CONTENTS

SYNOPSIS

In the study of second and foreign language acquisition, errors have been investigated to discover the processes learners make use of in learning and using a language. Error analysis has provided valuable information not only for teachers and learners but also for textbook compilers, syllabus designers and researchers. However, relatively few empirical studies have been conducted in investigating the errors made by Chinese learners in writing。 The objective of this thesis is, therefore, to furnish some information in this area for pedagogical concern and further research.

The thesis is composed of two parts: Part 1examines the development of error studies --- from Contrastive Analysis (CA) to Error Analysis (EA), then to the theory of Interlanguage. The strength and weakness of the EA approach, in particular, are evaluated and its pedagogical significance discussed. Part 2 is a detailed report of an empirical study of writing errors conducted by the present writer within the framework of EA but with a corpus-based approach. Errors for analysis were obtained from classroom compositions written by third-year English majors at Xiamen University. Two areas of errors, namely text errors and discourse errors, are examined in the sequence of identification, description and explanation. Deviations from standard norm are counted and categorized, and error causes explored and interpreted. It is discovered that local errors are less prevalent than global errors and that discourse errors and lexical errors represent two striking types of error. Grammatical errors are found unexpectedly frequent. Many errors are caused by the interference of Chinese, but more are the result of the improper application of English rules.

After the statistic analysis and error interpretation, proposals are made in pedagogy to improve the quality of the writing class and the effect of error treatment. The integration of the process approach and the product approach is recommended for teaching writing and specific advice given for dealing with errors of various types.

It is hoped that the present thesis will help language teachers to identify the problems or weak areas of Chinese EFL learners in writing. It is also hoped that such findings and proposals will give some insights to material writers and syllabus designers when planning the course of English Writing.

Key words:

error analysis, contrastive analysis, corpus-based approach, interlanguage, discourse errors, lexical errors, grammatical errors, interlingual errors, intralingual errors, product approach, process approach

Abbreviations:

EA (Error Analysis), CA (Contrastive Analysis), IL (Interlanguage)

SLA (Second Language Acquisition)

ESL/EFL (English as a Second/Foreign Language)

TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language)

L1 (the first language), MT (mother tongue)

L2 (the second language), FL (foreign language), TL (target language)

Part 1. A Survey of Theories on Error Analysis

1. Nature of Errors

Errors are the flawed side of learners' speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation or composition that deviate from some selected norm of mature language performance (Dulay: 1982). Errors can be thought of as any aspect of a speaker's linguistic or communicative behavior that differs in any way from the received norm of the language community in which the user is performing

1.1. Errors made by native & non-native speakers

One of the main characteristics of modern linguistics is to be *descriptive,* i.e. to describe the actual use of language. Traditional grammar is criticized as being *prescriptive*, since it is concerned with prescribing the correct usage. Modern linguists have no doubt been right in criticizing prescriptivism, since judgments are often vaguely based on such general notions as "logic" or "beauty", or, worse still, are made with reference to the rules of another language (usually Latin) or earlier stages of the same language. But some linguists went too far in the other direction and even denied the existence of errors.

> "There is no such thing as good or bad (or correct and incorrect, grammatical and ungrammatical, right and wrong) in language."(Hall: 1950:6)

The advent of transformational-generative grammar has brought about a break with this view. Firstly, it was recognized that a distinction should be made between competence and performance. The knowledge and use of language performance were based on competence but was also related to non-linguistic factors, e.g. memory, the speaker's psychological state, etc. These factors might lead to mistakes of different kinds. A distinction must be drawn between grammatical and ungrammatical utterances. Such a distinction corresponds to the intuition of the native speaker. Secondly, there may be different degrees of grammaticality. Such differences are also felt intuitively by the native speakers. In certain areas of the language the rules may not be quite established. This is reflected in the speaker's uncertainty about the grammaticality of certain utterances. In other cases (e.g. when a speaker breaks the rules of a language to achieve a stylistic effect) sentences are felt to be deviant and should also be shown as deviant in the linguist's account of the language.

Like native speakers, foreign language learners produce ungrammatical and semi-grammatical utterances as well. Most of the errors made by foreign speakers result from incomplete or approximate competence in the foreign language (see Interlanguage).

Generally speaking, foreign language learners experience two learning phases: the phase of co-existence of correct and erroneous forms; and the phase in which the erroneous forms are corrected or automatically disappear. No learners can jump into the second phase without experiencing the first one. Errors are a concomitant of the learning process and are, therefore, inevitable (Ellis, 1994).

1.2. Significance of errors and error studies

Language teachers who have waged long and patient battles against their students' language errors have come to realize that making errors is an inevitable part of learning. People cannot learn language without first systematically committing errors. Corder (1967) noted that errors could be significant in three ways: (1) they provide the teacher with information about how much the learner has learnt; (2) they provide the researcher with evidence of how language is learnt; and (3) they serves as devices by which the learner discovers the rules of the target language.

Since errors constitute a significant portion of a learner's language performance, error studies have become a useful technique of investigating and describing learners' language, otherwise called interlanguage. Error studies can throw light on regular processes in the use of language, in much the same way as the study of psychological abnormalities is a key to the normal working of the human mind. They can provide important insights into the processes of second language acquisition and instruction, together with transitional construction, acquisition orders and other performance aspects.

2. Developments of Error Studies

Although the analysis of learner errors had long been a part of language pedagogy (for example, French (1949) provided a comprehensive account of common learner errors), it was not until the 1970s that error analysis (EA) became a recognized part of applied linguistics, a development that owed much to the work of Corder. The study of language errors experienced chronologically three phases: Contrastive Analysis (CA), Error Analysis (EA), and the theory of Interlanguage.

2.1. Contrastive Analysis (CA)

Contrastive Analysis refers to the comparison of the linguistic systems of two languages, such as the sound system or the grammatical system. It was developed and practiced in the 1950s and 1960s, as an application of Structural Linguistics.

Contrastive Analysis grew out of the belief, inspired by behaviorist theories of learning that errors were a system of failure to learn. If the sources of this failure could be identified, then steps could be taken to remedy the situation. In Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the prime area of learner difficulty was identified as the influence of the learner's native language (NL) or first language (L1).

According to Lado (1957:2)

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture – both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives.

Based on such belief, Charles Fries, one of the leading applied linguists of the day, stated (1945:9):The 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"

Such observations have inspired a number of contrastive analyses. During the

decades from the 1950s to the 1960s researchers conducted many contrastive analyses, systematically comparing two languages. They were motivated by the prospect of being able to identify points of similarity and difference between a particular native language (NL) and the target language (TL), believing that a more effective pedagogy would result when these were taken into consideration.

2.1.1. The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)

The conviction that linguistic differences could be used to predict learning difficulty has given rise to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH). Lado (1957) claimed that the teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real problems are and can provide for teaching them. He explained that "those elements that are similar to his (learner's) native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult" (1957:2). Similarly, Weinreich (1953:1) asserted: "The greater the difference between two systems, i.e. the more numerous the mutually exclusive forms and patterns in each, the greater is the learning problem and the potential area of interference." In other words, where two languages were similar, positive transfer would occur; where they were different, negative transfer, or interference, would result.

As a result, a Contrastive Analysis would consist of a series of statements about the similarities and differences between two languages. The procedures in CA involve first describing comparable features of MT and TL at the levels of phonology, morphology, and syntax, and then comparing the forms and resultant meanings across the two languages in order to spot the mismatches that would *predictably* (with more than chance probability of being right) give rise to interference and error. It has been maintained that depending on the degree of similarity between MT and TL, up to 30 percent of the errors that learners would be likely or disposed to make can be predicted or explained.

2.1.2. CA in foreign language teaching

There has always been an element of CA in foreign language teaching. During the time when CA was advocated as an effective means of predicting the difficulties in learning a foreign language, the field of language teaching was dominated by the prevailing view of behaviorism. The behaviorists held that language acquisition was a product of habit formation. Such assumption has been given rise to the Audiolingual method. Audiolingualists considered that errors were the result of L1 interference and were to be avoided or corrected if they did occur. It was assumed that learning difficulties arose as a result of proactive inhibition – the inhibition of new habits by previous learning, the learner's L1 interfering with the acquisition of new, FL habits. As a result, errors that appeared in the learner's responses were directly traceable to the L1.

With CA, the goal of language teaching was to develop the foreign language system as a coordinate one, independent of the learner's L1 rather than a compound system, in which the mother tongue accompanied and dominated the attempted

behavior in the L2. To achieve a coordinate system it was necessary to prevent learners from speaking their L1 in class although they might occasionally be allowed to hear it. More important still was the need to prevent L1 interference occurring.

2.1.3. Reaction against CAH

The year 1959 saw the publication of Chomsky's classic review of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*, in which Chomsky seriously challenged the behaviorist view of language acquisition. Moreover, studies of SLA tended to imply that CA might be most predicative at the level of phonology, and at least predicative at the syntactic level. When predictions arising from CA were finally subjected to empirical tests, serious flaws were revealed (Jonhansson, 1975):

A. CA can only predict some of the learning problems. Many learners' errors are due to complexities within the foreign language or are due to general learning strategies, observable both in the first- and the second-language learner and independent of the learner's native language.

B. Predictions of CA are often ambiguous and vary, depending on the linguistic model use in describing the native and the foreign language.

C. The points of difference identified in CA may not cause the same degree of difficulty. Moreover, the difficulties may be different in production and perception. This cannot be predicted by CA.

D. CA assumes that the whole of the systems of the native and the foreign language come into contact. In fact, the learner is only exposed very gradually to the foreign language, and CA has no way of predicting the identifications made by the learner.

E. CA assumes that the learner uses elements that belong to the native language to apply to the foreign language. However, the learner may use elements or constructions that do not belong to either language. Such phenomenon cannot be predicted by CA.

2.2. Error Analysis (EA)

As CAH came to challenged, CA declined in the 1970s, and the assumptions of L1 interference was replaced by other explanations of learning difficulties such as Error Analysis. According to Corder (1981), Error Analysis is a type of bilingual comparison, a comparison between the learner's "interlanguage" and the target language. It is a methodology for describing L2 learners' language systems. Corder (1981) proposed two justifications for the study of learners' errors. The first is pedagogical, which claims that a good understanding of the nature of errors is necessary before a systematic means of eradicating them can be found. The second is theoretical, which claims that a study of learners' errors is part of the systematic study of the learners' language that is itself necessary to an understanding of the process of second language acquisition.

So, EA aims to: 1) find out how well the learner knows the second language; 2) find out how the learner learns the second language; 3) obtain information on common difficulties in second language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the

preparation of teaching materials; and 4) provide data from which inferences about the nature of the second language learning process can be made (Le, 1999).

2.2.1. EA vs. CA

Whereas CA looked at only the learner's native language and the target language, EA provided a methodology for investigating learner language. The novelty of EA, as in contrast with CA, was that the mother tongue was not supposed to play a role in foreign language acquisition. Errors could be fully described in terms of the TL without the need to refer to the L1 of the learners. For this reason EA constitutes an appropriate starting point for the study of learner language and L2 acquisition.

Error Analysis is an activity that is at once ancient and new. It is ancient in that since ancient times this technique has been used by teachers, but in an informal and intuitive way. It is new because as a scientific technique based on psycholinguistics it was developed in the late sixties. Until then for two decades, the prevailing technique used in the study of errors of L2 learners had been contrastive analysis, which ascribes most errors to interference of the first language. But empirical evidence has shown that interlingual errors only constitute a small proportion of L2 learners' errors, and that among other factors, the intralingual effects of learning play an important role. Contrastive analysis that aimed to predict errors resulting from L1 interference failed to account for other types of errors. Rather than reflecting the learner's inability to separate two languages, many errors reflect the learner's competence at a particular stage and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition. Errors of this nature are frequent, regardless of the learner's language background. Their origins are found within the structure of English itself and through reference to the strategy by which a SL is acquired and taught (Richards, 1978).

Error Analysis is distinguished from Contrastive Analysis by its examination of errors attributable to all possible sources, not just those that result from the interference of the first language. Therefore, although EA and CA are not mutually exclusive, the former can easily supersede the latter.

2.2.2. Basic assumptions

According to Brown (1987:169-171), EA is based on the following assumptions:

A. Human learning is fundamentally a process involving making errors, which forms an important aspect of learning any skill or acquiring any knowledge.

B. Language learning is like any other human learning. In the course of learning a second language, learners will produce utterances that are ungrammatical or otherwise ill-formed, when judged by the generally accepted rules of the language they are learning. This is obvious not only to teachers of languages but also to any native speaker of the target language who comes in contact with them. That is to say L2 learning, like L1 acquisition, is trial-and-error in nature. Hence errors are unavoidable.

C. Errors made by L2 learners can be observed, analyzed, classified, and described.

D. In errors made by L2 learners lie some of the keys to the understanding of

the process of second language learning.

Corder (1981) claimed that learner errors provide the researchers with evidence of how the target language is learned or acquired and what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Brown (1987:169) argued that "the study of the speech of learners is largely the study of the errors of learners", because "correct items yield little information about the interlanguage of the learner".

EA is important and valuable because the study of errors will furnish researchers or language teachers with a keen insight into the nature of foreign language acquisition, which will consequently improve language teaching and learning.

2.2.3. Analytical procedures

According to Corder (1974), EA research includes the following steps:

1. Collection of a sample of learner language;
2. Identification of learner errors;
3. Description of learner errors;
4. Explanation of learner errors;
5. Evaluation of learner errors.

However, many studies (e.g., Politzer &Ramirez, 1973; Wyatt, 1973; Scott, 1974) do not include step 5 and, in fact, the evaluation of learner errors is generally handled as a separate issue, with its own methods of enquiring.

2.2.3.1. Collection of a sample of learner language

The starting point in EA is deciding what sample of learner language to use for analysis and how to collect the sample.

There are three types of sample for EA. The first type is the massive sample, which involves collecting several samples of language use from a large number of learners in order to compile a comprehensive list of errors, representative of the entire population. The second type is the specific sample consisting of one sample of language use collected from a limited number of learners. The third type is the incidental sample, which involves only one sample of language use produced by a single learner.

The errors that learners make can be influenced by a variety of factors. Table 1.1 lists some of the factors that need to be considered. This table is not complete; the factors that bring about variation in learner output are numerous, perhaps infinite.

Decisions also need to be made regarding the manner in which the samples are to be collected. An important distinction is whether the learner language reflects natural, spontaneous language use, or is elicited in same way. Natural samples are generally preferred. A drawback, however, is that learners often do not produce much spontaneous data, which led Corder (1973) to argue for the elicited data. Corder identified two kinds of elicitation: A) clinical elicitation, which involves getting the informant to produce data of any sort, for example, by means of a general interview or by asking learner to write a composition; B) experimental methods, which involve the use of special instruments designed to elicit data containing the linguistic features that the researcher wishes to investigate.

Another issue to consider is whether the samples of leaner language are collected cross-sectionally (i.e. at a single point in time) or longitudinally (i.e. at successive points over a period of time).

Table 1.1. Factors to consider when collecting samples of learner language

Factors	Description
A. Language	
Medium	Learner production can be oral or written
Genre	Learner production may take the form of a conversation, a lecture, an essay, a letter, etc.
Content	The topic the learner is communicating about
B. Learner	
Level	Elementary, intermediate, or advanced
Mother tongue	The learner's first language
Language learning experience	This may be classroom or naturalistic or a mixture of the two.

(From *The Study of SLA* by Rod Ellis, 1999:49. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.)

2.2.3.2. Identification of Errors

In order to identify errors, a norm or standard should first be established. According to Dulay et al (1982), the term "error" is used to refer to any deviation from a selected norm of language performance, no matter what the characteristics or causes of the deviation might be. Errors are not always easy to identify because the norm that is used to identify errors is dependent, among other things, on the medium (spoken or written), the social context (formal or informal), and the relation between speaker and hearer (symmetrical or asymmetrical). Therefore, Corder (1981) claimed that "recognition of errors is thus crucially dependent upon correct interpretation of the learner's intentions".

In identifying errors, it is necessary to draw a distinction between those errors that are the products of chance circumstances, such as slips of the tongue or of the pen, and those that reveal learners' underlying knowledge of the target language. The former are errors of performance or mistakes, whereas the latter are errors of competence or errors. It is the latter, which is errors of competence, or systematic errors, that are worth studying and analyzing because they reveal learners' knowledge of the target language or their transitional competence. Mistakes are of no significance to the knowledge of the process of language learning because they are random and non-systematic. However, errors of competence cannot be directly observed, and can only be inferred from errors of performance. Corder (1977) provided a model, by which errors can be identified through the following three steps:

A. Identifying overt and covert errors

Analyze any utterance or sentence of the learner. If it is superficially well-formed, and makes sense in the context, it is both correct and appropriate and contains no errors. If it is superficially ill-formed, it is ungrammatical, and

contains overt errors, If it is superficially well-formed but does not match intentions, it is unacceptable or inappropriate, and contains covert errors.

B. Providing interpretations and constructing well-formed sentences in the target language

If a sentence contains overt or covert errors, the next step is to see whether a plausible interpretation can be put on the sentence in the context. If a plausible interpretation is possible, then reconstruct a well-formed sentence in the target language. If no plausible interpretation can be worked out, and the learner's mother tongue is known, then translate the sentence literally into his mother tongue and see if a plausible interpretation is possible in the context. If such is the case, then translate the sentence back into the target language in a well-formed sentence. If the mother tongue is not known or if no plausible interpretation of the reconstructed sentence is possible, then hold it in store.

C. Providing pairs of ill-formed or inappropriate sentences and reconstructed well-formed sentences in the target language for comparison

Put the learner's ill-formed or inappropriate sentences and the well-formed sentences reconstructed by the researcher or the teacher in sets of pairs for comparison and analysis.

2.2.3.3. Description of errors

The successful completion of the previous step provides sets of pairs of sentences with the same meaning for comparison or description. To put it in a simple way, to describe errors is to consider how errors can be categorized. Errors can be described in three dimensions:

A. According to the stages in which errors are made: Corder (1977) identifies three stages: presystematic, systematic and postsystematic. At the presystematic stage, the leaner is unaware of the existence of a particular rule in the target language and his use of the target language is through random guessing. He is neither able to correct his errors nor to explain them. At the systematic stage, the learner has discovered some rules of the system of the target language, but is inconsistent in applying these rules or has wrongly applied these rules. He usually cannot correct his errors although he can explain why he made them. At the postsystematic stage, the learner is quite consistent in his use of the target language. When he makes an error, he can both correct it and explain why it is incorrect. Though errors still exist at this stage, the occurrence of errors becomes infrequent.

B. According to the levels of language: This is what Dulay et al. (1982) called linguistic category taxonomies, which classify errors according to either the language component or the particular linguistic constituent the error affects. Language components include phonology (pronunciation), syntax and morphology (grammar), semantic and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary), and discourse (style). Constituents include the elements that comprise each language component. For example, within syntax one may ask whether error is in the main or subordinate clause; and within a clause, which constituent is affected, e.g. the noun phrase, the auxiliary, the verb phrase, the proposition, the adverb, the adjectives, and so forth.

This type of descriptive taxonomy is closely associated with a traditional EA undertaken for pedagogic purposes, as the linguistic categories can be chosen to correspond closely to those found in structural syllabuses and language textbook. This framework is certainly useful, and can handle the errors of relatively advanced learners. However, a problem with the scheme is that while we have a reasonably well-understood set of units on the level of grammar, what the corresponding units are on the levels of phonology, lexis and text /discourse is not so clear.

C. <u>According to the general nature of errors</u>: This is what Dulay et al. (1982) called the surface strategy taxonomy, which highlights the ways surface structures are altered: Learners may omit necessary items or add unnecessary ones; they may misform items or misorder them. Thus, four mathematical categories of errors can be described: addition, omission, substitution, and ordering. Dulay et al. claim that such an approach is promising because it provides an indication of the cognitive processes that underlie the learner's reconstruction of the L2. However, Ellis (1999:58) argues that this claim is doubtful because it presupposes that learners operate on the surface structures of the target language rather than create their own, unique structures. If a surface strategy taxonomy dose not represent mental processes, it is not clear what value it has.

Thus, every error can e classified in the above three dimensions. For example, an error may be a presystematic lexical error of substitution, or it may be a systematic grammatical error of addition.

2.2.3.4. Explanation of errors

To some researchers, this is the ultimate goal of error analysis. The key of explanation lies in determining the sources of errors, that is, why are these errors made and what underlies these errors? This step is the most important for SLA research as it involves an attempt to establish the processes responsible for L2 acquisition.

Just like the various types of error description, the sources or causes of errors are also of different types. Richards (1971b) distinguishes three kinds: interference errors, intralingual errors and developmental errors. However, because of the 'curiousness' in the distinction between intralingual and developmental errors, most researchers have operated with a general distinction between transfer errors (interference errors) and intralingual errors (intralingual errors and developmental errors). It is difficult to distinguish transfer and intralingual errors, even more difficult to identify their subcategories. In order to overcome the problem of identifying sources, Dulay and Burt (1974b) classified the errors they collected into three broad categories: developmental, interference and unique errors.

In spite of the fact that different categories of error sources are deployed from research to research, there is a general agreement over the following four major categories for explanation errors.

A. Interlingual errors

Interlingual errors refer to L2 errors that reflect native language structure, regardless

of the internal processes or external conditions that spawned them (Dulay and Burt, 1982). Such errors result from the interference of the first language, such as the mechanical application of rules, set phrases or items of the first language to foreign language contexts. This is called interlingual transfer, which explains many errors made at the beginning stage of FL learning.

As Corder (1983) argued, learners may well activate their L1 knowledge in order to produce an interlanguag utterance, or in order to understand incoming messages, without retaining these rules or items in their interlanguage systems. The different roles of transfer in comprehension and production, thus, were distinguished by many researchers (e.g. Færch & Kasper, 1987; Ringbom, 1992).

The different roles of transfer in comprehension and production are based on the distinction between overt and covert transfer (Ringbom, 1987). The main distinction between overt and covert transfer is based on whether or not cross-linguistic similarity to the L1 has been perceived for L2 items. Overt transfer may be transfer of forms, especially lexical items, but also of phonological and morphological forms, grammatical patterns, or even procedures. L1-based procedures may also be used when no similarities are perceived. This is covert transfer, which has a negative effect and means that L1-based procedures are used in the absence of appropriate L2-based procedures, to compensate for gaps of knowledge. In particular, covert transfer, to which formal cross-linguistic similarity is largely irrelevant, lies behind avoidance and the (subconscious) perception of some linguistic, usually grammatical features, as being redundant. Items such as English articles and prepositions are perceived as redundant by many Chinese learners, whose L1 does not have these categories. They are, therefore, frequently omitted, at least in the early stages of learning.

The main difference between transfer in comprehension and transfer in production is that the former constitutes an overt transfer, which occurs when some degree of cross-linguistic similarity has been perceived between L2 input and existing or potential L1-based knowledge. Overt transfer has an overwhelmingly facilitative influence on the process of comprehension: the closer the perceived distance, the more (positive) transfer there is. In production, on the other hand, learners make use of both overt and covert transfer, and the relative strength of positive versus negative transfer is more difficult to assess. Overt transfer may lead to errors in production more easily than in comprehension, in which the linguistic and situational contexts provide considerable help for accurate interpretation.

B. Intralingual errors

Intralingual errors refer to those "reflecting the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply (Richards, 1971). Such errors often occur when the learner attempts to build up hypotheses about the target language on the basis of limited experience. The most typical example of intralingual errors is the application of past tense morpheme "-ed" to irregular verbs in English.

According to James (1998:185), intralingual errors can be further subdivided into seven categories:

(1). <u>False analogy errors,</u> which arise when the learner wrongly assumes that the new item B is like A: the learner knows that *boy* (A) has its plural *boys* and assumes that *child* (B) behaves likewise, so pluralizes to *childs*.

(2). <u>Misanalysis errors,</u> which occur when the learner has formed a hypothesis concerning an L2 item resulting in misanalyzing the TL. For example, "All I want are a room of myself." The error might result from the learner's false assumption that *all* is a plural pronoun.

(3). <u>Incomplete rule application</u>, which involves a failure to fully develop a structure. Some learners, thus, use declarative word order in a question (for example, "You like to sing?") in place of interrogative word order (for example, "Do you like to sing?").

(4). <u>Exploiting redundancy</u>, which involves redundancy reduction and overelaboration. By "redundancy reduction", it refers to the situation where the learner senses redundancy in the TL, such as the form of unnecessary morphology and double signaling, and tries to dispense with some of it to lighten the learning task, e.g., *six year;* I *go* shopping *yesterday.*

By "overelaboration", it refers to the opposite situation where more advanced learners overlaborate the TL and lapse into verbosity and babu. For example, *I informed my girlfriend of the party through the medium of telephone.*

(5). <u>Overlooking cooccurrence restrictions</u>, which involves a failure to fully develop a structure. A typical example of this is *People in America live more quick than we do.* The statement has a double error here: Firstly, *quick* is wrongly assumed to be synonymous with *fast* and to have the same distribution. Secondly, it is wrongly assumed that *quick* can serve as either adjective or adverb, as *fast* can, without suffixing *–ly* to the adverb.

(6). <u>Hypercorrection (monitor overuse),</u> which results from the learners over-monitoring their L2 output, in an attempting to be consistent. For example, *a seventeen years old girl* is the result of the learner's deliberate suppression of a potential L1 transfer for fear of being wrong.

(7). <u>Overgeneralization of system-simplification,</u> which leads to the overindulgence of one member of a set of forms and the underuse of others in the set. For instance, some learners use *that* to the exclusion of *who* in attributive clauses:
The man, that (who) stood under the roof, had stared me for a long time.

C. Communication strategy-based errors
A communication strategy is the conscious employment of a verbal or nonverbal mechanism for communicating an idea when precise linguistic forms are for some reason not readily available to the learner at a point in communication. Four main communication strategies are generally used by L2 learners. The first is avoidance: The learner may avoid certain structures or lexical items which he does not know or cannot think of at the moment. This type of avoidance is manifested in paraphrasing. The second strategy is prefabricated patterns: The learner has memorized certain stock phrases or sentences without knowing the meaning of the components. In the process of memorizing, one or two components may get wrong, which results in

errors. For example, "How much does this cost?" may be memorized as "How much does this costs?" and "Could you tell me where the railway station is?" as "Could you tell me where is the railway station?" The third strategy is appealing to authority: When the learner gets stuck for a particular word or phrase, he may sometimes turn to his interlocutor for help. The forth strategy is language switch: When all other strategies fail, the learner may sometimes switch to his first language, and surprisingly, this strategy may occasionally help bring his message across in certain contexts. From these strategies we can conclude that the gaps that the learner tries to fill in by means of communication strategies are usually his learning difficulties. That is to say, he is uncertain of the correct or appropriate forms in the target language.

D. Induced errors

Some errors are caused by the way in which the language items have been presented or practiced, either in the classroom or in the textbook. For example, the teacher may introduce the verb *worship* "as a general word for *pray*", which the students already know. They also know that *pray* selects the preposition *to*, which they will assume also apply to *worship*. The result is *worshipping to God*. Such error is induced by imprecise teacher definition.

Imprecise teacher explanation can also lead to such errors, for example, the use of "*any*" to mean "*none*" when the students are told that "*any*" has a negative meaning.

Drills performed without consideration for meaning can also result in errors, which can be called exercise-based induced errors. One of such examples is conditionals linked by "if" or 'unless": *I can't afford a new car* combined with *I shall win the lottery* should yield *I can't afford a new car unless I win the lottery*. But this will also yield at times such structures: *unless I can afford a new car I shall win the lottery*. The reason may lie in the fact that the students have been told that *unless* is equivalent to *if ...not*, which will suggest to them the possibility of replacing the negative element in *can't* with *unless*.

E. Compound and ambiguous errors

A compound error is ascribable to more than one cause, which operate either simultaneously or cumulatively. For example, there might be a lexical and a phonological cause in a Chinese learner's utterance "*My watch does not walk (work) well*".

Ambiguous errors are those that could be classified equally well as intralingual or interlingual. For example, in the utterance *I not have a car*, the negative construction reflects the learner's native Chinese and is also characteristic of the speech of children learning English as the first language.

2.2.3.5. Evaluation of errors

The purpose of evaluating errors is to determine exactly which learner errors most impede communication with native speakers (NSs) and /or which errors most irritate NSs. It involves communicative efficiency and error gravity. It is concerned with the attempt to identify which errors most warrant pedagogic attention.

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