSFER

Apart from errors there are other manifestations of transfer as well. Important ones are facilitation, avoidance and over use. The different manifestations of transfer are discussed below:
Chapter 2

1. **Negative transfer (errors)** - the concept of interference i.e. to what extent errors are the results of transfer has been already discussed. A lot of research has been done to establish the accountability of transfer for the L2 English learners error. Whereas Dulay and Burt (1973) reported that transfer accounted for only 3% of the errors, Tran-Chi-Chau (1975) reports that percentage up to 51%. Similarly Grauberg (1971) found 36%, George (1972) 33%, Mukkatesh (1977) 23%, Flick (1980) 31% and Lott (1983) 50%. The main reason for this variation is the “difficulty in determining whether an error is the result of transfer or intra-lingual processes” (Ellis, 1994: 302).

2. **Positive transfer (facilitation)** - Facilitation does not result in total absence of errors. Instead, it increases the rate of learning and there is a quantitative decrement in errors. The U-shaped behaviour model by Kellerman (1985a) where the learner passes through several stages adducts the facilitative effect of L1. Two studies in particular firmly established facilitation, Gass (1979; 1983) and Hyltenstam (1984). A very good example of facilitation is when a Chinese native learns Japanese. As these two languages share a lot of cognates, the L1 Chinese speaker definitely will have advantage over an English learner of L2 Japanese.

3. **Avoidance** - Avoidance or infrequent use of a target language item because of a perceived problem is a complex phenomenon and it is a challenging task to identify it. It is chiefly governed by two factors, the extent of learner’s knowledge of the L2 and the attitude of learners towards their native and target language cultures (Ellis 1994; 305). Kellerman (1992) identified three types of situations which may lead to avoidance:

   I. When learners are aware of the fact that there is a problem.
   II. When learners find the target too difficult to use although they have an insight present about the target.
   III. When learners know what to say and how to say, but are unwilling to say it will result in defying their own behaviour norms (Ellis 1994;305)

Schachter (1974) studied the pattern of avoidance in relative clause production in five languages (Schachter 1974; 209). He found that Chinese and Japanese learners of L2 English made fewer errors than Persian or Arabic learners, while using relative clauses. The reason he gave was that unlike English, which is right-branching (head initial), Chinese and Japanese are primarily left branching (head final). According to
Schachter, this factor led Chinese and Japanese learners of L2 English to avoid using relative clauses.

4. **Over-use or over indulgence** – Over-use or over indulgence often results from overgeneralization, e.g. learners may demonstrate a preference for words which can be generalised to a large number of contexts. (Levenston, 1979) as cited in (Ellis, 1994:305). Over-use is often a by product of some other manifestations of transfer, like avoidance or underproduction. In order to avoid ‘a difficult’ structure a learner may employ an ‘easier’ substitute more often.

2.6 FACTORS AFFECTING TRANSFER

Multiple factors affect the load and rate of transfer. An important factor being, where the transfer is taking place. For e.g. in classroom settings, due to ample amount of opportunities for input and interaction, the chances of transfer will be more than outside the class. Another factor which has been found to affect transfer is proficiency in language. Most believe that transfer has an inversely proportional relationship with proficiency i.e. more proficient, less the chance. Also it depends on the learner itself. Learners who are meaning oriented and have a positive attitude to L2 are less prone to transfer as compared to learners with a negative attitude. Perceived language distance is also an important factor, closer the language, more likelihood of transfer (Benson, 2002).

There have been some theories regarding the effect of learner’s age on transfer. Adults seem to be more susceptible to transfer than children. This may be because children are sometimes not conscious of using different languages, whereas an adult learner will always be concerned about his/her mother tongue and will relate to his/her identity. But still any inference on the relation between these two aspects is far from clear. According to Villanueva (1992) ‘adults tend to learn both the syntactic and morphological subsystems faster than children, whereas children are faster at mastering the phonological subsystems. (Cortes, 2005)

As already discussed behaviourist views and in the same vein Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis over predicts both the transferability and transfer load of specific items. In response to that, researchers have been consistently trying to identify factors that specifically promote and inhibit transfer. Unanimously this is accepted that transfer
limiting factors are more important than transfer promoting ones. According to Ellis (1994), there are six crucial factors which put constant traction on transfer, somewhat in a restraining way. These are 1) Level of language transfer, 2) Sociolinguistic factors, 3) Markedness, 4) Prototypicality, 5) Language distance and Psychotypology, and 6) Developmental factors (which includes ‘learner’s general level of development’ and ‘natural principles of language acquisition’).

2.7 TRANSFER AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

There is a clear mandate as to the presence of transfer in a learner’s language but it is also seen that it manifests itself at different levels of language to different extents and also differently in different settings.

Transfer is most commonly present at the phonological level; this is almost a routine experience by most of us. When a British learner speaks Hindi, his L1 is British English and L2 is Hindi. The foreign accent is so prominent that when he says ‘darwaza band karo’ it sounds like ‘there was a brown crow’. This was experimentally attested by Purcell and Suter (1980) when they demonstrated this phenomenon in L2 learners of English with different L1s. They established that “the L1 of learners serves as best predictor of native speaker’s evaluations of their speech”. (Ellis 1994;316).

Similarly, transfer is also prevalent at lexical level. As Kellerman said ‘there are enormous quantities of evidence for the influence of the IL (interlanguage) when it comes to lexis’ (Kellerman 1987; 42) (as cited in Ellis1994; 316). Ringbom also supported this notion in his study on Swedish and Finnish learners of L2 English. At the level of discourse and pragmatics also, sufficient evidence exists to support that transfer has a major role in Second Language Acquisition. Discourse transfer has been proved by Schachter and Rutherford (1979) in their study on Chinese and Japanese learners of L2 English. They also suggested transfer at the level of pragmatics. Where Rutherford garnered criticism was his suggestion that discourse and pragmatic transfer are more prevalent than syntactical transfer. His claims that transfer at levels of syntax is less common when compared to other levels of language is challenged by Odlin (1990) on the basis of metalingual awareness. He said that as learners are more aware of their grammatical properties than of phonological or discourse/pragmatic properties, this may motivate their choice of linguistic form which in turn may inhibit transfer. Still this discussion is open to criticism.
Odlin (1989, 1990) suggested that the extent of transfer varies depending on the context of discussion which can be either focussed or unfocussed. Odlin suggested that ‘negative transfer is less common in classroom settings than in natural settings’ (Ellis, 1994; 317). Reason being classroom constitutes a ‘focussed community’ where L1 forms are taken as intrusion. But a diametrically opposite observation was made by Tarone (1982) when she argued that ‘L1 in transfer likely to be more evident in learner’s careful style than in their vernacular style’ (Ellis 1994; 318). But this contradiction is more apparent than real. This is because Odlin based his observation on macro-sociolinguistic perspective whereas Tarone reached her conclusion on the basis of a micro-sociolinguistic perspective. Clearly more work is needed for clarification on this contradiction.

Recent research claims that ‘transferability of different features depends on their degree of markedness’ (Ellis 1994; 319). The term markedness has been defined in different ways, but all the definitions have the basic idea that “some linguistic features are special in relation to others, which are more basic” (Ellis 1994; 319). The ‘special’ are marked whereas the ‘basic’ are unmarked. A beautiful example is given below to illustrate this idea of markedness by Battistella (1990;3). Consider these sentences:

1. a)  How old are you?
    b)  How young are you?
2. a)  How tall are you?
    b)  How short are you?

Sentences (a) imply nothing specific about the age or height of the addressee whereas (b) imply that the addressee is in fact young or short. It is now very easy to predict that ‘young’ and ‘short’ are marked forms of ‘old’ and ‘tall’ respectively.

Different researchers hold different opinions regarding the effect of markedness on transfer. Whereas Zobl (1984) suggested that “learners do resist transferring marked forms when the corresponding TL structure is unmarked but this resistance can be overcome if learners obtain evidence that transfer is possible” (cited in Ellis 1994;321), This idea was challenged by Liceras (1985). White(1987) also argues that “transfer is not confined to unmarked forms, that L2 learners may transfer marked forms from the L1 to the interlanguage, and that such transfer is compatible with the
theory of markedness currently invoked in *generative grammar*” (White 1987b:266-7, as cited in Ellis 1994:321). Studies of Ekman on asymmetric patterns (1977) are also groundbreaking in providing evidence regarding the influence of markedness on transfer. In order to rationally explain how markedness affects transfer, he gave Markedness Differential Hypothesis, which is considered by many as Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis equivalent of markedness.

Prototypicality was coined by Kellerman (1986) as term analogous to ‘markedness’. He demonstrated that what learners actually transfer depends on how they perceive their own language. This native speaker’s *perception* has been referred ‘psycholinguistic markedness’. Most of the work on prototypicality comes from ‘breken’ study (Kellerman 1978) and later ‘eye’ study (Kellerman 1986), which were mainly performed at lexico-semantic level.

Kellerman (1977) also gave the term ‘psychotypology’ referring to ‘learner’s perception about language distance’. He proposed that it is actually the perceived language distance and not the actual language distance which affects transfer. Although Corder (1978b; 1981a: 101) was of the opinion that language distance is a factor in positive transfer, it is likely that both positive and negative transfer are affected by it. This has been experimentally demonstrated by Sjoholem (1979) and Ringbom (1976:1978:1987).

‘Prototypicality’ should not be confused with ‘psychotypology’. Unlike psychotypology, prototypicality does not change with developing proficiency. Depending on their judgement of language distance i.e. ‘psychotypology’, learners decide whether transfer is feasible or not and whether they should attempt to transfer those items, which they consider transferable or prototypical.

### 2.8 CONCLUSION

Corder (1981) was the first to discuss the identification of transfer and observed that both language teachers as well as the native speakers of the language have a role in identifying transfer according to the rules. A common way to identify transfer in second language acquisition research is somewhat like an informal estimation method (Kasper, 1992). The process of recognizing transfer follows three steps:

1) First, it can be identified from the productive interlanguage data of the learners.
Chapter 2

2) On the basis of the definition of transfer, attention is paid to the various means that learners engage or make use of while expressing and comprehending a speech act in the target language.

3) And lastly, we will recognize the features of transfer from the collected data.

(Liu, 2010: 3)

Language transfer is not restricted exclusively in the L1 $\rightarrow$ L2 direction. Some linguistic features are transferred forward and some backward. For e.g. language functions are transferred backwards (Kasper, 1996). Researchers have found that bidirectional language transfer is seldom an uncommon entity, as supported by the work of Manczak-Wohlfeld (2006) on Polish speakers.

Language transfer also occurs on sociolinguistic level (Dulay, Burt and Krashen 1982) as well as on the psycholinguistic level. L1 transfer is not restricted to linguistic phenomena only. It includes pragmalinguistics too (Littlewood, 2001). The phenomenon of transfer is not confined to lexical level only. It is also found at the level of pragmatics, phonetics, phonology, semantics, grammatical and although stating this generates a lot of debate, but cross-linguistic influence applies also to discourse features.

Transfer can occur both at a conscious level, as a deliberate communication strategy and also at an unconscious level. Transfer is at times apparent and sometimes not-researchers have referred to the ‘now you see it, now you don’t’ nature of language transfer. (Kellerman, 1983) as cited in (Ellis, 1994:300).

The ‘why of transfer’ poses an interesting question and some logical explanation has been attempted. Conscious and deliberate transfer may generate from the fear of the learner that if he/she learns L2 too well, their identity will be diluted. At the subconscious level, transfer may be the result of a poorly developed grammar of L2 (interlanguage) of the learner as compared to L1. This makes L2 more permeable as compared to L1. ‘What may be transferred’ provides more direct answers. Transfer may occur at all levels, i.e. phonology, syntax, lexis, pragmatics and morphology (this seems least likely to be affected than others). Let us take lexis for example, if the learner incorrectly assumes that an L2 word has same meaning as a similar L1 word, for e.g. suppose a Hindi/English speaker is learning Urdu, he/she knows that ‘Kalam’
means ‘pen’. But when the learner encounters the word ‘Kalaam’ in Urdu, he/she may think that it’s an Urdu equivalent for ‘pen’. Such a phenomenon is known as false cognates (Benson, 2002)

Transfer can be either positive or negative. If there is similarity between mother tongue i.e. L1 and target language i.e. L2 then transfer can facilitate learning. This is positive transfer. Negative transfer implies the negative influences which the knowledge of first language has on the learning process of second language. But all similarity does not lead to positive transfer and likewise negative transfer is not inevitable with dissimilarity (Cortes, 2005). However, the concept of positive, negative and neutral transfer which is often discussed in literature (e.g Selinker, 1969) has to be abandoned (Faerch & Kasper, 1987). Today the general consensus about transfer is that it is a far more complex phenomenon. It neither is the only reason for error nor does it always lead to error (Faerch and Kasper, 1987).

Many researchers today accept that cross-linguistic influences play an important role in L2 learning, on all language levels from phonology to discourse. (Ortega, 2009: 31-54, as cited in Mitchell et.al 2013:16). Of course there are researchers who resist this generalization. A significant work was done by Ringbom (2007). He showed that L1 Swedish speakers learn L2 English briskly in comparison to L1 Finnish speakers. Among other factors the most important factor for this observation, he attributes to the fact that English and Swedish languages are typologically close. (Ringbom, 2007 as cited in Mitchell et.al 2013).

Recently a lot of research is being done which is directed to explain the paradox why sometimes target- native language differences lead to transfer and sometimes not. In addition to various constraining factors which have been already discussed in detail, the identification of factors quantifying transfer and mode of interaction needs further research for suitable answer.