Chapter I

Introduction
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1.1. Language
Definition

Human communication through the use of spoken or written words. (Oxford dictionary, 2009 edition)

The word "language" has at least two basic meanings: language as a general concept, and "a language" (a specific linguistic system, e.g. "French"). Ferdinand de Saussure first explicitly formulated the distinction, using the French word language for language as a concept, and langue as the specific instance of language.

The English word derives ultimately from Latin lingua, "language, tongue", via Old French. When used as a general concept, "language" refers to the cognitive faculty that enables humans to learn and use systems of complex communication. Language may refer either to the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication, or to a specific instance of such a system of complex communication. The scientific study of language in any of its senses is called linguistics.

Language as a communication system is thought to be fundamentally different from and of much higher complexity than those of other species as it is based on a complex system of rules relating symbols to their meanings, resulting in an indefinite number of possible innovative utterances from a finite number of elements. Language is thought to have originated when early hominids first started cooperating, adapting earlier systems of communication based on expressive signs to include a theory of other minds and shared intentionality. This development is thought to have coincided with an increase in brain volume, and many linguists see the structures of language as having evolved to serve specific communicative functions.

1.2. Origin of language

Theories about the origin of language can be divided according to their basic assumptions. Some theories are based on the idea that language is so complex that one cannot imagine it simply appearing from nothing in its final form, but that it must have evolved from earlier pre-linguistic systems among our pre-human ancestors. These theories can be called continuity based theories.
1.2.1. Noam Chomsky’s theory

Currently the only prominent proponent of a discontinuity theory of human language origins is Noam Chomsky. Chomsky proposes that 'some random mutation took place, maybe after some strange cosmic ray shower, and it reorganized the brain, implanting a language organ in an otherwise primate brain'. While cautioning against taking this story too literally, Chomsky insists that 'it may be closer to reality than many other fairy tales that are told about evolutionary processes, including language'.

In the 1960s Noam Chomsky formulated the generative theory of language. According to this theory the most basic form of language is a finite set of syntactic rules that are universal for all humans and which underlies the grammars of all human languages. This set of rules is called Universal Grammar, and for Chomsky describing it is the primary objective of the discipline of linguistics. For this reason the grammars of individual languages are only of importance to linguistics, in so far as they allow us to discern the universal underlying rules from which the observable linguistic variability is generated.

Continuity based theories are currently held by a majority of scholars, but they vary in how they envision this development. Those who see language as being mostly innate, for example Steven Pinker, hold the precedents to be animal cognition, whereas those who see language as a socially learned tool of communication, such as Michael Tomasello see it as having developed from animal communication, either primate gestural or vocal communication. Other continuity based models see language as having developed from music.

1.3. History of English language

English is a West Germanic language that originated from the Anglo-Frisian and Old Saxon dialects brought to Britain by Germanic settlers from various parts of what is now northwest Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. Up to that point, in Roman Britain the native population is assumed to have spoken the Celtic language Brythonic alongside the acrolectal influence of Latin, from the 400-year Roman occupation.

One of these incoming Germanic tribes was the Angles, who were believed to have relocated entirely to Britain. The names 'England' (from Engla land "Land of the Angles")
and English (Old English Englisc) are derived from the name of this tribe but Saxons, Jutes and a range of Germanic peoples from the coasts of Frisia, Lower Saxony, Jutland and Southern Sweden also moved to Britain in this era.

Initially, Old English was a diverse group of dialects, reflecting the varied origins of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Great Britain but one of these dialects, Late West Saxon, eventually came to dominate.

Old English was later transformed by two waves of invasion. The first was by speakers of the North Germanic language branch when Halfdan Ragnarsson and Ivar the Boneless started the conquering and colonization of northern parts of the British Isles in the 8th and 9th centuries (see Dane law). The second was by speakers of the Romance language Old Norman in the 11th century with the Norman Conquest of England. Norman developed into Anglo-Norman, and then Anglo-French – and introduced a layer of words especially via the courts and government. As well as extending the lexicon with Scandinavian and Norman words these two events also simplified the grammar and transformed English into a borrowing language—more than normally open to accept new words from other languages.

1.4. Language as mental faculty, organ or instinct

One definition sees language primarily as the mental faculty that allows humans to undertake linguistic behavior: to learn languages and produce and understand utterances. This definition stresses the universality of language to all humans and the biological basis of the human capacity for language as a unique development of the human brain. This view often understands language to be largely innate, for example as in Chomsky’s theory of Universal Grammar, Jerry Fodor’s extreme innatist theory. These kinds of definitions are often applied by studies of language within a cognitive science framework and in neurolinguistics.

1.5. Language as formal symbolic system

Another definition sees language as a formal system of signs governed by grammatical rules of combination to communicate meaning. This definition stresses the fact that human languages can be described as closed structural systems consisting of rules that relate particular signs to particular meanings. This structuralist view of
language was first introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure, and his structuralism remains foundational for most approaches to language today. Some proponents of this view of language have advocated a formal approach to studying the structures of language, privileging the formulation of underlying abstract rules that can be understood to generate observable linguistic structures. The main proponent of such a theory is Noam Chomsky, who defines language as a particular set of sentences that can be generated from a particular set of rules. The structuralist viewpoint is commonly used in formal logic, semiotics, and in formal and structural theories of grammar, the most commonly used theoretical frameworks in linguistic description. In the philosophy of language these views are associated with philosophers such as Bertrand Russell, early Wittgenstein, Alfred Tarski and Gotlob.

1.6. Language tool for communication

Yet another definition sees language as a system of communication that enables humans to cooperate. This definition stresses the social functions of language and the fact that humans use it to express themselves and to manipulate objects in their environment.

1.7. The study of language/aims of teaching/ learning English

The study of language, linguistics, has been developing into a science since the first grammatical descriptions of particular languages in India more than 2000 years ago. Today linguistics is a science that concerns itself with all aspects relating to language, examining it from all of the theoretical viewpoints described above.

Academic study of language is conducted within many different disciplinary areas and from different theoretical angles, all of which inform modern approaches to linguistics. For example, Descriptive linguistics examines the grammar of single languages so that people can learn the languages; theoretical linguistics develops theories of how best to conceptualize language as a faculty, based on data from the various extant human languages; sociolinguistics studies how languages are used for social purposes informing in turn the study of the social functions of language and grammatical description; neuro linguistics studies how language is processed in the human brain, and allows the experimental testing of theories about the language faculty; computational linguistics builds on theoretical and descriptive linguistics to construct computational
models of language often aimed at processing natural language, or at testing linguistic hypotheses; and historical linguistics relies on grammatical and lexical descriptions of languages to trace their individual histories and reconstruct trees of language families by using the comparative method.

1.8. Grammar

The rules in a language for changing the form of words and joining them into sentences. (Oxford advanced learner’s dictionary, Eighth edition 2010.)

The rules under which signs can be combined to form words and phrases are called syntax or grammar. The meaning that is connected to individual signs, words and phrases is called semantics. The division of language into separate but connected systems of sign and meaning goes back to the first linguistic studies of de Saussure and is now used in almost all branches of linguistics.

1.8.1. Grammatical categories

Grammar can be described as a system of categories, and a set of rules that determine how categories combine to form different aspects of meaning.

Languages differ widely in whether categories are encoded through the use of categories or lexical units. However, several categories are so common as to be nearly universal. Such universal categories include the encoding of the grammatical relations of participants and predicates by grammatically distinguishing between their relations to a predicate, the encoding of temporal and spatial relations on predicates, and a system of grammatical person governing reference to and distinction between speakers and addressees and those about whom they are speaking.

1.8.2. Word classes

Languages organize their parts of speech into classes according to their functions and positions relative to other parts. All languages, for instance, make a basic distinction between a group of words that prototypically denote things and concepts and a group of words that prototypically denote actions and events. The first group, which includes English words such as "dog" and "song," are usually called nouns. The second, which includes "run" and "sing," are called verbs. Other common categories are adjectives, words that describe properties or qualities of nouns such as "red" or "big".
Many other word classes exist in different languages, such as conjunctions that serve to join two sentences and articles that introduce a noun.

1.8.3. Morphology

Many languages use the morphological processes of inflection to modify or elaborate on the meaning of words. In some languages words are built of several meaningful units called morphemes, the English word "unexpected" can be analyzed as being composed of the three morphemes "un-", "expect" and "-ed". Morphemes can be classified according to whether they are roots to which other bound morphemes called affixes are added, and bound morphemes can be classified according to their position in relation to the root: prefixes precede the root, suffixes follow the root and infixes are inserted in the middle of a root. Affixes serve to modify or elaborate the meaning of the root. Some languages change the meaning of words by changing the phonological structure of a word, for example the English word "run" which in the past tense is "ran". Furthermore morphology distinguishes between processes of inflection which modifies or elaborates on a word, and derivation which instead creates a new word from an existing one - for example in English "sing" which can become "singer" by adding the derivational morpheme which derives an agent noun from a verb. Languages differ widely in how much they rely on morphology - some languages, traditionally called polysynthetic languages, make extensive use of morphology, so that they express the equivalent of an entire English sentence in a single word.

1.8.4. Syntax

![Basic constituent structure analysis of a sentence:](image)

The cat sat on the mat.
Syntax has to do with the order of words in sentences, and specifically how complex sentences are structured by grouping words together in units, called phrases, that can occupy different places in a larger syntactic structure. Below is a graphic representation of the syntactic analysis of the sentence "the cat sat on the mat". The sentence is analyzed as being constituted by a noun phrase, a verb and a prepositional phrase; the prepositional phrase is further divided into a preposition and a noun phrase; and the noun phrases consist of an article and a noun.

1.9. Language acquisition

All healthy, normally-developing human beings learn to use language. Children acquire the language or languages used around them – whichever languages they receive sufficient exposure to during childhood. The development is essentially the same for children acquiring signed or spoken languages. This learning process is referred to as first-language acquisition, since unlike many other kinds of learning it requires no direct teaching or specialized study. In The Descent of Man, naturalist Charles Darwin called this process, "an instinctive tendency to acquire an art."

First language acquisition proceeds in a fairly regular sequence, though there is a wide degree of variation in the timing of particular stages among normally-developing infants. From birth, newborns respond more readily to human speech than to other sounds. Around one month of age, babies appear to be able to distinguish between different speech sounds. Around six months of age, a child will begin babbling, producing the speech sounds or hand shapes of the languages used around them. Words appear around the age of 12 to 18 months; the average vocabulary of an eighteen-month old child is around 50 words. A child's first utterances are holophrases (literally "whole-sentences"), utterances that use just one word to communicate some idea. Several months after a child begins producing words, she or he will produce two-word utterances, and within a few more months begin to produce telegraphic speech, short sentences that are less grammatically complex than adult speech, but that do show regular syntactic structure. From roughly the age of three to five years, a child's ability to speak or sign is refined to the point that it resembles adult language.
1.10. Significance of English language

Modern English, sometimes described as the first global lingua franca, is the dominant language or in some instances even the required international language of communications, science, information technology, business, seafaring, aviation, entertainment, radio and diplomacy. Its spread beyond the British Isles began with the growth of the British Empire, and by the late 19th century its reach was truly global. Following British colonization from the 16th to 19th centuries, it became the dominant language in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The growing economic and cultural influence of the US and its status as a global superpower since World War II have significantly accelerated the language's spread across the planet. English replaced German as the dominant language of science. Nobel Prize laureates during the second half of the 20th century. English equaled and may have surpassed French as the dominant language of diplomacy during the last half of the 19th century.

A working knowledge of English has become a requirement in a number of fields, occupations and professions such as medicine and computing; as a consequence over a billion people speak English to at least a basic level. It is one of six official languages of the United Nations.

1.10.1. Language and society

Humans acquire language through social interaction in early childhood, and children generally speak fluently when they are around three years old. The use of language has become deeply entrenched in human culture and, apart from being used to communicate and share information. It also has social and cultural uses, such as signifying group identity, social stratification and for social grooming and entertainment. The word "language" can also be used to describe the set of rules that makes this possible, or the set of utterances that can be produced from those rules.

All languages rely on the process of semiosis to relate a sign with a particular meaning. Spoken and signed languages contain a phonological system that governs how sounds or visual symbols are used to form sequences known as words or morphemes, and a syntactic system that governs how words and morphemes are used to form phrases and utterances. Written languages use visual symbols to represent the sounds of the spoken
languages, but they still require syntactic rules that govern the production of meaning from sequences of words. Languages evolve and diversify over time, and the history of their evolution can be reconstructed by comparing modern languages to determine which traits their ancestral languages must have had for the later stages to have occurred.

1.11. Status of English in India

The official language of the Republic of India is Hindi with English as an additional language for official work. During the British rule, English was used for most official purposes both at the federal level and in the states. The Indian constitution adopted in 1950, envisaged the gradual phasing in of Hindi, to replace English over a fifteen-year period, but gave Parliament the power to, by law, provide for the continued use of English even thereafter. But resistance to making Hindi the sole official language has resulted in English being retained for official uses. English continues to be used today, in combination with Hindi (at the central level and in some states).

The legal framework governing the use of languages for official purpose currently includes the Constitution, the Official Languages Act, 1963, Official Languages (Use for Official Purpose of the Union) Rules, 1976, and various state laws, as well as rules and regulations made by the central government and the states.

1.11.1. English Teaching/Learning in Tamilnadu

Though English is learnt as a second language in Tamilnadu, it plays a vital role in the society. Among the three languages Tamil, English and Hindi, English is a more acceptable lingua franca than Hindi because people of Tamil have their own bias towards Hindi. English is a compulsory subject of study.

In the State Board Schools, English is introduced from first standard onwards. A student cannot pass even the first standard without learning English whereas he can even complete a degree by studying Hindi instead of Tamil. This shows the high status enjoyed by English in Tamilnadu. The people are aware of that value of English in the International arena and have developed a craze for English medium education. This has resulted in the mushroom growth of matriculation schools in Tamilnadu. The craze continues right through schools to colleges. Most of the private colleges do not offer parallel medium. Only Government colleges, Tamil medium is offered as a matter of policy.
When a language enjoys socio-economic sanction, as English does in Tamilnadu, it is quite reasonable to expect that students acquire proficiency in it. But the students of Tamilnadu fare no better than their counterparts from other States in competitive examinations conducted by the Central Government. Since English is introduced only (State Board Schools) at the first standard, the students are fully under the grip of their mother tongue i.e. Tamil. They have already acquired the rudiments of Tamil. So they find it difficult to learn a new language in the class room situation with limited hours of learning.

Another notable fact is that both in the Government and Private Schools, teachers who teach English at the primary level are not necessarily graduate of English literature. In most of the schools, it is a kind of one man show where one teacher handles three or four subjects. This affects the quality of what is being taught. Primary schools are the feeder schools for high schools. So the student studying in the abovementioned situation carry with them insufficient or defective knowledge of English. By the time, they reach high schools and collegiate level, they depend upon Bazaar notes and even those who scored above 60% in English are not able to use the language efficiently. They know about English but do not know English. The foregoing discussion emphasizes the need for taking immediate steps to improve the teaching of English language at school level itself.

English has been widely used as the medium of instruction through various stages of the educational process; questions related to specifications of model/uses/purposes continue to be evaded. Srivastava and Gupta (1984) in their study of media of instruction in higher education in India report that English continues to be functionally a very potent language. The authors conclude from an extensive survey of recommendations of committees constituted for the purpose of language planning that “the system of higher education is plagued with many internal contradictions’, one of them advocating change over from English to Indian languages as medium of instructions while at the same time, the gap is widening between the educated elite who owe allegiance to English and the common man who access remains restricted. A possible reason for this is that though the English speaking Indians form a negligible minority, English is a language most widely in use. Parasher (1979) in a study of language attitudes of educated Indian bilinguals found that English was preferred to regional language as the language of higher education. Vanikar et al., (1985) reported from a study of sources of English available to
students, the majority expressed a need to improve their English, and an overwhelming number of vernacular students expressed their desired to associate themselves with those from whom they could learn English and that, they believed that the study of English leads to popularity.

1.11.2. English language teaching at schools of Tamilnadu

At school, the teaching of grammar consists of a process of training in the rules of a language which must make it possible to all the students to correctly express their opinion, to understand the remarks which are addressed to them and to analyze the texts which they read. The objective is that by the time they leave school, the pupil controls the tools of the language which are the vocabulary, grammar and the orthography, to be able to read, understand and write texts in various contexts. The teaching of grammar examines texts, and develops awareness that language constitutes a system which can be analyzed. This knowledge is acquired gradually, by traversing the facts of language and the syntactic mechanisms, going from simplest to the most complex. The exercises according to the program of the course must untiringly be practiced to allow the assimilation of the rules stated in the course. That supposes that the teacher corrects the exercises. The pupil can follow his progress in practicing the language by comparing his results. Thus can he adapt the grammatical rules and control little by little the internal logic of the syntactic system. The grammatical analysis of sentences constitutes the objective of the teaching of grammar at the school. Its practice makes it possible to recognize a text as a coherent whole and conditions the training of a foreign language. Grammatical terminology serves this objective. Grammar makes it possible for each one to understand how the mother tongue functions, in order to give him the capacity to communicate its thought.

1.12. Evaluation of teaching methods

Evaluation of teaching methodology is vital because the second language is learnt deliberately through formal classroom teachings. Various methods are used throughout India to teach English. These methods are evaluated now and then by experts in the field of language teaching. Some of the teaching methods followed in India are:
1. Grammar Translation Method
2. Audio-lingual Method
3. Audio-visual Method
4. Oral approach / situational language teaching
5. Directed practice
6. Direct method
7. Series method

1.12.1. Grammar translation method

The grammar translation method instructs students in grammar, and provides vocabulary with direct translations to memorize. It was the predominant method in Europe in the 19th century. Most instructors now acknowledge that this method is ineffective by itself. It is now most commonly used in the traditional instruction of the classical languages, however it remains the most commonly practiced method of English teaching in Japan.

1.12.2. Audio-lingual method

The audio-lingual method was developed in the USA around World War II when governments realized that they needed more people who could conduct conversations fluently in a variety of languages, work as interpreters, code-room assistants, and translators. Specialized Training Program created intensive programs based on the techniques Leonard Bloomfield and other linguists devised for Native American languages, where students interacted intensively with native speakers and a linguist in guided conversations designed to decode its basic grammar and learn the vocabulary. This "informant method" had great success with its small class sizes and motivated learners.

This first version of the method was originally called the oral method, the aural-oral method or the structural approach. The audio-lingual method truly began to take shape near the end of the 1950s.
Due to weaknesses in performance, and more importantly because of Noam Chomsky's theoretical attack on language learning as a set of habits, audio-lingual methods are rarely the primary method of instruction today. However, elements of the method still survive in many textbooks.

1.12.3. Audio-visual method

This method is mostly used only in schools run for the cream of the society owing to its high cost radio, tape-recorders, overhead projectors, language laboratories, computers, etc., are used as aids for the teaching of foreign language.

1.12.4. The oral approach / situational language teaching

The oral approach was developed from the 1930s to the 1960s by British applied linguists such as Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornsby. They were familiar with the direct method as well as the work of 19th century applied linguists such as Otto Jesperson and Daniel Jones but attempted to formally develop a scientifically-founded approach to teaching English than was evidenced by the Direct Method.

It was discovered that languages have a core basic vocabulary of about 2,000 words that occurred frequently in written texts, and it was assumed that mastery of these would greatly aid reading comprehension. Parallel to this was the notion of "grammar control", emphasizing the sentence patterns most-commonly found in spoken conversation. Such patterns were incorporated into dictionaries and handbooks for students. The principle difference between the oral approach and the direct method was that methods devised under this approach would have theoretical principles guiding the selection of content, gradation of difficulty of exercises and the presentation of such material and exercises. The main proposed benefit was that such theoretically-based organization of content would result in a less-confusing sequence of learning events with better contextualization of the vocabulary and grammatical patterns presented. Last but not least, all language points were to be presented in "situations". Emphasis on this point led to the approach's second name. Proponent claim that this approach leads to students' acquiring good habits to be repeated in their corresponding situations. Teaching methods stress PPP-presentation (introduction of new material in context), practice (a controlled practice phase) and production (activities designed for less-controlled practice).
1.12.5. Directed practice

Directed practice has students repeat phrases. This method is used by U.S. diplomatic courses. It can quickly provide phrasebook-type knowledge of the language. Within these limits, the student's usage is accurate and precise. However the student's choice of what to say is not flexible.

1.12.6. The Direct method

The direct method, sometimes also called natural method, is a method that refrains from using the learners' native language and just uses the target language. It was established in Germany and France around 1900 and is best represented by the methods devised by Berlitz and de Sauzé although neither claim originality nor has been re-invented under other names. The direct method operates on the idea that second language learning must be an imitation of first language learning, as this is the natural way humans learn any language - a child never relies on another language to learn its first language, and thus the mother tongue is not necessary to learn a foreign language. This method places great stress on correct pronunciation and the target language from outset. It advocates teaching of oral skills at the expense of every traditional aim of language teaching. Such methods rely on directly representing an experience into a linguistic construct rather than relying on abstractions like mimicry, translation and memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary. Learning of writing and spelling should be delayed until after the printed word has been introduced, and grammar and translation should also be avoided because this would involve the application of the learner's first language. It provides a motivating start as the learner begins using a foreign language almost immediately. Lessons progress to verb forms and other grammatical structures with the goal of learning about thirty new words per lesson.

1.12.7. The series method

The series method is a variety of the direct method in that experiences are directly connected to the target language. Children organize concepts in succession of time, relating a sequence of concepts in the same order. Students learn a language more quickly and retain it better if it is presented through a chronological sequence of events. Students learn sentences based on an action such as leaving a house in the order in which such
would be performed. The learner must use the new concepts frequently after presentation, either by thinking or by speaking, in order to master them. Language was learned in sentences with the verb as the most crucial component.

Among the seven methods listed above, the direct, conversational and audio-visual methods are not in all the schools where the study was conducted. Only few schools, especially all the residential schools have language laboratory and the language teachers use the language laboratory for teaching literature. The teachers were themselves are not fully aware of the conversational and audio-visual methods. They prefer to use the traditional methods. Grammar classes are dull monotonous repetitions of sentence by students in group. The new trends in teaching second language are yet to be implemented in the schools to promote better teaching and learning.

1.12.8. Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling

Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPR Storytelling or TPRS) was developed by Blaine Ray, a language teacher in California, in the 1990s. TPR Storytelling can be categorized as part of the comprehension approach to language teaching.

1.12.9. Dogme language teaching

Dogme language teaching is considered to be both a methodology and a movement. Dogme is a communicative approach to language teaching and encourages teaching without published textbooks and instead focusing on conversational communication among the learners and the teacher.

1.12.10. Communicative language teaching (CLT)

Communicative language teaching (CLT), also known as the Communicative Approach, emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. Despite a number of criticisms it continues to be popular, particularly in Europe, where constructivist views on language learning and education in general dominate academic discourse.

1.12.11. Task-based language learning (TBLL)

In recent years, task-based language learning (TBLL), also known as task-based language teaching (TBLT) or task-based instruction (TBI), has grown steadily in
popularity. TBLL is a further refinement of the CLT approach, emphasizing the successful completion of tasks as both the organizing feature and the basis for assessment of language instruction. Dogme language teaching shares a philosophy with TBL, although differs in approach.

1.12.12. Learning by teaching

Learning by teaching is a widespread method in Germany, developed by Jean-Pol Martin. The students take the teacher's role and teach their peers.

1.13. Review of Literature

Ms. S. Kalaiselvi (2004) in her Ph.D. dissertation entitled “A Linguistic Study on the problems of Learning English at Collegiate Level”. The Problems encountered by the informants in the process of learning second language is dealt in this dissertation. This study concentrates on the problems of learning English Syntax and other grammatical features at the collegiate level.

K.Nisha (1995) has identified the mother tongue interference in second language (L-II) acquisition at the phonological, lexical, morphological and syntactical levels in her Ph.D. dissertation entitled “Second Language Acquisition and Achievement of Communicative Competence in English – A Case Study of students”. The various communicative strategies adopted during communication are studied in this dissertation.

P.V. Ravi (1998) in his dissertation, “Study of the Motivational Problems with Reference to Teaching – Learning English as a Second Language” tries to discuss and identify the motivational factors in the teaching – learning of English as a second language in the class room situations – VI, VII and VIII Std. from the points of view of education, linguistics (language) and psychology. The interaction between teacher and students and students with their peer group has also been observed by him.

The syllabus and materials prescribed for the informants have been studied by P.K. Rangasamy (1998) in his dissertation entitled “A Linguistic Study of the Techniques of Teaching English at the Higher Secondary Level in Tamilnadu”. The merits and demerits of language teaching methods have been discussed in this study. The errors both in speaking and writing committed by the student have been analyzed. With the help of the questionnaire all the techniques of teaching have been analyzed in the dissertation.
A. Chandran (1999) has analyzed the errors committed by the students in the productive skills such as speaking and writing in his dissertation entitled “A Study of Productive Skills with a Special Reference to Communicative Ability in Speaking English of the Higher Secondary First Year Students in Coimbatore District”.

The area of hindrance in acquiring the communicative skills in English by the Higher Secondary students who have had Hindi as their medium of instructions in middle school has been studied by Chaya Mittal (1999) in her dissertation, “Second Language Learning with Reference to Communicative Skills: A Case Study of the Hindi Speakers of English in Coimbatore District”. More focus has been given to the influence of Hindi in the second language learning situation.

A review of the previous works on language teaching / learning shows that in the past researchers have studied the grammatical problems faced by the second language learners in such fringe areas as tenses, prepositions, auxiliaries, articles, etc. throwing a little light on the issues related to the areas of problems such as agreement, word order and so on. The errors committed by the students in word order, concord have been dealt with inadequately. Hence this study aims to analyze the syntactic problems such as word order, concord and so on in a detailed way so as to fill up the gap and also to identify and propose remedial measures to the problems faced by the Higher Secondary School students while they learn English language.

The behaviorists view errors as a symptom of ineffective teaching or as evidence of failure. They also view it as being due largely to mother tongue interference – interference that the teacher failed to predict and allow for. When errors do occur, they are to be remedied by a bombardment of correct forms. This bombardment is achieved by the use of intensive drilling or over-teaching.

According to mentalists, errors arise from over-generalization of rules. The learners process the new data in their mind and come up with succession of rules that produce new patterns in the target language. The learners are constantly attempting to solve problems and make sense of the linguistic evidence around them. Consequently, error is inevitable; it is, in fact and integral part of learning process and developing competence. Students will produce errors because their hypothesis about the new language is wrong and incomplete. Errors are not, therefore, to be regarded as signs of failures, but as
evidence that the student is working his way toward the correct rules. Nor are errors
harmful to the learning process, as the behaviorists say. On the contrary, the students
learn by making errors and having them corrected. (Peter Hubbard, et al., 1983:144).

1.14. Aim and Scope of the Study

In the process of learning a second language the learners face many problems
because once a language is learnt by a learner it tends to interfere with the learning of a
second language. Encountering problems in this process is inevitable. Learning English
syntax is a major problem for the second language learners due to the intricacies involved
in its syntactic structures owing to the fact that it is a non-native language. This study is
undertaken to find out the reasons as to how and why the learners of English fail to learn
the sentence structures of the English language properly. Error analysis plays a vital role
to understand the process of language learning for it helps the teacher to obtain
information on the common difficulties experienced by the learners in the process of
learning. This study concentrates on the problems of learning English syntax and other
grammatical features at the school level.

1.15. Specific Objectives

The objectives of this study are specified as follows:

(a) To identify the problems in English word order and the influence of L\textsubscript{1} on L\textsubscript{2}
syntax.
(b) To identify the problems in English word order, due to the influence of L\textsubscript{2} itself.
(c) To identify the problems faced in subject-verb concord in English language.
(d) To identify the problems faced in verb-adverb concord in English language.
(e) To identify the problems faced in noun-adjective concord in English language.
(f) To identify the problems involved in the derivation of new forms of words in
   English.

1.16. Limitations of the Study

(i) The study is restricted to the higher secondary level.
(ii) Three schools chosen for data collection consisted of students hailing from rural
    as well as urban pockets of Kurichikottai and Amaravathinagar of Tiruppur District.
(iii) From each school, sixty students were chosen as informants for the study making the total number of informants one hundred and eighty.

(iv) The informants have been asked to fill in the questionnaire provided by the researcher.

(v) The informants background although was considered for error analysis, it is restricted to the informants from rural or urban areas and whether the informant is first generation learner or not. Whereas the details of the learners parents education is not considered. This in fact plays a major role in the acquisition of English knowledge.

1.17. Significance of the Study

This study is an attempt to point out some of the shortcomings in the process of learning the syntax of English. The teaching materials used are adequate. Yet the students fail to make use of them properly. Almost all the students irrespective of their medium of instruction commit errors in forming sentences, of course with varying degrees of errors. Whereas the English medium educated students commit less number of errors, the Tamil medium educated students commit more number of errors. This defective learning continues from the high school to higher secondary level. If the errors are not identified and eliminated even at the higher secondary level it will damage the quality of higher education. Higher Secondary education is a threshold to studies. Hence it is believed that this study would help to improve the teaching of English in schools.

1.18. Methodology

Any type of research problem requires an appropriate research methodology in order to arrive at accurate results. As far as this study is concerned the researcher has selected few sociolinguistic and descriptive methods and applied them in this study. The steps followed in the preparation of questionnaire, selection of informants, collection and analysis of data and so on are described in the following passages.

1.18.1. Selection of Informants

The school students in and around Udumalpet were selected as the subjects of this study. One hundred and eighty students were selected as informants using random sampling frame. Although the researcher had not made any distinction between girls and
boys, since the sex of the learners was not found to be diagnostic variable in the pilot study, but has made distinction between the first generation learners and the second generation learners, considering the vital role played by the parents in their wards knowledge acquisition. Also the researcher has made distinction between the medium of instruction used in schools.

Total number of informants from rural pockets - 130
Total number of informants from urban pockets - 50

Total number of informants from both rural and urban pockets - 180

1.18.2. Questionnaire

Questionnaires are major sources of elicitation of data. A questionnaire was prepared for this study to elicit data. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of questions related to the background regarding social and economic standard of the informants. It also contained questions regarding their likes and dislikes towards English learning, use of guides, the various problems faced by them in learning English etc.

Part I

1. Name :
2. Age :
3. Class :
4. Name of the school :
5. Address :
6. Mother Tongue :
7. Marks obtained in English
   in previous years’ Annual exam :
8. Medium of instruction
   High school :
   Higher secondary :
9. Father’s (a) Occupation :
   (b) Educational Qualification:
10. Mother’s (a) Occupation:
(b) Educational Qualification:

11. (a) Do you have a TV set at home? If yes name it

12. Do you watch English channel? If yes name it

13. Do you read anything in English? If Yes Why?

14. Do you speak in English with your friends and others at home?

15. Do you feel any difficulty in Learning English? Why?

16. Do you like English classes? Why?

17. What language do you normally use in the class room?
   With your teacher
   With your classmates

18. Do you learn grammar separately?

19. Do you attend any special coaching classes for learning English?-If yes-Why?

20. Do you have reading habit?

21. Do you like to improve your English?

22. How many hours do you spend to learn English?

23. Do you think that the number of periods allotted for teaching English in your school is enough?

24. Do you want to improve your vocabulary?

25. Do you take any special step to improve your English?

26. Which is most important in learning a language?
27. Do your English teacher take special effort to teach vocabulary?-----------------

28. How frequently do you clarify your doubt inside the class?-----------------

29. How do you clarify your doubt outside the class?-----------------

30. Do you have any idea about wordlist, derivation and inflection?-------

31. Do your family members help you in learning English?-----------------

32. Have you had any health problem which affected your studies?----------------

33. Do you have a good English teacher in your school?------------------

34. Whether your nativity gives an advantage to your vocabulary learning?-------

The second part of the questionnaire had been framed to test the level of competence of the informants in the sentence constructions. Eight exercises had been framed for this purpose. They are:

1. Fill in the blank with appropriate be form of the verb.
2. Fill in the blanks with the correct form of number (singular or plural) of the verbs.
3. Fill in the blanks by choosing the correct answer from the actions given.
4. Rewrite the sentence by nominalizing the first adjective of the sentence to noun.
5. Study the cartoons and complete the sentences using appropriate derivatives.
6. Combine the following sentences by nominalizing the first verb into its noun derivative.
7. Combine the following pairs of sentences by changing the adjective to a noun.
8. Choose the correct synonym from the options given below.

1.18.3. Data elicitation

After selecting the informants a pre-tested questionnaire was administered to them with due explanation. After making them read the questionnaire the students had been asked to give answers, i.e., fill up the questions with appropriate answers.

1.18.4. Reliability and validity of the questionnaire

To ensure ‘reliability’ of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted. The questions not eliciting relevant information were deleted from the questionnaire. In this way, the pilot study has helped the researcher to wet the questions in the questionnaire.
1.18.5. Data analysis

The data collected from the students were subjected to analysis. Statistical analysis had been done first by counting the number of correct and wrong entries followed by quantitative analysis. The main focus of analysis had been on word order, concord, other grammatical features and syntactic features in English sentence constructions of the informants. The nature of errors and the rate of occurrence had been analyzed thoroughly and discussed elaborately.

1.18.6. Error analysis

Error analysis is an absolute necessity in the field of language teaching/learning. In order to understand the problems of the learners and to improve the teaching methodology or materials, it is essential that proper evaluation and analysis is undertaken. The errors are no longer viewed as slackness or incapacity; instead they indicate the learning strategies of the learner, suitability of the course materials and the techniques adopted by the teacher. The errors indicate the learners’ active participation in the language learning activity. The learner has already framed certain hypothesis regarding the language he/she is trying to learn with the help of exposure he/she has had. The aim of error analysis is to make an attempt to discover the learners’ language processing mechanism in learning a language.

The encouraging factor about the learners’ errors is that the errors are transitional and dynamic in the process of acquiring the system of the target language and the errors will disappear when the learners are exposed to the target language system more and more in course of time.

1.18.7. Types of errors


1. Interlingual errors
2. Intralingual errors
3. Developmental errors.

1.18.7.1. Interlingual errors

Interlingual errors are those deviant forms which are results of first language interference. First language is supposed to influence at all levels of second language learning – phonological, grammatical and lexical.
1.18.7.2. Intralingual errors

Intralingual errors are caused as a result of interference from within the target language itself. Example: Use of ‘is’ always after ‘I’, imitating “he is, she is”. These errors are independent of the mother tongue of the learner.

1.18.7.3. Developmental errors

Developmental errors are those which indicate the types of strategies by which the learner acquires a language. Due to limited exposure to the target language, the learner constructs certain false hypothesis about the second language system. Example: Use of “I come” imitating “He comes”.

1.18.8. Significance of error analysis

Though many studies had been undertaken in the past on the various aspects of teaching and learning languages, certain factors affecting the progress of teaching and learning have not been fully understood. Error analysis throws light on these factors and highlights its value and significance.

(a) Errors are welcome evidence of learning and they reveal the amount and quality of learning that has taken place in a particular situation.
(b) It is through the error that we can understand the strategies by which the learner processes the linguistic data in his attempt to acquire the target language.
(c) Error analysis is of great help to the course designer because the feedback obtained from the learners points out the suitability of the course materials. This enables reorganization of course materials and framing remedial measures.
(d) Error analysis enables the teacher as to what to correct and how to correct when she/he is dealing with the language produced by the learners.
(e) Error analysis is very important in the field of language learning also because its ultimate result benefits the learner.

1.18.9. Sources of errors

The following are some of the main sources of errors:
1.18.9.1. Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization covers instances when the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language (J.C.Richard, 1974). Corder (1973) says that over-generalized errors are produced on the basis of analogy and are an inevitable process in learning.

1.18.9.2. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

Here, the learner is not able to perceive the restrictions of existing structures, i.e. the learner internalizes certain rules of the second language and applies to contexts where they do not apply. This is a kind of overgeneralization as the learner makes use of the acquired rule in new situation. Example: “Children likes sweets very much”, using V-s because the noun has plurality.

1.18.9.3. Incomplete application of rules

The errors indicate that the students have acquired the rules in a hazardous manner. Example: “The tricolor flag were hoisted by the Principal”. Under this category, we may note that the occurrence of structure whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required producing acceptable utterances.

1.18.9.4. Forming hypothesis

These errors occur as a result of faulty comprehension of the distinctions in the target language. These errors are sometimes due to poor grading of teaching items. Example: ‘is’ and ‘was’ may be interpreted as markers of present and past tense, adding ‘-ing’ instead of ‘-ed’.

1.18.10. Presentation of the study

The present study “A linguistic Approach to study on the problems of learning English at Higher Secondary level” comprises of five chapters. The scheme of presentation of the report on the study is as follows.

1.18.10.1 Chapter I – Introduction

The introductory chapter contains a general introduction on language, its origin and history, grammar and various grammatical categories and the status of English
language in India with special reference to Tamilnadu. Further, this chapter contains a
review of literature, aim and scope of the study, limitations involved in this study,
significance of this study, the evaluation of teaching methods, various educational
policies in India, the various types of errors and their sources, particulars about
questionnaire, data elicitation and processing.

1.18.10.2. Chapter II – Concord

A general introduction to English concord has been presented in this chapter
followed by the problems faced by the informants with regard to subject-verb concord,
noun-adjective concord, adjective-verb concord, verb-tense concord.

1.18.10.3. Chapter III - Derivation

An untouched topic is touched upon. A new topic where not much of a research is
done. An introduction to derivation and the different types of derivations with
illustrations is presented. This chapter deals with the problems faced by the informants
with regard to the conversion of verb to noun, adjective to noun and vice-versa.

1.18.10.4. Chapter IV – Morphology

The errors committed by the informants in the sentences constructed due to
erroneous prepositions, articles and conjunctions have been probed and described in this
chapter. Analysis of exercise 10 of the questionnaire is presented in this chapter. The
errors of the informants have been categorized following J.C.Richards (1971)
classification i.e. interlingual, intralingual and developmental errors.

1.18.10.5. Chapter V – Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, the observations and inferences drawn on the basis of
the analysis executed in this study are consolidated and presented. Suggestions to refine
second language teaching / learning with special reference to grammar have been
presented. This chapter also discusses the future prospects in a research of this nature
with a view to advocate the future course of direction.