# ERROR-ANALYSIS BASED SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING STRATEGIES

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**ÖZET**

Diğer öğrenme süreçlerinde olduğu gibi dil öğreniminde de hatanın kaçınılmaz olduğu bilinir. Dil öğretiminde ve öğreniminde, dilbilimcilerin sağladığı yöntem ve prensiplerin herhangi birini kullanarak öğrenen kişinin yaptığı hataları sistematik bir şekilde açıklama, tanımlama ve belirleme tekniğine hata çalışması(Hata Analizi) denir. İkinci dil öğretmenleri sınıflarında hata analizi tekniğinden yararlanmalıdırlar.Bu yazının amacı hata analizi çalışması yapmak ve hata analizinin ikinci (İngilizce ) dil öğretim programında yaralı olabileceğini göstermektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** hata, yanlış, hata analizi, karşılaştırmalı analiz

**ABSTRACT**

As is known, the language learning, like any other learning process, involves making errors. In language teaching and learning, the study of learner's error (Error Analysis) is a technique for identifying, describing and systematically explaining the errors made by a learner, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics. The second language teachers should make use of this technique of error analysis in the second language classes. The aim of this paper is to study Error Analysis (EA) and to show how it can be useful in a second (an English) language teaching program.

**Keywords:** error, mistake, error analysis, cotrastive analysis

## Introduction

As it is known in 1950s, behaviourist learning theory described language learning as habit formation and explained why the second language (L2) learners made errors.According to BLT old habits hinder or facilitate forming new habits.That is why errors are "unwanted".Since the errors were result of non-learnig rather than wrong learning,there was a danger of errors becoming habits if they were tolerated, so like sin, errors should be avoided.Depending on the behaviourism and structuralism Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) focused on the interference of first L1 on L2 learning.(Brown 1987)

In the early 1970s CA was criticised in terms of empirical, theoretical and practical considerations.Critisims on CA were classified as follows.

"First, there were the doubts concerning the ability of CA to predict errors.These doubts arose when researchers began to examine language – learner language in depth. The second, there were a number of theoretical critisms regarding the feasibility of comparing languages and Methodology of CA. Third, there were reservations about whether CA had any thing to offer language teacher."(Ellis 1985)And lately it is understood that L2 learning is a creative process of constructing a language system.(Brown 1987) In other words, accoding to cognitive approach the making of errors is an inevitable and

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necessary part of languge learning.Because of criticisms and new developments in L2 learnig, the interest in CA declined as the enthusiasm for EA grew.

### A. What is Error Analysis?

"There is an Italian proverb 'Sbagliando simpara'(We can learn through our errors)…making mistakes can indeed be regarded as an essential part of learning."(Norrish 1983). Brown (1987) says that language learning, like any other human learnigt is a process that involves the making mistakes.

In orde to understand the process of L2 learning, the mistakes a person made in the process of constructing a new system of language should be analysed carefully.

Here we can give the definition of EA as a process based on analysis of learners' errors.

The forerunner of EA, Corder (1987) explains the significance of learners' errors in three different ways. "The first to the teacher in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed, and consequently what remains for him to learn. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how langugage 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 indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn." Brown ( (1987) gives the definition of error analysis as follows;"The fact that learners do make errors and these errors can be observed ,analysed and classified to reveal some thing of the system operating within the learner led to a surge of study of learners' errors, called 'error analysis'."

As it is seen in the definitions the aim of this process is to suggest suitable and effective teaching-learnin strategies and remedial measures necessary in the target language. It is a multidimensional process which involves much more than simply analysing errors of learners.EA becomes distinguished from CA in that it examines all possible sources of errors.

### B. Why should error analysis be undertaken?

Corder (1973) says that " the most obvious practical use of the analysis of errors is to the teachers. Errors provide feedback, they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques, and show him what parts of the syllabus, he has been following have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention. As it is seen in the explanation given above, error analysis can be a very useful device of a foreign – language teaching program. Undertaken at the beginning level, error analysis reveal to the teacher "knotty" areas of the language confronting the students. The frequency counts of errors supported by the solutions of CA can be helpful in setting up teaching priorities.

Teaching time and effort can be allocated accordingly for optimal results.

## C. What are the considerations related to the error analysis?
### a. Identification of errors

There are those so-called "errors" or "mistakes" that are more correctly described as lapses. A mistake refers to a performance error, it is a failure to make use of a known system. Everybody makes mistakes in both native and second language situations. Normally native speakers are able to recognise and correct such "lapses" or "mistakes" which are not the result of a deficiency in competence, but the result of imperfection in the process of producing speech(Brown 1987).

Errors are deviances that are due to deficient competence(i-e "knowledge" of the language, wich may or may not be conscious).As they are due to deficient competence they tend to be systematic and not self correctable. Whereas "mistakes" or "lapses" that are due to performance deficiencies and arise from lack of attention, slips of memory, anxiety possibly caused by pressure of time etc.They are not systematic and readily identifiable and self correctable.(Corder 1973).

### b. Description of errors

As we know error analysis is a comparative process. So, in order to describe the errors, in a way, we use a special case of contrastive analysis, and we compare synonymous utterances in the learner's dialect and the target language, in other words we compare "erroneous utterance" and "reconstructed utterance".(Corder 1973)

According to Corder's model (1973) any sentence uttered by the subsequently transcribed can be analysed for idiosyncrasies.A major distinction is made between "overt" and "covert" errors.(Brown 1987) Overtly erroneous utterances are completely ungrammatical at the sentence level. Covertly erroneous utterances are grammatically well-formed at the sentence level, but are not interpretable within the context.

According to Corder's model, in the case of both overt and covert errors, if we can make a plausible interpretation of trhe sentence, then we should make a reconstruction of the sentence in the target language and compare the reconstruction with original idiosyncratic sentence, and then describe the differences.(Brown 1987)

### c. Explanation of errors (Tracing errors to their sources)

In order to arrive at effective remedial measures the analyst must understand fully the mechanism that triggers each type of error.(Şanal 2007). The source of an error could be interlanguage or intralanguage.(Richards 1971)

### 1. Errors caused by negative transfer

If the learner of a foreign language makes some mistakes in the target language by the effect of his mother tongue, that is called as interlanguage errors. For example, any Turkish speaker learning English may say, "Ahmet Fatma ile evlendi." in his mother tongue, and he may transfer his old habit to

the target language.(Altunkaya 1985) The result would be "Ahmet married with Fatma." Which is not acceptable in English.

## 2. Errors caused by the target language

Learners may make mistakes in the target language, since they don't know the target language very well, they have difficulties in using it.For example, they may say "mans" instead of saying "men" as the plural form of "man".In that way the learner overgeneralize the use of plural suffixes.

Richards (19719 focuses on intralanguage/developmental errors and distinguishes four types of developmental errors.

I-Overgeneralization
II-Ignorance of rule restriction
III-Incomplete application of rule
IV-False concepts hypothesised. The problem with this classification is that it's difficult to distinguish between these types.

## D. Can the teachers of English use error analysis in a second language teaching program?

One of the justifications fort he study of learners' errors is that a good understanding of the nature of error is necessary before a systematic means of eradicating them could be found(Corder 1973).Since the errors of performance are known to be unsystematic, but the errors of competence systematic, the teachers of English should be aware of the system of errors.It is not sufficient merely to study learners' errors and to classify them in different groups. Only when the teachers of English know why an error has been produced they can set about correcting in a systematic way.It's generally unacceptable to correct the errors of a foreigner fo r native speakers unless they have been asked to do so by him.But for the teacher, it is one of the most important tasks of him in the language classroom to decide when correction is necessary.

To correct the learners' errors enable them to acquire most expeditiously the correct forms of the target language. The classroom teachers should be careful in that all language practice must focus, in a systematic manner, on those points of language use that present significant learning problems as shown by error analysis.

## E.Can error analysis be undertaken fruitfully by the classroom teacher?

We can say that the teacher of English can carry out error analysis of his learners' English.The result will be highly rewarding;

a. He will be in a much better position to pinpoint those areas of English where his students go wrong for various reasons.

b. He will have a keener insight into the various mechanism that lead errors in his learners' English.For example he will have a better and more systematic understanding of how the learners' native-language system interferes with their learning of English.

c. He will come to know a lot about the learning problems of individual students. All this in formation will equip the teacher much better to devise remedial measures to make his teaching and learners' learning much more rapid and effective. Time spent on error analysis will thus be very fruitfully utilised.

### Conclusion

As a result of interlanguage theory and the study of error analysis, we can say that errors are no longer seen as "unwanted forms", instead errors can be accepted as an indication of some kind of learning activity taking place in thre learner.

I'll conclude this paper with an extract from "language learners and their errors"(Norrish 1983).

"The learner, in a very real sense, must create his language for himself. The teacher cannot learn it for him.As von Humboldt put it, as long as 1836 (the idea is not a new one!)language cannot actually be taught it may appear at first sight that it can.It can only be aroused in the mind and be given the thread with which to develop itself."

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