Chapter I

Introduction

Importance of English Language

English language, the first global lingua franca, dominates all spheres of activities including communication, science, business, aviation, entertainment, diplomacy, etc. both at national and international levels. Its reach beyond the British Isles began with the growth of British Empire and by the nineteenth century, it became truly global. Presently, one in ten persons knows English and one should know English to have one’s say in the world. English, having attained the international status, provides the best medium to interact with the outside world. All the events involving the multinational participation necessarily include English as one of the medium of expression. Education also has contributed to the growth of English. English plays a vital role as a medium of instruction while teaching the foreign students in majority of the countries. English is the mainstay of the internet users. Some subjects like science, mathematics, and technology are easily taught through English. English is a storehouse of knowledge and hence the study of English is given greater importance, especially, in a developing country like India.

Every nation must develop and encourage its own language. However, in India we have diversity in language and it is not possible for many years ahead to have a common language like Hindi. We cannot wait for such a language to be developed. Therefore, the learning and teaching of English is very essential for the smooth transference of ideas and messages.
A working knowledge of English has become a basic requirement in a number of fields, occupations, and professions including medicine and computing. As a result, over a billion people speak English, at least, to a basic level. It is also one of the six official languages of the United Nations.

The modern job markets provide better opportunities for candidates who can communicate in English. A reasonable level of proficiency in English is expected from the candidates even though they possess a sound knowledge in their area of specialization. Those who communicate in English will surely find their own place in their academic and career pursuit. Call centres, BPOs, tele marketing, on-line shopping, project implementation, medical transcription, etc. require high level of proficiency in English. English teachers are the most wanted group in the academic sector. The role of English speaking teachers is crucial not only in teaching English but also in teaching all other subjects, to train people for interviews, group discussion, etc.

Considering all the above facts, it is clear that English is a language that has to be internalised systematically for its effective production. Internalisation does not mean that knowledge in receptive skills can make one competent. An individual should be competent in productive skills too, to become an effective language user.

The researcher being a language teacher raised a few queries to himself and the research project was born out of his quest to find the answers to these queries.

a. How does language acquisition take place?

b. Why does our second language education not produce the expected outcome?

c. Why do our students remain “dumb” even after learning a skill subject for nine years?

d. Is there any procedure for systematic language acquisition/learning?
e. What are the stages through which one acquires mother tongue?

f. If we find out the mother tongue acquisition pattern, is it possible to develop foreign language course in the same pattern?

g. If mother tongue acquisition is possible without learning the alphabets, why not English?

h. Is reading ability a must in language acquisition? How far does it help in the acquisition of a second language?

i. A child takes years to acquire his mother tongue. Is it possible to reduce the period in second language acquisition since one already knows a language?

The researcher sincerely hopes that the findings of this research will not only help the researcher to redefine his classroom practice but also will enable the Indian teachers in high/higher secondary schools to better their teaching methods.

Many methods have been employed to make English language learning effective. The concept of methods of language teaching paved the way for the introduction of various strategies in language teaching. The method concept - the notion of a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning - is a powerful one, and the quest for better methods preoccupied teachers and applied linguists throughout the twentieth century.

Methodology in language teaching has been characterised in a variety of ways. Methodology links theory and practice. Within methodology a distinction is often made between methods and approaches, in which methods are held to be fixed teaching systems with prescribed techniques and practices, and approaches are language teaching philosophies that can be interpreted and applied in a variety of different ways in the classroom. There are a number of methods and approaches that have influenced language teaching practice over a long period of time.
A brief glance into the earlier methods followed in Indian schools to teach English from the late 19th century onwards is necessary in order to understand the shift of emphasis on the objectives of teaching English and methodologies followed to teach English, which culminated in laying emphasis on acquisition rather than learning. This exercise of presenting the history of teaching English is done with the purpose of bringing out the gradual changes that have been taking place in the classrooms and hence are not elaborated.

The Grammar Translation Method.

The Grammar Translation Method, as suggested by its exponents Johann Scidenstiicker, Karl Plotz, and Johann Meidinger, is the offspring of German scholarship, the object of which was “to know everything about something rather than the thing itself” (qtd. in Kelly 53). The underlying principle of this method, otherwise known as the Classical Method, is to make full use of the mother tongue in teaching a foreign language.

Text-book occupies the most important place in teaching in this method. A specific graded vocabulary is presented in the text book. Some rules of grammar are illustrated in each lesson. The teacher translates each sentence into the mother tongue in the class. Because the Grammar Translation Method is not an offshoot of a theory of learning or an approach to language description, it becomes difficult to clearly define a typical Grammar Translation Method class (Tickoo 350). The principle characteristics are as follows:

a. Grammar Translation is way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences from the mother tongue into
the target language and vice versa. It, hence, views language learning as consisting of little more than memorizing rules and facts in order to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the foreign language. “The first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language” (Stem 455).

Reading and writing are the major foci; little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening.

Vocabulary selection is based solely on the reading texts used and words are taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study, and memorisation.

The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice. Much of the lesson is devoted to translating sentences from the mother tongue into the target language and vice versa.

Accuracy is emphasised. Students are expected to attain high standards in translation, because of “the high priority attached to meticulous standards of accuracy which, as well as having an intrinsic moral value, was a prerequisite for passing the increasing number of formal written examinations...” (Howatt 132).

Grammar is taught deductively. In most grammar translation texts, a syllabus is followed for the sequencing of grammar points throughout a text. There is an attempt to teach grammar in an organised, systematic way.

The student’s native language is the medium of instruction.

As the emphasis is on developing writing skills, meagre attention is paid to developing pronunciation.
i. It is purely a teacher oriented method.

It is still used in situations where understanding literary texts is the primary focus of foreign language study and there is little need for a spoken form of the language.

**The Direct Method**

It is an antidote to the Grammar Translation Method, both in theory and practice. The underlying principle is that words should be directly associated with the reality or experience. It aims at making the pupil think in English without the intermediary of a word or words in his/her own mother tongue. Direct Method which was popular in India from the early 20’s is associated with the following precepts and practices in the foreign language classroom:

a. Since it considers speech being the basis of language, oral expression receives much attention in the class. People learn by imitation and practice.

b. Sentence is the unit of teaching. So it focuses on building a usable stock of language utterances and expressions.

c. The habits built in the first language serve as road blocks to second language learning. So the Direct Method prefers the use of actions, objects, and explanations that strengthen direct bonds between ideas, experiences, and concepts and the target language words and expressions that stand for them.

d. The teaching of grammar should follow and not precede the learning of a language, and also it should be done inductively.

e. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.
The common allegation against the Direct Method is that it neglects written work and reading. Creating direct bonds between words and ideas is not possible in the case of hard phrases and idioms.

The Harvard psychologist Roger Brown has documented similar problems with strict Direct Method techniques. He described his frustration in observing a teacher performing verbal gymnastics in an attempt to convey the meaning of Japanese words, when translation would have been a much more efficient technique. (Brown 35)

New Method

Dr. Michael West’s New Method was an improvement upon the Direct Method. It lays more emphasis on reading aloud and silent reading. Another important feature of this method is oral work or conventional practice inside the classroom. It considers talking and reading as interdependent abilities. But they need to be taught separately, as the methods and techniques involved in their teaching are different. Dr. West designed strictly controlled and interesting reading material which is presented with the help of limited vocabulary. He is also against teaching of formal grammar.

Bilingual Method

J. Dodson’s Bilingual Method is comparable to West’s New Method. Both are products of experiments done in a bilingual teaching-learning environment - New Method in India and Bilingual Method in Wales (Tickoo 355). The Bilingual Method has received a considerable attention from a number of ELT practitioners in the non-English speaking world also.

Dodson aimed at full language proficiency and made use of the best activities found in other language teaching methods. In its basic structure, a lesson in the Bilingual Method fits into the traditional three-phase model of presentation, practice, and
production. It moves on step-by-step from controlled imitation to free communicative use of language.

It has the advantage of using printed texts in the classroom. The teacher first reads out the text to the class with the books closed. Learners then open the books and glance at the text as a support to oral imitation.

Principles of the Bilingual Method

a. Foreign/second language can be learnt with the help of mother tongue.

b. Words and sentences in the target language are presented with mother tongue equivalents.

c. Mother tongue is not used as translation, but as a means to achieve the communicative end.

d. Sentence, not word, is the unit of teaching.

e. Once the students develop sufficient command over the target language, mother tongue is completely withdrawn.

Audio-lingual Method

The emergence of the Audio-lingual method resulted from the increased attention given to foreign language teaching in the United States towards the end of 1950s. Audiolingualism, a term coined by Nelson Brooks in 1964, claimed to have transformed language teaching from an art to science. There are many learning principles which became the psychological foundation of Audiolingualism.

a. Foreign language learning is basically a process of mechanical habit formation. Language is verbal behaviour - the automatic production and comprehension of utterances - and can be learned by inducing the students to do likewise.
b. Language skills are learned more effectively if the items to be learned in the target language are presented in spoken form before they are seen in written form.

c. Analogy provides a better foundation for language learning than analysis. Drills can enable learners to form correct analogies. So teaching of grammar is essentially inductive.

d. The meanings of the words in a language can be learned only in a linguistic and cultural context.

Audiolingualism holds that language learning is like other forms of learning. It stresses the mechanical aspects of language learning.

By this time there was a shift from method to approach considering all the pros and cons of method.

Method and Approach

In English Language Teaching, the difference between a philosophy of language teaching at the level of theory and principles, and a set of derived procedures for teaching a language, is central. In an attempt to clarify this difference, a scheme was proposed by the American applied linguist Edward Anthony in 1963. He identified three levels of conceptualization and organization, which he termed approach, method, and technique:

The arrangement is hierarchical. The organizational key is that techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach. . . . An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. . . . Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. . . . Within one approach, there can be
many methods. ... A technique is implementational - that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well. (Anthony 63-67)

This distinction was developed and recast by Richards and Rodgers as Approach, Design, and Procedure encompassed within the overall concept of Method, “an umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice” where

Approach refers to the beliefs and theories about language, language learning and teaching that underlie a method. . . . Design specifies how theories of language and learning are implemented in a syllabus model and teaching and learning activities and materials in the classroom... . Procedure concerns the techniques and practices employed in the classroom as consequences of particular approaches and designs.

Figure 1: Relationship among method, approaches, design and procedure from Richards and Rodgers, TESOL Quarterly 153-68)
Brown, in *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, draws a distinction between methods as “specific, identifiable clusters of theoretically compatible classroom techniques” (15), and methodology as “pedagogical practices in general . . . whatever considerations are involved in ‘how to teach’ are methodological” (15).

Method is more related to the theoretical aspect of teaching. A method contains a particular view about teaching in which there are no contradictions. On the other hand, an approach is more related to practical teaching. An approach may use more than one method while teaching.

**The Structural Approach**

The Structural Approach came into being as an alternative to the Direct Method. It is the presentation and practice of carefully selected and graded grammatical structures of English in effective and meaningful situations, initially through speech and later through reading and writing. Language is viewed as structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning, the elements being phonemes, morphemes, words, structures, and sentence types. Language items are graded according to their frequency, usefulness, and teachability.

The Structural Approach is based on the following principles:

a. Language is primarily speech.

b. Language is a set of habits.

c. By using situations, the use of mother tongue can be avoided.

**The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching**

Palmer, Hornby, and other British applied linguists from 1920s onward developed an approach to methodology that involved systematic principles of selection,
the procedures by which lexical and grammatical content was chosen; gradation, principles by which the organization and sequencing of content were determined; and presentation, techniques used for presentation and practice of items in a course. The main characteristics of this approach are as follows:

a. Language teaching begins with the spoken language. Material is presented orally before it is presented in written form.

b. The target language is the language of the classroom.

c. New language points are introduced and practiced situationally.

d. Vocabulary selection procedures are followed to ensure that an essential general service vocabulary is covered.

e. Items of grammar are graded following the principle that simple forms should be taught before complex ones.

f. Reading and writing are introduced once a sufficient lexical and grammatical basis is established.

It was the third principle that became the key feature of the approach in the 1960s and it was then that the term situational was used increasingly in referring to the Oral Approach.

The Situational Approach lays emphasis on learning language through real life situations. Here, this foreign language learner should be enabled to form links between new words, constructions, and real situations. The amount of new materials in each class must be limited to what can be assimilated without indigestion.
The Situational Approach makes great demands upon the teacher, who should be imaginative and also fluent in the target language. Text books also need to be prepared to suit this method.

The **Substitution Table**

Substitution Table, introduced by H.E. Palmer, is often considered a technique not a method. It is a process by which any model sentence may be multiplied indefinitely, by substituting any of its words or word groups of the same grammatical family with certain semantic limits. Substitution tables serve as a valuable device for their schematic use. They also provide an authentic linguistic form of language, articulation, and fluency exercises. The unit of teaching is sentence.

This technique ensures the formation of correct speech habits, and mistakes are minimised. The students can easily acquire command over phrases and idioms. Since enough practice is given in speaking, learners develop the habit of speaking English.

It is also a teacher-oriented method. It focuses on form and it remains as an error preventive method. However, teaching poetry and prose is very difficult in this method. Only isolated sentences taken from the text can be taught by this method. It may take long time to formulate adequate linguistic habits.

Since most of the messages were teacher-oriented or structure-oriented, students lacked confident use of productive skills, especially oral communication. For effective teaching/learning climate, the learner has to play a significant role in language learning. So a new approach has found its way.
The Communicative Approach

The Communicative Approach could be said to be the product of educators and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the Audio-Lingual and the Grammar-Translation methods of foreign language instruction. Interest in promoting the Communicative Approach in teaching developed in 1970s.

The primary principle of the Communicative Approach is to learn English through use, that is, through communication. In the learning tasks listening, speaking, reading, and writing areas are constantly combined and integrated.

It is a learner centred approach, where “teachers will find themselves talking less and listening more, becoming active facilitators of their students’ learning. . . . Because of the increased responsibility to participate, students may find they gain confidence in using the target language in general” (Larsen-Freeman 48).

Although no single methodology has been described for this approach, it has its own characteristics. It stimulates real life communicative experiences. Through interviews and conversations, students learn to prepare questions. The learning task is content based, theme based, project based or it is the combination of these three. Students get and share information. The Communicative Approach is based on context and so analysis of language is done in specific context. Language drills, recitation and isolation grammar exercises are not the ways to acquire any language. Decontextualised language is not used as a basis for skill instruction.

The focus of Communicative Approach is on meaning rather than on form. It gives priority to the semantic content of language learning. That is, learners learn the grammatical form through meaning, not the other way around. Thus, "learning activities
are selected according to how well they engage the learner in meaningful and authentic language use (rather than merely mechanical practice of language patterns)” (Richards and Rogers 72).

Since the primary aim of the approach is to prepare learners for meaningful communication, it is error tolerant and so students have the freedom to make mistakes and learn through the mistakes.

**Classroom Implementation**

Instructors of the Communicative Approach must be dedicated to the belief that oral communication is important for learning and be willing to arrange classrooms so that talk between students in large and small groups is convenient. The psychological atmosphere should be one in which students feel comfortable and take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

There are two types of communicative activities that can be implemented in the class - one controlled communicative activities and the other free communicative activities. Controlled communicative activities include situations creation, guessing games, information gap exercises, exchange of personal information, etc. and free communicative activities include pair work, group work, eliciting, role-play, etc. Workouts like warm-ups, relaxes, information-centred tasks, theatre games, group dynamics, etc. are essential to follow the Communicative Approach.

Experts in the language teaching theory and practice accept that it is both unhelpful and unwise to look for one best method for effective teaching. Some even believe that the profession has finally got over the “century-old obsession” (Stem 250) with finding a panacea in a globally usable method.
Years of the search for the best method has produced no evidence to show that by itself any method consistently guarantees better learning. Also, once inside the classroom, teachers find it neither possible nor helpful to use a particular method fully. They modify it substantially. At the same time there is also a steady increase in the scholarly work that seeks to produce what Kumaravedivelu calls “an alternative to method rather than an alternative method” (“Method, antimethod and post method” 14). The present research is founded on this precept.

In the Communicative Approach, methods of assessment are also changed. A student’s performance can no longer be measured solely by a predetermined checklist of speaking and listening skills, but must reflect the effective use of language in different social situations. Wells. G in his book *The Meaning Makers: Children Learning Language and Using Language to Learn* has concluded that “linguistic interaction is a collaborative activity involving the establishment of triangular relationship between the speaker, the listener and the context of the situation” (72). So assessments must take place over a variety of realistic classroom situations.

The Communicative Approach is acquisition-oriented rather than learning. Its activities, situations, and experiences pave a better way for the learners to acquire the language. The researcher also wants to check whether language acquisition, rather than language learning, is possible at higher secondary level.

Along with the shift in objectives, another evolution was also gradually taking place. There was awareness among teachers of English and experts in this field that a child is able to attain proficiency in his mother tongue because of exposure, interest and motivation. This can be termed as language acquisition. While learning a foreign language the child is conscious of the work he has to put forth and hence the learning is
neither spontaneous nor the process of learning motivating. The shift from accuracy of
attaining language skills to fluency in presenting the language is the major focus of
Communicative Approach and in the following paragraph the researcher has given the
definition of acquisition differentiating it from learning.

Language Acquisition

Language acquisition is the study of the process by which humans acquire a
language. Language acquisition refers to First Language Acquisition, which studies
infants’ acquisition of their native language. It is a universal process. The term Second
Language Acquisition deals with the acquisition of additional languages in both children
and adults. It is the process by which people learn a second language in addition to their
native language. The term second language is used to describe the acquisition of any
language after the acquisition of the mother tongue.

Language Acquisition vs Language Learning

An important difference is always made between language acquisition and
language learning. Language acquisition is a subconscious process through which the
children are familiarised with a language. If it is a second language, other than the
mother tongue, the students acquire that language through the same process they acquire
their mother tongue. They get a feel for what is and what is not correct. In order to
acquire a language the learner needs a source of natural communication. The emphasis is
on the text of the communication, not on the form.

Language learning is the conscious knowledge of the new language and students
can talk about that knowledge. Language learning is not communicative. It is the result
of the direct institution in the rules of language. Learners can fill in the blanks on a
Grammar page. Researches (Carroll, “Foreign Language” 131-151; Naiman, et al. 85-87; Krashen, Second Language Acquisition 62-68) have shown, however, that knowing grammar rules does not necessarily result in good speaking or writing.

The study of the structure of the language can have general educational advantages and values that schools and colleges want to include in their language programme. But examining irregularity, forming rules and teaching complex facts about the target language is not language teaching; rather it is language appreciation(Krashen, Second Language Acquisition 33).

Stages of Language Acquisition

The language acquisition process happens in different stages - first understanding, then one-word utterances, then two-word phrases, and so on. Second language acquisition also moves through five predictable stages:

Stage I: Pre-production.

This is the silent period. According to Stephen Krashen (Language Learning 23), most new learners of English will go through a silent period which is an interval of time during which they are unable or unwilling to communicate orally in the new language. It occurs before the English Language Learners are ready to produce oral language.

Learners may have 500 words in their receptive vocabulary but they are not yet speaking. Some students may repeat what the teacher says. They are not really producing language, but are parroting. They will listen attentively and they may even be able to copy words from the board. They will be able to respond to pictures and other visuals.
Listening to comprehensive and vocabulary building activities are essential in this period. Learners at this stage will need much exposure to English.

The length of the silent period is determined by various factors. Personality plays a key role. A normally shy and quiet learner in native language needs longer period before he feels comfortable to speak. Native culture will also play a vital role. For example, in many cultures girls are not expected to speak out. They play a more passive role in family and classroom dynamics.

Stage II: Early Production

In this stage the learners begin to speak using short words and sentences but the emphasis is still on listening and absorbing the new language. They will develop receptive and active vocabulary of 1000 words. They can use short language chunks that have been memorised, although these chunks may not always be used correctly. They can demonstrate comprehension of new material by giving short answers to simple yes or no, either...or, who, what, and where questions.

Stage III: Speech Emergence

Students develop a vocabulary of 3000 words and can communicate with simple phrases and sentences. Students begin to use dialogue and can ask simple questions, such as “May I come in?” and are also able to answer simple questions. They will initiate short conversations with their classmates. They will understand easy stories read in the class with the support of pictures. They will also be able to do some content work with teacher support. Vocabulary continues to increase and errors begin to decrease, especially in common or repeated interactions.
Stage IV: Intermediate fluency

English language learners at the intermediate fluency stage have a vocabulary of 6000 active words. They begin to use more complex sentences when speaking and writing, express opinions, and share their thoughts. They start asking questions to classify what they are learning in class. Their ability to comprehend detailed text content increases. They use strategies from their native language to learn content in English.

Students’ writing at this stage will have many errors, as they try to master the complexity of English grammar and sentence structure. They should be expected to synthesise what they have learned and to make inferences from that learning. They will be able to understand more complex concepts.

Stage V: Advanced Fluency

Students at this level are close to native language fluency and can interact well in a variety of situations. They develop specialised content area vocabulary and can participate fully in grade-level classroom activities with the support of the teacher. Since they achieve near-native fluency, effective error correction on academic works and oral language can be given.

Understanding that students are going through a predictable and sequential series of developmental stages helps teachers predict and accept a student’s current stage, while modifying their instruction to encourage progression to the next stage. Learners need time to listen to what others talk, to digest what they hear, to develop receptive vocabulary, and to observe their classmates’ interactions.

Many have studied about language acquisition and its process, stages, etc., and formed different theories on it. “Current theories of second language acquisition are
based on years of research, in a wide variety of fields including linguistics, sociology, anthropology and neuro-linguistics” (Freeman and Freeman 19).

A glance into the earlier methods distinctly points out that each method evolve from the major/minor dissatisfaction with the previous method and there have been slight modifications to suit the needs of the classrooms and changing values. For example, though there was emphasis on spoken language in direct method, the audio-lingual made it more specific and systematic.

Behavioural changes in any human being is an outcome of learning. It is a known fact that human psychology and language learning are closely associated. The following pages are devoted to bring out the contribution of psychologists to language development.

Theories of Language Development

Language acquisition theories are basically centred on nurture and nature distinction or on empiricism and nativism.

The doctrine of empiricism holds that all knowledge comes from experience, ultimately from our interaction with the environment through our reasoning or senses. Empiricism, in this sense, can be contrasted to nativism, which holds that at least some knowledge is not acquired through interaction with the environment, but is genetically transmitted and innate. The nativist theories assert that much of the capacity for language learning in human is innate. It is part of the genetic makeup of human species and is nearly independent of any particular experience which may occur after birth. Thus, the nativists claim that language acquisition is innately determined and that we are born with a built-in device which predisposes us to acquire language. In other words, some
theoreticians have based their theories on environmental factors while others believed that it is the innate factors that determine the acquisition of language.

Whether it is learning or acquisition both are affected by the child’s ability, environment, potentials, attitude, aptitude and exposure. Learning/acquisition is a psychological phenomenon a and good teacher applies this psychology in linguistic situation. A glimpse into the four major theories of language development lays the theoretical framework of this thesis. The researcher has made an attempt to bring out the essentials of these theories collected from various authentic sources, (please refer works cited).

Following are the four major theories of language development:

1. The Behaviourist Theory

   Behaviourism, like structural linguistics, is empirical-based approach to the study of human behaviour. To the behaviourist, the human being is an organism capable of a wide repertoire of behaviours. The occurrence of these behaviours is dependent on three crucial elements in learning: a stimulus, which serves to elicit a pattern of behaviour; a response, triggered by a stimulus; and reinforcement, which serves to mark the response as being appropriate and encourages repetition (Skinner 81; Brown 42).

   Behaviourists think that the acting, thinking and feeling processes are all behaviours that can simply be described without any reference to the role of the mind or brain in such processes. Behaviourist approach demeans the role and implication of the brain in the language acquisition process. Ivan Pavlov is the main source of inspiration for the Behaviourist School of Thought. This Russian psychologist did experiments on dogs that helped him invent what is termed as classical conditioning - a process of stimulus substitution.
Behaviourist theory emphasises two types of learning: classical or respondent conditioning and operant or instrumental conditioning. As Pavlov is to classical conditioning theory, Edward L. Thorndike and B. F. Skinner are to operant conditioning.

To apply this theory to language learning is to identify the organism as the foreign language learner, the behaviour as verbal behaviour, the stimulus as what is taught or presented of the foreign language, the response as the learner’s reaction to the stimulus, and the reinforcement as the extrinsic approval and praise of the teacher or fellow students or the intrinsic self satisfaction of target language use. Language mastery is represented as acquiring a set of language stimulus or response chains.

The behaviourists consider first language acquisition as a matter of imitation and habit formation. Children imitate what they hear and they are encouraged to do so. They continue to imitate and practice the words and sentences until they form habits of correct usage (Lightbown and Spada 22). Behaviourists believe that learning is a process of habit formation. Habits are formed by receiving the linguistic data from the surrounding environment and by the reinforcement received for the good attempts made to repeat or imitate certain patterns.

Because behaviourists consider language maturation as a matter of forming habits, they assume that a learner acquiring a second language begins with habits related to the first language. These habits influence those required for second language acquisition and the learner has to form new habits (23). The behaviourists treat errors in second language acquisition as interference from first language habits. This psychological learning theory is often related to what is called the contrastive analysis hypothesis. The proponents of this hypothesis claim that if similarities between two languages exist, the language learner will acquire the second language more easily, but if
differences are encountered, the acquisition of the target language will be more difficult (Klein 25). Whereas it may be true that the first language has an influence on learning the second, it is also suggested that the learner uses the knowledge already acquired in learning another language (Lightbown and Spada 23).

2. The Nativist Theory

The behavioural view is viciously attacked by Noam Chomsky calling it largely mythology and a serious delusion (Chomsky 28). He points out that imitation theory of learning has failed to explain how people come to produce sentences which they never have heard before. He argues that cognition plays the decisive part in creating the ability to produce an unlimited number of sentences with the knowledge of a limited number of grammatical rules. He calls this ability language competence and distinguishes it from performance, that is, the actual use of language which, under the heat of communicative exchanges or when people are tired, may lead to the production of grammatically faulty sentences.

Instead, Chomsky advocates a more theoretical approach, based on the study of syntax. He says that language is a unique human accomplishment and that all children have a LAD (Language Acquisition Device) that allows them to produce consistent sentences, once vocabulary is learned. Because young children learn language so effortlessly, yet lack the mental ability to analyze the rules and structures of the language logically; he proposed that there must be a mechanism that allows children to acquire the structure of language naturally. Though Chomsky's LAD has never been located, it is generally accepted among the experts that the brain comes hardwired for language to develop and biologically human beings are programmed for learning language (Pinker 41; Lust, Suner, and Whitman 60; and Slobin 3-24).
He later expanded the idea of LAD into that of Universal Grammar, a set of innate principles and adjustable parameters that are common to all human languages. According to Chomsky, the presence of Universal Grammar in the brains of children allows them to deduce the structure of their native languages from mere exposure.

Nativists view that there are some “hidden assumptions” (Chomsky 29) that allow children to quickly figure out what is not possible in the grammar of their native language and allow them to master that grammar by the age of three. This leads to language being perceived as our biological inheritance and its acquisition as natural part of maturation. They believe that children learning language are as natural and normal as dolphins learning to swim or birds learning to sing.

3. The Cognitive Approach

Cognitive psychologists claim that one of the main features of second language acquisition is the building up of a knowledge system that can eventually be called on automatically for speaking and understanding. At first, learners have to build up a general knowledge of the language they want to understand and produce. After a lot of practice and experience they will be able to use certain parts of their knowledge very quickly and without realising that they did so. Gradually, this use becomes automatic and the learners may focus on other parts of the language.

The cognitive theory is a relatively newcomer to second language acquisition and there have been only a few empirical studies about this approach so far. Although we know that the processes of automatising and restructuring are central to the approach, it is still not clear what kinds of structures will be automatised through practice and what will be restructured. Also it cannot predict which first language structures will be transferred and which will not.
As far as the phenomenon of restructuring is concerned, psychologists state that things that we know and use automatically may not necessarily be learned through a gradual build-up of automaticity but they may be based on the interaction of knowledge we already have. They may also be based on the acquisition of new knowledge which somehow fits into an existing system and may, in fact, restructure this system (Lightbown and Spada 25).

McLaughlin’s Attention-Processing Model and Implicit and Explicit models also contributed to the language development studies.

A. McLaughlin’s Attention-Processing Model

This model connects processing mechanisms with categories of attention to formal properties of language. Consequently there are four cells. The first one refers to focal automatic processes like the student’s performance in a test situation or a violin player performing in a concert. The second one characterises focal controlled processes such as the learner’s performance based on formal rule learning. The next cell refers to peripheral controlled processes such as the phenomenon of learning skills without any instruction. The last cell focuses on peripheral automatic processes and can be related to a learner’s performance in situations of communication. “Controlled processes are ‘capacity limited and temporary,’ and automatic processes are ‘relatively permanent’” (Brown 265). Automatic processes mean processing in a more accomplished skill which means that the brain is able to deal with numerous bits of information simultaneously. According to Brown, “the automatizing of this multiplicity of data is accomplished by a process of restructuring in which the components of a task are co-ordinated, integrated, or reorganised into new units, thereby allowing the… old components to be replaced by a more efficient procedure” (267).
B. Implicit and Explicit Models

According to Brown and other linguists, there is a distinction between implicit and explicit linguistic knowledge. Explicit knowledge means “that a person knows about language and the ability to articulate those facts in some way” (285). Implicit knowledge is “information that is automatically and spontaneously used in language tasks. . . . Implicit processes enable a learner to perform language but not necessarily to cite rules governing the performance.” (285) Instead of implicit and explicit, Bialostok uses the terms unanalysed and analysed knowledge. Unanalysed knowledge is described as “the general form in which we know most things without being aware of the structure of that knowledge; on the other hand, learners are overtly aware of the structure of analyzed knowledge” (286). Furthermore, these models also distinguish between automatic and non-automatic processing which is built on McLaughlin’s conception of automaticity. Brown states that “automaticity refers to the learner’s relative access to the knowledge. Knowledge that can be retrieved easily and quickly is automatic. Knowledge that takes time and effort to retrieve is non-automatic” (286). Another significant fact in second language performance is time. It takes learners a different amount of time until they produce language orally.

4. The Empiricist Theory

Since 1980, linguists like Melissa Bowerman and psychologists following Piaget like Elizabeth Bates and Jean Mandler came to suspect that there may be many learning processes going into the acquisition process, and that ignoring the role of meaning may have been a mistake. Empiricist theory argues that there is enough information in the linguistic input that children receive and therefore there is no need to assume an innate language acquisition device. This approach is characterised by the construction of
computational models that learn aspects of language and/or that stimulate the type of linguistic output produced by children.

Empiricist theories of language acquisition include Statistical learning theories of language acquisition, Relational frame theory, Social interventionist theory, and others.

A. Statistical learning theories of language acquisition

Language acquisition researchers like Elissa Newport, Richard Aslin, and Jenny Saffran believe that language acquisition is based primarily on general learning mechanisms, namely statistical learning. The development of connectionist models that are able to successfully learn words and syntactical conventions support the predictions of this theory.

B. Chunking theories of language acquisition

Chunking theories of language acquisition constitute a group of theories related to statistical learning theories. They assume that the input from the environment plays an essential role. The central idea of these theories is that language development occurs through the incremental acquisition of chunks of elementary constituents which can be words, phonemes or syllables.

C. Relational Frame Theory

Relational Frame Theory (Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, and Rocha 22-54) provides a wholly selectionist account of the origin and development of language competence and complexity. Based on the principles of Skinnerian Behaviourism, RFT positions that children acquire language purely through interacting with the environment. Relational Frame Theorists introduced the concept of functional contextualism in language learning,
which emphasises the importance of predicting and influencing psychological events such as thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, by focusing on manipulable variables in their context. RFT distinguishes itself from Skinner’s work by identifying and defining a particular type of operant conditioning known as derived relational responding, a learning process that occurs only in humans possessing a capacity for language learning. Empirical studies supporting the predictions of RFT suggest that children learn a language through a system of inherent reinforcements, challenging the view that language acquisition is based on innate language-specific cognitive capacities.

D. Social Interactionist Theory

Social interactionist theory is a method of language acquisition in which a variety of its forms including written, spoken or visual are used as social tools. Like nativists, interactionists also take a cognitive view of learning. They too believe that second language acquisition relies much more on the learner’s innate abilities than on the inputs supplied by the government. They differ, however, in their belief that teaching makes a difference (Tickoo 339).

The term interactionist has two possible meanings. The first meaning refers to a person who believes that learning takes place as a result of interaction between learners and the people they communicate with. Researchers like Long studied this type of interaction in different contexts including foreigner talk, teacher talk, caretaker talk, and student-student interaction. (Long 377). The second meaning refers to a person who believes that successful second language learning is a product of meaningful interaction between internal and external factors. The former mainly refers to the learner’s innate language learning capacity; the latter to the instruction received by the learners.
In second language teaching, aspects of interactionist approach can be seen at work in humanistic and communicative approaches. In each of them the shared goal is to teach language as a means of effective communication. The means used include task-based teaching inside a learner-centred classroom. Interactionist approach seeks to build a learning environment free from stress and anxiety. These theories suggest that there is a native desire to understand others as well as being understood by others.

5. Emergentist Theories

Emergentist theories such as Mac Whinney’s competition model posit that language acquisition is a cognitive process that emerges from the interaction of biological pressures and the environment. According to these theories neither nature nor nurture alone is sufficient to trigger language learning. Both of these influences must work together in order to allow children to acquire a language. The proponents of these theories argue that the general cognitive processes subserve language acquisition and that the end result of these processes is language-specific phenomena, such as word learning and language acquisition.

6. Krashen’s Hypothesis of Second Language Acquisition

This hypothesis by Stephen Krashen is one of the most controversial theoretical perspectives in Second Language Acquisition. It is based on a set of five interrelated hypotheses that are listed below:

A. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

As mentioned above, Krashen claims that there is a difference between acquisition and learning. Acquisition is “a subconscious and intuitive process of constructing the system of a language, not unlike the process used by a child to ‘pick up’
a language.” Learning is a conscious process in which “learners attend to form, figure out rules, and are generally aware of their own process” (Brown 278).

B. The Monitor Hypothesis

The monitor has nothing to do with acquisition but with learning. The learned system acts only as an editor or *monitor*, making minor changes and polishing what the acquired system has produced. According to Krashen, three conditions are necessary for monitor use: sufficient time, focus on form, and knowing the rules (Lightbown and Spada 27).

C. The Natural Order Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that we acquire the rules of a language in a certain order that is predictable (27). However, this does not mean that every acquirer will acquire grammatical structures in exactly the same order. It states that, in general, certain structures tend to be acquired early and others to be acquired late (Krashen and Terrell 28).

D. The Input Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that it is important for the acquirer to understand language that is a bit beyond his or her current level of competence. This means, if a learner is on a level $i$ the input he gets should be $i + 1$. This means that the language that learners are exposed to should be just far enough beyond their current competence that they can understand most of it but still is challenged to make progress (Brown 278).

E. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that it is easier for a learner to acquire a language when he/she is not tense, angry, anxious, or bored. According to Dulay and Burt, performers
with optimal attitudes have a lower affective filter. A low filter means that the performer is more open to the input language (Krashen and Terrell 38).

Krashen’s assumptions have been hotly disputed. Many psychologists like McLaughlin have criticised Krashen’s unclear distinction between subconscious (acquisition) and conscious (learning) processes. According to Brown, second language learning is a process in which varying degrees of learning and of acquisition can both be beneficial, depending upon the learner’s own styles and strategies. Furthermore, the $i + 1$ formula that is presented by Krashen raises the question how $i$ and 1 should be defined. Moreover, what about the silent period! Krashen states that after a certain time, the silent period, speech will emerge to the learner, which means that the learner will start to speak as a result of comprehensible input.

Nevertheless, there is no information about what will happen to the learners, for whom speech will not “emerge” and “for whom the silent period might last forever” (Brown 281).

**Acquisition and Learning and the Monitor Model for Performance**

The fundamental claim of Monitor Theory is that conscious learning is available to the performer only as a Monitor. Utterances are initiated by the acquired system. Fluency in production is based on what one has picked up through active communication. Formal knowledge of the second language or conscious learning can be used to alter the output of the acquired system. These changes help to improve accuracy and the use of Monitor often has this effect.

Lawler and Selinker propose that for the rule internalization one can “postulate distinct types of cognitive structures: (1) those mechanisms that guide automatic
language performance . . . that is, performance . . . where speed and spontaneity are crucial and the learner has no time to consciously apply linguistic mechanisms . . . and (2) those mechanisms that guide puzzle or problem-solving performance . . (Lawler and Selinker 35)

**Conditions for Monitor Use**

There are several important constraints on the use of the Monitor. The first condition is that in order to monitor successfully, the performer must have time. In normal conversation both are speaking and listening, and so performers do not have time to think about and apply conscious grammatical rules. There is a second condition: the performer must be focused on form or correctness. The third condition is that the performers need to know the rule and a correct mental representation of the rule to apply it correctly.

But situations in which all these conditions are satisfied are rare so it is very difficult to apply conscious learning to performance successfully. Individual variation is a key factor while discussing the acquisition learning difference. There are basically three types of performers.

**A. Monitor Overuser**

Monitor overusers are performers who feel they must know the rule for everything and do not entirely trust their feeling for grammatical correctness in the second language. Stafford and Covitt present an instructive case of Monitor overuser. Their student $S$ knows many of the rules of English, but is unable to communicate in English, while her written English is quite accurate. Stafford and Covitt remark that “she speaks very little, because she tries to remember and use grammar rules before speaking”
S’s self correction behaviour reveals her lack of faith in her acquired knowledge of English. She does not trust her intuitions about English syntax but relies on conscious rules. Mr. I, a missionary, described by Nida, also belong to this category. Nida suggests that this may have stemmed from his early use of a non-prestige dialect of English and his efforts to learn the prestige form. He felt he could not dare for a minute to make a mistake, “thus exposing his background and running the risk of losing the position he had sought so hard to win” (Nida 53)

Overuse of the Monitor can also stem from a lack of acquisition. Those trained only in foreign language classroom, where the emphasis was on conscious grammar, may develop extensive formal knowledge of the target language, with very little acquisition, and consequently have no choice but to be overusers. Such performers may utilise the first language as an utterance initiator when forced to speak, since they lack acquired competence in the second language. Overusers typically have a resistant, overcareful style of speaking, thanks to their overconcern with correctness and constant rule-searching.

B. Monitor Underuser

There are adult second language performers who do not seem to use a monitor to any extent, even when conditions encourage it. Such performers appear to be uninfluenced by most error correction and do not unusually utilise conscious linguistic knowledge in second language performance.

The Monitor underuser does not seem to use the conscious grammar at all. The underuser typically judges grammaticality by feel; he uses his subconsciously acquired system, rather than a conscious grammar. Cohen and Robbins describe a language underuser Hung using his own words: “I never taught any grammars. I guess I just never
learned the rules that well. I know that every time I speak it’s pretty correct, so I never think about grammars. I just write down whatever I feel like it. Every time I write something I just stop thinking. I don’t know which (rule) to apply . . .” (Cohen and Robins 59)

Underusers seem to be immune to error correction and do not perform well on grammar test. They may acquire a great deal of the target language and may use quite complex constructions.

C. Optimal User

The optimal user is the performer who uses learning as a real supplement to acquisition, monitoring when it is appropriate. They achieve native speaker’s competence in written performance.

Critical Period Hypothesis

How long children acquire native language (L1) and the relevance of this to the second language (L2) learning have long been debated. Although evidence for L2 learning ability declining with age is controversial, a common notion is that children learn second language easily and adult learners rarely achieve fluency. This assumption stems from critical period ideas. Critical period hypothesis was popularised by Eric Lenneberg in 1967 for LI acquisition but considerable interest now surrounds age effects on second language acquisition also. But the results are varied. Recent studies (Mayberry and Lock 88) have recognised that certain aspects of second language acquisition may be affected by age.

Although this hypothesis does not describe an optional age for second language acquisition, it implies that “the younger children can learn languages more easily than
older learners, as adults must reactivate principles developed during LI learning and forge an SLA path. Children can learn several languages simultaneously as long as the principles are still active and, they are exposed to sufficient language samples” (Pinker 117).

Critical period hypothesis supports the commonly held view that young children learn languages better. But this has not been confirmed by any research (Singleton 71). On the contrary, given the same amount of exposure to a foreign language, there is evidence that the older the child the more effectively he or she learns (Snow and Hoefnagel-Hoehle 162-67; Ellis 484-94). Snow and Ellis find teenagers are overall the best learners.

Young children’s better language learning ability is even more dubious if applied to formal classroom learning - where there is only one teacher to a number of students, exposure time is very limited and the survival motive does not usually apply. Moreover they have not yet developed the cognitive skills and self discipline that enable them to make the most of limited teacher mediated information.

Adult’s capacity for understanding and logical thought is greater, and they like to develop a number of learning skills and strategies which children do not yet have. Adult classes tend to be more disciplined and co-operative. Another reason is that most adults are learning voluntarily, have chosen the course themselves, often have a clear purpose in learning (work, travel, etc.) and are therefore likely to feel more committed and motivated, whereas most children have little choice in where, how or even whether they are taught.

The belief that if you get too old and pass the critical period you will have more difficulty in language learning is not conclusively supported by research evidence. There
may not be critical period at all; or there may be several (Singleton 72; Long 217-25).

While C. Snow claims that twelve is the optimum age for a shorting a foreign language in school (Snow 65), Penny Ur opines that ten is the right age (Penny 107).

The controversy about the critical period is still inconclusive. But the researcher felt the need to mention the concepts of critical period to bring out the complexity of teaching-learning process in the classroom.

**Attitude and Aptitude in Second Language Acquisition and Learning**

Another area of second language research and practice that the acquisition-learning hypothesis helps to interpret is work in second language aptitude and attitude. Both language aptitude (as measured by standard tests) and attitude (affective variables) appear to be related to second language achievement, but are not related to each other.

“. . . what is termed aptitude is directly related to conscious learning, while attitudinal factors may be more closely linked to acquisition” (Krashen, *Second Language Acquisition* 163). It is possible to have high aptitude and low attitude, low aptitude and high attitude, or both high, or both low.

**Aptitude**

Foreign language aptitude, which Carroll defines as the “rate of which persons at the secondary school, university and adult level learn to criterion” (“Characteristics” 5) has most recently been measured by standardised test such as the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) and the Language Aptitude Battery (LAB).

According to Carroll there are three major components of modern aptitude tests. The first, phonetic coding ability, the ability to store new language sounds in memory; the second, grammatical sensitivity, individuals ability to demonstrate his awareness of
the syntactical patterning of sentences in a language (7); and the third, inductive ability, the ability to “examine the language material . . . and from this to notice and identify patterns and correspondence and relationships involving either meaning or grammatical form” (8).

Pimsleur’s summary of the components of language aptitude is similar to, but not identical with Carroll’s:

. . . the ‘talent’ for learning foreign language consists of three components. The first is verbal intelligence, by which is meant both familiarity with words (this is measured in the Language Aptitude Battery by the ‘Vocabulary’ part) and the ability to reason analytically about verbal materials (this is measured by the part called “Language Analysis”). The second component is motivation to learn the language . . . The third component . . . is called ‘auditory ability’. . . (“Foreign Language” 182)

Attitude

Language attitude includes affective, personality and motivational factors. Affective factors relate to the emotional state and attitude towards the target language. Research on affective factors in language learning is still strongly influenced by Bloom’s taxonomy, which describes the affective levels of receiving, valuing, organization, and self-characterisation through one’s value system.

Researchers like Krashen believe that language learners possess an affective filter which affects language acquisition. If a student possesses a high filter he or she is less likely to engage in language learning because of shyness, concern for grammar or other
factors. Students possessing a lower affective filter will be more likely to engage in learning because they are less likely to impede by other factors. The affective filter is an important component of second language learning. (Krashen, Second Language Acquisition 92)

Anxiety

There appears to be consistent relationship between various forms of anxiety and language acquisition in formal and informal situations. Anxiety is often related to sense of threat to the learner’s self-concept in the learning situation, for example, learner’s fear of being ridiculed for a mistake.

Studies have shown a relationship between low anxiety and language acquisition. Carroll noted a small negative correlation (r = -0.20, n=68) between text anxiety and accomplishment in intensive foreign language courses (“Implications” 45). It is also reported that classroom anxiety correlated with speech skills as well as grades in French as a foreign language in grades seven to eleven in Canada (Gardner, et al. 198-213). Naimon, Frohlich, Stem, and Todesco found that their student’s (French students in grades 8 to 12 in Toronto) failure was due to classroom anxiety, high fear of rejection and such feelings. Dunkel found that the low achievers in Latin showed “emotionality, inner conflict and anxiety” on a personality test (qtd. in Pimsleur, et al., 160-70). Oiler, Baca, and Vigil in their study of Mexican-American females in New Mexico, reported that the more the subject saw themselves as calm, conservative, religious, shy, humble, and sincere, the better they did on a cloze test on English as a second language.
Personalty Factors

Studies have proved that the impeding language development is the issue of extroverts versus introverts. Chastain reported that the performance in foreign language at the college level was related to the scores on the Marlowe-Crowne Scale of reserved versus outgoing personality, with outgoing students lending to get higher grades (153-61). Wesche studying thirty-seven Canadian civil servants in an intensive French course found a correlation between role-playing, the willingness of the student to take the part of a character in a dialogue or role-playing situation, and proficiency in listening comprehension and speaking skills (359). Extroverts will try to communicate even if they are not sure they will succeed. Kinginger and Farrel conducted interviews with the US students after their study abroad programme in France in 2003. They found that many of the students would avoid interaction with the native speakers, while others jumped at the opportunity to speak the language. Those who avoided the interaction were typically quiet, reserved people.

Self image has been shown to be related to second language achievement in a few studies. Heyde examined the relationship between self-esteem and oral production in ESL learners at the University of Michigan. In her pilot study involving fifteen subjects, she found a high correlation between global self esteem (the individual’s evaluation of his own worth) and teacher ratings of oral production (226-40). Olle, et al. conclude that “the more positive a subject’s self concept, the higher the achievement in ESL (14). H.D. Brown states a similar view: “Presumably, the person with high self esteem is able to reach out beyond himself more freely, to be less inhibited, and because of his ego strength, to make the necessary mistakes involved on language learning with less threats to his ego (Principles of Language Learning and Teaching 352).
Two other personality factors, not related to self confidence, are also predicted to relate to success in second language acquisition — attitude towards classroom and teacher. The student who feels at ease in the classroom and likes the teacher may seek out intake by volunteering (Seliger “Does practice make perfect?” 264-78). Positive attitude towards the classroom and teacher may also be manifestation of self-confidence. Gardner, et al. found that evaluative relations to the learning situations were associated with both speech and grades in levels seven and eleven in French as a second language in Canada (198-213).

Motivation

The role of motivation in second language acquisition has been the subject of extensive scholarship, closely influenced by work in motivational psychology. Motivation is generally categorised as integrative and instrumental.

Integrative motivation is defined as the desire to be like valued members of the community that speak the second language. The presence of integrative motivation should encourage the acquirer to interact with the speakers of the second language out of sheer interest, and thereby obtain intake. In Stevick’s terms the integratively motivated learners will not feel a threat from the other group and will thus be more prone to engage in receptive learning (acquisition) rather than defensive learning (113). Gardner, et al. confirmed the importance of integrative motivation in grades seven to eleven French classes in Montreal. They found that the measures of integrative motivation tended to correlate more highly with their speech measure than with grades. They suggest that integrative motivation provides the student with the necessary motivation to persist in the second language studies (Gardner, et al. 200).
Integrative motivation also affects the actual behaviour in the classroom. Gardner, et al. found that those students whose test responses indicated the presence of integrative motivation volunteered to answer questions more often, made more correct answers in the class and received more positive reinforcement from their teacher (204).

Instrumental motivation is defined as the desire to achieve proficiency in a language for utilitarian or practical reasons. Its presence will encourage learners to interact with L2 speakers in order to achieve certain ends. For the integratively motivated learner, interaction for its own sake will be valued. For the instrumentally motivated learner, interaction always has some practical purposes.

Instrumental motivation takes lead in certain solutions. Lukmani found that for female Marathi speakers in Bombay who belonged to the comparatively non-Westemised section of Bombay society, proficiency in English was more related to instrumental motivation than to integrative. They saw themselves “based in their own country but reaching out to modem ideas and lifestyles” (272). Gardner and Lambert reached similar conclusions for English as a second language in the Philippines (Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning 126). In the Philippines, English is the language of education and business, but is rarely spoken at home.

The good and bad language learner

A good language learner is an acquirer who is able to obtain sufficient intake in the second language and has a low affective filter to enable him to utilise this input for language acquisition. Data from Naimon, et al. support these generalizations. They surveyed thirty-four good language learners and found that immersion and motivation were the most frequent responses to the question of what factors influenced successful language acquisition. They agreed that the study of grammar alone was not enough.
“Several interviewees, who had achieved high marks in their language courses at school, now attached little significance to this aspect of success” (34).

There are three sorts of bad language acquirers. The very worst has neither acquisition nor learning going for them. This might be the result of low attitudinal and aptitudinal factors. Two other types are the underuser and the overuser of knowledge. The underuser will progress as far as his attitudes will take him. The overuser will be limited by his conscious knowledge and will suffer from lack of spontaneity.

So it is evident that all vanities of learners will be helped by a classroom where intake for acquisition is available in a low anxiety situation. This is easy to say but difficult to provide. Conscious learning need not be avoided, just put in its place. This recommendation is quite close to Carroll’s observation where, “persons with limited sensitivity to grammar may be better off in courses that de-emphasise grammar and concentrate on exposing the learner to large amount of the second language in actual use” (“Characteristics” 3).

In fact, acquisition is central and obligatory for real proficiency in a second language, and if, at best, learning is a useful supplement available only in certain situations, and if attitude relates more directly to acquisition that to learning, then Savignon is correct when she says “Attitude is the single most important factor in second language learning” (298).

The Role of First Language in Second Language Acquisition

The topic of first language interference has had an unusual history in second language acquisition researches and practice. Interference is the process in which a communicative behaviour for the first language influences the second language. For
many years, it had been presumed that the only major source of syntactic errors in adult second language performance was the learner’s first language (Lado, *Linguistics Across Cultures* 112), and a great deal of materials preparation was done with this assumption in mind (Banathy, Trager, and Waddle 35-56). Subsequent empirical studies of errors made by second language students led to the discovery, however, that many errors are not traceable to the structure of the first language, but are common to second language performance of different linguistic backgrounds (Richards 115-35; Buteau 133-46).

Thomas and Collier’s researches put forward the argument that individuals learning a second language use the same innate processes that are used to acquire their first language from the very first day of exposure to the new language, in spite of their age. They reach similar developmental stages of those who acquire first language, making some of the same types of errors in grammatical markers that young children make, picking up chunks of language without knowing precisely what each word means, and relaying on the source of input, providing modified speech that they can partially comprehend.

Many others also researched on the role of first language in the second language acquisition and they took various other factors also in their consideration.

a. First language influence appears to be strongest in word order and in word for word translation and phrases. Duskova studied written errors in the compositions of Czech postgraduate students and concluded that “interference from the mother tongue... was plainly obvious in errors of word order and sentence construction,” a common example being the placement of the direct object after an adverbial, as in “I met there some Germans” (18).

The best example in Malayalam is
Njan Ninne Snehikunnu (നഞ്ഞന് സ്നീഹികുന്നു) which means “I Love You” in English, where subject + object + verb is changed into subject + verb + object.

b. First language influence is weaker in phonology and morphology. Duskova notes that errors in phonology and morphology (e.g. omission of plurals on nouns, lack of subject verb agreement, adjective noun agreement, etc.) are not due to first language interference in her Czech students of EFL. Same is the case with Malayalam also; the finite verb agrees with its subject in person and number:

Avan Pokunnu (ഇവന് പോകുന്നു) – He goes

Avar Pokunnu (ഇവര് പോകുന്നു) – They go

c. First language influence seems to be the strongest in acquisition poor environment. First language interference frequently takes place where natural appropriate intake is scarce and where translation exercises are frequent. It is interesting to note the signs of first language influence in English classroom in Kerala, where input is primarily from the teacher not from peers.

Newmark’s view on interference gives us a positive dimension. Interference is not the first language getting in the way of second language skills, on the other hand, it is the result of the learner falling back on old knowledge when he or she has not yet acquired enough of the second language. First language influence is not proactive inhibition, but is simply the result of the learner being called on to use the language before he has learned the new behaviour. The result is padding, using old knowledge, and supplying what is known to make up for what is known (77-81). L1 may substitute
the acquired L2 as an utterance initiator when the learner has to produce in the target language but has not acquired enough of the L2 to do this.

First language influence may therefore be an indication of low acquisition. If so, it can be eliminated or at least reduced by natural intake and language use. This is what apparently occurred in Taylor’s ESL subjects, who showed less first language influence with more proficiency (Taylor 73-107).

Perhaps the *silent period* observed in natural child second language acquisition (Hakuta, 218-343; Huang and Hatch 118-31) corresponds to the period in which the first language is heavily used in unnatural adult second language performance. The child may be building up acquired competence through input. Several recent studies imply that less insistence on early oral performance is profitable for children and adults studying second languages in formal settings (Gary 51-63; Postovsky 17-26).

**Language Transfer**

Language transfer typically refers to the learner’s trying to apply rules and forms of the first language into second language. Transfer is an important factor in language learning. Learners begin by transferring sounds, (phonetic transfer) and meanings (semantic transfer) as well as various rules including word order and pragmatics.

**Routines and Patterns in Language Acquisition and Performance**

The role of prefabricated routines and patterns in first and second language acquisition and performance has been discussed by many researchers like Hakuta, Lyons, et al. The relationship of these “fixed and semi fixed” (Krashen, “A model of second language performance” 11) expressions to the development of syntactic structure and
their status in performance are issues that are both theoretically interesting and of practical importance in second language teaching.

Prefabricated routines are memorised whole utterances or phrases such as “How are you?” or “Where is your room?” A learner may use these without any knowledge at all of their internal structure. Entire lines from memorised dialogues qualify as prefabricated routines, as do expressions learned from foreign language books. Hakuta has noted that prefabricated patterns are different from routines. They are partly creative and partly memorised wholes. They consist of sentence frames with an open slot for a word or phrase such as “That’s a __________ (pen, book, banana).” Lyon called such constructions “phrase and sentence schemata” and defined them as “utterances that are grammatically unstructured or only partially structured but which can be combined in sentences according to productive rules” (177-78).

There are many researchers who support the view that the second language learner relies far more on routines and patterns than does the first language acquirer. Hatch (“Some studies in language learning” 29-36) describes the case history of Paul, a four-year old acquirer of English as a second language. Paul, a Chinese speaker, was exposed to English in an informal environment, interacting with American children in school and in the playground. During the first month “it seemed as if Paul was learning by imitation. He might repeat the sentence immediately after the other person said it or he might remember it and use it later in the appropriate situation” (31). Proportional speech appeared in the second month and looked quite similar to the analytic speech, one generally sees in descriptions of child first language acquisition. “After week 12 it became increasingly difficult to separate out imitations since Paul’s rule stages moved so fast that he quickly caught up with the language as it was spoken by the children in the
playground” (31). Alajouamine notes that when prepositional speech returns, “fixed phrases” may disappear (95-133).

Hatch suggests a reason why second language acquirers may use more routine and patterns than first language acquirers. She emphasises the second language learners’ greater capacity to remember longer utterances. “The person (L2 acquirer) brings with him a great capacity to create language by rule formation. At the same time, he is capable of storing, repeating, and remembering large chunks of language via imitation. He can repeat them for use in an appropriate situation” (Hatch 33).

Hakuta emphasises on another reason that it is the older child’s greater need to communicate “... in the case of the second language learner, we would expect that, with advanced semantic development and yet no form with which to express such thoughts, the need to learn the various linguistic structures of the target language is especially acute” (288). Until the structure of the language is acquired, it is conceivable, Hakuta suggests that “the learner will employ a strategy which ‘tunes in’ on regular, patterned segments of speech, and employs them without knowledge of their underlying structure, but with the knowledge as to which particular situations call for what patterns. They may be thought of as props which temporally gives support until a firmer foundation is built...” (288).

Synthesising both Hatch and Hakuka, we can conclude that the child second language acquirer has both an increased need and ability to use motions and patterns. The most complete study of routines and patterns in child second language acquisition is L. Fillmore’s doctoral dissertation where he argues that “... that strategy of acquiring formulaic speech is central to the learning of language; indeed it is this step that puts the
leader in a position to perform the analysis which is prerequisites to acquisition”

(Fillmore 125).

**Formal and Informal Linguistic Environments in Language Acquisition**

The question of optional linguistic environment for the second language student has been approached empirically in the last few years in a number of studies (Upshur 111-24; Mason 197-204). Two sorts of linguistics environments are contrasted in these studies - artificial or formal environment, formal for the most part in the classroom and natural or informal environments.

Upshur compared three groups of ten adult ESL students enrolled in a special summer session for the law students at the University of Michigan. The first group, who scored highest on the entrance test, attended seminars and classes during the seven-week period that were conducted in English, but had no extra ESL classes. The second group, who scored lower on the entrance test, also attended law classes and had one hour of ESL class daily in addition. The third group, scored lowest on the pre-test had two hours of ESL class daily in addition to law classes. At the end of the summer, an alternate form of the pre-test was given. Upshur’s statistical analysis revealed “no significant effects on language learning attributable to amount of language instruction” and that foreign language courses may, at this time, be less effective means for producing language acquisition than the use of language in other activities (111-24).

Krashen and Seliger suggest that motivated second language students are able to provide themselves with the essential ingredients of formal instruction without going to class (“The Essential Contributions” 173-83). Mason allows certain foreign students at the University of Hawaii to follow regular academic programmes without extra ESL classes. The post-tests given at the end of the semester showed no significant difference
in increase of English proficiency between those excused from ESL and who took the ESL classes.

Carroll’s study support language acquisition through formal study. It was found that those who started foreign language study early achieved better scores. Those who studied the target language in high school did better than those who started in college. Carroll notes that “the simplest explanation of this finding is that the attainment of skill in a foreign language is a formation of the amount of time spent in its study. (“Foreign Language” 136).

Krashen and Seliger (“The Role of Formal and Informal Linguistic Environments in Adult Second Language Learning”) and Krashen, Seliger, and Hartnett (“Two Studies in Adult Second Language Learning”) claim that when the effects of exposure and formal instruction are compared, it is reliably the case that more instruction means higher proficiency. While more exposure does not necessarily mean more proficiency in ESL. Both studies compared instruction and exposure by matching pairs of foreign students for one of these variables and seeing whether the student who excelled on the other was more proficient in English. (International Journal of Psycholinguistics 15-21).

In their studies, the measurement of the amount of formal instruction was the students’ report of the number of years he or she had studied English in a school situation, including the factors such as the methodology used in the class, the presence or the absence of language laboratory, how often the class met, the amount of the time students devoted to study or grades received. In Krashen and Seliger’s research, exposure was defined as the product of number of years the student reported having spent in an English-speaking country and how much English the students spoke every day, on a scale of one to ten (“The Role of Formal” 220-228). In the research by
Krashen, et al., students were asked to indicate years spent in an English-speaking country and also to indicate how much English they spoke each day, on a scale of one to four (“Two studies in adult second language learning” 2-3). Subjects with the same number of years spent in the country where English was spoken and the same report of speaking were considered to have the same exposure score.

Student samples differed somewhat. In Krashen and Seliger, subjects were registered in an intensive, 20 hour per week institute designed to prepare foreign students for study in American colleges. In Krashen, et al. subjects were enrolled in a part-time extension program, these students were, on the average, older, and many were permanent residents or citizens of the United States. The measure of proficiency used in the first study was teacher ranking, which correlated significantly with the local placement tests, and in the second study, the Michigan Examination in structure was used.

In the first study, six out of fourteen pairs of students matched for years of formal study of English were consistent with the hypothesis that more exposure meant more proficiency; that is, in only six cases did the student with more exposure show a higher ranking than his partner with less. Similarly, in the second study, more exposure was associated with a higher score. In only ten out of twenty-one cases, which is consistent with the hypotheses that the exposure has no consistent effect on second language proficiency. When students were matched for exposure scores, it appeared to be the case that more instruction did indeed mean more proficiency. In the first study, this was true if seven out of nine cases and in the second it was true of eight of eleven cases.

*Heard language* is probably insufficient input for the operation of a language acquisition device at any stage. The difference between *heard language* and *intake* is emphasised by Friedlander, Jacobs, Davis, and Westone. They examined the linguistic
encouragement of a child who at 22 months was judged to be nearly as fluent in Spanish as she was in English. This child heard Spanish primarily from her father. This input, according to Friedlander, et al., made up only four per cent of the child’s total heard language but was twenty-five per cent of the language directed at the child. This confirms the hypothesis that the relevant primary linguistic data are those which the acquirer is actively involved with. The total linguistic environment is less important. Years spent in an English-speaking country need not be equivalent to time spent in meaningful informal linguistic environment (Friedlander, et al. 730-40).

It is not simply the case that informal environments provide the necessary input for acquisition while the classroom aids in increasing learned competence. The interpretation of Krashen, et al., as well Friedlander, et al. suggests that informal environments must be intensive and involve the learner directly in order to be effective. We should distinguish between exposure-type informal environments and intake-type environments. Only the latter provide true input to the language acquisition device. It seems plausible that the classroom can accomplish both learning and acquisition simultaneously. While class-work is directly aimed at increasing conscious linguistic knowledge of the target language, to the extent that the target language is used realistically, to that extent acquisition will occur. In other words, classroom may serve as an intake informal environment as well as a formal linguistic environment.

Pervious researches discussed above assert that intake informal environments are sufficient for language acquisition. Classroom can be reshaped to such an environment when intake environment is created and formal learning processes can be reduced in the classrooms.
The concept of cerebral dominance has been adequately exploited by experts engaged in NLP, Neuro Linguistic Programming, which combines psychology, linguistics and classroom activities. Though this thesis in not completely framed on the development of cerebral dominance, the researcher feels that mention should be made at this juncture to emphasise the fact that acquisition is not just a psychological process but also needs linguistic propel.

The Development of Cerebral Dominance and Language Acquisition

It is known that left hemisphere is responsible for most linguistic performances. Much of the controversy on the issue of neurology of language acquisition is concerned with the development of cerebral dominance in childhood and its relation to language acquisition, both in first and second languages. The history of this issue begins with Lenneberg who hypothesised that the development of cerebral dominance was “firmly established” by around puberty. (Biological Foundations of Language 154). According to Lenneberg, the infant brain is not firmly lateralised. In case of damage to the left hemisphere or in case of removal of left hemisphere, the right hemisphere is able to assume the language function. He argues that this ability of the language function to transfer hemisphere lasts until puberty. After puberty, the right hemisphere did not appear to be able to assume the language function in case of injury to or removal of the left hemisphere and Lenneberg hypothesised that this was due to the fact that lateralization of language to the left hemisphere was now complete.

Lenneberg also hypothesised that the end of the development of cerebral dominance coincided with the close of a critical period for language acquisition, noting that “foreign accents cannot be overcome easily after puberty” and that “automatic acquisition (of second languages) from mere exposure . . . seems to disappear after this
Lenneberg therefore proposed a biological explanation for child-adult differences in language acquisition attainment.

While there seems to be no question that puberty is an important turning point in language acquisition (Seliger, Krashen, and Ladefoged 20-22), it is not all clear that the development of cerebral dominance is directly related. Also, alternative explanations are available to explain child-adult differences.

Early completion of the development of cerebral dominance is also indicated by studies examining the development of unimanual motor skills. Caplan and Kinsbourne in a paper titled “Baby Drops the Rattle” provide an example: they gave rattles to twenty-one infants (average age 21 months 21 days) and found that the babies tended to hold the rattles longer when they were placed in their right hands, suggesting early lateral specialization of the central nervous system (532-34). Witelson has reviewed many studies of this sort using children age seven and younger, and concludes that “right-hand or right-sided superiority was observed in the large majority of the 34 studies” (236).

Lenneberg’s claim that lateralization was complete by puberty and is the neurological basis for the critical period for language acquisition and thus responsible for child-adult differences in second language acquisition is not entirely ruled out. There is, however, considerable evidence today. Caplan, Witelson, et al. observe that much of the development of cerebral dominance may be complete much earlier and may have little or nothing to do with the critical period.

The process of language acquisition and language learning had undergone lots of discussions and debates and it resulted in developing new theories and methods to suit each argument. At the earliest stage, concentration was on grammar and so grammar-centred methods were developed. Later it was disproved because of its limited use, and
importance was given to spoken language. Hence the shift occurred from grammar to structure. Since the middle of the 20th century, both grammar and structure were set aside and form was replaced with meaning. There began the era of communicative approach and the focus was on developing listening and speaking skills first, and through developing these two skills, it was believed that all the four language skills could be developed.

This research has taken its directions from Communicative Approach. Since the basic function of language is communication, especially oral communication, people should be able to speak first, giving importance to fluency rather than accuracy. The present education system, from where the researcher collected his samples, follows the grammar-oriented methods and gives importance to writing skills only. They continue with writing and reading skills and never get the chance to listen or speak English. Communicative Approach to language teaching is more conducive to language acquisition. The researcher believes that oral fluency is the first step of language acquisition and that it is possible by language activities and games. Therefore, his primary focus is on the possibility of language acquisition at higher secondary level through language games and activities.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis has been divided into six chapters.

The first chapter “Introduction” provides the conceptual and theoretical framework of the thesis, thereby lays the foundation. After discussing how English has developed as an important language, the researcher has presented the existing methods of language learning and theories of language development. He also discusses the function of personality factors, aptitude, attitude, motivation, etc. in language acquisition. He
details the role of linguistic environment and first language in second language acquisition.

The second chapter "Review of Literature" analyses the relevant literature available in the research area. The researcher believes that language acquisition is possible only if it is done in natural way as in the acquisition of mother tongue, where the first two steps are listening and speaking, and also believes that oral skill development is possible through language games and activities. So a review of literature is presented in order to find the research gap, analysing the existing researches in language games and activities that help language acquisition.

Chapter three “Design of the Study” states the objectives of the study, presenting the hypothesis and describes the sample and methodology used in the research. The four objectives show the direction of the research and the four hypotheses explain the anticipated outcome of the research. Details about the sample collected give a clear picture of the students, institutions, personality factors, language environment, etc. Description on methodology shows how the study was carried on.

In chapter four “Profile Analysis” describes the profile of the students by explaining the areas under which they have been analysed. This chapter gives a closer understanding of sample respondents.

Chapter five “Experimentation” explains how the experiment was conducted. After analyzing the samples, the researcher conducted a pre-test and has presented batch-wise interpretation. The researcher has focused on speaking skills and developed games and activities to enrich speaking skills. These game-related language activities experimented in classroom to focus on developing reading and listening skills also.
Chapter six “Summing Up” sums up the previous chapters and presents the major findings. The researcher discusses the feasibility of implementing the findings and also presents the future scope with few suggestions.

This study is limited to the higher secondary students of St. Thomas Higher Secondary School, Pala and there is further scope for conducting similar researches including other schools in Kerala and other States also.