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WHAT DO LEARNERS' ERRORS TELL THE TEACHER OF ENGLISH ?

towards a better understanding of errors and their causes in L2 classroom

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By
Atila Aydın
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Niğde, Turkey

Abstract

Teachers of English as a second or foreign language are faced with the problematic issue of errors. Nevertheless, before adopting a stance towards errors, the teachers ought to probe into the realms of language learning theory, besides the concerns of pedagogy.

Recently, we witness a reaction to overt teaching of grammar, which fails to contribute to the competence of learners which will in turn improve the L2 learner's communicative performance. Notional/functional approaches to L2 teaching also failed to address the question of L2 acquisition. They merely highlighted the teaching of formulaic language.

Interlanguage and hypothesis-testing theory shed light on our understanding of language acquisition. This requires the teacher to revise his views about a pre-determined syllabus.

Interference from Turkish also has a part to play but the L2 teacher should not be pre-occupied with contrastive analysis. Error analysis can partly help him to adopt strategies to eliminate errors. He should also be concerned with the value of input and interaction. Hence the necessity for additional materials. The schema theory needs to be taken seriously as well.

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Atila Aydın

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The primary aim of this dissertation is to help the second or the foreign language (henceforth L2) teachers to gain an insight into the very problematic issue of errors and their causes. We attempt to probe into the question of possible causes of errors within the framework of L2 acquisition process. Besides this, we also deal with corrective teacher feedback although it is not our main concern. Traditional teaching methods, being interventionist in nature, have have always imposed some external criteria on learners. Behaviourist approaches, for example, held that L2 learning results from active teaching of bits of language in the process of forming correct language habits. Errors were viewed as undesired by-products to be eradicated at all costs. Here, we pursue a more cognitive view in explaining errors. We also suggest that there is not a one-to-one relationship between correcting learners' errors and their elimination. Therefore, the title of this dissertation 'what do learners' errors tell the teacher of English?' should be viewed from these perspectives. In this study, our aim is to seek answers to this question. We also try to shed light on an area of great importance guiding the L2 teacher into other possible directions rather than attacking errors. This dissertation comprises six chapters:

Chapter 1 introduces the dissertation and the topic area and provides a general description of a typical L2 (English)

class in Turkey. Traditional teaching-oriented classroom procedures including explicit teaching of grammar, inadequacy of pedagogical approaches are also reviewed. An introduction to error correction concludes the chapter.

In Chapter 2, apart from the theoretical background relating to language learning theory and errors, interlingual and intralingual dimensions, Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and error analysis, and testing hypotheses are introduced for a fuller understanding of the title.

Chapter 3 introduces the research into the evaluation of certain errors committed by Turkish learners of English in forming the verb phrase. It also deals with the research procedure and techniques.

In Chapter 4, we deal with the actual analysis of excerpts from learners' written work and attempt to identify certain error types in the verb group. Possible causes of errors including interference from L1 (Turkish) are also examined.

Chapter 5 is devoted to language acquisition process and its significance in achieving a grammar accepted as correct by L2 standards. Effects of input, schema theory and interactionist view are also reviewed.

In the last chapter, we attempt to conclude the discussion about errors, if this is ever possible.

1.1 Introducing the research area

Although errors had to be avoided at all costs in 1960s, today they are considered to be 'an integral part of the L2 learning process from which we can gain very significant insights' (Dubin and Olshtain 1986:74). According to Cook (1991:7), mistakes are not to be blamed on the teacher, the materials or even on the students since they are an inevitable and natural part of the language learning process. Cook regards mistakes as 'minor irritants' rather than 'major hazards'. Researchers have often suggested the hypothesis-testing process during the development of L2 as the most important explanation of L2 learning and errors. McDonough (1986:112) maintains that persistent errors may be due to some inherent difficulty in L2 , transfer from L1 , insufficient exposure to good language data, laziness etc. But these two questions remain to be answered: a) to what extent are errors made by L2 learners representative of transfers from L1? and b) to what extent do they reflect universal characteristics of language development since they often resemble errors made by L1 learners? (Dubin and Olshtain, op. cit:74)

As suggested by psycholinguists, actual speech production is only the tip of an iceberg and it is the main bulk which needs closer scrutiny. According to Halliday (1985), there is a stage penultimate to speech production.This stage comprises 'wordings' which are 'purely abstract pieces of code'.

The wording cannot be heard or seen. This can be likened to Chomsky's deep structure view or the mental representation of language (linguistic competence). The wording is re-coded in sound or writing. Halliday refers to the way language is built up by children i.e. the organisation of their proto-language, which is the symbolic system they construct for themselves before using the mother tongue. He holds that a child's language begins without a grammar at all. He adds that in the first year it is a two-level system, with meanings coded directly into expressions (sounds/gestures). In the second year of life, however, this two-level system is upgraded to a three-level system, in which meanings are first coded into wordings which are in turn recoded into expressions.

According to Chomsky, sentences are not learned by imitation and repetition but 'generated' from the learner's underlying competence. Mentalists maintain that there are two types of rules which children happen to internalize. These rules enable them to translate universal thoughts into specific languages. Phrase structure rules generate sentences in their deepest forms, and transformational rules convert deep structures into output strings. Likewise, an interactionist view suggests that errors are natural by-products in negotiation. A distinction is made between mistakes and errors, both of which are realized at surface level. When it is a mistake the learner can correct his

utterance, and when it is an error, he cannot. If an erroneous utterance has stemmed from a faulty deep structure rule, then the teacher has to act on it but not necessarily resorting to overt error correction and reteaching. In such a case, it is beyond the competence of the learner to correct his speech. When an erroneous utterance is the result of a malfunctioning at surface level, then there is no need for much concern.

Unfortunately, most teachers do not take heed of these dual cause of faulty utterances. Even if they concern themselves with this, it would not be feasible in class since too many interruptions and corrections are detrimental to the main function of language. Furthermore, they constitute a face threat for L2 learners. It is equally important for L2 teachers to know about such questions as what causes people to make language errors, how teachers react to learners' errors and whether errors are really a problem. In short, it is generally agreed that the notion of error is not a simple one and in order for a L2 teacher to be able to address the question of what learners' errors tell him, the existence of a number of intertwined strands should be acknowledged. One of these strands, i.e. error correction, poses difficulty at practice level and it will be dealt with in 1.3.

1.2 Describing the local situation

Turkish Secondary Schools have a number of problems relating to learning English effectively. Naturally, methodology, syllabus, materials, etc. are responsible for this. Language teaching in these schools is generally grammar-based, textbook-oriented and teacher-centred. The L2 teachers (generally teachers of English) play an active and central role in managing the L2 learning such as distributing turns, correcting errors, etc. In addition, L2 learning is considered to result from an active interaction between the teacher and the learners. An explicit teaching of grammar prevails in teacher-fronted classrooms. Besides this, many valuable classroom hours are spent on minute details of formal aspects of English, such as the rule governing the use of the present tense morpheme '-es' (rather than '-s'). Similarly, idealized phonological features which disregard discoursal features of connected speech are given priority. Such analytic and atomistic treatment of English merely highlights an accuracy and product view and is detrimental to the promotion of fluency. Both teachers and learners are accustomed to an approach whereby presentation of structures is realised at sentential level in accordance with a pre-arranged syllabus foreseeing the whole is the sum of its parts. This is all at the expense of meaningful language use in context, and L2 is viewed from a very narrow angle.

In Turkish secondary schools, the L2 teacher represents

a person of higher authority and superior knowledge. In his evaluation of the Turkish educational system, Bear describes the present situation. In his words:

> (The Turkish educational system) is extremely formalistic and lays great emphasis on the value of rote learning... Grammatical correctness and learning of de-contextualized vocabulary are emphasized. There has been a long tradition of concentration on intensive reading, an emphasis on correction of errors, and the use of the native language as a teaching aid.
> (Bear, 1990:28)

This means that errors are viewed as undesired forms and Turkish is widely used as a reference system. However, the latest trends in L2 learning point towards a more mentalist view which suggests that errors are only natural and should be seen as evidence of learner achievement. Also it is held that the teacher must quit his traditional asymetrical role and be tolerant to errors (Stern, 1992:13). Likewise, a non-interventionist attitude to errors in L2 classroom helps change the social climate of the language class since it does reduce the face threat. Besides this, L2 teachers, as professionals, need a fuller understanding of their students' achievement as a part of their research undertaking. Another dimension to the issue of errors is the fact that up till the near past, the teacher colleges has boasted of including a comparative structure component in their syllabus to help future teachers to spot and act on predicted areas of difficulty in L2 instruction for the prevention of errors.

1.3 Error correction

Error correction is thought to be one of the L2 teacher's most important functions. And it has wrongly been assumed that what occurs as correction in classroom interaction automatically leads to learning on the part of the student (Chaudron,1988). Albeit the considerable amount of research, there is still a lot of controversy surrounding this area. Nunan (1989:31), for example relates to some key questions: a) When should errors be corrected? b) How should they be corrected? c) Who should correct errors? d) To what extent should self-correction be encouraged? and e) Which errors should be corrected? Likewise, on the question of errors, Allwright (in Nunan 1989) holds that teachers are imprecise in their treatment of learners' errors, tending to repeat the corrected model rather than helping the learner to pinpoint the error. He maintains that the teachers correct errors made by some learners but not by others. This typical lack of precision and the inconsistent treatment create confusion in the mind of learners. Chaudron (1988:149) also refers to the problem of inconsistency with which teacher correct learners' utterances. He states that teachers, at times, accept a faulty L2 form for the sake of communication, while they, at other times attack the same or a similar faulty utterance. As pointed out by Chaudron, teachers correct even minor errors for the sake of the example. According to Krashen (1982:11), error correction has little or no effect

on subconscious acquisition. He believes that it is only useful for conscious learning, because it supposedly helps the learner to figure out the right form of a rule. However, he holds that conscious learning plays only a limited role in L2 performance since L2 performers would need a) time to think about and apply conscious rules effectively, b) focus on form for effective use of monitor, and c) knowledge of the rule; three conditions which are difficult to apply during spontaneous language use. Thus, application of conscious rules to prevent errors is not deemed practical. Krashen views error correction as an unfortunate but typical reaction of the teachers. He sees its effect on the affective filter as the most serious flaw:

> Error correction has the immediate effect of putting the student on the defensive. It encourages a strategy in which the student will try to avoid mistakes, avoid difficult constructions, focus less on meaning and more on form. It may disrupt the entire communicative focus on an exchange.
> (Krashen 1982:75)

Like Nunan, Henrickson (1978, in Krashen 1982) on the issue of error correction, addresses five fundamental questions which are almost identical to Nunan's except for the first one: 'Should errors be corrected?' Krashen provides an answer to this question: when the goal is learning, errors should be corrected (but still not at all times and not all rules). As with the question of 'when', no error correction is implied in free conversation, but it is allowed on writtten work and grammar exercises. On the question of 'which errors should

be corrected?', a) the global errors that interfere with communication, b) errors that are 'the most stigmatized', and c) the most frequent errors deserve top priority. To give an answer to the question of 'how', the discovery approach versus direct correction is suggested. Krashen still citing Henrickson suggests that students who have had direct correction in instructional programmes did not produce fewer errors. However, Krashen does not regard error correction as totally useless and learning as valueless. For him, learning has a role to play, and error correction may be useful in certain situations. The essence of a Krashenist view on errors, however, is that L2 learners, like L1 learners, need a silent period during which they acquire language. It follows from this that premature attempts to produce language will result in errors which otherwise would not occur. If we ,as teachers of English, acccept that a silent period is necessary before producing language, then we should consider it wrong to get learners to make utterances in L2 before they are competent enough.

Prabhu's approach (1987:62-63) to the issue of error correction is a pedagogic one. He distinguishes between two types: 'incidental correction' and 'systematic correction'. He favours for the former type on the grounds that it will 'exclude any sustained attention to language itself which would have resulted in a reduction in the focus on meaning'.

Chapter 2 Theoretical background

At first glance, errors appear to be undesired forms that signal a breakdown in learning a L2. This was the accepted view for a long time and was cherished by behaviorist psychologists who prescribed the importance of manipulative drills to ensure correctness. All this constitutes the basic tenets of the Aural-Oral approach which is mechanistic and externalistic in nature. In contradiction with this view, the mentalists regarded errors as an unavoidable and necessary part of learning a L2. According to this theory, language is not learnt by conditioning and habit formation as the behaviourists thought. The Direct Method stems partly from the mentalist theory which holds that children learn a L2 not by repetitive conditioning but by direct association of objects and actions with words.

2.1 The interlingual and intralingual dimension

The language pedagogy has long been concerned with the role of L1 in L2 teaching. It was a widespread belief until recently that a comparison of the learner's L1 and his target language would predict the potential difficulties in learning L2. In Stern (1992:279), a comparison of crosslingual and intralingual strategies is presented. In intralingual strategy, L2 is used as a reference system and kept apart from L1. As in the Direct Method, immersion in L2 is a necessity with no requirement of translation from and into L2. On the other hand, a crosslingual strategy emphasizes L1 as a reference system and a comparison of L1 and L2 is sought. As in the Grammar and Translation method, practice through translation from and into L2 has a significant place. Crosslingual errors were accounted for by negative language transfer from L1.

Selinker's concept of interlanguage recognizes the systematic nature of the learner's language. Although it was assumed that the learner develops his own interlanguage system on the basis of L1, the characteristics of the learner's language cannot be explained by transfer from L1. According to the restructuring hypothesis, the learner's language represents a gradual progression from L1-based rules to L2-based rules and is related to a crosslingual theory of L2 learning. On the other hand, the creative construction hypothesis assumes that the learner's language progress

independently from his L1. This system which is between L1 and L2 is a dynamic one and moves in the direction of improvement and perfectionism. During the process, deviant grammatical forms, phonological imperfections and lexical inaccuracies are only natural. According to Corder (1981:72), 'interlanguage may quite regularly exhibit systematic properties which show no obvious resemblance to the L1 or any other language that the learner knows'.

2.2 Contrastive Analysis and error analysis

As suggested by Corder (1981:5-6), the field of methodology hosts two fields of thought. The former school maintains that if a perfect teaching method is sought, errors would never be committed in the first place, and thus the occurence of errors indicates the inadequacy of our teaching techniques. The philosophy of the second school is that since we live in an imperfect world, errors will always occur no matter how hard we try to prevent them. Corder also suggests that 'our ingenuity should be concentrated on techniques for dealing with errors after they have occurred.' (Corder, op. cit: 6). From 1940s to the 1960s researchers were engaged with identifying points of similarities and differences between native languages and target languages. They believed that a more effective pedagogy would result from such a comparison. Hence, the contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH) emerged. This hypothesis states that while the child is learning a second language, he will tend to use his native language structures in his L2 speech. Charles Fries (in Dulay and Burt 1974:97) stated:

> 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 language of the learner. (1945:9)

Lado (1957, in Larsen-Freeman and Long,1991:52) emphasized points of contrasts between two language systems. He claimed that those elements that are similar to one's L1 will be simple to learn while those elements that are different will

be difficult (in Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:53). Of course Fries and Lado are not the only scholars reiterating the importance of L1 interference in L2 learning. The claims made by Lado and Fries about the predictive power of CA and about the relation between L1 and L2 acquisition were challenged by the 1970s. However, this argument is not readily accepted by some scholars. For example, McLaughlin (1987:79) maintains that the rejection of CA by researchers such as Dulay and Burt has been premature. He holds that research on transfer has resulted in a richer and more sophisticated view of the goal of CA. In this study, we shed light on this issue when we examine our students' errors of negative transfer in Chapter 4.

Chomsky's claim that the child's knowledge of L1 was derived from a Universal Grammar adds another dimension to this argument. In line with this view, the L1 is no longer considered an annoying interference in the L2 acquisition process. (Refer to Odlin,1989 for the renewal interest in transfer).

The CA hypothesis held that where structures in the L1 differed from those in the L2, errors that reflected the structure of the L1 would be produced. However, this claim was challenged on the grounds that not all errors were predicted by CA and that those predicted failed to materialize. The observation that the number of errrors in L2 performance that could be attributed to L1 influence was far

smaller than had been imagined previously. Despite all this, differences between the L1 and the L2 may affect L2 learning in these ways:

a. they may influence the rate at which target-language features are acquired, b. they lead to the avoidance of certain target language structures and c. they may lead to the over-production of certain target-language forms, which are sometimes perceived as carrying L1 discourse functions (Keller-Cohen). Some linguists proposed closer study of the performance of actual learners. Because comparisons of collective, not individual, linguistic behaviour, gave rise to inaccurate predictions of individual performances. Thus, as a reaction to CA, error analysis emerged. However, one drawback about error analysis is that it tends to reinforce a product view of learning, rather than a process one. In addition to this, it cannot account for possible errors avoided by the learner.

To sum up, the data obtained by error analysis should not lead the teacher to resort to drills and overt teaching to eradicate errors.

2.3 Newer approaches to the causes of errors

Nowadays a reaction is witnessed to grammar-based approaches wich are mentalistic and rationalistic. Such approaches regard language as a code which can be learnt through conscious, overt study of grammar. Nevertheless, some scholars e.g. Krashen and Terrell (1983:17), in full support of a natural approach to L2 teaching advocate that 'any reduction of the dominance of grammar-based methods will improve language teaching'. Such an approach , among others, calls for some requirements such as priority of comprehension over production and allowing the latter to emerge in stages. A corollary to this is that students should not be forced to produce L2 before the time is ripe, and those speech errors which do not impede communication can go uncorrected.

According to Allwright and Bailey:

> Changes in pedagogy have also influenced our attitudes towards error and its treatment. With the recent advent of the communicative approach to language teaching, less emphasis has been placed on formal accuracy than was formerly the case, and more importance given to the question communicative effectiveness.
> (Allwright and Bailey, 1991:84)

As believed by them, teachers who adopt the communicative approach are often more concerned about receiving and conveying information than about producing grammatically correct sentences. Besides this, current research tends to focus on the learner himself as generator of the grammar of his sentences in the new language. The learner attempts to internalize the grammar of the language he is learning.

According to Richards and Sampson (in Richards 1974:17)

> ...viewing the approximative systems of language learners not as pathologies to be eradicated but as necessary stages in the gradual acquisition of the target system may result in a deeper understanding of language in general and a more humane approach to language teaching'.

Errors have generally been attributed to cognitive causes, evidence of the learner's psychological process of rule formation. But they can also be seen as communicatively motivated, the realisation of avilable resources to get a message across (see Faerch and Kasper, 1983).

Widdowson (1990:157) maintains that language learning has two sides i.e. knowing (competence) and doing (performance). The former is asssociated with a medium perspective and the latter with a mediation perspective on meaning. Widdowson maintains that approach to L2 teaching in fashion until the recent past was called 'structural approach' which focuses attention on knowing. Widdowson (op. cit:163) also differentiates between two kinds of knowledge: systemic and schematic knowledge. The former is knowledge of the formal properties of language, whereas the latter relates to the particular world we live in, our beliefs, ideas and so on. Therefore, the meanings we achieve through the use of language result from the interaction between these two kinds of knowledge. In natural language use, systemic knowledge is subservient to the schematic. It is a means, not an end, in the achievement of meaning. When we use language to deal with a familiar content, we pay as little attention to

language forms as possible. But when the content is unfamiliar, we fall back on systemic knowledge. (We will deal with the schema theory in more detail in 5.3.). Widdowson (op. cit.) makes a further distinction between medium and mediation which relates to preplanning and execution stages. The medium perspective will foresee a priori specification and ordering of linguistic points. Thus, structural and notional/functional syllabuses are both informed by a medium view of communication. On the other hand, the methodology becomes primary with a mediation view. With the rise of the mediation view, the validity of the traditional structural syllabus has been called into question. Widdowson also relates his stance on product/ process distinction to his attitude towards errors. Thus:

> ...a medium view necessarily sets a high premium on correctness, and learner errors are seen as failures to internalize the devices necessary for the proper formulation of meaning. They are defective sentences. The mediation view, on the contrary, sees these nonconformist features of learner behaviour as positive signs of successful learning since they show the learner employing procedures for using whatever linguistic resources they have to hand to mediate meaning. These so-called errors errors may be defective sentences from the medium point of view, but effective utterances from the mediation point of view.' (Widdowson, op. cit:121)

2.4 Testing hypotheses

During the course of interlanguage, a second language learner may be checking the correctness of his knowledge of the rules of L2. It is one of the strategies adopted by learners and is called hypothesis-testing. It is associated with nativisism ,and what is tested comes from internal processes, whereas in audiolingual application of behaviourist theory there is no need to test language points since they are provided externally by the teacher. As held by Ellis(1990:53), 'learners pass through a series of developmental stages as they test out hypothesis about the target language'. To give an example, high input generators (Seliger's term) are more willing to make mistakes while interacting because they may be testing hypotheses. By the same token, the learners with impulsive style, as opposed to reflective ones, have a tendency to provide immediate response (Brown,1987:90-91), thus, they are more likely to make mistakes but have more chance of testing hypotheses. As suggested by Dubin and Olshtain (1986:75) 'the potential errors that might result can be due to the wrong choice of the domain, the wrong choice of a hypothesis, or a combination of both'. For them, this is the reason why learners from the same language background may produce different errors, and why conversely speakers of different language backgrounds can commit similar errors, both by employing this hypothesis-testing process. Furthermore, as

the learners become more and more proficient in the target language, their range of hypotheses expands and as a result more developmental errors occur. Corder (1967), too, suggested that both L1 and L2 learners make errors in order to test out certain hypotheses about the nature of the language they are learning. He viewed the making of errors as a strategy, evidence of learner-internal processing. If we subscribe to this view, then we should have little reason to adopt an interventionist attitude towards errors. Once the learner has developed a hypothesis, he can test it out in a variety of ways. Faerch and Kasper (in Ellis:174) list four ways of testing hypotheses: 1. receptively, 2. productively, 3. metalingually and 4. interactionally. The first way relates to the effect of input (5.1), and the second and the fourth ones to an interactionist's view (5.3) which will be dealt with in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. It was suggested that L2 acquisition ceases either when the learner no longer receives contrary evidence, or when he stops testing out hypothesis.

Chapter 3 Research

The research was carried out to assess and comment on the causes of some salient errors in the written production of Anatolian secondary school students within the framework of L2 acquisition/ development of English. The scope of errrors has been confined to the verb group only. In this study, we not only examine the verb group in the main clause but also that of the subordinate clause. The reason for our opting for the verb group is due to the fact that 'verb' is so central to the structure of the sentence that any syntactic analysis will fail to proceed without a careful consideration of it. Furthermore, learning a L2 is to a very large degree learning how to operate the verbal forms of that language.

Limiting our analysis only to verb phrase and focusing on L2 acquisition should not lead to the misconception that discourse analysis is worthless. However, we should not fail to recognize the significance of basic deep structure rules in improving a L2 learner's performance strategies in discourse. We assume that elimination of errors in the course of L2 development contributes to socio-cultural appropriateness. Neither do we pursue a morpho-syntactic approach in the analysis chapter below. We mean more than that and in no way we deny the concerns of a text and discourse analysis. Our analysis is diagnostic and for providing a firm ground to the development of meaningful L2 use in context.

3.1 Research procedure and obtaining the data

For the research, sample students from different classes (Prep A, Prep B, Secondary 1, Secondary 2 and Secondary 3) were chosen. The students have been chosen according to these criteria:

a) students with average language proficiency were selected,

b) more articulate students were preferred,

c) those who volunteered were given priority,

The students were given the opportunity to speak and write freely with a minimum degree of inhibition so that they would not readily adopt reductionist strategies e.g. avoiding using certain structures. To this end, some of the interviews and writing were carried out outside the classroom.

Besides studying the production of the selected students, sometimes we had to examine the written work of a whole class and even the essays in exam papers. We collaborated with other teachers of English, and they carried out similar tasks with their students. Therefore the data collected reflect the errors as well as positive points in the interlanguage of a wide range of students.

3.2 Language elicitation techniques

By elicitation techniques we refer to the manner in which spoken or written performance is elicited from our learners of English. Before leading our students directly into a task, we wanted them to produce as much language as possible without feeling inhibited, so that they could exhibit as many language points as possible. To this end, we had a short informal gathering with each group for the purpose of establishing rapport. During these gatherings, the purpose of the research was made clear hence the necessity for some spoken and written data. We discussed in each group the range of best possible topics. Informing the students about research and valuing them by asking for their contribution to the research helped a lot in terms of voluntary participation. Therefore, we came up with topics/tasks for spoken and written data. The topics of discussion were a) talking about hobbies b) planning a trip to a seaside town c) telling a story, etc. The topics did not include any problem solving tasks. They appealed to their affective domain. However, the tapes produced less useful data for studying errors and assessing L2 development than the written data. The former type of data would have proved more useful if we had studied phonological, rather than syntactic, errors. It consisted of shorter sentences and it was difficult for us to determine the true nature of a seemingly erroneous form. We assumed that the student has the time to go back and

correct his sentence in the written work. For the written data, the students agreed to write about a recent favourite TV advertisement, an unforgettable event such as an accident or even a dream. They were also expected to make comments on certain newspaper articles which evoked their reaction. Also a sequence of pictures was used to get the students to create a story ('a night out' from Streamline departures, Oxford). We assumed that such tasks would lead to the production of more natural language and exhibit proficiency and L2 development. These tasks were beneficial to the students in that the students had the opportunity to express themselves freely, and with a minimum degree of inhibition. The topics required them to scan their affective domain for the most salient events or perceptions. The written data also provided much more interesting results as a result of its coverage of a wide range of schematic knowledge and related linguistic means.

Chapter 4 Analysis of the data

In this dissertation we have covered the written production of 60 students. However, for the lack of space, we only included snippets from their written work. They have been presented in Appendix A of this dissertation. Still for the ease of reference, the students referred to have been given numbers alongside with their names, class and the title/topic of their work. Furthermore, the sentences that include errors of use/usage have also been numbered. Excerpts have been reduced to a paragraph size and the sentences do not only include erroneous items but also correct sentences in order to help the reader to grasp the context. Furthermore, we supplied some missing punctuation and a slight editing was necessary. But the editing by no means covers the errors in the verb group.

We once again reiterate that the best approach to the analysis interlanguge is to study the speech and writing of learners although we cannot assess the problems caused by in-take mechanism.

4.1 Overexposure to some aspect of language

The data analysed are presented in Appendix A (page 51). Almost all of the sentences in Student 2's and Student 3's written production indicate that errors in the choice of the present continuous tense stem from overexposure to this aspect of language.

Especially the sentences made by Student 2:

They are carrying Arçelik TV

Where are we carrying these TV

One of the man is saying

Other is answering They are stopping

They are taking a TV and turning on it

Then they are sleeping

And the sentences formed by Student 3:

A housewife is baking börek.

Her husband is growing impatient.

He is coming into the kitchen.

He is asking to his wife.

His wife is answering this question.

And other sentences produced by other students:

They are eating hamburgers. (13.4)

Then they are pouring sauce into their t-shirt. (13.4)

And they are worrying. (13.5

They were loving him. (57.1)

point to the fact that too much exposure to the present progressive tense (either using L2 readers or listening to

the teacher as a model or both) leads to an excessive use of a linguistic point. To provide reasons for this, let us take two readers from Longman for instance: Detectives from Scotland Yard and Two thieves. Both books are used in our schools without being conscious of the fact that an abundant use of the present continuous tense could replace the use of the simple present tense. This may also explain the cause of a very common mistake committed by Turkish learners of English i.e. their placing 'am' after 'I'. To give further examples to the distorted use of the present continuous tense, we can cite the sentences of Student 7:

(7.1) You love your car, you're insuring it.

(7.2) You love your house, you're insuring it.

However, the use of the progressive form in the second part of the sentences in place of the simple present is more likely to be caused by interference of Turkish, which only affects the second part of the sentence. If we fully believe in the role of L1 in L2, we would expect that both parts of the sentences would be in the progressive form, since the verb forms in an equivalent Turkish sentence would be in the present progressive form. The reason for the correct use of the simple present tense in the first part of both sentences (you love your car) may be due to the fact that students have never been exposed to any (* you're loving) form before. This lack of exposure, however, does not quarantee the occurrence of the same type of error in L2. Take the sentence 'They were

loving him (57.1)' for example. This, we think, is due to the fact that the rules in the interlanguage of this learner about the appropriate use of the tenses may not be so deeply internalized that 'effect of input' alone would be insufficient in preventing negative transfer from Turkish. For us, as teachers of English, it is as if we were watching a tennis match the players being the effect of input and the negative transfer from L1. The concern about the winner depends largely on the experience of the learners in L2 as well as the idiosynratic affective/ cognitive resources they may possess. As stated above, the L2 rules have to be deeply internalized in order to prevent L1 rules coming to surface. And it is the teacher's job to expose his students to sufficient (variable) input data. In support of this view, we will examine the effects of input in section 5.1 in the following chapter (5.2) within the framework of the L2 acquisition process. To elaborate further on the negative transfer of L1 rules that concern the use of the present progressive tense in Turkish, we can say that it is a widely-used tense. For example, the utterance 'my sister is going to school' is used in Turkish to mean 'my sister goes to school' and it is a very common mistake.

4.2 Omission of the copula

Another common type of error in the interlanguage of Turkish learners of English is the omission of the copula 'be'. To give examples:

(11.1) Their parents very happy.

(12.2) Cinderella's two ugly sisters very happy.

(13.2) Cinderella's her two ugly sisters very happy.

(20.3) The owner of the house surprised.

(32.1) When he arrived there, he surprised.

(33.4) I think this very wrong.

(34.1) Always my mother angry with me.

(35.5) Then he and the man at the bed surprised.

(53.1) So the mother angry with him.

In Turkish the copula 'dır/dir' is optional and in some cases redundant whereas it is obligatory in English. Let us take, for example, the sentence 'I think this very wrong.' (33.4) The Turkish equivalent of this sentence is either ' Sanırım (I think) bu (this) çok (very) yanlış' or 'Sanırım bu çok yanlışdır (=is). To point out the redundant nature of the copula in Turkish, we can look at another example: 'Bugün (today) hava (the weather) çok (very) güzel (nice). The suffixation of the Turkish copula 'dır/dir' to 'güzel' in this sentence would sound rather unnatural. Therefore, a contrastive analysis (CA) view, which was elaborated in greater depth in 2.2, partly explains the reson for the omission of the copula by Turkish learners of English.

Nevertheless, we do not have to accept the view that L1 always interferes with L2 rules, a view held by the advocates of the strong version of CA. Instead, we had rather stick to the weak version which explains the errors after they have been committed. This would be a safe approach because the copula is not always omitted by Turkish learners. We should once again refer to the inadequacy of CA in addressing the question of why the predicted errors did not in fact turn out to be errors at all. Thus, contrasting Turkish with English is primarily useful when we want to explain the inadequacy of our teaching techniques. It is less useful for predicting all errors. Thus, the subscription to the prediction by CA that the copula in English will be omitted by Turkish learners remains to be supported by further evidence, because the interlanguage of Turkish learners do not always reveal such an ommission. In compliance with this, it was claimed that learning difficulties do not always arise from cross-linguistic differences and that difficulties which do arise are not always predicted by CA. For example, a CA of Spanish and English would not predict that Spanish speakers would omit forms of the verb 'be' since Spanish has similar grammatical structures. Another case in point is the omission by a Spanish speaker of an article in the phrase 'picture is very dark (Schuman 1978, in Odlin 1989)'. Such an error is not attributable to Spanish since a Spanish translation of the sentence would require an article. It is

argued that Spanish learners of English learn the correct use of articles (the picture is very dark) not as a result of any positive transfer from Spanish but simply as the result of sufficient exposure to the definite article in English.

4.3 Negative transfer from the Turkish case system

Another source of errors is the interference of the case system in Turkish. Take these examples:

Group A

(3.1) He is asking to his wife.

(4.2) Another man come to near you.

(6.2) A child say something to another child's ear.

(13.3) Fairy godmother came to near the Cinderella.

(19.2) He leaned (the ladder) to window.

(21.1) He telephoned to the police.

(22.2) We... took some petrol to our scooter.

(24.1) He hit to the school garden's wall.

(27.1) Bülent threw the ball to me...then I threw the ball to Hakan.

(29.1) I came to home from school.

(29.2) My brother went to the outside.

(30.1) We reached to the space.

(30.2) I couldn't reach to the ship.

(31.2) When we were coming to home...

(36.3) I didn't go to there before.

(37.2) They arrived to their home.

(38.1) When I looked to the street, I saw a coke lorry.

(39.1) and went to running.

(41.2) After that I went to home.

(43.1) when we came to home..

(46.2) When we arrived to the center of Hançerli, ..

(47.2) We arrived to Ankara.

(49.1) They attack to that thing.

(49.2) The dog saw the man and attacked to him.

(51.1) He took a step-ladder and put it to the window of the house.

(51.2) When he entered to room, a man was sleeping.

(52.1) One of the dog was attack to the mailman.

Group B

(17.7) He was very frighened from Tom.

(54.1) A boy ... was shot from his abdomen.

(55.2) He hated from them.

In all sentences in group A, we witness the use of 'to' and in group B 'from'. In the Turkish equivalents of these sentences, 'to' refers to the dative form of the case system. and 'from' the ablative.

Let's take these Turkish sentences as examples: 'Ben (I) hergün (everyday) okula (school-to) giderim (go-I)' , 'Polise (the police-to) telefon (telephone) etti (telephoned-s/he). As in the examples, the suffix '-a' or '-e' refers to the dative case in Turkish sentences. All the Turkish equivalents of the sentences in group A consist of either '-a' or '-e' depending on the vowel harmony.

Now let us look at these Turkish sentences:

'Ben (I) köpekten (dog-from) korkarım (afraid-I)',

'Gürültüden (the noise-from) nefret ederim (hate-I)'

'Çocuk (the child) karnından (abdomen-from) vuruldu (was

shot)'. In Turkish, the suffixes '-ten, -tan, -den, -dan' refer to the ablative and therefore the Turkish equivalents of the sentences in group B contain the above suffixes. The Turkish learners of English easily transfer this knowledge into English negatively producing errors. And it is very difficult for them to identify this type of error. Elimination of this type of error is due to the experience in the English. Ellis (1986:37) outlines one way in which interference can be recast as a learner strategy. He suggests that the learner's L1 may facilitate the learning of a L2 if his L1 bears similarities with it and that interference errors result not from negative transfer only but from 'borrowing'as well. According to Ellis, 'borrowing' stems from a need to carry on communication which is hindered by the lack of necessary L2 resources. There is more reliance on L1 at the beginning of the learning process than later. Here, it would be useful to deal with the issue of negative and positive transfer further. Odlin (1989:40) states that children acquire their native languages in approximately equal periods of time. Odler also cites the FSI (Foreign Service Institute) figures which suggest that it will take an English-speaking adult over twice as long to become highly skilled in Turkish as to become highly skilled in Italian. Conversely, this means that an Italian adult will learn English in a much shorter time as compared with a Turkish adult. In 4.2 we have partly referred to the shortcomings of

the CA. Despite all the controversy, differences between the L1 and L2 may affect L2 learning in various ways (refer to 2.2). Now let us look at an utterance by a Turkish teacher of English who once instructed his students to write their names on exam paper by saying 'you are writing your names' instead of 'please write your names'. This error of use also stems from the negative transfer from Turkish.

4.4 Translation from Turkish into English

Another type of cross-lingual errors is the translation from Turkish into English. To give examples: '(4.1) The man said: Open, close, open, close (taps). In Turkish, the infinitives 'açmak = to open' and 'kapamak = to close' go with the objects 'doors/books/taps' as well as 'electrical appliances' whereas in English the objects 'tap/electrical appliances' follow the verbs 'turn on/turn off'.

Other examples to translation from Turkish are:

'And he couldn't give calculation (= couldn't pay for the bill)'. This example also shows that the learner has resorted to the strategy of translation and inadvertently made an error. The Turkish word 'hesap' relates to 'an arithmetic calculation' and 'a bill'. Also, the verb 'vermek= give' is used to mean 'to pay for'. Thus, it is our prediction that the learner probably used a bilingual dictionary and picked up a wrong word.

In 'he sought his key for a long time (18.1)= he looked for it', we witness the same strategy was used and the Turkish verb 'aramak=to look for/seek/search' was mistakenly used. Similar strategy was used in these examples.

'The man opened the lamp (= turned it on)' (19.3)

'He has begun to search his key(= looked for it)'(20.2)

'First we went to Kemerhisar and took (= bought) a newspaper' (22.1)

'Then we went to Petrol Ofisi and took (= got/bought)

some petrol to our scooter.' (22.2)

'In my dream, I be (= am) an English teacher'. (26.1)

'That is why I opened TV (=turned it on).' (29.3)

'I want to make (= do) my homeworks.' (33.2)

'But another teacher make (= does/teaches) lessons in free lessons.' (33.3)

'I made (= spent) my last holiday in Ankara.' (36.1)

'They make autostop (= hitch-hike).' (37.1)

' My foot creamed (=slipped) then I rolled.' (41.1)

' We collected some money...so that he could see (= have) treatment at hospital.' (56.1)

' Jacob Colman don't like to make (= do) homework.' (58.1)

To elaborate further on translation, we can refer to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982:108) who state that interlingual errors may be due to at least two environmental factors: ' 1) conditions that result in premature use of the L2, and 2) certain elicitation tasks'. The first situation resembles the one in which a tourist with a knowledge of a few hundred words falling back on the L1 when attempting to communicate in L2. This is premature use of the L2, triggered by a need to communicate in the target language before one has been exposed to enough input for meaningful processing (op.cit).

To return to 'Open, close, open, close' example (4.1), the error in the choice of verb also stems from the tendency of Turkish learners of English to reduce two-word verbs into a single word. A topic that we will deal with below (4.5).

4.5 Omission of the particle in phrasal verbs

Turkish learners of English frequently omit the particle in phrasal words. The omission may result from the fact that in Turkish such particles (also propositions) do not exist. A Turkish learner finds it difficult to understand why 'for' follows 'wait' or similarly why 'on' is needed after 'knock'. For a better understanding of such error type, let us examine these examples:

(5.1) when he looked another girl, he falled down in a hole

(9.2) we don't wait the dishes

(18.3) at last he looked the room, but it wasn't his house

(23.1) my friends laugh me,

(23.3) my grandmother laughed me

(36.2) they had waited us

(40.1) when I looked them I saw a red and blue light on the lake

(42.1) my parents and my aunt looked dresses. And I looked toys

(44.1) I knocked the door

(45.1) Ali...was shouting us

(47.3) We arrived on my uncle's home, He had waited us

(50.1) They...began to wait ghosts

(53.2) but he wasn't listen her

(54.2) but he didn't listen her

In these examples, we see an abundant use of phrasal verbs without particle: 6 cases of 'look' without 'at', 3 cases of

'wait' without 'for', 2 cases of 'laugh' without the particle 'at', 2 cases of 'listen' without 'to', 1 case of 'shout' without 'at', and 1 case of 'knock' without 'at', totalling 15 cases of omission of particle. When English and Turkish are compared, we see no separate system of prepositions in Turkish. And the phrasal verbs are always avoided by Turkish learners. Therefore, the Turkish learners pursue a reductionist policy when they have to use phrasal verbs. Thus, we can add to the examples given at the beginning of this section. The Turkish learners use 'test it' instead of 'test it out', 'enter a competition' in place of ' enter for a competition', 'examine a matter' instead of 'look into the matter', etc. If phrasal verbs cannot be avoided, they are more likely to be reduced to a single-word form.

4.6 Wrong application of the rule

So far we have dealt with the seemingly cross-lingual errors. But a large proportion of grammatical errors could not be explained by L1 interference only. Let us look at these examples:

(5.2) he falled down in a hole,

(5.3) but when he falled down the hall...

(42.2) the policeman helded my hand

(43.2) then she leaved the cat in the same place

Here, the learners have added the past tense marker for regular verbs '-ed' to the verb stem of irregular verbs , instead of using the irregular past tense form. This is another common error committed by all learners regardless of native language. However, we cannot remedy the situation by resorting to 'systematic correction' referred to by Prabhu (see 1.3 of this research). Such a correction is bound to be held in short term memory and is to be erased when the load of memory is too much.

Let us study other examples relating to the simple past:

The man was say (9.1)

The woman was say (9.3)

But she wasn't go. (12.3)

The fairy godmother was touch the pumpkin. (12.4)

She did washed the floors, (13.1)

He was lost his key. (17.2)

He was put the ladder. (12.5)

But he didn't found. (18.2)

He did not found his key. (19.1)

His classmates weren't leave him alone. (53.3)

He wasn't found his key. (59.1)

But he wasn't entered his house. (59.2)

He wasn't like this couple. (60.1)

These examples indicate that applying the rules of simple past tense constitute a big problem for learners of English. Especially, the past form of 'be' (was/were) interferes with the simple past tense and produces a hybrid structure.

This time let us examine the errors below to see how the some exceptional rules are rejected by learners of English:

He don't like the cat. (25.1)

She like the cat. (25.2)

She don't answer. (26.2)

The other woman don't believe it. (10.2)

A child say something to another.. (6.1)

As seen from these examples, the third person singular '-s' and the negative form 'doesn't' are not used in the formation of the simple present tense. Rather, the students stick to the more general rules thus excluding '-s' and 'does'. We can relate this to Chomsky's theory of markedness. According to this theory, the unmarked or the less marked items are learned early, but the more marked ones later. To give an example 'I am picking apples now' illustrates the unmarked function of the present progressive and 'I am picking apples

tomorrow' illustrates a more marked function. We can also relate 'markedness' to 'the inherent difficulty' in L2 suggested by McDonough in 1.1 of this dissertation and also to a distinction between 'core grammar rules' and 'peripheral rules'.

The errors in forming the simple past tense and the simple present tense can possibly be eliminated by engaging the learners with activities which focus on meaning and by exposing them to suitable input as suggested in Chapter 5.

4.7 Discussing the results of the analysis

So far we have examined the interlanguage of our learners attributing the errors to certain causes. Perhaps we can ask ourselves the question: 'Is this analysis worthwhile?'. We assume that the answer is in the affirmative because the errors committed illuminate the areas to be altered and/or to be improved. This relates more to L2 acquisition process than to direct error correction. As has been shown by the analysis, there are types of errors common to all our students e.g. overuse of the present continuous tense, omitting the copula, overuse of 'to' and 'from', pursuing a reductionist strategy and translation. These type of errors stems from the negative effect of L1 in L2 learning. Besides crosslingual errors, we see another type of errors i.e. intralingual errors, which are also abundant in the production of our learners. We assume that, both crosslingual and intralingual errors will decrease in number as the proficiency level of our students increases. In the beginning, their occurence is quite normal and if the teacher feels discouraged by errors, then he should provide them with extra input (apart from using the textbook). Another possibility is that he may knowingly discourage his students from using English. However, this approach has one major drawback. Without the chance of errors, the learner cannot develop his own internalized standards of correctness (see 2.4).

As suggested by Allwright and Bailey (1991:99), it is the teacher's job to help the learners 'move along the interlanguage continuum'. Albeit many counterarguments, there is a renewal of interest in CA (See 2.2). In fact, L1 does affect the course of interlanguage development, but this influence is not always predictable. However, as our research has shown, there are certain areas where Turkish learners of English are susceptible to make errors. Our research aimed to illuminate these macro-areas.

Chapter 5 Language acquisition

Up till now we have been interested in the production data since it is observable and reflects the learner's underlying competence. It easily lends itself to analysis. By contrast, comprehension of a second language is more difficult to study since it is not directly observable. The comprehension of language is as important as production. Because the rules the learner has internalized are not open to direct inspection, it has been necessary to examine the learner performance. The early studies showed that certain grammatical features such as third person 's' and the progressive '-ing' were acquired in a certain order. This order seems to be the same for learners regardless of their L1. To put it another way, learners would acquire a particular a grammatical item at a time determined by their own internal system (a built-in syllabus). Corder suggests that the learner's syllabus may be a more effective syllabus than one prepared by the teacher. Corder (in Richards, 1974:27) highlights Von Humboldt's statement that 'we cannot really teach a language, we can only create conditions in which it will develop spontaneously in the mind in its own way'.

Now, let us elaborate on the issue of motivation, which affects L2 acquisition. According to Gardner and Lambert, there are two kinds of motivation: integrative and instrumental. The former relates to a desire to achieve

proficiency in the L2. It reflects a genuine personal interest in L2. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, has been defined as a desire to be proficient in L2 for utilitarian reasons. Both types of motivation have a positive effect on the rate and quality of L2 acquisition. Thus, the L2 teacher should introduce activities that motivate his students.

Another issue in L2 acquisition is the role of the right hemisphere of the brain. The right hemisphere learns and processes language data in a very different way than the left hemisphere. It can be an active processor of language. Whereas left brain's function is logical and analytic, the right brain can be perceptive, schematic and intuitive. And classroom activities that require functioning of the right hemisphere contributes to the acquisition of language items; thus reducing the number of errors in learner production. This requires the introduction of games, stories, etc. Thus, the lack of such activities tells the teacher of English something about errors.

5.1 Effects of input

By 'input', we mean the language which the learners are exposed to by listening or by reading. The role of input in the process of SLA remains one of the most controversial issues in current research. For example, Krashen hypothesized that L2 data which were comprehensible but with effort -and were slightly more advanced than L2 learner's current level of understanding- would promote learning. This type of input is represented by 'i+1'. 'i' represents the learner's current stage of interlanguage development and the '1' items which are new and challenging. However, other scholars (Allwright and Bailey,1991:121) hold the view that mere exposure to input per se, even if comprehensible, is insufficient in acquiring a L2. However, they acknowledge the value of the effort made by the learner to comprehend the input and especially when this effort is made in face-to-face interaction. Ellis (1986) seeks to show that it is not so much input as interaction that is important for SLA. Chomsky's mentalist view of language learning emphasized a 'language acquisition device' and played down the role of the linguistic environment. Therefore a minimum of input would suffice. Here, it would be appropriate to refer to the perennial question of whether children are born with 'a tabula rasa' in their minds or whether human mind is genetically programmed to learn a language. Whether language grows in the mind naturally or whether it is learnt by

instruction (the nature-nurture controversy) is still a controversial issue. If we accept that a blueprint exists, then the input is not very important. If we subscribe to the latter point, then we see input as most important. As maintained by mentalists input serves merely as a trigger to activate the device. Chomsky went so far as to label the linguistic input as 'degenerate'. He argued that it was logically impossible for a child to develop a competence that generated well-formed sentences from exposure to data consisting of sentence fragments, deviations from rules, and false starts. Chomsky (1965) also argued that the imperfect nature of the mother's speech input in L1 acquisition made it unlikely that any child could successfully internalize the rule system of a language if he worked on this alone. However, later research showed that the speech addressed to children and also to L2 learners is generally well formed. The fact is that there exists an interaction between the input and the learner's internal processing mechanisms. Then, input is transformed into intake, which can also be measured by evaluating output. Corder (1981:58) maintained that, learners do not immediately learn on first exposure. He provides two reasons for this which might explain the causes of some errors; the former relates to the fact that the quality of input or its presentation may be defective. The latter concerns an unreadiness in the learning device for taking in and this compels us to revise schema theory.

5.2 Schema theory

This theory stresses the interplay between language and one's knowledge of the world. A schema is a knowledge structure. Minsky called these knowledge representations 'frames' and it was likened to 'TV screen' by Peter J. Roe. Human mind consists of an ever-increasing number of schemas and they include slots which need to be filled in (or instantiated) with appropriate values, obligatory or optional. This instantiation implies an activation and exploitation of the meaning potential and thus contributing to acquisition process. People also differ in having different schemas with different slots. These slots need to be filled in with 'default values' (Minsky's term) as well as idiosyncratic values. And a better L2 acquisition results from an interaction between a top-down approach and a bottom-up one. This refers to schematic knowledge interacting with systemic knowledge. Cook (1989) asserts that language teaching in general follows a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down approach. Another point that needs to be illuminated is that there may be certain common elements in one's overlapping/interrelated knowledge structures. Strange as it may seem but the acquisition of a common value in one schemata does not guarantee its immediate retrieval to fill another slot in another schemata. To give an example, 'a bell' in our school schemata differs from 'a bell' in our church schemata or a hotel schemata. Even 'a bell' of a

bicycle and 'a bell' of a door belong to different schemas. The slight differences in meaning have led to the creation of subsenses in lexicography and mastery in the use of subsenses results from our ability to activate some schematic knowledge and operate retrieval systems instantly. All this discussion is not for denying that transfer of values is impossible but such transfer may not be automatic and spontaneous. Such transfer may be most difficult when metaphoric language is used,which is a case of polysemy or homonymy. In our example, the word 'bell' as in 'the bell of a flower' has quite a different meaning that can only be activated in and retrieved from our flower schemata. Thus the meaning of 'bell' is more than the most common definition of a bell i.e. a round hollow metal object, usually open-ended which makes a ringing sound when struck, or an electronic instrument which makes a similar sound (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English). The Collins English Dictionary gives almost a dozen subsenses of the noun 'bell', some referring to the instrument and some to its sound. If we look the same word up in the index of The Oxford Duden Pictorial Dictionary (1981), we see that subsenses of the word are illustrated in different sections relating to different fields. For example, we can refer to the instrument meaning under the section headings of 'plumber', 'iron and steel', 'railway', 'navigation', 'election', 'countryside in winter', 'musical instruments, 'electrician' and 'church'. Naturally meanings of words are

dependent on the context of use and situation. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that our L2 instruction should allow the learners to be exposed to a great number of listening and reading texts so that they are able to differentiate between items that look quite similar at face value. This will also help them to internalize both syntactic and lexical features of L2.

At this point, we can refer to Parabhu, who rightly stated:

> This way of looking at the process of acquisition does not implyy that acquisition of any element of language structure is necessarily an instant, one step procedure. It may take several instances of intensive exposure to different samples of language before any abstraction is made, or cognitive structure formed, and particular instances may or may not lead to any such result. The cognitive structures formed may at first be faint, or incomplete, or inaccurate, becoming better defined with further exposure, ... Also different learners in a class may, in the course of the same classroom activity, be preoccupied with different pieces of language, thus abstracting different structures, or with the same piece of language with different results... Language learning perceived in this way cannot be specifically predicted or controlled by language teaching.
> (Parabhu 1987:70)

Another suggestion is made by Hutchinson and Waters (1987:49). They assert that the human mind possesses 'a network of connections' and new connections are needed for the enhancement of an existing one. This is obviously related to schema theory.

5.3 The interactionist view

McLaughlin (1987:50) criticises Krashen arguing that comprehensible input alone fails to account for speech development as regards testing hypothesis and getting feedback. Berko-Gleason (in Brown, 1987:33) also favours the role of interaction rather than exposure in child's speech development:

> While it used to be generally held that mere exposure to language is sufficient to set the child's language generating machinery in motion, it is now clear that, in order for successful first language acquisition to take place, interaction, rather than exposure, is required; children do not learn language from overhearing the conversations of others or from listening to the radio, and must, instead, acquire it in the context of being spoken to. (Berko-Gleason, 1982:20)

The necessity of interaction in the development of L2 is a question addressed by scholars. Thus, Ellis (1986), in his evaluation, asserts that language development is the result of both input factors and innate mechanisms. He believes that 'language acquisition derives from the collaborative efforts of the learner and his interlocutors and involves a dynamic interplay between external and internal factors'(op. cit:129) Or similarly:

> The development of a variable interlanguage rests on the availability of opportunities to take part in different kinds of classroom interaction. (Ellis, 1987 :192)

Tasks provide such opportunities. According to Richards:

> ... the conversation class should primarily provide opportunities for learners to engage in natural interaction through the use of communicative tasks and activities. (Richards, 1990:78)

We can divide the tasks into two: 'pedagogic tasks' and 'real-world tasks'. Although the former group have little real world relevance, they are intellectually valid and meaning-focused.Such tasks are justified on the grounds that internal psycholinguistic processes of L2 acquisition are activated.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

Relying too much on conscious teaching of rules, instead of an intuitive/incidental acquisition process, causes a greater number of errors; because, as suggested by Stevick (in Ellis, 1986:234-235), the rules learned consciously are hold in 'secondary memory'. On the other hand, acquired material is never lost from 'tertiary memory'.

Errors also result from faulty comprehension of distinctions in L2. These sometimes result from paying too attention to micro areas when reading or listening. Faulty comprehension may also be due to misconception of rules. The form 'was', for example, may be interpreted as a marker of the past tense (Refer back to 4.6). Certain types of teaching techniques increase the frequency of over-generalized rules. There is a danger in too much attention to learners's errors. The teacher should not lose sight of the value of more positive features of development of The L2. Errors may also result from the classroom exercises, with their emphasis on correctness.

A distinction is made by Stern (1992) between the analytic and experiental strategies. In the analytic strategy, the focus is on the language whereas the focus is on message in experiental strategy. According to Stern (op. cit:319), 'the experiental strategy tries to counteract the excessively slow and painstaking struggle against error; it adopts instead the developmentally more optimistic belief that

errors will gradually disappear as the result of a rich and varied language experience'.

Another distinction is made between 'global' and 'local' errors that learners make. Global errors hinder communication. They prevent the hearer from comprehending some aspect of the message. Local errors on the other hand only affect a single element of a sentence and need not be corrected.

Another recommendation for error correction is that the L2 teacher can include in his instruction an 'error doctor' component as a separate session where the whole class is engaged in focussing on and correcting faulty utterances. Rather than disrupting the flow of L2 class, the teacher can deal with them in a separate session. It is also possible to incorporate error doctor sessions with individualized tutorials.

6.1 Summary

In this dissertation we suggested that explicit rule learning and attempts at correcting errors on the spot do not in fact contribute to elimination of errors. The point is that rather than attacking errors, a language teacher should rather be concerned about providing optimal input for his learners as well as providing them with opportunity to interact in small groups. If a persistent error needs to be corrected it should be done on an individual basis. And most of the errors can be eliminated by the learner himself.

Errors partly stem from the negative transfer from the Turkish rule system and reflect the unstable nature of interlanguage. Approximately one-third of total errors are attributed to L1 interference.

Error correction, unless resorted to sparingly and light-heartedly, causes the L2 learners to adopt a strategy of avoiding the use of certain structures. It was also suggested that learners should not be forced to produce language early, for errors partly stem from a state of unreadiness.

In chapter 1, we dealt with shortcomings of traditional approaches to errors and language learning. We emphasized a need for a more effective approach to correct language use.

Chapter 2 covered the theoretical background to our analysis which would otherwise be difficult to understand.

In chapter 3, we introduced the research and procedures followed.

In Chapter 4, we got down to the business of actually assessing some common errors found in the writings of Anatolian secondary school students. We dealt with cross-lingual as well as intralingual dimensions.

Chapter 5 was devoted to the issue of acquiring a L2. we studied effects of input and suggested that traditional textbooks would not be enough in L2 acquisition.

As a last say, our L2 insruction should also make use of material that includes listening and reading as input. Apart from the input provided by materials and teacher, the learners should be directed towards individualized learning and self-access materials. Conditions should be created for learners to engage in interaction in small groops.

6.2 Recommendation for further research

Up till now, we have concerned ourselves with ananalysis of crosslingual and intralingual errors made by Turkish learners of English. We suggested that crosslingual errors also appear in the written production of the students.

Consequently, the role of L1 in learning an L2 deserves to be investigated further. Perhaps we need to reconsider the use of a crosslingual strategy and the complex nature of transfer (positive, negative or other). Also, ways of countering the negative effects of Turkish rule system when learning English need to be explored. And further research ought to be done in this field. A case in point is a research into the positive or negative effects of the Turkish case system in learning English.

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APPENDIX A
The Written Data

Student	Name:	Class:	Source of data:
Student 1	Sumru Esirgen	Prep A	an advertisement 'a baby shampoo'
1.1	The girl says to her mother: 'Mum, mum! look my shampoo finished.'		
Student 2	Özgür Sağlık	Prep A	an advertisement 'a TV set'
2.1	Two men are in a lorry. They are carrying Arçelik TV. 'Where are we carrying these TV' one of the man's saying. Other's answering:... They are stopping. They are taking a TV and turning on it. Then, they are sleeping...		
Student 3	Pelin Öbek	Prep A	an advertisement 'Aymar cooking oil'
3.1	...A housewife is baking börek. Her husband is growing impatient and he is coming into the kitchen. He is asking to his wife: ... His wife is answering this question...		
Student 4	Tekin Beşer	Prep A	an advertisement 'Artema taps'
4.1 4.2	There is a man and the man smile. The man said: 'Open,close,open,close Artema' ... After, another man come to near you and he said 'Artema'		
Student 5	Şebnem Taşan	Prep A	an advertisement 'a washing liquid'
5.1 5.2 5.3	...He was going to meet his girl-friend. But, when he looked another girl, he falled down in a hole.. But, when he falled down the hole, his t-shirt and trousers got dirty...		
Student 6	Atakan Davarcı	Prep A	an advertisement 'Disney World'
6.1 6.2 6.3	I saw an advertisement. I'm going to tell you disney world magazine's advertisement. There are a lot of children sitting the studio. A child say something to another child's ear. And they say: Ay, I'm not believe.'		

Student 7	Sercan D. Güneş	Prep B	an advertisement 'life insurance'

A little child said:'You love your car,
7.1 you're insuring it. You love your house,
7.2 you're insuring it.' A few minutes later, he added: 'Don't you love me?' 'I love you.'...

Student 8	Tuğba Serin	Prep B	an advertisement 'Johnson shampoo'

Some children are singing song in English.
8.1 They telling [singing] Johnson baby shampoo.
8.2 One children combing hair.
8.3 A few children taking shower.

Student 9	Kamuran Ahraz	Prep B	an advertisement 'a washing liquid'

...A woman says:
'But we must wash the dishes.'
9.1 The man was say:
9.2 'We don't wait the dishes.'
9.3 The woman was say: 'But you don't ready.'

Student 10	Özgür Mutlu	Prep B	an advertisement 'vegetable oil'

In the advertisement, they want to explain to us that Yudum is very light.
A woman cooks meal with Yudum and her friend asks her: 'This is Yudum, isn't it?'
The woman said,'If you eat the meal, you will
10.1 fly,because this meal have cooked with Yudum.'
10.2 The other woman don't belive it,...

Student 11	Gülin Mutlu	Prep B	an advertisement 'Johnson shampoo'

They are very happy because they wash themselves by Johnson baby shampoo and it doesn't burn their
11.1 eyes. Their parents very happy because ...

Student 12	Erdoğan Aydemir	Prep A	a story 'Cinderella'

Cinderella was very beautiful. But her
12.1 sisters was ugly. One day Cinderella's two
12.2 ugly sisters very happy. Because they were going to ball. Cinderella said: 'I want to going to ball.' But her sisters laughed and they said: 'You mustn't go to ball. Because you haven't got pretty dresses.' So Cinderella wasn't happy.

Everyone was invited in a village.
12.3 But she wasn't go. When she was crying, a fairy
12.4 godmother came ... The fairy godmother was touch
the pumpkin...

Student 13 Mehmet Korkut Prep A a story 'Cinderella'

Cinderella was very happy. She was very beautiful
but her two sisters were very ugly.
13.1 Cinderella did a lot of work. She did washed the
floors, cooked food and collected wood.
13.2 Cinderella's her two sisters very happy.
Because they went to the ball palace.
13.3 Fairy godmother came to near the Cinderella...
an advertisement
There are two men in this advertisement. They
13.4 are eating hamburgers. Then they are pouring
13.5 sauce into their T-shirt. And they are worrying.

Student 14 Mustafa Durmaz Prep A 'a night out'

The time was 12.00. A man was drinking lots of
14.1 whisky. So he was being drunkman. After, he was
14.2 looking for his keys and he wasn't finding.
14.3 Because he was dropping his keys and it lost.
14.4 So, the man wasn't coming to his house. He was
14.5 taking a ladder and he was coming to house...

Student 15 Esen Öbek Prep A 'a night out'

The clock was 12.00. A man was drinking very
much. He is drunk. He was walking on the street
15.1 and he was think his home. He was looking for his
15.2 keys. He wasn't find his keys. He put the ladder
15.3 near the window. Suddenly he was broke the
15.4 window. After than he was climb up the window but
he was coming the man house...

Student 16 Emre Yavuzer Prep B 'a night out'

One day Tom wanted to drink some wine and he went
to pub. He drank lots of wine and he got drunk
16.1 and he couldn't give calculation. The boss of
the pub took him to the kitchen and wanted the
16.2 wash dishes from Tom but he couldn't do because
he was very drunk ...

Student 17 Esra Erdoğan Prep B 'a night out'

17.1 One night Tom was very drunk and he was go
17.2 home at 12.00 o'clock. He was lost his key.
17.3 He was come to house but he lost key so he

17.4 couldn't enter the house. He was bring the
17.5 and break the window. He was put the ladder
and enter the house but someone was sleep
17.6 on the bed and the man was wake up.
17.7 He was very frightened from Tom.

Student 18 Elmas Doğan Prep B 'a night out'

One night John was in a bar. The time was 12 p.m.
... When he was walking on a pavement, he dropped
18.1 his key...He sought his key for a long time.
18.2 But he didn't found...He thought he should use a
ladder and he should go in his house...
18.3 He climbed with ladder. At last he looked the
room, but it wasn't his house.

Student 19 Mehmet Özenç Prep B 'a night out'

One nigfht, Frank drank whisky a lot. He walked
in the pavement and he lost his key. He looked
19.1 for his key. He did not found his key. He broke
a glass. He brought the ladder and he leaned it
19.2 to window...The man woke up with fear.
19.3 The man opened the lamp.

Student 20 Tuğba Yıldız Prep A 'a night out'

A drunk had taken a bottle of whisky and he was
drinking it. And also he was walking fast.
20.1 At that moment he has fallen his key of house.
20.2 He has come his house. He has begun to search his
key. But he couldn't find it. Then he decided to
go to his neighbour's house...Then he climbed up
20.3 to the ladder. The owner of the house surprised..

Student 21 Sibel Eryiğit Prep A 'a night out'

One day...A man...was drunk and he didn't know
what he was doing. he dropped his house's key and
so he couldn't get into his house...Then the
other man screamed. After that, the man switched
21.1 on the light and he telephoned to the police.

Student 22 Erman Terciyanlı 1-A 'an accident'

Every day my big brother, my aunt's son and I
ride our scooter. One day we rode our scooter
22.1 again. First we went to Kemerhisar and took a
newspaper...Then we went to Petrol Ofisi and
22.2 took some petrol to our scooter...

Student 23 Şebnem Taşan 1-A 'leisure'

In my free time, I usually draw picture...if I draw animals' pictures, my brother and my friends
23.1 laugh me ... I drew my first picture when I was 3 years old. I drew a bird's picture. But the bird
23.2 hasn't got foot. So, my parents and my
23.3 grandmother laughed me and said 'Good.' Sometimes, I draw picture very carefully, but
23.4 it doesn't be beautiful. If I draw carelessly,
23.5 it does be beautiful.

Student 24 Özgür Sağlık 1-A 'an accident'

When I was at the third class in the primary school, I saw an accident...[the cyclist] didn't see the lorry. When he turned, the lorry hit him. ..A bus was there. It's driver didn't want to hit
24.1 them and he turned to the school then he hit to the school garden's wall..

Student 25 Volkan Aksöz 1-A 'a dream'

In my dream, I saw a cat...I don't want to put the cat in the street. After that I go to another
25.1 friend. He don't like the cat. After that I go to
25.2 my girl friend. She like the cat...

Student 26 Kamuran Ahraz 1-A 'a dream'

26.1 In my dream, I be an English teacher...In final exam, a student say me 'Teacher, please help me!' I answer 'OK. But why you frighten of exam?'
26.2 She don't answer.

Student 27 Erdoğan Aydemir 1-A 'a dream'

In my dream I was a footballer...Bülent threw the
27.1 ball to me...Then I threw the ball to Hakan. He
27.2 hit his head but the goalkeeper catched the ball.

Student 28 Uğur Umut 1-A 'my leisure'

28.1 ...I read a book once a day. I like listening to
28.2 pop and jazz music... I am riding a bicycle very
28.3 fast and I am playing football very good and I
28.4 don't like voleyball and handball...

Student 29 Tuğba Yıldız 1-A 'an accident'

29.1 One day, I came to home from school... my brother
29.2 went to the outside to play games with his
29.3 friends...I was bored... That is why I opened TV.

Student 30 Sibel Eryiğit 1-A 'a dream'

...we got into the spaceship and then all the
astronauts wore their special clothes and after
that the spaceship went to the space and we
30.1 reached to the space... when I had gone out I
felt wonderful things. Then I had begun to fly
30.2 in space... I couldn't reach to the ship.

Student 31 Nusret Yalçın 1-A 'an accident'

When I was 10 years old, we went to Sazlıca. We
visited my dad's uncle. After a few hours we
31.1 decided to go home and we set off. When we were
31.2 coming to home...

Student 32 Gülhan Songur 1-B 'a night out'

The time was 12 o'clock and everywhere was dark.
At that moment a man was walking on the streets
with his bottle of beer, alcohol. Of course, he
was drunk and lost the key of his house. For this
32.1 reason, when he arrived there, he surprised
32.2 because he didn't find it...

Student 33 Sevgi Altınel 2-B 'my problem'

...Our lessons are very hard. And although our
exams are too many, some of teachers give a lot
33.1 of homework. And I must make my annual Turkish
homework until May 17. ...And I haven't got any
33.2 free time to make it. I want to make my homeworks
and study my exams in the free lessons...
33.3 But another teacher make lessons in free lessons.
33.4 I think this very wrong...

Student 34 Alper Acındı 2-B 'my problem'

My problem is with my mother. I always make dirty
34.1 my clothes and always my mother angry with me and
she washes my clothes. And then she says to me:
'You always make dirty your clothes.'... My
other problem is with my father. Some days I have
a very difficult exam and I don't want to go
34.2 to school but my father say: 'You must go to
school.'

Student 35 İlker İlhanlı 2-B 'a night out'

35.1 It was midnight. A man drinks a lot. When
35.2 he come home he can't find his keys for the door of his house. Then he finds a ladder and starts
35.3 to climb up to the window. When he come near the
35.4 window he see a man at the bed. Then he and the
35.5 man at the bed surprised and he understands that it isn't his house.

Student 36 Gökşen Balaban 2-C 'My last holidays'

36.1 I made my last holiday in Ankara... We arrived on my uncles home about 02:30.
36.2 They had waited us. Then we slept and awoke in the morning... I was very excited because I
36.3 didn't go to there before.

Student 37 Serhat Özgüleç 2-C ' Auto stop'

..They started to run and wanted to found a road.
37.1 Then they found a road and they make autostop.A
37.2 lorry take them and they arrived to their home.

Student 38 Eylem Ak 2-C 'a killing story'

It was a hot and clear blue summer day. I was
38.1 standing in our balcony. When I looked to the street, I saw a coke lorry. It was an ordinary one for me. But how I could know that lorry's driver will be killed by another driver.

Student 39 Tamer Dikbaş 2-C 'at camps'

Our days in camp was the same. In morning got up
39.1 at seven o'clock and went to running, then breakfast. And then we went to sea for swimming ...

Student 40 Şevket Ş. Sümer 2-C 'a holiday'

... There is a lot of fishes in this lake. When
40.1 I looked them I saw a red and blue light on the lake. I looked at the sky and saw a UFO.

Student 41 Necati Çetinkaya 2-C 'my mistakes'

41.1 ... We were on the first floor... my foot creamed then I rolled. After that my head was bleed then They took me to the hospital.
41.2 After that I went to home.

Student 42 Cansu Dülgar 2-C 'a strange happenning'

... we stopped in front of the shop. My parents
42.1 and my aunt looked dresses. And I looked toys.
After one minute I looked around but I couldn't
42.2 see my parents... The policeman helded my hand ..

Student 43 Yasemin Öner 2-C 'a lone cat'

.. when our parents slept we went out near the
cat. Then we brought it to our room...But when we
43.1 came to home my mother got up and angried for us.
43.2 Then she leaved the cat in the same place.

Student 44 Ebru Eren 2-C 'a strange event'

...But I forgot our room's number. I remembered,
but very little. First of all I went to a room.
44.1 I knocked the door. A German looked at me ...

Student 45 İsimsiz 2-C 'an accident'

It was about 5 or 6 years ago, in a hot summer
holiday. Ali, who is my uncle's son, was
45.1 shouting us that he couldn't find a place...to
fly a kite. He was calling us from the top of
the cliffs.

Student 46 H. Alper Bircan 2-C 'a visit to a village'

Two months ago my family and I went to Hançerli
to visit. We set off about 12.00 o'clock a.m.
46.1 Hançerli isn't far to Niğde, it is about 8 kms...
46.2 When we arrived to the center of Hançerli, I saw
a very large pool near to the fountain.

Student 47 (İsimsiz) 2-C 'my last holiday'

47.1 I made my last holiday in Ankara.
47.2 We arrived to Ankara at 01.00 in the night.
Everywhere was very crowded. But about 30 minutes
later, I saw nobody in the streets...We arrived
47.3 on my uncle's home at 01.00. He had waited us.

Student 48 M. Emre Arı 3-A 'teachers'

48.1 Teachers are teach us something that we need. We
48.2 can't say all of teachers are teach us something.
48.3 ...Some of the teachers aren't teach something us
because they don't know anything or they know but
they but they don't teach.

Student 49 Muzaffer Adem 3-A 'my uncle's dogs'

My uncle's sons have got two very big dogs. They are very wild. When they saw a living thing in
49.1 their garden, they attack to that thing.
One day a man was riding a motorbike in the street. When he was passing my uncle's house,
49.2 the dog saw the man and attacked to him.

Student 50 Ayşegül Özyapı 3-A 'ghosts in the house'

... They had the house redecorated and began to
50.1 wait ghosts. After a few weeks, ghosts didn't
50.2 visit them. But they were going on to wait them.

Student 51 Emin Kumsal 3-C 'a night out'

...in the middle of day,..a drunk man was walking on the street...Then he came home...He looked for the key but he couldn't find it...He took a step-
51.1 ladder and put it to the window of a house. When
51.2 he entered to room, a man was sleeping.

Student 52 Özgür Erdoğan 3-C 'British dogs attact postmen'

In Britain, when the mailman delivered the letters by the service car, one of the dog was
52.1 attack to the mailman...it jumped through the window ...broke the window of the door...

Student 53 Ebru Yazgan 3-C 'channel changing dispute'

A mother shot her daughter after a channel changing dispute.
Before the mother shot him,the daughter changing channels often and not necessary.
53.1 So the mother angry with him. And say:'Do not do
53.2 it.' but he wasn't listen her.

'Mark Lowry and his friends'

I think it is a good happening for Mark Lowry
53.3 because his classmates weren't leave him alone.
[They had their heads shaved to support him.]

Student 54 Evrim Numanoğlu 3-C 'mother charged for shooting son'

A boy who was shot from his abdomen by his mother is staying in a British Hospital...
54.1 Everything was normal until the boy begin to change

the channels very often. Initially, mother told him
54.2 to stop the changing, but he didn't listen her.
So, she...pulled a gun and aimed at TV. But he
didn't mind....Finally she shot him...

Student 55 Köksal Demir 3-C 'Jacob Colman' kills couple'

I read that Jacob Colman killed a couple. The
55.1 couple weren't like Jacob. So, Jacob didn't like
55.2 they too...He hated from they...He was thinking
kill them...and he killed them...

Student 56 Fatih Özpınar 3-C 'Friendship'

Friendship is important...Let's come to the point..
When I was at Australia, one of our classmates had
cancer. We were with him on his bad days and good
days. We collected some money and gave it to him so
56.1 that he could see treatment at hospital...

Student 57 Onur Selamoğlu 3-C 'Boy had leukemia'

At the school the boy was a leukemia...in his class
room sixteen of his friends shaved their heads.
I think he is a clever boy. His friends were shaved
57.1 their heads because they were loveing him or he was
helping them.

Student 58 Eylem Savaş 3-C 'Jacob Colman'

58.1 Jacob Colman...don't like to make homework or study
his lesson. He think about himself.
58.2 He don't like the couple and wanted to kill them...
58.3 But he mustn't do this...If he don't kill the
58.4 couple, he live well and may be he has a good job..

Student 59 Mehmet Tunçbilekli 3-C ' a night out'

One day in the night, a man was drunk. He was
walking on the street. ...When he come his house,
59.1 he wasn't found his key. He broke the window and
59.2 entered the house. But he wasn't entered his house.

Student 60 Mustafa Atabey 3-C 'Jacob Colman'

Jacob Colman is 13 years old. He was living with
60.1 a couple... He wasn't like this couple because
Jacob think they didn't understand him...When the
police and some people ask 'why did you killing
60.2 them, Jacob answering to them 'I didn't like them'.