V. THE STUDY

One's reach should exceed one's grasp or what is a heaven for,

R. Browning.

Our analysis of what prevents the disadvantaged learner from acquiring English has lead us to hypothesize that the problem is basically socio-cultural in origin but the proximate shape it takes is the underdevelopment of certain cognitive capacities crucial to language attainment.

The intervention programme envisaged for these learners aiming at activating these latent capacities, we suggest, should include communicative activities that would maximize the learners' exposure to the target language coupled with training to make them aware of the specific features of that language and the appropriate learning strategies that are seen as rewarding for them. The other is to help the learner construct knowledge for himself/herself the way Vygotsky (1987) and Bruner (1986) have suggested.
Stated in the form of a hypothesis we might claim that: when exposure to the TL is maximized in the classroom, and when at the same time, the learner consciously attends to (a) the structure of the TL, and (b) the strategies for successful learning, the learning capacities of the disadvantaged learners that remain dormant due to a peculiar set of socio-cultural environment they have been nurtured in, can be activated and would result in significant improvement in the acquisition of the TL.

A. Subjects

With a view to empirically verifying the above claims, a study was undertaken in St. Joseph's college, Trichy. The disadvantaged students, 40 in number formed the experimental group. The 40 students were selected from among the first year C-stream students from across all the disciplines. The selection was made on the basis of their performance in the mid and end semester common exams. Those who had secured below 35% marks in these exams and therefore considered 'at risk' of failing in the public exams formed the experimental group.
An equal number of students with almost matching marks in the two exams referred to above, were designated as the control group. The control group was distributed among the three other C-stream classes taught by three different lecturers, while the participants of the experimental group formed a separate section and were taught by this researcher. Classes for both the groups were conducted within the working hours, during the five mandatory English hours each week.

B. Procedure

The study spanned five months, beginning on the 19th of November 1991, and ended on the 26th of March 1992. However the actual contact hours were just about 50 and some of these were used for tests and compositions. Both the groups had the same syllabus and had to take the same exam at the end of the term. The control group had during this period four common tests and compositions which were valued by the respective teachers. The experimental group had eight tests which were valued at tutorial sessions outside the class hours.
The control group, by and large had teacher-fronted classes using explication method and direct grammar teaching. However, it is difficult to pigeonhole these teachers as following one of the known teaching methods, like direct or grammar-translation method. In one of the classes learner participation was quite high and some group discussion and guided composition did take place in all three. It was a situation where the teacher responded on his feet to what he perceived to be the felt-need of his learners.

Summaries of lessons and answers to 'paragraph questions' were dictated by the teacher for one control group while in the other two answers were negotiated in the class and then written down by the students. These answers then were memorised and reproduced in the exams. The experimental group was discouraged from memorising ready-made answers and certainly no answer was dictated by the teacher. In fact, as the diary entry of one of the participants bemoans "You did not teach us the lesson; you were only interested in us learning English", the lessons themselves were mere launching pads for language use.
The first three classes for the experimental group were taken up for ice breaking and building up the participants' sense of self worth. The shift to a participative methodology proved more difficult than anticipated and it took the better part of one month for the students to loosen up and attempt to speak in the class. Given a chance, in future a more systematic and rigorous scheme would be devised to help the affective side of these learners.

In the first few classes the participants were asked to introduce themselves to the class with the teacher assisting their expression through the techniques of elaboration and paraphrasing. Then followed group work, where each group had to discuss and tell the rest of the class,

   a) Which of them had to travel longest every day to reach college?
   b) How many had been admitted to the course of their choice? and
   c) What was the main interest or hobby of the majority of the group?

The exercise was not very rewarding, the main reasons being fear and hesitation to speak English in
public. Some 15 participants eventually came out with original language, possibly for the first time in their lives. The common major errors were noted in the teacher's field notes each day and they pertained to the article system, use of negative forms, prepositions and the use of 's for possessive. Correction by the teacher was covert and in these stages restricted to the areas mentioned above. The participants were asked to maintain a log book or diary, and it was heartening to note that the learners had registered the corrections made in these areas.

The first lesson Tolstoy's 'Where Love is.' (cf. Appendix C) was turned into a confidence building activity, by asking the participants to read the first two paragraphs silently and guess the overall meaning of the passage. Most of the class, at the end of the exercise, felt thrilled that they had got the gist of the passage on their own, inspite of difficulty in lexis and structure. They were then, asked to answer simple comprehension questions like:

a) Who was Martin?

b) Where did he live?

c) How did he recognize the passers by?

d) Why was he so popular?
and later in groups they were asked to answer inference questions and say how they arrived at the answer. The teacher noted the strategy they were following and helped them systematize them. The inference questions were like:

a) How many windows were there in Martin's room?

b) Why could he see only the feet of the passers-by?

c) Was Martin married?

The inferential capacities, thus activated would sharpen their reasoning capacities, besides helping them deploy their language in meaningful contexts, as also focus on the semantic and the grammatical features of certain important words and phrases. In answering the first question, for example, the group will have to focus on the phrase of partition 'one of which' and in the process appreciate its use. Rather than the teacher transmitting the said grammatical and semantic information, the discovery procedure would yield lasting results to the learner.

Again, answering the second and the third questions would involve discursive features that would
help the learners leap from the explicitly stated and the observable to the information implied in the text. For, the very rules defining effective communication, like Grice's 'maxim of quantity' (McNeill 1987:46) that enjoins not to make your contribution more informative than necessary, nor to say what can be easily inferred from what has been said so far, might be a factor that staggers the linguistic growth of the disadvantaged learner. For these learners, as Donaldson says (in Blank p.78) it is true that 'the better you are at tackling problems without having to be sustained by human sense, the more likely you are to succeed in our educational system'.

It was also hoped that such exercises, by focussing on cause, consequence, analysis etc. and familiarizing them with disembedded language would help them overcome the dearth in these areas, Wardhaugh (1986) points out as impeding their acquisition of language.

C. Awareness Exercises

Some of the awareness exercises devised for the experimental group took the following shape. The participants were asked to:
a) underline the articles in paragraph one of Tolstoy's story.

b) decide in groups the positions articles take with reference to other parts of speech, and

c) note if there are any exceptions to certain category words taking articles.

The exercise forced the learners to notice the use of articles and deduce, with the teacher's help the rules governing their occurrence. Special attention was drawn, later to the position of adjectives with reference to determiners and nouns. The learners were also helped to see how intensifiers help embellish the sentence and nuance its meaning. Later the class was asked to compose noun phrases (det.+adj.+ Noun) using prompts from the texts like: street, cobbler, feet, boot etc. The use of 'a' and 'an' was also pointed out, making a distinction between their use before nouns beginning with vowels and vowel sounds. In the group work that followed, the participants were asked to correct a given passage adding and shifting articles to their appropriate slots.
Similarly, activities were devised for other areas noticed as being problematic for the participants, like the progressive aspect, relative clause, verb + s, in III person singular of the present tense form, and embedding sentences (mainly, relative clauses using 'who').

These exercises, it is hoped, work on the intentionality of the learners. Since their earlier training had focussed on the action words at the expense of the function words, there is a need for them to consciously notice these neglected features of the language. Human propensity imposes organisation upon input and through intentional noticing when the learners' attention is drawn to the hitherto neglected aspects of language words, organisation of both content and function words, would be more meaningful and learning systematic. Kuhan (in Wilson 1981:28) says, "what you see depends on what you look at and also upon what your visual-conceptual framework has taught you to see". In these exercises, the learners' own explorations of the text, focussing particularly on the function words, would ascribe meaning to these grammatical features and trigger acquisition of syntactic features.
D. Diary

An important feature of the study was a personal log or diary the participants were asked to maintain. In it they were asked to write after each class, using the mother tongue if need be, the features of the target language that had attracted their attention, vis-a-vis their position, the morpho-syntactic changes, collocation etc. The diary also recorded the new expressions, phrases and new words that they had learnt that day. The other point was a comment on the teaching material, classroom procedures and their own learning experiences. The idea was two-fold,

(i) to inculcate in the learners a habit of noticing;

(ii) to develop their metacognitive capacities; and

(iii) to keep track of the learners' reaction to their learning experiences.

The initial reporting, not surprisingly, was vague and raw; most of the early entries pertained to vocabulary and a few points of grammar discussed in the class. Slowly a few welcome changes were observed, as
when one participant recorded that when a sentence is constructed with two verbs the second follows the preposition 'to', and another had been charmed by the expression, 'Once there lived a cobbler, Martin by name.' which could state in a single sentence, propositional units that so far for him, required two. Another (no.1013) notes that he learnt to use 'May I come in, sir', and 'What can I do for you?' instead of the brusque 'What do you want?'. Yet another participant says he observed that 'one of' is followed by a plural noun but the verb ought to be in the singular. The frequent examples in the diary entry relate to the participants' ability to combine sentences using the relative pronoun. No. 243 gives the following example:

I gave Mohan ten rupees. Mohan is my friend.
I gave ten rupees to Mohan, who is my friend.

There are different dimensions to noticing; these learners must have been noticing linguistic features in their earlier attempts at learning English language. Possibly that was generic noticing without paying attention to what was considered as minutiae. Our concern has been to cause a shift from a predominantly
semantic noticing to a noticing that includes grammatical and syntactical features as well. And when exercises to use the item noticed is given, receptive noticing becomes productive noticing. The noticing begins as isolated and soon can be made cognate. Through repeated exercises, it is possible to inculcate a habitual noticing that extends beyond the classroom and as Schmidt (n.d) points out, when the learner recognizes in his/her reading or listening what he/she had earlier noticed in class, learning is reinforced.

Highlighting awareness continued in the tutorial sessions when each participant's written composition was corrected in his presence and in dialogue with him. The interviews helped find the learners' perception of the structure and syntax of the target language. This helped device corrective measures individually and in case of more pervasive errors, in the class also.

It came as a pleasant surprise, that many participants found the maintaining of a diary a fruitful exercise. It was a means for them to recall, review and register learning. In some cases, it has also been therapeutic, for, these disadvantaged learners often lack self expression and affirmation—the kind of willing ear and appreciation, the more
privileged learners get from their elders at home; and so, through the diary they are able to talk to themselves, recapitulate learning and assess their progress. The diary is a mirror for them, as Lovell's (1986:115) 'looking glass theory' suggests, making them see themselves reflected back from their own diary entries.

E. Scaffolding

Scaffolding was used covertly in ever so many situations and overtly when certain points proved a persistent problem for the learners, as when the English structure differed significantly from the MT structure. Four major areas for which scaffolding techniques were used pertained to (a) word order (SVO), (b) passivisation, (c) preposition and (d) question formation.

The following is an example of drawing attention to the word order of the English language. The MT sentence structure with SOV patterns and post positions, was identified as one of the major sources of their errors in English. Therefore the participants were (i) first asked to write down the sentence they wish to express, in MT, (ii) to rewrite it in MT again,
this time in the order the words would appear in the TL, and (iii) finally translate the sentence, in the SVO order the TL requires. Thus for example:

i) பெருமைப் பொருள்க் குறிப்பிட்டது.

ii) லக்சர் பொருள் குறிப்பிட்டது.

iii) Doctor Rao returned to India.

Slowly the scaffolding was withdrawn and the learners were able to transpose the words mentally and produce target-like sentences.

Having made the learners aware of the contrastive features in the word order of the two languages in question, passivisation—a requirement of the syllabus—was taught following Bruner's (1978) steps of:

i) lending expert consciousness,

ii) scaffolding to help understanding,

iii) progressive withdrawal, and

iv) handing over.

After the participants analyzing the word order change effected by change of voice in simple sentences,
the teacher made a diagrammatic representation (fig.6) to enable the participants picturize the physical changes that take place and infer better the transformational rules involved.

\[
\text{Active: } \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{S} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{V} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{O}
\end{array}
\quad \text{(fig.6)}
\]

\[
\text{Passive: } \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{S} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{V} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{O}
\end{array}
\quad \text{by +}
\]

Thus, using the structure they were able to change, (fig.7) for example:

\[
\text{Effluents polluted the Kalu river.}
\]

\[
\text{The Kalu river was polluted by effluents.}
\quad \text{(fig.7)}
\]
The basic figure enables to effect the needed change by providing a concrete model of the abstract set of rules. And the learner realizes the basic step i.e NP shift, the addition of 'by' before the new object, the bifurcation of the verb etc. As a first step, the learners draw this figure before changing a simple active sentence into passive. As they gain confidence through repeated practice with sentences of increasing complexity, the scaffolding is gradually withdrawn and the teacher's supervision recedes, till the learner takes over the entire responsibility for sentence conversion, on himself.

Obviously, the diagram given is simplistic and cannot account for more complex form of active sentences. Hopefully these steps would help the learner notice the transformations that take place in the process of passivisation, and this would gradually, help him/her notice the more complex changes called for in other involved sentences. This initial attempt, suggested here is meant to clear the grounds and instil confidence before the learner takes on more involved and complex sentences for transformation. In any case, the communicative activities would complement the acquisition process.
F. Communicative Activities

The communicative activities introduced for the experimental group, by focussing attention on meaning rather than on form, helped the participants acquire fluency. Though it took some time for the participants to switch to the dynamics of language learning through communicative games and interactive mode and to make them realize the rules of the game, the final result was encouraging.

Besides the ice-breaking and self introduction activities explained in the previous pages, the familiar 20-question game eventually resulted in excited participation and considerable amount of language generation. There were some, however, who needed constant prodding and encouragement before they participated in the game. A better range and complexity of language was called for when some miming game were conducted. In the first phase of this game, a volunteer had to look at a picture card and describe it to the group without naming it or using MT equivalent. For example, a volunteer gave the following cues to the audience, to help them identify a wrist watch found in the card he picked up:
i) cue: Everyone now a days uses it.
   ans.: cycle?

ii) cue: It helps us come to college on time.
    ans.: clock?

iii) cue: we tie (sic.) on our hand.
     ans.: wrist watch

The second phase was a little more complex with pictures, for example of (a) a leaking tap (b) a punctured tyre. etc. The third phase was when a volunteer had to enact the entire scene depicted in a picture card, for example an elderly lady in a public call office holding a receiver in one hand and fumbling for change in her hand bag.

Although interesting, these activities could not always be pursued, for the demands of the common exams and the constraints of syllabus and other environmental restrictions prevented the full deployment of these activities. Again, it was found that with a few kernel and basic structures, the participants could manage to negotiate the communicative situations. Therefore, when communicative activities 

per se were not possible, the
second best seemed to be, making the lessons themselves as far as possible, communicative. These text-based communicative activities were indeed weak substitutes for the near natural and interest-absorbing situations of the earlier kind. For example, based on the lesson 'Pollution Disaster', the participants were asked in groups, to draw the map of the Kalu river and locate the factories, towns etc. along its banks. Again, a flow chart explaining how mercury from the effluents enters the human food chain, provided some language generation. Stephen Leacock's 'My Lost Dollar' formed the basis for the participants to work out in groups imaginary dialogues between, one who tries to remind his friend of the money one had borrowed earlier.

G. Limitations of the Study

The study suffered from certain extrinsic and intrinsic problems. Chief among them was the problem of absenteeism. For familial, cultural, religious, medical and personal reasons some of the participants kept away from class. Out of the 33 days for which attendance was computed participant R.No.385 was absent for 21 days, 607 for 17 days, 361 for 13 days, and 254 and 256 for 12 days each. Only one student (383) was present on all days. The others absented themselves between 1 and 9
days, the class average being 5.7 days. Sometimes though, it was heartening to learn that some students made it a point to attend whenever convenient, the English class, even if they had to absent themselves from the other classes. It is also noteworthy that compared to the previous semester absenteeism had dropped slightly.

The other problem related to the shift from a transmittive to an interactive mode. Not all participants were convinced that they were learning anything much when engaging in group activities and communicative games! Some began to grow apprehensive and asked when the researcher would start teaching! So accustomed were these learners to teacher-fronted classrooms that they were sceptical of all learning that was not text based or taught in the traditional manner.

Another constraint stems from text or syllabus compulsions. For the exam purposes, it was required that the participants be trained in active to passive conversions, use of modal verbs, tag-questions, etc., most of which militated against the progression of the classroom procedures envisaged for the group. Often these different strands had to be 'yoked by violence
together'. And most of the lesson were too disperse and placid that they hardly lent themselves to communicative activities.

Again there were as many as eight class tests during the period of the study, beside the two common exams and these severely restricted the flow of teaching/learning, and led to 'the French-class room anxiety'. The other lesser problems, to name but a few were the problems of number, extra-academic problems affecting the learners, demands and anxiety caused by the other subjects, and exposure to erroneous English in the other subject-classes, etc.

H. Ethnographic Study

It was decided to combine both the ethnographic and the psychometric traditions to collect data about the effect the intervention programme had on the experimental group. As the diary maintained by the participants pertained largely to linguistic features noticed by the participants each day, towards the end of the study a separate retrospective account on the impressions the learners have about the programme was requested. In this account the learners:
a) compared their earlier experiences of learning English with the present procedures,
b) assessed how they stand affected by the present procedures,
c) introspected into what they had learnt during the period of study, and
d) evaluated their progress during this semester.

In order to facilitate better expression and ease in communicating, writing the retrospective account in MT was encouraged. We append a few excerpts from their entries, both in their original form and translated and restated for greater clarity (cf. Appendix D).

1. Data and Discussion

That the majority of the participants found the classroom procedures adopted in the experimental class useful, is abundantly clear from their introspective accounts. Almost all of them speak of a transition from a memory based approach to English language learning in the school to an enlightened self expression during the
study period. Number 886's summary of his learning at school may be a case in point:

In school our teachers used to give us the gist of the lesson in Tamil and dictate answers for short answer questions, paragraphs and essays which we used to rote learn and reproduce in the exams.

and 482 confesses that he could hardly understand 25% of what he wrote in the earlier exams and 760 might be speaking for the whole group when he laments that he was 'mortal afraid of English classes' and 1046 sounds defeatist: 'we were convinced we could never learn English!'

About the structural properties of the TL, two comments are worth recording, 239 notes that in school 'the little grammar we learnt was geared to answering possible grammar questions in the examinations. It did not help us compose our own sentences in English.' For 286, as suggested in the topic-specific noticing in chapter 4 structural properties were no priority as,
we could score high marks in English even without learning the use of the morpho-syntactic changes that are called for by the grammar of the language. Good marks were given even if we just strung together the key words of the answer.

It becomes obvious from the following comments that the new approaches followed in the experimental class initiated the desired change. Thus, number 482 records 'Now my understanding has improved' and 542, 'I attempt to speak English now'; Nos. 395 and 897 state that they are eager now, to compose their own sentences but admit the exasperation when they do not always succeed. 482 remarks 'Nowadays, I speak to myself in English and when I hear others conversing in English I quietly place myself within ear-shot and listen to their conversation'. He further says that 'I never used to touch my English text in my school days. Memorising class notes was all that mattered for me. But now I enjoy reading my text. In two or three years, I will be able to speak English fluently'. The comment of 247 'Now I understand unseen passages if I read them twice or thrice over', and of 395 'I've learnt more in these few months than I did in the last 12 years!' makes
concrete the growth in confidence and linguistic progress made by these learners.

The generic improvement, these participants are giving expression to, may be grouped under:

a) an increase in the level of confidence,

b) a change in their attitude to learning English, and

c) an ability to compose their own sentences, albeit still faultily.

However, it is the specifics, if anything that indicate the possible success of our instructional device and so we turn to the statements about learning of specific grammar points. Almost everyone of the experimental group records observing, largely through the awareness procedures the SVO word order of the TL, the use of articles, the position of adjectives and other intensifiers, the syntax of the progressive aspect and some rules for embedding sentences.

Number 396 reveals a significant result of awareness raising exercises. He writes, 'I used to think 'The car come' is the singular form and the
plural form of the same sentence would read 'The cars comes'. Another equally revealing entry was by 886 and a few others. 886 notes that he was confusing the possessive pronoun 'our' with its phonological equivalent in Tamil (இன்) meaning 'his', and so used to produce sentence like:

Rajan returned to our house
for
Rajan returned to his house.

The awareness that has been raised in the participants and recorded in the diary, regarding some of the features of the target language may be summarized as follows:

a) English has a word order (SVO) different from that of Tamil (SOV),

b) that articles are essential features of nouns,

c) that 's is a form of possessive,
d) verbs ending in -ing are to be preceded by an auxiliary verb form.

e) when two verbs co-occur the second verb may be written in the infinitive form (V + to + verb),

f) NPs beginning with 'one of' is followed by the plural form of the noun (head word) but the NP is singular,

g) the verb 'told' necessarily takes an object while the verb 'said' may take an object, and if so, the object follows the preposition 'to',

h) the change from SVO to VSO with verbs of state can make the sentence interrogative,

i) questions may also be formed with 'WH' words,

j) the use of prepositions, and that

k) sentences may be embedded as seen in the following examples:
i. There once was a cobbler, Martin
   by name.

ii. One day a holy man who was from
    Martin's village visited him.

Obviously not all entries have recorded all the above features distributively, nor is this an exhaustive list of the recordings in the diaries.

The comment of number 190, 'I realize I've learnt a lot of grammar now', is proof enough that these participants have had their consciousness-raised with regard to the grammatical properties of English, though they were hardly exposed formally to the rules in question.

That the technique of scaffolding and lending to the novice learner the teacher's expert consciousness has paid rich dividends at least for some, is evidenced in the specific entries in the diaries of some 14 participants. Number 1015 says that he profited from the scaffold provided to make him aware of the changed word order called for in the syntax of English. Similarly the diagrammatic representation suggesting the shift of words for forming passive sentences
appears to have helped nos. 225, 255, 395, 607, 813, 886 and 897. And 542 stresses that for him the use of English prepositions and their contrastive use in MT as enclytic post positions, was a useful insight.

There are also other stray noticing, like 886 (also 976) saying, 'I used to write 'He was died' but now I write 'He died' and again that he used to ask 'Where is your native?' for 'Which is your native place?'.

1. Limitations

The ethnographic techniques of data collection like the introspective method called for in diary writing are not without problems. However much one may ensure that the respondents are under no constraint, the accounts of the diarists cannot be taken as totally reliable and so renders the study necessarily subjective, inferential and indirect. As Oller and Perkins point out:

plausible source of non-random but extraneous variance in measures of affective variables may inflate estimates of reliability and validity of these measures substantially and produce
spurious relationships with other variables. (in L. Wong-Fillmore 1984:)

The sources of error in these retrospective accounts may be traced to (a) approval motive -- the respondents tend to record statements which they view as pleasing and acceptable to the teacher, (b) self flattery -- they produce statements which are satisfying to their ego and come to believe as true, and (c) set response -- responses appear to be rehearsed possibly in consultation with other respondents.

Seliger (1983) doubts whether the learner will be able to report on unconscious level of processing and suggests that all he can do is to simply report products (e.g. utterances, translations) of underlying processes that are inaccessible. The inability to introspect on what transpired at the time of production is obvious from the entries cited above. That however, is not to deny that though the self report strategies fail to lend themselves to rigorous analysis and classification they are the only valid insights so far available into the learning processes. It is thanks to the low degree of structure of the elicitation
processes that one can get a peep into the learners' mind and record what cannot be quantified and therefore cannot be captured by the quantitative techniques.

I. Psychometric Analysis

All the same, as a corrective and a complement to the inherent weakness of the introspective accounts, we also introduce psychometric analysis to ascertain in quantifiable terms, the gains of the experimental group in acquiring English. The first of these tests aims at plotting the progress made in certain specific aspects of the TL with reference to their entry behaviour.

Accordingly, a few practicable and concrete areas were identified on the basis of the diary entry and the introspective account. These are:

(a) the past tense,
(b) the progressive aspect,
(c) the use of the article,
(d) intensifiers, and
(e) multi-propositional units.

The last item was expected to mirror the felicity the learners acquire in embedding sentences. These were also the more common and basic features of syntax that
are likely to occur more commonly in most natural situations and therefore can be computed (unlike passivisation, question formation, syntactic difference in the use of 'told' and 'said' etc. which were also noticed by the participants).

The progress in these areas was plotted through pre and post tests. On 3-12-'91 the participants were told a short story in MT and they had to write it down in English. This was the pre test. Then after 31 classes, the same script was given back to them in their original form, on 12-03-'92 and they were asked to rewrite the story on the page opposite, making whatever addition, deletion, modification, alteration or correction they thought fit. This was the post test.

The two scripts were analysed individually, (a) computing the percentage of the grammatically correct sentences, and by counting the number of propositions in each sentence. The rest of the items were calculated by using the Target Like Use (TLU) Analysis. (cf. Pica, T. 1988:82 for reasons for preferring TLU over Suppliance in Obligatory Context (SOC) Analysis) TLU was computed for each of the grammatical features referred to above using the following formula:
TLU = \[ \frac{n \text{ correct suppliance in obligatory context}}{(n \text{ obligatory context}) + (n \text{ non-obligatory context with appropriate suppliance})} \]

We shall illustrate the TLU analysis briefly with an example of the past tense morpheme in the following passage:

The next day Radha went (a) to the room where she think (b) a woman was murder (c). The man and the woman were there (d). Radha began (e) to explained (f) her mistake. The couple was laugh (g) and gave her (h) a free ticket for the play

Scoring for past tense morpheme:

Correct suppliance
in obligatory contexts: a, d, e, h = 4

non-obligatory context with inappropriate suppliance: f = 1

obligatory contexts: a, b, c, d, e, g, h = 7

\[
\text{TLU} = \frac{4}{7} + 1 = 0.5
\]
Psychometric Data

Table 4 gives the TLU scores in the pre and post tests and the difference for each of the linguistic feature under observation, i.e. the percentage of grammatically acceptable sentences, use of past tense and the progressive aspect; and table 4 a. continues the analysis for article system, intensifiers and multi-propositional units. The first column of each item lists the results of the pre test, the second, that of the post test and the third computes the difference. The results of eight participants are not computed because they were not available for either the pre test or the post test.

Table 4   TLU Analysis of Interlanguage.

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<th>% of gram. sent.</th>
<th>past tense</th>
<th>progres.aspect</th>
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<tr>
<td>Num</td>
<td>pre</td>
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2. Analysis and Discussion

The results of the TLU analysis is quite heartening; the bar diagrams (fig.8) graphically portrays, the improvement in the specified areas is quite appreciable, with the grammatical sentences collectively recording 200% gain, the past tense 169%, the progressive aspect 216%, the article system 116%, the intensifiers 185% and MPU 185%.
It is also significant that 5 participants record regression in grammatical sentences, 7 in past tense, 4 in progressive aspect, 7 again in articles and 3 in intensifiers. MPU alone reveals no regression though 2 participants who used no MPU in the pre test use in the post test also no MPU.

The most plausible explanation of this anomalous situation may be found in the interlanguage hypothesis itself which admits that progress in learning is necessarily fluid and transient. In the process of learning, the whole system of language is ongoingly revised in the light of the new data the learner is exposed to. The simplistic explanations and paradigms the learner initially creates, fails under the mounting pressures from new data that defy these constricting frameworks. And interlanguage admits possibility of backsliding and regression and is more often than not, a sign of progress or at least of hypothesis revision. Therefore the falling scores of these learners may in fact reflect a transitional phase of their interlanguage, exploring newer ways of making meaning in the face of an enlarged corpus of language.

It is interesting to note that some of these participants experienced discomforting moments when
they encountered data that seemed to shake the very foundations of the language rules they had interiorized. One learner, for example was puzzled, why in the following extract:

'Where is the woman?' Rajan demanded angrily. 'What woman?' replied the puzzled man,

the second occurrence of the word woman was not preceded by any article? Similarly, another participant lost all his orientation towards article system when the sentence:

Cat is a common domestic pet.

was presented as a perfectly grammatical sentence.

Again, coming to word order, another participant was disoriented by the sentence:

'The rascal ought to be whipped, said the old woman.

He had earlier learnt that 'said' is to be followed by 'to', if it takes an object and so wanted to know, why the sentence does not end with 'said to the woman'? The explanation further confounded his problem because he
believed, the word order rule (SVO) in English was absolute and inviolate.

Thus, as exposure to English increases, the narrow interpretation of rules the learner has inferred comes under severe stress; it results in more fumbling and erroneous productions than he was capable of before the exposure. In fact, these may well be a search that leads to enlightened progress sooner than later.

An important point to bear in mind is that despite some progress in specific areas the overall sentence structure of the participants, is far from accurate. Even in the post test accuracy level is as low as 0.28%, even though this figure is double the pre test score. Thus though number 1041, for example, has a perfect score of 1 in the post test for article system, he scores a mere 0.1 in the corresponding test for accuracy! And No.255 who has recorded the highest score of the group for accuracy in the post test, has scored slightly lower than his pre test score in past tense and article system.

The differential progress in the linguistic features attained by the learners shows that language learning does not appear full blown the morning after
instruction. All we can claim at the end of the study period, is that these learners have begun a journey, and begun well, but the destination is far, far away. All that we at this stage record, is the rumbling of change. Equipped with strategies that succeed, these learners have set on a journey of discovery and progress they will. It would be too early to look for the fruits of the intervention programme in absolute terms. In any case, it would be presumptuous to expect that after a paltry 35 classes or so, a group of disadvantaged students would produce strings of grammatically acceptable language that is situationally appropriate and relevant.

It is therefore, not surprising that at the semester exam the marks of the experimental group are not remarkably different from that of the control group. Producing original language under the stressful situation of prolonged days of exam, must have further compounded their problems. Pitted against the memorised answers of the control group, who try to 'arrive without travelling', the participants of the experimental group must have had to marshal all their resources in the limited time to answer on their own questions in this public exam.
In relation to the differential instructional techniques for the control and the experimental groups, the findings of Dubin and Taveggia (1968), comparing (a) lecture and lecture-discussion methods, (b) discussion and lecture-discussion methods, (c) lecture methods and supervised independent study methods, and (d) lecture-discussion methods and supervised independent study methods, makes an interesting revelation that, teaching methods do not differ in effectiveness as measured by achievement in final examination. They speak of an 'equalizer effect' which is achieved when the learner compensates for the inadequacies in the method by which they are taught by relying, for example, heavily on the text books. "Thus, it is hard to uncover differences between teaching methods when the text book is common to different methods and helps to equalize achievement." (in Anderson et al. 1977:379)

However, when it comes to free composition, that the experimental group is at an advantage becomes noticeable when we compare the marks in this area. Out of the 55 marks allocated for free compositions, the experimental group on an average scored 21.1% while the control group scored 19.8%. The highest percentage of
marks by the experimental group comes from the grammar question, 'rewrite the following in passive voice'. (experimental group 73%; control group 64%).

In answer to the question 'write a short essay of about 100 words on the theme of "Love your Enemies"', while most of the control group summarized Tolstoy's story 'Where Love is..', prescribed for them, many in the experimental group have attempted original and therefore parsimonious and faulty language and have consequently, scored lower marks. In answering the comprehension questions as many as 91% in the control group have reproduced verbatim, sentences from the passage that carry phrases found in the question. In the experimental group the percentage falls to 63%, but the marks obtained by this group is significantly lower than that of the control group. Again, the letter 'to your friend narrating your meeting with a foreigner', has stock phrases and memorised lines by both the groups. The experimental group have, however have employed some original language also.

The exigencies of our examination system today inadvertently punishes early learners' attempts at producing original language and drives them to the safety of memorised language and thus ends up as
counter productive to all the attempts initiated in the classrooms. The system of evaluation, beset with its own myriad problems, not the least among which is the marker's subjectivity, has no way of discerning original though faulty language from memorised but correct language. For, grammatically acceptable though borrowed or memorised sentences are better rewarded than learners' own language that is still grammatically and syntactically imperfect, tempting the students to take recourse to memory, rather than attempt to answer questions in their own language. And so long as the marking system keeps counting errors rather than measure progress, these marks would be unreliable index of language acquisition. Thus marks given in these exams are suspect if they pretend to reflect the learners' progress in language acquisition. It is therefore justifiable that we downplay any detailed comparison of the marks obtained in the semester exam between the control and experimental groups.

J. Conclusion

The analysis of the data from both the ethnographic and psychometric traditions in research undertaken is enough to prove our earlier claim that the disadvantaged learners have made some progress in
language acquisition. The introspective accounts and the teachers' experience in the classroom reveals that these participants from the experimental group have gained confidence and fluency. The dormant learning capacities that are slowly blossoming will take some more time before they reveal themselves in full grandeur and glory, for the experiment was not intended as a fully developed package that would result in a finished product; rather it was meant to initiate a process, a painfully slow process of learning a language using all the strategies that are experienced as rewarding. It would remain to see what these, 36 out of the 40 students who have cleared the General English paper, do in the O-level exam they will be taking at the end of the scholastic the year 1992-'93., and how they compare then, with the members of the control group and with their peers in general.

As points for further research, it would also be interesting to note if highlighting awareness and teaching noticing pays off by comparing the performance of two groups, and also to check, based on the mounting theories about individual difference, whether all learners or only some like field dependent and field independent learners or science Vs. humanities students
profit more from noticing. Another more fundamental point that needs to be systematically looked into is whether the alleged latent learning capacities and limited capacity for abstract thinking and conceptualisation mirror themselves in their mother tongue as well. Preliminary data appears contradictory. Finally, there is an urgent need to devise a system of evaluation that would adequately capture and reward the evolution of syntax in the language of the early learners.