

## Lecture 03: Approaches in Applied Linguistics 2

### 1. Error Analysis

- “During the fifties and the sixties, CA enjoyed respectability and enthusiasm. At the end of the 1960s, researchers began to realize that not all errors in L2 learning could be explained on the basis of linguistic differences between L1 and L2.”
- “CA was seen to concentrate on the L2 teacher rather than on the L2 learner. This led to a shift from teaching to learning and a concentration on error (i.e. inappropriate form) that learners regularly produce in the process of learning an L2.”
- “EA is a technique which aims to describe and explain the systematic nature of deviations or errors generated in the learner’s language”
- “Error analysis showed that contrastive analysis was unable to predict a great majority of errors, although its more valuable aspects have been incorporated into the study of language transfer. A key finding of error analysis has been that many learner errors are produced by learners making faulty inferences about the rules of the new language.”
- “EA plays a role in understanding the processes that underlie L2 learning. It figures out statistically the troublesome linguistic areas of errors that L2 learners encounter in learning. The study of errors provide valuable feedback to both teachers and learners regarding learner’s strategies and progress.”

#### Errors Vs Mistakes

“Brown (1993: 205) differentiates between mistakes and errors. A mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or slip in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. All people make mistakes, in both native and second language situations. Native speakers are normally capable of recognizing and correcting such mistakes, which are not the result of a deficiency in competence but the result of some sort of breakdown in the process of production. Corder in Larsen (1992) claims that a mistake is a random performance slip caused by fatigue, excitement, etc. and therefore can be readily self-corrected.

“An error is a noticeable deviation, reflecting the competence of the learner. It is a systematic deviation made by the learner who has not yet mastered the rules of the target language. The learner cannot self-correct an error because it is a product reflective of his or her current stage of L2 development, or underlying competence (Larsen, 1992: 59). Error analysis is the study of the kind and quantity of error that occurs, particularly in the fields of applied linguistics. These errors can be divided into three sub-categories: overgeneralization, incomplete rule application, and the hypothesizing of false concepts, reflected a learner's competence at a certain stage and thereby differed from learner to learner.”

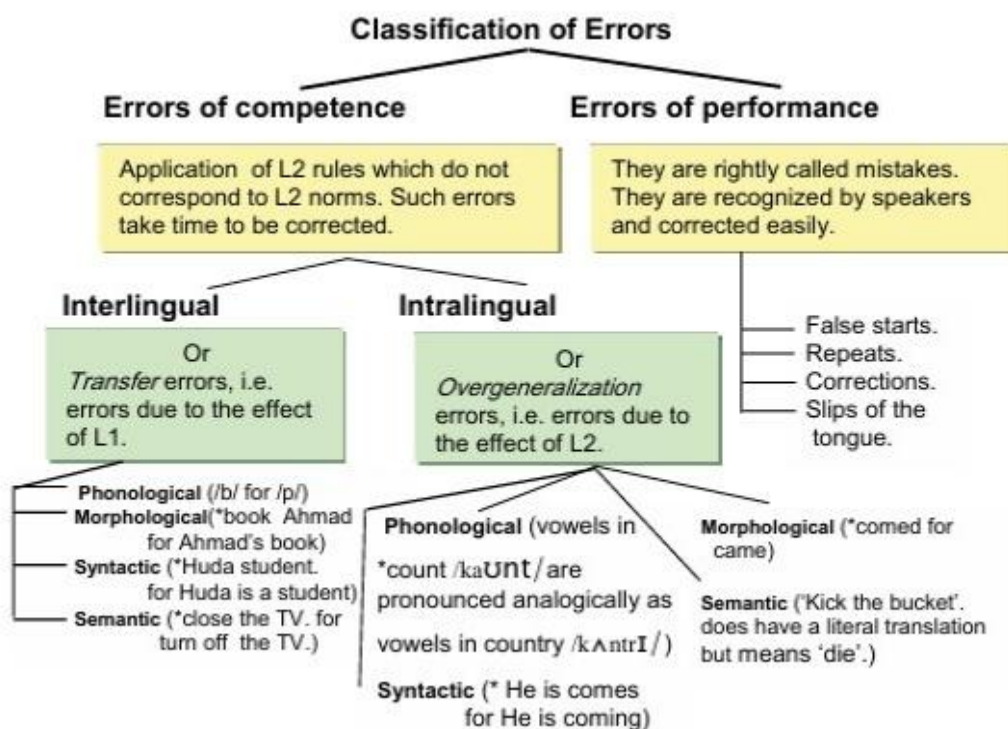
#### Notes

### 2. EA Methodology

EA is undertaken by using the following technique (Sridhar 1980:103):

1. Collection of errors: by using free compositions of learners around a theme or from their answers to examinations in English, or certain designed tests.

2. Identification of errors: by telling what kind of deviation from the L2 norm is and what a language variety (e.g. British or American English) and form (i.e. spoken or written) are.
3. Classification of error types ( see the Figure below)
4. Statement of relative frequency of error types.
5. Identification of the areas of difficulty in the L2.
6. Determination of the source of errors, such as L1 transfer, overgeneralization, inconsistencies in the spelling system of the L2, etc.
7. Determination of the seriousness of the error in terms of communication and the L2 itself.
8. Remedy by the teacher in the classroom by designing special drills, lessons, activities, exercises, etc.



## Notes

### 3. EA Vs CA

- Contrastive analysis starts with a comparison of systems of two languages and predicts only the areas of difficulty or error for the second language learner, whereas error analysis starts with errors in second language learning and studies them in the broader framework of their sources and significance.
- EA unlike CA provides data on actual attested problems and so it forms a more efficient basis for designing pedagogical strategies.
- EA is not confronting with the complex theoretical problems like the problem of equivalence encountered by CA.
- EA provides a feedback value to the linguist, especially the psycho-linguist interested in the process of second language learning in ascertaining. a. Whether the process of acquisition of first language and second language learning are similar or not? b. Whether children and adults learn a second language in a similar manner or not?
- EA provides evidence for a much more complex view of the learning process- one in which the learner is seen as an active participant in the formation of and revision of hypotheses regarding the rules of the target language.
- CA studies Interlingual error (interference) whereas EA studies intralingual errors besides Interlingual.

## 4. EA Criticism

### Classification of errors (Khansir, 2012)

Errors may be wrongly classified between language tasks. The same error may be classified as interlingual and intralingual, e.g. \*he intelligent. This error was often committed by both English children and Arab learners. The error source for Arab learners may be due to the fact that the Arabic language has verbless sentences at the surface structure.

### Progression insights

Stresses only what the learner cannot do at a given point in time. This was discovered by a cross-sectional study, which investigated an aspect at a single point in time for a number of learners with different degrees of proficiency. This means that EA does not provide any insight into the progression of the L2 learning process that can be achieved through longitudinal studies. Such studies are to investigate an aspect over a long period of time.

### Difficulty of error identification

Errors are contrasted with L2 norms and these norms depend on, among other things, spoken or written language, formal or informal contexts, monitored or unmonitored speech, and symmetrical or asymmetrical relations between a researcher and learners.

### Avoidance strategy

Learners simply avoid certain linguistic structures in which they would be likely to commit errors. It is possible that learners utilize such a strategy because of the differences between L2 and L1.

### Further reading

Khansir, A. A. (2012). Error analysis and second language acquisition. *Theory and practice in language studies*, 2(5), 1027-1032. doi:10.4304/tpls.2.5.1027-1032