BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
DERGİSİ

TRENDS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING : CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS, ERROR ANALYSIS, AND INTERLANGUAGE [1]

Sinan Bayraktaroğlu [a]

ABSTRACT

This article presents a survey of some of the most recent trends in the application of linguistics to second language learning and teaching. The theoretical foundations of contrastive analysis, error analysis, and interlanguage are briefly discussed and subjected to critical evaluation. The conclusion is that the findings of contrastive analysis and error analysis cannot be said to offer solutions to all of the structural problems encountered in teaching a second language. When reviewed in broader terms, applied linguistics should be used to focus attention on social functions of language such as language attitudes and communicative competence.

Introduction

The problem of 'difficulty' in second language (SL) learning and the ways to overcome it in teaching, has long attracted the interest of many foreign language teachers, linguists, psycholinguists, and specialists from various disciplines, In one way or another, they have all attempted to predict and find the causes of learning difficulties. These activities are undoubtedly of great importance to all those who are involved in language teaching - language teachers, test writers, and course organizers

---

a   University of Cambridge.
1   This paper was given to summarize the theme of the seminar on 'contrastive linguistics' held at Exeter University, England (5 - 7 August, 1977).

who, in their tasks of planning teaching strategies, evaluating progress and achivement, and developing teaching materials must unquestionably have a certain knowledge of the potential problem areas and of the causes and magnitude of the learning problems.

It is a common experience that languages are difficult to learn. But what it is that constitutes 'difficulty' is still an unsolved problem. Little is known of the learning mechanisms, especially in the realm of SL learning. What actually takes place in the learner's mind is by and large a mystery. Studies of first language acquisition have tempted many scholars to draw a close comparison between the processes of acquiring the mother tongue with those of learning a SL. Corder (1967, p. 164), for example, argues that some of the strategies adopted by the learner of a SL are substantialy the same as those by which a first language is acquired. Cooper (1970, pp. 303-14), on the other hand, makes a stronger claim :

> There seems to be little evidence that the actual language learning processes differ for the child and the adult.

However, some psychologists and linguists such as Stern (1970, p. 64), Jacobvits (1968, pp. 89-109), Ausubel (1964, pp. 420-24), and Dunkel (1948, chs. 2 and 5) hold the view that second-language learning processes are, in many ways, different from those of first language acquisition.

Approaches to the Problem of Difficulty in SL Learning/Teaching :

1. Contrastive Analysis (CA)

Faced with the twofold problem of inadequate knowledge of the learning mechanisms, and being forced to cope with the problem of difficulty in SL learning, many learning/teaching problems. As early as 1945, C. C. Fries (p. 9) pointed out that

> The most effective 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.

The principles of contrastive analysis were laid down in Lado (1957, p. 9) :

> The plan of the book rests on the assumption that we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student.

Similarly, in Valdman's **Trends in Language Teaching** (1966), Banathy, Trager, and Waddle (1966, p. 37) express the same idea :

... the change that has to take place in the language behavior of a foreign language student can be equated with the differences between the structure of the student's native language and culture. The task of the linguist, the cultural anthropologist, and the sociologist is to identify these differences. The task of the writer of a foreign language teaching program is to develop materials which will be based on a statement of these differences; the task of the foreign language teacher is to be aware of these differences and to be prepared to each them; the task of the student is to learn them.

More recently, Nemser points out that (1970)

on the basis of a comparison of the descriptions of the phonologies, grammars and lexicons of the language in question, as formulated in accordance with the contrastivist's preferred model of language structure, contrastive linguistics offer hypotheses concerning identifications a learner will make between elements of his base and target systems, thus providing predictions and explanations concerning his learning behaviour.

It was therefore thought that the prime cause of difficulty and error in learning a second language is interference coming from the learners' native language, and that the difficulties are chiefly, or wholly, due to the differences between the two languages. The greater these differences are, the more acute the learning difficulties will be. The results of a comparison between the two languages are needed to predict the difficulties and errors which will occur in learning the foreign language. Once the difficulties are predicted and identified, they could be diminished by exposing the learner to drills specifically designed to change his linguistic behaviour at the relevant points. To put it another way, what there is to teach can best be found by comparing the two languages and then subtracting what is common to them, so that

what the student has to learn equals the sum of the differences established by the contrastive analysis (Valdman, 1966, p. 31).

2. Criticisms of Contrastive Analysis :

It becomes quite clear that Contrastive Analysis was characterized by a strong emphasis on the predictive value of the comparisons made, and was overwhelmingly accepted as a more sophisticated and reliable method for predicting and explaining learning difficulties. Wardhaugh (1970) in a paper on the contrastive analysis hypothesis observes that a decade ago this approach was still a fairly new and exciting idea apparently holding great promise for teaching and curriculum construction.

Now one is not so sure - and not solely as a result of the Chomskyan revolution in linguistics (Ritchie, 1967).

In recent years, it has faced mounting criticism regarding both its theoretical foundations and its methodological practices (Lee, 1968; Nemser and Slama-Cazacu,

1970; Wardhaugh, 1970). (Many of the objections have been met by C. James, 1971, and recently by Sanders, 1976.) Today, Contrastive Analysis is only one of many uncertain variables which is being re-evaluated in SL teaching.

> The predicting power of Contrastive Analysis is now seriously questioned; it is being confronted with approaches that are directly concerned with pupil performance (Buteau, 1970, p. 134).

Similarly, Lee (1972, p. 138) points out that

> it was a matter chiefly, it seemed, of what errors were likely to occur, as a result of the differences between L1 and L2, rather than of what errors actually did occur.

In a recent article, Nemser (1971, p. 12), a linguist long associated with the studies in Contrastive Analysis, admits that the

> theoretical bases and procedural practices of the field fell far short of the requisite levels both in predicting and explaining the behaviour of language learners.

Criticisms are usually centred around the following points :

(a) Contrastive Analysis can only predict some of the learning problems. While first-language interference constitutes the largest single cause of errors, there are also errors caused by the complexities within the foreign language or by the general learning strategies, or by other interfering factors other than interlingual differences, and therefore not predictable by Contrastive Analysis. [1]

Pit Corder (1967, p. 162), for example, reports that :

> teachers have not always been very impressed by this contribution from the linguist for the reason that their practical experience has usually already shown them where those difficulties lie and they have not feld that the contribution of the linguist has provided them with any significantly new information. They noted, for example, that many of the errors with which they were familiar were not predicted by the linguist anyway.

Moreover, Mackey (1966, p. 201) states that

---

1 Such criticism was met by James (1971, p. 54) as follows : "The most obvious way to an..... ..... criticism is to point out that CA has never claimed that Ll interference is the sole source of error". He goes on by quoting Lado (1964, pp. 21 and 91) that "these differences are the chief source of difficulty in learning a second language", and, "the most important factor determing ease and difficulty in learning the patterns of a foreign language is their similarity to or difference from the patterns of the native language". James (ibid.,, p. 55) concludes that the expressions "'Chief source' and 'most important' imply that Ll interference is not conceived to be the only source".

errors which had been predicted did not occur and some which had not been predicted did occur.[2]

Similarly, Wilkins (1968) suggests that many errors are due to overgeneralization of a pattern, to interference between forms and functions of the language being learned, and to psychological causes such as inadequate learning. By restating Upsur (1962), Wilkins (1968, p. 101) poses the following question :

> Yet is it true that by listing areas of differences between languages we are listing all the linguistic differences that will occur? This is surely an oversimplified view.

He then goes on to say that over-generalization within the L2 will also cause the learner to make errors, and adds that many errors are "not linguistic in origin" but rather psychological and pedagogical.

Lee (1968., p. 187) supports Wilkins by observing that interference will occur not only from the L1, but also from newly absorbed L2 material.

> ... the learner ... will tend to notice and produce, by false analogy, wrong patterns of that language as well as patterns of his own...

Moreover, Duskova (1969, p. 25) lists separately interference errors and false-analogies, and reaches the following conclusion :

> To sum up what has been found about the source of a large group of errors, we may say that while interference from the mother tongue plays a role, it is not the only interfering factor.

(b) The predictions of the learners' errors in SL made by CA are often ambigous, not reliable and vary, depending on the linguistic model used in describing the native and the foreign language.[3]

Baird (1967, p. 132), for example, points out that in some Indian languages there is a dental $[\overset{t}{n}]$ and a retroflex [t], either of which, in terms of Contrastive Analysis,

---

[2] Yarmohammadi (1970) gives an example : As Modern Persian does not permit any initial consonant clusters, the initial double - consonant clusters of English have been rendered in some cases by the addition of a vowel initially before the clusters, in other cases by the addition of a vowel between the two consonants of the clusters in the English pronunciation of the native speakers of Persian. Substitution of Persian /Cu-w/ for English /Cw/, i.e., 'the queen' tends to be rendered as /kuwin/, or Persian /qes-C/ for English /sC/, 'school' rendered as /qeskul/. This diversity of treatment is not possible by Contrastive Anlysis. Yarmohammadi concludes that "systematic comparison of English and Persian phototactics, no matter how detailed the descriptions are, will not result in the above - observed generalisations" (p. 78).

[3] James's (ibid., p. 57) reply to this criticism is as follows : "The most regrettable feature of such criticism is that it imputes to CA claims that have never been made for it : CA has never claimed to be able to predict all errors, nor has it claimed linguistic omniscience about which 'choices' speakers will make. Lado (1968, p. 125) claims no more than ability to predict 'behaviour that is likely to occur with greater than random frequency'.

could be substituted for the English /t/ phoneme. What happens, though, is that the retroflex usually substitutes for /t/, while the dental, with aspiration added, stands in for English /θ/). Therefore, as Baird concludes,

> it is unlikely that a contrastive study of the phonology of Hindi or Urdu and of English would have enabled the teacher to predict this choice with any certainty. Nor would it have enabled him to guess that the Indian dental 't' sound is used with the addition of aspiration as a substitute for the English 'th' sound. A Contrastive study of the phonology of North Indian languages and of English would be unlikely to prepare the expatriate teacher, or the Indian teacher from another region, for a variety of alveolar 't' which is very close to the English sound and often replaces the retroflex 't' in the Lucknow dialect of Urdu.

A similar criticism has been noted by Wilkins (1968, p. 102) that there is an 'unpredictable alternation between two potential substitutions', a case in point being (Lado, 1957) French speakers' tendency to substitute either French /s/, /z/ or /t/, /d/ for English /θ/, /ð/. Similarly, Angus (1937, p. 242) reports that Turkish speakers of English fluctuate between /t/ and /s/ for English /θ/, and /d/ or /z/ for /ð/.

(c) The points of difference identified in Contrastive Analysis may not cause the same degree of difficulty. In other words, the degree of difficulty is not proportional to the degree of difference between the native and the foreign language. Nemser and Slama-Cazacu (1970, p. 105) have pointed out that the highest degree of difficulty seems rather to be found in the case of partial similarities. However, Dushova (1969, p. 29) states that

> what proves to be still more difficult is a category nonexistent in the mother tongue.

Moreover, the difficulties may be different in production and perception, and these cannot be predicted by Contrastive Analysis (Wiik, 1965; Nemser, 1971a; Dushova, 1969, p. 26).

(d) Contrastive Analysis assumes that the whole of the systems of the first and of the foreign language come into contact. In fact, the learner is only exposed very gradually to the foreign language, and Contrastive Analysis has no way of predicting the identifications made by the learner (Nemser and Slama-Cazacu, 1970; Slama-Cazacu, 1971, pp. 188-201).

(e) Contrastive Analysis assumes that the learner uses elements which belong to the native language in the foreign language. However, he may use elements or constructions which do not belong to either language; these cannot be predicted by Contrastive Analysis. These elements and constructions from part of 'transitional competence' (Corder, 1967), 'Approximate Systems' (Nemser, 1971a), or 'Interlanguage' (Selinker, 1972).

3. Types of Contrastive Analysis : The 'weak' and 'strong' Hypothesis

As a result of these criticisms and other problems, the value and the use of Contrastive Analysis for language teaching were re-evaluated. It is now recognised that Contrastive Analysis should be used to explain difficulties which have already been observed rather than to predict such difficulties. Wardhough (1970), for example, makes a clear distinction between the 'strong' and 'weak' hypothesis of Contrastive Analysis. The strong hypothesis states that the difficulties of the learner can be **predicted** by a systematic contrastive analysis and teaching materials can then be devised to meet these difficulties. As Wardhough mentions, this position is untenable at present, for it makes demands that cannot be met on linguistic theory and a non-existent theory of Contrastive Analysis. However, this 'strong' hypothesis has been the approach which had underlined much of the work done in Contrastive Analysis. The 'weak' hypothesis, on the other hand, claims no more than an **explanatory** role for Contrastive Analysis : where difficulties are evident from the errors made by learners, then comparison between the mother tongue and the second language may help to explain them.

In contrast to the demands made by the 'strong' hypothesis, the 'weak' hypothesis

> requires of the linguist only that he uses the best linguistic knowledge available to him in order to account for observed difficulties in second-language learning. It does not require what the strong version requires, the prediction of those difficulties and, conversely, of those learning points which do not create any difficulties at all. The weak version leads to an approach which makes fewer demands of contrastive theory than does the strong version. It starts with the evidence provided by linguistic interference and uses such evidence toward relationships between systems rather than directly between systems (Wardhough, 1970, pp. 14-15).

Although the 'weak' hypothesis of Contrastive Analysis is a more useful tool than the 'strong' hypothesis in accunting for the errors arising only from the interference of the first language (interlingual interference),

> no theory of contrastive analysis, strong or weak, should be expected to account for all errors of language learning (Schumann and Stenson, 1975, p. 2).

As already noted, the sources of linguistic interference are not restricted to the native language of the learner; and there is already much evidence to us that there are also errors which are due to interference within the foreign language itself (interalingual interference), or to psychological causes such as inadequate learning, or to general learning strategies observable both in the first and the second language learner and independent of the learner's native language (Wilkins. 1968; Duskova, 1969).

4. The Aims of Error Analysis (EA)

Faced with the inadequacy of CA in accounting for the learner's errors, and with the continuing problem of difficulty in SL learning without adequate knowledge of the learning mechanism, many researchers next resorted to a new technique called 'error analysis'. It is believed that an analysis of errors that have already occurred may give better and more reliable results since this will lead at least to a greater understanding of the difficulties that learners face, and will perhaps assist in constructing the teaching strategy.

It may seem that there is relatively small difference between the error analysis and the 'weak' form of contrastive analysis.[4] In fact, they both attempt to account for observed errors, and make their departure from the same point : the SL as the student speaks it. The difference, however, is in the approach of accounting for the observed errors. The 'weak' form of contrastive analysis only looks for errors of interference from the student's SL, while error analysis considers all errors in terms of the student's formulation of the SL system as a whole.[5] The two apploaches are not inconsistent, but, rather, focus on different problems within the same approach. CA in its 'weak' form, therefore, is considered just one aspect of the larger area of error analysis. There is thus no case of conflict between the two approaches. Actually, EA is a more general term, incorporating the 'weak' form of CA for the explanation of the interference phenomena. To put it another way, CA is a necessary and explanatory complement to EA. The two types of analysis, therefore, are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. The primary aim of both is to find the source of the errors made by students. This is the overall task of error analysis, within all the more detailed analyses fall (Svartik, 1973; Schuman and Stenson, 1975).

Error analysis covers a wide range of viewpoints as to its goals and its value to the language teaching field. In order to understand its aims clearly, we must, at this point, note that error analysis has two related but distinct functions (Zydatiss, 1974; Strevens, 1969). The one pedagogical and 'applied' in aim, and the other, theoretical, leading to a better understanding of second-language learning processes and strategies.[6]

---

4 As already noted, "the controversy between C/E analysis is in the directionality of analysis : whether one starts from the analysis of the first and second languages, or from the student's observed errors. The conflict only exists where we take CA to mean the 'strong' version, which claims predictive power based on description of the two languages involved (Schuman and Stenson, 1975, p. 3).

5 According to earlier structuralists (Fries, 1945 and Lado, 1957), learning a language meant acquiring a new set of habits. Interference was described as the negative effect of old habits in the acquisition of a new language. According to a view which is shared by most linguists at present, learning a language involves the formation and testing of hypotheses. Interference in a foreign language could then be described as the formation and testing of hypotheses on the basis of the native language (Corder, 1967, p. 168).

6 A terminological distinction has also been proposed by Svartik (1973). He suggests that the term 'error analysis' should be reserved for the study of erroneous utterances produced by groups of learners at some stage of their learning process and 'performance analysis' for the study of learner's language system, or in other words, his whole performance data, in order to discover the psychological processes of second language learning.

The significance of the study of learners' errors, therefore, will be different if the aim of such a study is geared towards the psychology of SL learning, as opposed to pedagogic ends attempting to provide the practising teacher with information and insight of a practical sort in the developing of teaching materials and classroom practices, e.g., corrective or remedial procedures.

6. Theoretical Error Analysis :

If we consider, for example, the notions like 'error', 'deviancy' or 'ill-formedness' from a psycholinguistic point of view, we assume that they are useful evidence of the learner's strategy and of the way he follows when learning a second language. These are no longer considered as "undesirable and avoidable shortcomings in the learner's performance" (Strevens, 1969, p. 6), but as indispensable devices he uses to test his hypotheses about the language he is learning. To quote Oolsson (1972, p. 20), "rather than consider errors as items to be avoided, we may look on them as a necessary ingredient in SL learning. The implication is that the learner progresses while testing and remodelling his hypotheses about the linguistic materials he is handling". But from the pedagogical point of view, our assumption about such notions is that they all represent undesirable and avoidable shortcomings in the learner's performance in the foreign language, and, therefore, we take them as evidence of his failures.

A good formulation of the significance of error analysis is given by Corder (1967, p. 167) as follows :

> A learner's errors... are significant in three different ways. 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 language is learned or acquired, what strategies or precedures 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 to in order to learn. It is a way the learner has of testing his hypothesis about the nature of the language he is learning. The making of errors then is a strategy employed both by children acquiring their mother-tongue and by those learning a second language.

Moreover, the implications of the current views concerning language learning, as in the above statement, include the following assumptions : that the processes of first and second-language acquisition are fundamentally the same and that when the utterances of first and second-language learners differ, as clearly they do, these differences can be accounted for by differences in maturational development, motivation for learning and the circumstances of learning. Within this framework, a second language learner's errors are similar to those of a child acquiring his first language. They are both systematic and as such give evidence of the system to which they belong. Furthermore, Corder distinguishes between errors and mistakes. The latter are the random slips of the tongue, or performance failures made by all speakers. They are

not systematic and are of no significance in language learning (Corder, 1971a). A further development of Corder's theory is that he defines the spontaneous speech of a second language learner as a language having a genuine grammar of its own. He calls this learner language an 'idiosyncratic dialect', which he distinguishes from both a social dialect and an idiolect. Idiosynratic dialects are usually unstable and tend to evolve during the language learning process. This process has also been called the 'transitional competence' of the learner, again by Corder himself; and similarly, it is also referred to as an 'approximate system' by Nemser, by which he means a structurally cohesive linguistic system distinct from both the first language and the second language. It is by definition 'transient' and is gradually restructured in successive stages from initial through advanced learning, and the systematic nature of these systems is proved by "the regularity of patterning of errors in perception and production of a given target language by learners sharing the same mother tongue".

According to Corder's notion of 'transitional competence', terms like 'error', 'deviancy', ill-formedness' or 'ungrammaticality' do not apply to the second language learner, and therefore inappropriate in the description of his utterances. "None are utterances in the target language at any time, but a language of his own, a unique dialect... every utterance of the learner must be regarded as an acceptable utterance in his transitional dialect..." (Corder, 1971b).

7. Interlanguage

Selinker suggests that there is a 'latent psychological structure' in the brain which is activated when one attempts to learn a second language. When such an attempt is made, the utterances which are realized are identical neither to those which would have been produced by a native speaker of the target language, nor to the sentences having the same meaning in the learner's language. Thus a separate linguistic system is hypothesized to account for the actual realized utterances. This system is called 'interlanguage'. The term emphasize the structurally intermediate status of the learner's language system between the first and second languages, while Nemser's term 'approximate system', or Corder's 'transitional competence', emphasize the transitional and dynamic nature of the system. Nemser does, however, allow that stable varieties of 'approximate systems' are found, for example in the speech of migrant workers where the learners have "reached a plateau" in their learning. Similarly, Selinker calls this phenomenon as 'fossilization' by which he means a state of affairs when the learner ceases to elaborate or 'complexify' his approximate system in some respect, however long he is exposed to new teaching.

Selinker (1972) identifies five central processes in second language learning, which determine the nature of a learner's interlanguage.

1. Language transfer, i.e. the interference of the first language with the second language (interlingual interference)

2. Transfer of training, i.e., teaching-induced (incorrect) hypotheses about the target language

3. Learning strategies of the individual learner which leads him to purely idiosyncratic hypotheses about the target language through the material to be learned

4. Strategies of communication which are the result of an identifiable approach by the learner to communication with the native speakers of the target language, and finally

5. The over-generalization of target language rules.

According to Selinker, these five processes force fossilizable material upon the surface structures of the learner's interlanguage. Fossilizations are forms, phonological, morphological, and syntactic, in the speech of a speaker of a second language that do not conform to the target language norms even after years of instruction and exposure to the standard norms.

It can now, at this point, be clearly seen that the static linguistic method of early contrastive analysis has given way to a dynamic learneroriented approach in analysing the problems of difficulty in second language learning. Corder's 'transitional competence' theory, Selinker's concept of 'interlanguage', and Nemser's notion of 'approximate systems' have brought new dimensions to describe the process of second language acquisition, which is much more complex than appears from the contrastive, linguistic description of the two languages, and may also have far-reaching consequences for theories of language learning and teaching.

8. Pedagogical Error Analysis :

The aims of error analysis and the significance of the study of learner's errors given so far has been in its relevance to theoretical aims, i.e., second language acquisition, rather than providing the practising teacher with information and insight of a practical sort in the developing of teaching materials and classroom practices. But common to both 'theoretical' and 'pedagogical' aims is the need for an adequate linguistic explanation of the nature of the errors found in any particular learning situation. We are here concerned with the methodology of **description.** "Until we are able to give a linguistic account of the nature of learners' errors we can neither propose pedagogical measures to deal with them nor infer from them anything about the processes of learning" (Corder, p. 205).

In order to find out the principal learning difficulties of groups of learners[7] for our pedagogical purposes, we need a qualitative linguistic **classification** of errors, and a quantitative statement of the frequency[8] of each type of error. We need

---

[7] The group of learners should be as homogenous as possible. The learners must, for example have studied the foreign language for some period of time. If the aim is to study the errors made by Turkish students in English tests at the end of a one-year course at the university, all other students participating in the same tests will have to be eliminated.

[8] If this is not done, we obviously cannot generalize about the degree of difficulty of a construction from observations of error frequency. Duskova (1969, p. 15) points out that "... lower frequency of an error does not necessarily mean that the point in question is less difficult, but simply that the point itself occurred only in some (not in all) papers".

further some **evaluation** of the gravity of each type of error from a communicative or pedagogical point of view, so that we may assign priorities to the treatment of each problem, and finally we need some **explanation**[9] of the cause of each type of error so that we undertake appropriate remedial measures (Corder, p. 209).

We may look for the causes of error in different areas. It seems useful to start by considering interference from the native language (interlingual interference),[10] since we know by experience that this is an important source of error. We must then ask whether an error can be explained by contrasting the relevant points in the native and the foreign language. Substitution by Turkish learners of English of /θ/ and /ð/ by /t/ and /d/, for example, can be explained as being due to interference from Turkish. If an error cannot be explained by interlingual interference, we have to look elsewhere for an explanation. Errors may occur not only because of differences between the native and the foreign language but because constructions are difficult in the foreign language itself. Moreover, certain errors may be attributable to the general learning process itself. Often an error could be described as being due to interference within the foreign language (intralingual interference, Richards 1971).[11] The incorrect form "**singed** in English (instead of **sang**) could, for example, be explained by interference from the regular pattern of past tense formation.

By contrasting the native and the foreign language and by examining the foreign language itself, we can probably find an explanation of most errors. However, we can never expect to explain all errors. Duskova (196 p. 15) reports that a quarter of the errors collected for her investigation "defied all attempts at classification, being unique in character, nonrecurrent, and not readily traceable to their sources...". These errors (nonce mistakes) "appear to be of small value, since conclusions that can be drawn from them, if any, apply only to one particular learner and unless some system can be discovered in them, they are of little value even in the case of the learner who commits them" (p. 16). Duskova (p. 16) concludes that an "error analysis should be based primarily on recurrent, systematic errors that are made by a number of learners...".

We cannot, however, claim that occurence or non-occurrence of errors and the differences in the frequency of errors are completely determined, since the learner's behaviour is also related to his learning experience. The non-occurrence or low frequency of errors in a certain construction could be due to the fact that this construction has been successfully taught, and not to the fact that it is inherently easy. Conversely, a high frequency of error may result from inadequate teaching materials

---

9 Moulton (1962, p. 101), "To be useful such a study must present its material in terms of a theory which will show German teachers not only **that** students make pronunciation errors, but also as far as possible **why** they make them. Only when the 'why' of the mistakes has been discovered will it be possible to design useful corrective exercises".

10 There is another, less important, form of interlingual interference, viz., interference from another foreign language.

11 These types of error may also be regarded as **developmental** (Slama - Cazacu, 1971, p. 190), since similar processes are regularly observed in child language acquisition studies.

or methods (induced errors) [12] (Stenson, 1975; Richard, 1971; Johannson, 1975). Moreover, the difficulties experienced by different learners may vary in accordance with such factors as age, [13] period of study, stay in the foreign country, etc. In evaluating the data of the error taxonomy it is necessary to take into consideration as many of these factors as possible. Only in this way can we hope to reveal what difficulties are independent of the learning experience and individual characteristics of the learner. At the same time we gain valuable information about the efficiency of different teaching methods and materials and about the relationship between learners' difficulties and age, period of study, stay in the foreign country, etc.

9. Limitations of Pedagogical Error Analysis :

Unfortunately, there is a serious limitation in error analysis as a way to achieve a full explanation of learners' errors, since we never know whether the corpus we use for it is sufficient or not. The corpus may consist of tests or written and oral production in the foreign language. But such tests are usually constructed for other purposes than identifying learners' errors : consequently, one cannot expect them to provide complete coverage of possible errors. [14] The more restricted the object of study is, the larger the corpus has to be. But there are still further problems with the material used in error analysis. The types and frequencies of errors may be related to the type of test used. Dushova (1969, p. 26), for example, suggests that it "might be interesting to study errors made in translation into a foreign language as compared with those made in free utterances".

Finally, before error analysis can achieve its pedagogical role effectively, it must overcome one more serious handicap, which is a lack of objectivity in its procedures of analysis. We are faced with an important question : 'how does one define "error"?'.

It has been customary to determine errors by tests of acceptability or non-acceptability by native speakers. As Lyons (1969, p. 137) points out, "an acceptable utterance is one that has been, or might be, produced by a native speaker in some appropriate context and is or would be accepted by other native speakers as belonging to the language in question". However, the various degrees and kinds of acceptability make it difficult for the error analyst to decide what is right and what is wrong. Certain sentences are grammatical but meaningless, such as the following cited by Lyons

---

[12] Richards (1971, p. 211) points out, for example that error in the use of the progressive form in English could be due to inadequate teaching materials. Johansson (1975, p. 252) notes, "In English tests written by Swedish university students we find a heavy over - representation of the progressive form; it seems reasonable to assume that this can be attributed to inadequate teaching materials (or methods)".

[13] Age is generally considered to be an important factor in language acquisition (Lennenberg, 1967).

[14] Lado (1957, p. 4), objects to error analysis for this reason, "... we get closest to the language problems by a systematic comparison of the native language and the foreign language. The alternative attempt, to find valid problems by statistical treatment of connected material which is not chosen linguistically, does not seem to be productive. It will tend to leave out problems that are important. It will tend to include problems which are not properly language. And it involves elaborate tabulation of large amounts of materials that could be avoided".

(p. 140), who quotes Bertrand Russell : "Quadruplicity drinks procrastination". There are other kinds of unacceptability which have nothing to do with meaningfulness. Many sentences found in fairy tales and science fiction would be unacceptable in everyday English (Lyons, p. 140). Furthermore, to quote Lyons again (p. 140), "it seems clear that utterances can be acceptable or unacceptable in various ways or in various degrees. We might say of a foreigner's English, for example, that it is 'grammatically' acceptable (or correct), but that his 'accent' is faulty and marks him immediately as a non-native speaker of the language". Thus it is not surprising that, in speaking of Error Analysis, Strevens (1969) makes the following comment :

> The identification of errors is essentially subjective. It is possible for two educated native speakers to differ, in a surprisingly large proportion of cases, as to whether items are acceptable or unacceptable ,and hence as to whether they should be counted as errors. Consequently the degree of prescriptiveness of the individual analyst greatly affects the number of errors to be categorized (p. 5).

Therefore, what is acceptable and what is not is far more difficult to test, since so many factors are involved. Prejudice is hard to overcome, and some people may be perfectly willing to understand a Frenchman speaking English, and may even think his accent is charming, whereas a person of different nationality may have a hard time, even though he may, objectively speaking, be just as easy to understand, but people do not even want to try. It is important, nevertheless, that we find out about acceptability and naturalness, as well as intelligibility, so that some people will not be left out, or segregated because of the way they speak and use the language. Of course, the distinction between acceptable and intelligible is not a sharp one, but intelligibility is a very important criterion that is relevant to this question of 'what is an error?'. But again the question arises : intelligibility for whom? Foreign speakers of English very often say they are perfectly intelligible in their own community, but admit that they are not always intelligible to other linguistic communities in their own community, or to native speakers of English, and are even much less intelligible to foreign speakers of English from other parts of the world. Intelligibility to native speakers of the language can be laid down as a criterion, but again the native speakers themselves differ so much in their response. Those familiar with foreign accents of English will always understand much more than others. In spite of these difficulties this matter of intelligibility needs careful investigation, because, if the level of intelligibility is low, the language breaks down as a system of communication and does not serve the purpose intended.

Most often, the speakers of foreign languages can produce grammatically correct sentences and also utterances which are apparently fully intelligible to native speakers, but nevertheless, seriously deviant. If the communicative aspect of language studies questioned whether the norm should not be intelligibility rather than grammatical correctness, in as much as the structure of a language is less significant than its vocabulary in the communication situation. [15] This would apply for some categories of stu-

---

[15] Bearing in mind, for example, that different learners have different needs, then the question of exaggerating the importance of grammatical correctness becomes irrelevant to our teaching purposes

dents, at least. The yardstick of intelligibility, however, must be the reaction of native speakers. In order to obtain such reactions, we should, therefore, design intelligibility test to find out how well native speakers understand the learners' deviant utterances, and on the basis of such results, we should investigate the frequencies and types of errors which hamper intelligibility.

Practical applications of Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis : [1]

It has been shown that error analysis and contrastive analysis are of considerable importance both from a pedagogical and from a theoretical point of view. Concerning their practical or pedagogical applications, they could, as Svartik (1973, p. 13) points cut, improve the language teaching situation in a number of ways by helping us

"(1) to set up a hierarchy of difficulties

(2) to achieve a realistic ranking of teaching priorities at different levels

(3) to objectify principles of grading, preferably in international cooperation

(4) to produce suitable teaching materials

(5) to revise syllabuses in a non ad-hoc manner

(6) to construct tests which are relevant for different purposes and levels

for at least some classes of learners. Feasible approaches in the planning of language courses for special purposes and with a highly controlled linguistic content are discussed by J.L.M. Trim in "Linguistic considerations in Planning Courses and of the preparation of Teaching Materials" (1969, p. 21) : "These ... possibilities raise a far more controversial question - whether it may, under severe conditions of restrictions, be admissible to present features of linguistic organization so incomplete (in extreme cases only a limited lexicon) that the learner cannot produce well - formed sentences at all... So far as I know, no course at present deliberately set out to communicate so restricted a competence. It is always presupposed that correctness or grammaticality is, in principle, inviolable. For some classes of learners that universal assumption might be challenged".

Moreover, the question of acceptability and intelligibility has also been followed up in the testing situation. Of immediate interest to us is the viewpoint of Peter Robinson (1971, p. 261) on oral expression tests : "There are no widely accepted linguistic criteria of grammatical, lexical, and phonetic correction, but there are two eminently practical criteria, which should underlie any evaluation, namely, comprehensibility and acceptability. Does the subjects' error or deviation from the implicit and explicit norms of speech of a community make him difficult to understand? And if not, is that error or deviation acceptable to that community?"

An utterance is acceptable in Chomsky's opinion (1965) if it is "perfectly natural and immediately comprehensible without paper-and-pencil analysis, and in no way bizarre or outlandish". He considers, however, that there are degrees of acceptability as there are degrees of what is grammatical, but the scales do not coincide. To use one of his examples, the sentence "The man who the boy who the students recognized pointed out is a friend of mine" is highly grammatical, but because of its clumsiness, very low in an acceptability ranking pp. 10 - 11). If examinees produce utterances which are deviant, but nevertheless acceptable to native speakers, Robinson's views could entail that the evaluation principles should not be the same as when the students provide deviant utterances which are unacceptable to native speakers.

1 Here we mean the 'weak' form, since we assume that Contrastive analysis is a necessary and explanatory complement to error analysis.

(7) to decompartmentalize language teaching at different levels, in particular the school and university levels."

10. Conclusion

It has often been stated that Error and Contrastive analysis are unnecessary, since they can only reveal what experienced teachers know already. However, not everybody is an experienced teacher, and more importantly, as Johansson (1975, p. 334), says, "The knowledge of an individual teacher can neither be complete nor can it be assumed to be systematically organised and to include explanations of all the difficulties observed. Most teachers of foreign languages probably need the information which can be revealed by Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis".

Finally, we must be careful not to over-estimate the value of Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis. The analysis must not lead to an over-emphasis on points of difficulty at the expense of teaching the foreign language as a complete system of communication. This may result in hypercorrection or overgeneralization (Nickel, 1970, p. 8 and Richards, 1971) and as Richie (1967, p. 129) points out, "a course that concentrates too much on "the main trouble spots' without due attention to the structure of the foreign language as a whole, will leave the learner with a patchwork of unfruitful, partial generalisations".

Finally, I must confess that I have always been puzzled by the insufficiency of the theory of Applied Linguistics. The area of Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis and Interlanguage which has not received the attention it requires in Applied Linguistics today is sociolinguistics. To the best of my knowledge, hardly anything of significance has been attempted in differential comparison at this level. Because of the works of many anthropologists, sociologists, psycholinguists, philosophers and linguists in showing how various languages reflect the experience of mankind differently, it might, at the first sight, be expected that much would have been attempted at this level as in phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis. The need however is great, for even within the European languages where for the most part there is a common cultural substratum. There are great variations in language use. Contrastive linguistics needs to pay attention not just to what we usually think of grammar, but also to the social functions which are embedded in different cultural contexts. Fishman's domains of language use or attitudes, or Gumperz's verbal repertoires of types of interactions, or Hymes' notion of communicative competence or functions of speech can offer further substantial contributions to the theory of Applied Linguistics and Contrastive Analysis.

A comparison between the ethnographic descriptions of certain speech functions like 'agreement and disagreement', 'forms of address', 'presuppositions', etc., in L1 and L2, which are culturally and situationally determined, may first, for example, show us how the social interaction between let us say, an Englishman and a Turk is likely to be affected by misunderstandings, or inappropriate, or unexpected results because of the socio-cultural differences.

Our assumption here, of course, is that speech is an integral part of social behaviour, and that how, what and when to speak is culturally and situationally determined.

Moreover, it follows from this point that for a stranger to communicate appropriately with the members of an unfamiliar society, it is not enough that he learns to formulate messages grammatically or intelligibly. He requires more than a grammer and a lexicon, and needs what Dell Hymes has called an "Ethnography of Speaking", i.e., a specification of what kinds of things to say, in what message forms, to what kinds of people, in what kinds of situations. It is not the very complicated business of finding out, let us say, that the words for 'you' are **tu** and **vous** in French, or **sen** and **siz** in Turkish, and that these have certain morphological and syntactic correlates, but finding out just which social classes and which situations and which roles **tu** and **vous** or **sen** and **siz** are appropriate for. What is needed is a pragmatic or an ethnographic ethnographic description of usage in "forms of address" in terms of intimacy and status, and relating usage to more general aspects of the place of the dimensions in social relations.

I believe that this approach can make certain contributions to general areas of inquiry such as Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and social psychology, and also to the more specialized body of sociolinguistics and the translation theory which is closely tied to the work of serious translators. It seems that the importance of cultural variation in speech functions as a major source of difficulty in translation has not yet been appreciated. The translation process itself, of course, is extremely difficult to analyze and to describe in general terms. I. A. Richards once remarked that it is   "the most complex event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos".

Finally, what I have said so far might seem somewhat ad hoc, but nevertheless have struck me as sociolinguistically important for a better human understanding, which I believe is the ultimate aim of foreign language teaching today.

REFERENCES

1 Alatis, J.E., ed. (1968), **Report of the 19th Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies**, Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics, No. 21. Washington, D.C. : Georgetown University Press.

2 Angus, W. (1937), 'The Turk's Characteristic Difficulties in Learning English Pronunciation', **The Quarterly Journal of Speech**, 23. 238 - 243.

3 Ausubel, D.P. (1964), 'Adults versus Children in Second - Language Learning : Psychological Considerations', **Modern Language Journal**, 48. 420 - 24.

4 Baird, A. (1967), 'Contrastive Studies and the Language Teacher', **ELT** 21. 130 - 5.

5 Banathy, B., E.C. Trager, 'The Use of Contrastive Data in Foreign Language Course and C.D. Waddle, (1966), Development', in Valdman (1966), pp. 35 - 56.

6 Buteau, M.F., (1970), 'Students' Errors and the Learning of French as a Second Language : A Pilot Study', **IRAL** 8.2 133 - 45.

7 Cooper, R.L., (1970), 'What Do We Learn When We Learn a Language', **TESOL Quarterly**, 4. 303 - 14.

8 Corder, S.P., (1967), 'The Significance of Learners' Errors', **IRAL** 5. 161 - 170. (1971a), 'Idiosyncratic dialects and error analysis', **IRAL** 9. 147 - 60. (1971b), 'Describing the language learner's

language', (CILT Reports and Papers, No. 6, 57 - 64). (1975), 'Error Analysis, Interlanguage and Second Language Acquisition', **Language Teaching Abstracts**, VIII, 14.

9   Dunkel, H.B., (1948), **Second Language Learning** (Boston : Ginn).

10 Duskova, L., (1969), 'On Sources of errors in foreign language learning', **IRAL** 7.1 11 - 36.

11 Filipovic, R., ed. (1971), **Zagreb Converence on English Contrastive Projects : Papers and Discussion** (Zagreb : Institute of Linguistics).

12 Fries, C.C., (1945), **Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language** (Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press).

13 Jacobovits, L.A., (1968), 'Implications of Recent Psycholinguistic Developments for the Teaching of a Second Language', **Language Learning**, 18, 89 - 109.

14 James, C. (1971), 'The Exculpation of Contrastive Analysis', in Nickel (1971), pp. 53 - 68.

15 Johansson, S. (1975), 'The Uses of Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis', **ELT** 29. 3 and 4, pp. 246 - 53, 330 - 36.

16 Lado, R. (1957), **Linguistics Across Cultures. Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers.** (Ann Arbor : The University of Michigan Press).

17 Lee, W.R., (1968), 'Thoughts on Contrastive Linguistics in the Context of Language Teaching', in Alatis (1968), pp. 185 - 194. (1972), 'The Contribution of Contrastive Linguistics to the Preparation of Language - Teaching Materials', in Nickel (1972), pp. 137 - 142.

18 Leuneberg, E.H., (1967), **Biological Foundations of Language** (New York, Wiley).

19 Lyons, J .(1969), **Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics**, 2nd ed. (Cambridge : CUP).

20 Mackey, W.F., (1966), 'Applied Linguistics. Its Meaning and Use', **ELT** 20.3.

21 Moulton, W.G. (1962), 'Toward a Classification of Pronunciation Errors', **Modern Language Journal** 46. 101 - 109.

22 Nemser, W. (1970a), 'Recent Trends in Contrastive Linguistics', paper presented at the Second Canadian Symposium on Applied Linguistics, University Of Ottawa, May 31. 1970.

23 Nemser, W. and Slama - Cazacu (1970b), 'A Contribution to Contrastive Linguistics. A Psychological Appraoch. Contact Analysis', **Revue Roumaine de Linguistique** 15. 101 - 128. (1971a), **An Experimental Study of Phonological Interference in the English of Hungarians**, Bloomington, Ind., Indiana University Publications, Uralic and Altaic Series, Vol. 105. (1971b), 'Approximate Systems of Foreign Language Learners', **IRAL** 9. 115 - 23. (1971c), 'Recent Center Activities in Contrastive Linguistics', in Filipovic (1971), p. 12.

24 Nickel, G. (1970), 'Einleitung', **PAKS Arbetisbericht**, No. 6, pp. 1 - 33. ed. (1971), **Papers in Contrastive Linguistics** (Cambridge : CUP) (1972), **Applied Contrastive Linguistics.** (Proceedings of the Third Congress of the International Association of Applied Linguistics, Copenhagen).

25 Olsson, M. (1972), **Intelligiblity. A study of errors and their importance** (The Gume project : Göteborg : Pedagogiska Institutionen Lärarhögskolan).

26 Richards, J. (1971), 'A Non - Contrastive Approach to Error Analysis', **ELT** 25. 204 - 219.

27 Ritchie, W.C., (1967), 'Some Implications of Generative Grammar for the Construction of Courses in English as a Foreign Languages', **Language Learning** 17. 45 - 70, 111 - 32.

28 Robinson, P. (1971), 'Oral Expression Tests : 2', **ELT** 25, 3, pp. 260 - 266.

29 Sanders, C. (1976), 'Recent Developments in Contrastive Analysis and their Relevance to Language Teaching', **IRAL** 14. 1 67 - 81.

30 Schumann, J.H. and N. Stenson, ed. (1975), New Frontiers in Second Language Learning (Newbury House).

31 Selinker, L., (1072), 'Interlanguage', IRAL 10. 209 - 231.

32 Slama - Cazacu, T. (1971), 'Psycholinguistics and Contrastive Studies', in Filipovic (1971), pp. 188-206.

33 Stern, H.H. (1970), 'First and Second Language Acquisition', Perspectives on Second Language Teaching (Toronto : Ontario Institute for studies in Education, p. 64).

34 Steevens, P. (1969), 'Two ways of looking at error analysis'. Paper given at GAL meeting, Stuttgart (1969), Zielsprache Deutsch 1 (1971), 1 - 6.

35 Svartik, J., ed. (1973), Errata : Papers in Error Analysis (Lund : Gleerup).

36 Trim, J.L.M. (1969), 'Linguistic Considerations in Planning Courses and in the Preparation of Teaching Materials', in Languages for Special Purposes, CILT, London, pp. 18 - 24.

37 Upsur, J.A. (1962), 'Language Proficiency Testing and the Contrastive Analysis Dilemma', Language Learning 12.2.

38 Valdman, A., ed. (1966) Trends in Language Teaching (McGraw - Hill).

39 Wardhaugh, R. (1970), 'The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis', in Schuman and Stenson (1975), pp. 11 - 19.

40 Witk, K. (1965), Finnish and English Vowels, Turku.

41 Wilkins, D.A. (1968), 'Review of Valdman (ed.), Trends in Language Teaching', IRAL 6.1.

42 Yarmohammadi, L. (1970), 'A note on Contrastive Analysis', ELT 20.1.

43 Zydatiss, W. (1974), 'A "kiss of life" for the notion of error', IRAL 12.3, 234 - 7.

DİL ÖĞRENİMİ VE UYGULAMALI DİLBİLİMDE YENİ AKIMLAR : KARŞITSAL DİLBİLİM, YANLIŞLAR ANALİZİ VE ARADİL

ÖZET

Bu yazıda dilbilimin ikinci bir dilin öğretimi ve öğrenimine uygulanmasındaki en yeni akımlar gözden geçirilmektedir. Karşıtsal dil analizi, yanlışlar analizi ve aradil yaklaşımlarının kuramsal temellerine kısaca değinilmiş ve bunlar eleştirilerek değerlendirilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, karşıtsal analiz ve yanlışlar analizinin ikinci dil öğretiminde rastlanan yapısal sorunları tümüyle çözümleyemeyeceği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Daha geniş bir açıdan bakıldığında, uygulamalı dilbilimin dilin toplumsal işlevi ve bildirişim yetisi gibi konulara eğilmesinde yarar görülmektedir.