Chapter III Theoretical Approaches

3.1 Introduction

What is language? Why language is unique of all the things man uses in day-to-day life? Is it really indispensable? Can’t men and women do without it? Is there no substitute for language? These are some of basic questions which require answer before one proceeds to explain about the theoretical approaches which a language teacher intends to implement to native or non-native speakers. There are hundreds and hundreds of definitions for language. There are umpteen number of language specialists – linguists, grammarians, educational psychologists etc., Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias explain language in different shade and tone. Collins COBUILD defines a language as a system of communication which consists of a set of sounds and written symbols which are used by people of a particular country or region for talking or writing. It adds that language is the use of a system of communication which consists of a set of sounds or written symbols. Another definition offered by the COBUILD Dictionary, is that language refers to various means of communication involving recognizable symbols, non-verbal sounds or actions. According to Noam Chomsky, language is human essence. He says: when we study human language, we are approaching what some might call human essence, the distinctive qualities of mind that are, so far as we know unique to man. Aristotle says: language is the speech … the representation of the experience of mind. Bloomfield has a different definition for language. He says that the totality of utterances that can be made in a speech community is the language of the speech community. Definitions of language differ in words but the attributes and traits are the same. E. Sapir defined language as … a purely human and non-instinctive method of communication ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols.

Apart from the uniqueness of the language, one must not forget the fact that it is arbitrary in many ways. But it helps us to think coherently and logically. It impacts on human beings in many ways by influencing our relationship and helping to transmit a vast amount of knowledge. Language is used to express one’s feelings and emotions without which one can not sustain for long time. Language is the engine which takes human beings in the river of lifeline. Languages have no either
superior or inferior qualities per se. every language is unique in its own way with different sound patterns and grammatical structures.

Hence what is exactly a language? What are the important attributes of it? Linguists give various definition based on its usages. The primary function of a language is that it is used as a means of communication and self-expression – the former for one- to-one and the latter for one-to oneself. Language is basically arbitrary, conventional and non-instinctive. It is also systematic and vocal. It is a kind of social behaviour. The characteristics of a language are not exclusive to one language.

All languages are open-ended, modifiable and extendable. In the next level, the a scientific and systematic study of language is applied linguistics. This term was used by Mackey(1966). A general definition of applied linguistics explain that it is about language teaching, testing and evaluation. It also includes preparation of material for teaching, lexicography, translation and sign language. Artificial language is also dealt in applied linguistics. Computational linguistics, language education, socio-linguistics, psycho-linguistics, neuro-linguistics, speech pathology come under the study of applied linguistics.

3.2 Different approaches in language learning

Different approaches have been experimented by linguists and grammarians to facilitate the language learning situations both for the categories of adult and children. The purpose of those methods is to remove the language barriers among different types of learners. The Foreign Language or Second Language learners face many problems while they attempt to acquire both written and spoken skills. In some exceptional cases, SL learners exceed the fluency of native speakers while the literacy level of L2 learners is higher than the L1 speakers. Grammatically and structurally, the L2 learner is equipped with wide knowledge of the meaning and forms of the foreign language. But most of the L2 learners generally face the same language problems and the theoretical approaches are experimented to come over these problems for better understanding of L2.

What are the parameters of the best L2 learning environment? Are there any specific method and approach which could help in producing the best L2 speakers?
According to David Crystal (2011), the following are the main parameters:

a. The soundness of teaching methods
b. The attitudes
c. Motivation of the learner
d. The availability of time and opportunities to learn
e. The adequacy of resources and
f. The chance to put the language to active use.

It is imperative that a distinction should be made between the two terms ‘learning’ and ‘acquisition’ even though both look synonymous. While the term ‘acquisition’ refers to the learner’s natural absorption of a language, the term ‘learning’ refers to an environment in which the language learner learns in a classroom situation with the help of the teacher in a structured manner. It should also be noted that there is a distinct variation between Foreign language and Second language. The former is used while a language is used by speakers for the purpose of conversing with a foreigner while second language is used by speakers as a tool of communication and officially recognised to be used as a medium of education, government and business.

The goal of L2 learning is definitely achieving a sort of native-like proficiency. In this regard it may be noted that what required for L1 proficiency may be applied to L2 proficiency. For L1 proficiency, Stern has conceptualized certain parameters such as the intuitive mastery of the forms of language such as linguistic, cognitive, affective and socio-cultural meanings expressed by the language forms. He stresses that learners should develop the capacity to use the language with maximum attention to communication and minimum attention to form.

Canale and Swain propound different requirements like grammatical competence such as linguistic competence - vocabulary and pronunciation as well as grammatical and word forms. Sociolinguistic competence is another requirement for the L2 learners. In this category communicative competence including socio-cultural rules for using language appropriately and discourse rules for linking parts of a language text coherently and cohesively. Discourse competence and interpretation of meaning, strategic competence i.e., problem-solving ability including verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies that may be called into
action to compensate for breakdown in communication due to performance variables or insufficient competence. According to Richards, the task of L2 learner is the acquisition of a new set of syntactic and phonological rules and transformational rules for the realization of the language—indepen- dent deep structures. That L2 learning primarily involves the acquisition of a new set of realization rules by which the new language expresses underlying relationships of a universal type is an important parameter.

3.3 Major L2 learning theories

a. The Interlanguage theory
b. The Monitor theory
c. The acquisition-learning hypothesis
d. The monitor hypothesis
   I. The natural order hypothesis
   II. The input hypothesis
   III. The affective filter hypothesis

f. The Creative construction model
   I. Affective filter
   II. Cognitive organizer
   III. Linguistic monitor

The major language learning theories are behaviourist, mentalist, developmental interactionist. Behaviourist theory was expounded by Skinner (1957). This theory focused on the role of verbal and non-verbal environments. Habit formation and predictability in learning behaviour are underlined here. First children imitate the language environment.

Chomsky opposed this Stimulus –Response (S-R) theory. Apart from the S-R, the innate ability of the individual learner comes to the forefront in language learning situations. Language Acquisition Device (LAD) was devised by Chomsky. It helps children to make hypothesis about the structure of language both generally and particularly. Till the learner attains adult-like proficiency, change happens in the language learning situations. Cognitive aspect plays a vital role in the LAD. Both the behaviourist theory by Skinner and others and the mentalist theory propounded by Chomsky have positive and negative results on the learners.
In 1978, De Villieres J and De Villieres P brought an improved language theory called Procedural Approach in which the interaction between the internal and external factors is considered the most important as structure of a language is acquired by the learner slowly. Earlier in 1971, Developmental Interaction Theory (DIT) was introduced by Piaget.

This linguistic psychologist highlighted that all cognitive acquisition including language plays an important role in the language acquisition. Of course language theories are abound in the language learning. There are umpteen number of Second Language Theories (SLA) with merits and demerits.

These SLA theories help to provide with us explanations as to how language takes place, to identify the variables responsible for SLA. They also offer guidance to SL teachers. Of course the perspective of each theory has its own approach. Technically, SLA theories can be categorized into two types - form and content.

Christina Gitsaki has outlined in her essay about the theories of SLA. The SLA theories can be classified according to different criteria. Theories can be grouped according to their form along a continuum with 'deductive' on one end and 'inductive' on the other. Concepts and constructs are important in the deductive approach. They are also considered to be true without proof. In this approach laws of logic are applied on these axioms to obtain the 'hypotheses' of the theory. If these hypotheses are empirically supported then they become the laws and facts of the theory (McLaughlin, 1987:8).

In the deductive approach, axioms are as much important as in inductive method. Empirically-based, theoretical statements are formulated after a significant amount of empirical relationships have been established. Theories that follow the inductive approach formulate hypotheses based on certain empirical facts (McLaughlin, 1987:9). As for content is concerned, theories are grouped into macro and micro theories. These two theories play an important role in SLA. Macro theories in SLA cover a vast amount of language learning phenomena while micro theories speak about specific phenomena with narrow scope (McLaughlin, 1987:9).
According to McLaughlin (1987), two of the most basic criteria for evaluating a theory are:

1) ‘Definitional Adequacy’ (DA)

2) ‘Explanatory Power’ (EP)

The first term ‘definitional adequacy’ defines the concepts of a theory and their correspondence to some external reality. In this, ambiguity should not be there so that different people can interpret them in the same way (McLaughlin, 1987:12).

The Second term ‘explanatory power’ refers to the theory which is measured by the correspondence of the theory to the facts that theory is supposed to explain. The operational definition for the term ‘listening ability’ is the score that a learner achieves on a test designed to measure the learner’s listening comprehension (McLaughlin: 1987:13). He emphasizes that a theory should also have explanatory power and should describe certain phenomena.

The theory also should offer explanations as to why a certain phenomenon occurs. He concludes that it is important that theorists do not over-estimate the truth-value of their theory. To conclude his theory, McLaughlin (1987:17) opines that a theory is validated by what it suggests and predicts as well as by what it affirms explicitly. The theories correspondence to the facts and internal coherence are considered to be important in assessing the validity and usefulness of a theory. Over the period, a number of SLA theories have evolved and SL teachers and experts and L2 and FL practitioners have been exploring various methods and approaches to find solutions for the linguistic problems of the SL learners across the world.

Studies in linguistics and applied linguistics have taken a great stride as psycho-linguistic and socio-linguistic aspects have been taken into account while formulating new SLA theories and approaches. For the past three or four decades these studies have gained importance as people from across the length and breadth of the globe, have started acquiring a Second Language for various purposes including communication. The globalization, started late in the 20th century, has spurred the learning necessity for a second language for business, commerce and trade purpose, too. Hence the necessity for new and innovative theories and approaches for SLA has come as a challenge for the linguists and language experts.
Research has spawned new SLA theories in the classroom situations in various forms including deductive and inductive approaches. Among the SLA theorists, Stephen Krashen’s model has become influential for its in-depth and innovative approach. Krashen formulated his model in the late 1970s and called it ‘The Monitor Model’. Krashen’s theory facilitated the SL acquisition in a major way. The scenario of SLA has transformed to a great extent after Stephen Krashen outlined reasons for the lacuna while SLA process takes place and the ways and means to overcome those linguistic bottlenecks.

The famous five central hypotheses propounded by Stephen Krashen in the Monitor Model are:

a. The Acquisition versus Learning Hypothesis
b. The Monitor Hypothesis.
c. The Natural Order Hypothesis
d. The Input Hypothesis
e. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

a. The Acquisition versus Learning Hypothesis

According to Krashen, (1976, 1982), acquisition is a subconscious process, much like first language acquisition, while learning is a conscious process resulting into "knowing about language". He also underlines that learning does not "turn into" acquisition and it usually takes place in formal environments, while acquisition can take place without learning in informal environments.

b. The Monitor Hypothesis

In the second hypothesis, Krashen (1982:15) opines that learning has the function of monitoring and editing the utterances produced through the acquisition process. Because the use of the Monitor is affected by the amount of time that the second language learner has at his/her disposal to think about the utterance he/she is about to produce, the focus on form, and his/her knowledge of second language rules (Krashen, 1981:3-4).
c. The Natural Order Hypothesis

In the third hypothesis, Krashen underlines that there is a natural order of acquisition of second language rules. And a few of them are early-acquired and some are late-acquired. Also he propounds that this order does not necessarily depend on simplicity of form while it could be influenced by classroom instruction (Krashen, 1985). To prove this idea, he provides evidence for the Natural Order Hypothesis was provided by a series of research studies investigating morpheme acquisition orders.

d. The Input Hypothesis

The fourth idea is the input hypothesis in which receiving comprehensible input is the only way that can lead to the acquisition of a second language. If a learner’s level in a second language is \( i \), he/she can move to an \( i+1 \) level only by being exposed to comprehensible input containing \( i+1 \) (Krashen, 1985).

e. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The term ‘Affective filter’ is referred to ‘mental block’. Comprehensible input will not be fully utilized by the learners if there is mental block which acts as a barrier to the SLA process (Krashen, 1985). Krashen’s findings differentiate between child & adult L2 learners as adults proceed through early stages of syntactic and morphological development faster than children (where time & exposure are held constant). Secondly, older children acquire faster than younger children (again in early stages of morphological & syntactic development where time & exposure are held constant). Finally, acquirers who begin natural exposure to L2s during childhood generally achieve higher levels of L2 proficiency than those beginning as adults.

Many theorists and researchers rejected the hypotheses propounded by Krashen. Among them, Gregg and McLaughlin are the major critics. Apart from its demerits, The Monitor Theory is still an example of a macro theory which encompasses the factors involved in SLA viz., age, personality traits, classroom instruction, innate mechanisms of LA, environmental influences, input etc., There are a number of limitations in this theory according to linguists and theorists. Gregg (1988) opposed Krashen’s five hypotheses for successful SLA. According to him,
this theory can be used generally but there is no need to talk about two different ways of gaining competence in a second language. McLaughlin (1987) gives due regards for hypotheses by Krashen for SLA process for its extensive and detailed theory of SLA.

The inadequacy of this monitor theory is also spelt out McLaughlin. According to him, some of its central assumptions and hypotheses are not clearly defined and thus are not readily testable (e.g. the acquisition-learning dichotomy is based on “subconscious” and “conscious” processes respectively, which have not been clearly defined by Krashen although he operationalized them in his studies (Krashen, Butler, Birnbaum, & Robertson (1978) for an investigation of grammaticality judgments based on "feel" and "rule" for subconscious and conscious acquisition respectively), while other assumptions aiming to enhance the explanatory power of the Monitor Theory are not based on well-established theories and research (e.g. the Natural Order hypothesis).

Furthermore, the role assigned to unconscious learning was found to be overestimated and exaggerated. Instead subsequent studies drew attention to the role of consciousness in second language learning and how much learners notice and what they think as they learn second languages. In spite of the criticism it received from various quarters, Krashen’s Monitor Theory was considered to be one of the great one for its originality and pioneering ideas. As there was not any other credible approach for SLA at that time, theorists and linguists applauded it for its practical approach.

3.4 Interlanguage Theories

A brief definition about interlanguge is that Interlanguage is an L2 learners’ multi-competence (Cook 1992, 1996) which has its own grammar (Selinker 1972) and is subject to systematic variation, as any natural language (Labov 1969). The L2 target is the “standard” variety of the language that the learning community adopts.

It was Selinker (1969) who coined the term ‘interlanguage’ way back in 1969. Many theorists, linguists, grammarians, and language experts and language purists refused to accept the mistakes and errors committed by the second language learners (SLL). That there are a number of linguistics steps in the ladder of language
learning was not recognized by them. Selinker took the courage to recognize the errors committed by the SLL during the process of SLA. The interlanguage was not new as it has been there since human beings began to converse in more than two languages for the purpose of trade and commerce.

Even before the study of language and linguistics, interlanguage has existed, for traders from China, India, and Persia; Egypt had traveled long distances and forced to speak a second language or foreign language. Hence, the traders and businessmen would have committed linguistic errors and mistakes long back but would have managed with some knowledge of a second or third language. But the systematic errors committed by the SLL were studied in depth and categorized by Selinker in a scientific manner to bring out a linguistic system which he named as ‘interlanguage’. Selinker defines interlanguage as a temporary grammar which is systematic and composed of rules. He has brought in all these rules in to the product of five main cognitive processes. They are:

a. Overgeneralization
b. Transfer of Training
c. Strategies of Second Language Learning
d. Strategies of Second Language Communication
e. Language Transfer

a. Overgeneralization

Some of the rules of the interlanguage system may be the result of the overgeneralization of specific rules and features of the target language.

b. Transfer of Training

Some of the components of the interlanguage system may result from transfer of specific elements via which the learner is taught the second language.

c. Strategies of Second Language Learning

Some of the rules in the learner's interlanguage may result from the application of language learning strategies “as a tendency on the part of the learners to reduce the TL [target language] to a simpler system” (Selinker, 1972:219).
d. Strategies of Second Language Communication

Interlanguage system rules may also be the result of strategies employed by the learners in their attempt to communicate with native speakers of the target language.

e. Language Transfer

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) suggest that there are two possible ways of describing the term ‘interference’. One is from a psychological perspective, which suggests that there is influence from old habits when new ones are being learned. The second is from a sociolinguistic perspective which describes the language interactions which occur when two language communities are in contact.

Three such examples are:

- **a. Borrowing**, 
- **b. Code-switching** 
- **c. Fossilisation**

**a. Borrowing**

Borrowing essentially means the incorporation of linguistic material from one language into another, for example, the borrowing of thousands of words from old French into Anglo-Saxon after the Norman conquest of 1066. Such words maintain their general sound pattern but alter the phonetic and phonological system of the new language. ‘Integrated borrowing’, according to Dulay and Burt (1974b), occurs when the new word in question is fully incorporated into the learner’s IL. Selinker (1992) argues that this is in fact transfer.
b. Communicative Borrowing

‗Communicative borrowing‘ on the other hand, reflects a communicative strategy which helps to get over the deficiencies of the L2. The learner falls back on structures or patterns from the L1 in order to get a message across. Selinker (1992) notes that if communication is successful, then transfer will (or may) happen. The danger is that successful communication does not depend entirely on formal correction.

Persistent errors (e.g. wrongly incorporated errors, covert errors) could lead to fossilization where a learner, uncorrected for the reasons mentioned above, but still able to successfully get their message understood, has no socio-functional need to alter their IL and so it fossilizes in that state.

c. Code switching

Code switching describes the use of two language systems for communication, usually evidenced by a sudden, brief shift from one to another. This phenomenon is not an indication of a lack of competence, but rather tends to obey strict structural rules. Certain structural combinations, for example, are not possible, e.g. switching before relative clause9 boundaries or before adverbial clauses is ‘illegal’.

A more behaviourist interpretation of interference was mentioned earlier; two types were suggested:

1. Positive Transfer (PT)

2. Negative Transfer (NT)

Both of these types refer to the automatic and subconscious use of old behaviour in new learning situations. Specifically, semantic and syntactic transfer of this nature reflects the most commonly understood uses of the term. Corder (1983) suggested the need for a word other than ‘transfer’ which he claimed belonged to the school of behaviourist learning theory. He suggested the term ‘Mother Tongue Influence (MTI)’.
Sharwood Smith (1986) refined the idea still further by suggesting ‘Cross Linguistic Influence (CLI)’, which would take into account the potential influence of L3 on L2 where another learned language, but not the L1 might have an effect on the learning of the L2. Also encompassed within the meaning of CLI is the notion of possible L2 influence on L1. ‘Transfer’ is also used by educational psychologists to refer to the use of past knowledge and experience in a new situation, e.g. a literate SLL does not have to learn that written symbols represent the spoken form of the new language. While a cognitive emphasis and a focus on the strategies that learners employ when learning a second language are given importance by Selinker, Adjemian (1976) in his attempt to describe the nature of the interlanguage systems. Adjemian argues that approaches it with different priorities. To him, interlanguages are natural languages but they are unique in that their grammar is permeable.

Adjemian (1976) also differentiates between the learning strategies that learners employ and the linguistic rules that are “crucially concerned in the actual form of the language system” (Adjemian, 1976:302). He ends with the description of these linguistic rules that will reveal the properties of the learner’s grammar should be the primary goal of linguistic research. After Selinker and Adjemian, Tarone (1979, 1982) brought in a third approach to describe interlanguages. According to Tarone, interlanguages are a continuum of speech styles. L2 learners shift between styles according to the amount of attention they pay to language form – from the super-ordinate style in which attention is mainly focused on language form to the vernacular style in which the least attention is paid to language form. According to Tarone (1982), the new target language forms first appear in the more careful style and progressively move towards the vernacular style. The systematic variability of interlanguage systems is reflected to the variable effect which the different tasks and different linguistic contexts have on the learners’ use of syntactic, phonological and morphological structures. So, in the SLA process, the importance of interlanguage should be taken into account (Tarone, 1990:398)

Ellis (1985) supports the view that different language approaches can be employed for explaining the acquisition of interlanguage. He also argues that learners begin with forms which are used in free variation during the early stages of SLA (non-systematic variability). In all the theories of interlanguage, two basic
characteristics are highlighted – that interlanguages are systematic and dynamic. In the form of learning strategies, the learners employ a sort of systematicity and linguistic rules that governs the learners’ grammar. Secondly, Interlanguage keeps changing until the target language (TL) system is fully acquired.

Even though interlanguage has its own system of grammatical rules, it is only a form of interim grammar which gradually progress towards the TL. In the study of interlanguage, error analysis plays a vital role. It is a mode of enquiry limited in its scope and concentrate on what learners do wrong rather than on what make them successful (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1992:61).

### 3.5 Universal Grammar Theories

Chomsky (1969, 1980, and 1986) formulated a different type of theory of language learning. They are called Universal Grammar Theories (UGT). They are based on certain principles that form the basis on which knowledge of language develops. According to him, these principles are biologically determined. As is known, the UG theory was earlier propounded for only first language learner. Then its principles were adopted by SL researchers especially in the field of SLA. In any language learning process – either in first or second language learning – developmental sequences are important. Hence, in interlanguage theory too, UG was used to provide explanations for the existence of developmental sequences (Hilles, 1986:45). Bley-Vroman, Felix & Loup (1988) argued that the use of UG for language transfer, fossilization and L2 pedagogy was also suggested. Evidence was provided that adults have some sort of access to knowledge of UG, and this knowledge is used in the development of foreign language competence. Felix (1985) brought a new ‘Competition Model’ with two subsystems – the Language-Specific Cognitive System (LSC-system) and the Problem-Solving system (PSC-system). He argued that it is responsible for the differences in the learning processes employed by children and adults.

In this model, Felix explained that the children’s learning process is guided by the LSC-system, while adults employ the problem solving module which then enters into competition with the language-specific system. And he continues to argue that even though the LSC-system is governed by principles similar to the principles of the Universal Grammar, the principles of the PSC-system are largely unknown.
the same vein, another approach called the Creative Construction Theory (CCT) which was formulated by Dulay and Burt (1974) focused on children engaged in SLL. In this approach, the theorists concentrate on how the SLL progressively reconstruct rules for the TL speech they hear guided by ‘universal innate mechanisms which lead them to construct certain types of hypotheses about the system of the language they are acquiring until the mismatch between what they are exposed to and what they actually produce.

S P Corder (1978) brings out the effect of the mother-tongue in determining the magnitude of the second language learning task is reflected in the model of the learning process. The SL learner begins his/her learning task from a basic Universal Grammar (or built-in syllabus) which gradually becomes more complex in response to the learner’s exposure to target language data and the communicative needs he/she is faced with. This elaboration or complexification process follows a constant sequence for all learners of a particular second language, but the progress of any particular learner is affected by the degree to which his/her knowledge of the target language in the form of mother-tongue-like features facilitates his/her learning process.

3.6 Cognitive Theories

In the same period, psychologists and psycholinguists looked at the SLL as the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill. According to McLaughlin (1987:134), some of the sub-skills involved in the LL process are applying grammatical rules, choosing the appropriate vocabulary, following the pragmatic conventions governing the use of a specific language. These sub-skills become automatic with practice (Posner & Snyder, 1975).

Further to this view, McLaughlin (1987, 1990), adds that during this process of automatisation, the learner organizes and restructures new information that is acquired. Through this process of restructuring the learner links new information to old information and achieves increasing degrees of mastery in the second language (McLaughlin, 1987, 1990). This gradual mastering may follow a U-shaped curve sometimes (Lightbown, Spada, & Wallace, 1980) indicating a decline in performance as “more complex internal representations replace less complex ones” followed by an increase again as skill becomes expertise (McLaughlin, 1990).
Berman (1987:4) argues that LA is dependent “in both content and developmental sequencing on prior cognitive abilities” and language is viewed as a function of “more general non-linguistic abilities”. But Felix (1981) rejects this cognitive theory. He argues that cognitive skills as “useless” for language development. The cognitive development is important for the development of meaning and vocabulary since lexical items and meaning relations are most readily related to a conceptual base. Yet another cognitive theory to SLL was formulated by Clahsen, 1987) called interactivist approach. This model “assumes an autonomous linguistic level of processing” and contains a general problem solver mechanism (GPS) that allows “direct mappings between underlying structure and surface forms, thus short-circuiting the grammatical processor”. In spite of all the cognitive models in the SLL, Schimdt (1992) observes:

“there is little theoretical support from psychology on the common belief that the development of fluency in a second language is almost exclusively a matter of the increasingly skilful application of rules” (Schmidt, 1992:377).

There are some more models with regard to SLA such as the Multidimensional Model and the Acculturation/Pidginization Theory. But, as this dissertation mainly deals with the SLA of Tamil Speaking Under-Graduates learners, these models which refer to the acquisition of a second language by adults in naturalistic environments, they are not discussed here.

The SLA process is complex and the aim of SL theories is to simplify the process to the extent possible. Removing the linguistic bottlenecks in all respects – sociological, psychological and cultural – is the crux of every SL theories and provides solutions to facilitate the learning. In the process of SLA, the new phenomenon ‘interlanguage’ has been identified and how it helps and affects the SLL of Tamil Speaking Under-Graduate Students (TSUGS) of Arts and Science Colleges (ASCs) in Madurai district.

All types of theories point out the fact that SLA is not short process but a gradual one and it takes due time to achieve some sort of fluency in the TL. As is known, no theory is perfect per se. every theory has merits and demerits and it does not cover all aspects for a perfect SL learning atmosphere.
Larsen-Freeman (1978) argues that the morpheme frequency of occurrence in native speaker speech is the principle determinant for the morpheme order in the speech production of second language learners. However this conclusion seen under the light of different theories of second language acquisition can provide a number of different explanations. Different learners require different SL approaches to suit their needs. There is not a single model which would fulfil their linguistics needs. They relay on different strategies when learning a second language, depending on a number of different variables such as the target language input they are exposed to, their cognitive style, their motivation, their proficiency in the target language, etc.

3.7 Interlanguage Development

How to assess the SL’s progression of linguistic development? As all SLLs are not equal, there are variables in their acquisition. H.D.Brown highlights four stages:

1. The first is a stage of “random errors”, in which the SLLs are not in a position to understand that there are some systematic orders to a particular class of items.
2. The next stage is “emergent”. The SL learners become consistent in linguistic production.
3. “Systematic stage” is the third one in which the SLL learners are now able to show more consistency. At this stage error corrections become easy for them. In the third stage, the SLLs are closer to the TL.
4. The final stage is “the stabilization stage”. In this stage the SLLs develop their own ability for self-correction.

3.8 Linguistic competence and performance

There is a vast difference between linguistic competence and performance. Many linguists give different definitions about these two concepts. Chomsky (1965) says that “competence consists of the mental representations of linguistic rules that constitute the speaker-learner’s internal grammar“. Performance is the use of this grammar in the comprehension and production of language.
Linguistic experts have come out five types of the main areas of SLA.

1. **Errors**
2. **Acquisition orders**
3. **Variability**
4. **Pragmatic**
5. **Other factors** (learner-internal, learner-external, learner strategies, universal grammar, and grammar in relation to SLA).

In the process of SL, the influence of one’s mother tongue is so enormous that the main areas of SLA have to be studies with reference to the MTI.

### 3.9 Contrastive Analysis

The source of errors plays a vital role in all these approaches. There are two types of error analysis viz., Contrastive Analysis (CA) and Error Analysis (EA). CA theories came into the linguistic milieu during 1950s. It was Robert Lado (1957) who pointed out that the basic assumption underlying Contrastive Analysis (CA) is that ‘individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings and the distribution of the forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the second language and culture – both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture as practiced by natives. In addition, the SLLs bring and transfer all the previous L1 experience i.e., his knowledge of his mother tongue (MT). Hence, Lado (1957) and Fries (1945) are the names most closely associated with the CA hypothesis. The SLLs learn easily some items of SL which they have in their own mother tongue.

In CA, language is considered as a conditional response and it is strongly believed that errors produced by a SLL results from the interference of mother tongue. The important features of the theory are:

1. Interference of mother tongue or in other words MTI is believed to be the primary reasons to the SLL.
2. Errors occur because of the difference between L1 and L2. The difficulties vary according to the relationship between the L1 and L2.
   - Some languages originating from the same family sometimes pose
lesser difficulties to the SLLs. If the families are entirely different, the SLLs face much linguistic problems.

3. To understand the errors committed by the SLLs, the main features of the grammatical aspects of L1 and L2 should be compared.

4. Other views on error analysis are that a strong approach development of teaching methods based on comparison on phonological, grammatical and syntactical features of L1 and L2.

3.10 Error Analysis

The study of Error analysis started during the 1960s while errors committed by the SLLs were considered to the evidence of SLL’s strategy as they try to build competence in the TL. Errors committed by the SLLs should not be viewed seriously as something serious but as normal and inevitable features for achieving competencies in TL (Strevens, 1969). Second language learners commit errors but evolve a language system. The SLLs test their knowledge of the language against the data they encounter.

The errors committed by the SLLs are not random but it has its own system. If there is a pattern in the commission of errors, it is evidence and sign of achievement on the part the learner in the target language. Also the mistakes and errors made by the learners become an important source of information about the nature of linguistic knowledge. Corder (1973) says that by describing and classifying the learners’ errors in linguistic terms, one can build up a picture of the features of the language which are causing learning problems to the SLLs. According to various linguistic studies, a great change took place during the 1960s. The stress was on the actual errors i.e., ‘the product’ and then the stress was shifted to the process.

The reason why the process was stressed was that this approach throws light on how a language is learned. Corder (1973) says that the study of errors is part of the psycholinguistic search for the universal processes of SLL.
The learner himself develops a system of his own in the SLA such as:

1. Idiosyncratic dialect
2. Interlanguage
3. Approximate system
4. Transitional competence

3.11 Errors in language learning

What is an error in SLA? Corder (1967) looks at an ‘error’ as a deviation in learner language which results from lack of knowledge of the correct rule. It contrasts with a mistake. An error can be overt or covert. Various frame works for describing errors have been developed, including descriptive taxonomies, which focus on the observable surface features of errors, and surface strategy taxonomies which reflect the way in which target language. Surface structure is altered by learners. Errors are deviations from linguistic norms including phonological, grammatical and semantic which occur in the speaker’s use of language. Whatever be the linguistic background of some error occurring in a speaker’s use the language, it is significant to note that errors as a phenomenon occur only in the speaker’s use of language. These rules out a number of alternatives:

1. Errors do not occur as part of the speaker’s linguistic competence.
2. The process of internalization of language does not render itself to the formation of errors as part of the child’s language (level 1).
3. We do not consider under errors any ‘deviant language behavior’ which occurs as a result of organic or functional speech disorder.

According to different studies and research works, the areas of error are many. So, the teacher should highlight the actual work of analysis, it is necessary to spot the number of language areas where he expects the pupils to be probably weak.

3.12 Error Analysis and Error correction in SL

In applied linguistics, error analysis is “the study of patterns of errors. Analysts have proposed six kinds of error, arising from inaccurate learning, inaccurate teaching, wrong guessing, poor memory, the influence of the mother tongue, and the process of learning.” S. Pit Corder in the U.K. dichotomized between error (a failure in competence, a systemic fault) and mistake (a flaw in
performance in Error Analysis - Maria Karra - United States. It is to S.P. Corder that Error Analysis owes its place as a scientific method in linguistics. As Rod Ellis cites (p. 48), “it was not until the 1970s that EA became a recognized part of applied linguistics, a development that owed much to the work of Corder”. Before Corder, many other linguists observed learners’ errors, divided them into categories, tried to see which ones were common and which were not, but not much attention was drawn to their role in second language acquisition. It was Corder who showed to whom and information about errors would be helpful (teachers, researchers, and students).

3.13 Significance of Error Analysis

Corder (1981) underlines the importance of the significance of error analysis of many reasons. Identification and correction of errors may be one of vital steps in second language learning but applying various theories such as linguistic and psychological approaches to the study of language learning is important, too.

Hence, he classifies the studies into two schools:

a. Perfect teaching method – to avoid errors

b. This is imperfect world – errors are natural

Based on these two ideas, Corder attributes the errors committed by the SL learners both to the teaching and learning processes. The errors committed by the second language learners are evidences to the learning processes taking place in a second language. Corder (1984) identifies three ways to find the processes are happening in the second language.

1. The progress of the SLL may be checked by the teacher by testing what the learner has acquired and what remains to be acquired.
2. The utterances and written texts provide the evidence about the learning process.
3. Errors are nothing but a device or a strategy adopted by the SLL to learn the target language. So the SLL himself uses this hypothesis to test himself about the learning processes.
The making of errors is a strategy employed by children acquiring their mother tongue and by those learning a second language (Corder, 1987). Like Corder, there are other linguists and second language experts who studied about the errors made the SLLs. There are language experts like Spolky, Dulay, Burt, Crasen and Selinker.

3.14 Review of Studies in Errors Analysis

Research work have been going on in the area of SLA for a long time. A number of researchers and linguists have explored about the need for SLA investigation, the errors the L2 learners committed, the role of mother tongue or first language in the second language acquisition, the nature of errors, the reasons for committing the errors, and rectification of errors. This type of investigation has been done in English as second language with first language as Dutch, Japanese, Chinese, German etc. Many studies have been taken up with reference to Tamil Speakers who study English as a Second Language. These informants are from both schools and colleges.

D.Gunasekaran (1988) has done a case study about the SLA of Tamil students in schools. Arunan (1976)’s research on social differentiation explored the assimilation of loan words in Tamil. K Karunakaran (1974) has done a research work on standardization of Tamil dialects. A Subramanian (1964) has done a phonological study in Tamilian English.

Corder introduced the distinction between errors (in competence) and mistakes (in performance). This distinction directed the attention of researchers of SLA to competence errors and provided for a more concentrated framework. Thus, in the 1970s researchers started examining learners’ competence errors and tried to explain them. We find studies such as Richards’s “A Non-Contrastive Approach to Error Analysis” (1971), where he identifies sources of competence errors; L1 transfer results in interference errors; incorrect (incomplete or over-generalized) application of language rules results in intralingual errors; construction of faulty hypotheses in L2 results in ‘developmental errors’. Not all researchers have agreed with the above distinction, such as Dulay and Burt (1974) who proposed the following three categories of errors: developmental, interference and unique. Stenson (1974) proposed another category, that of induced errors, which
result from incorrect instruction of the language. As most research methods, error analysis has weaknesses (such as in methodology), but these do not diminish its importance in SLA research; this is why linguists such as Taylor (1986) reminded researchers of its importance and suggested ways to overcome these weaknesses.

Corder noted that the study of errors would be significant: to teachers, to researchers and to learners. In addition to studies concentrating on error categorization and analysis, various studies concentrated on these three different areas. In other words, research was conducted not only in order to understand errors per se, but also in order to use what is learned from error analysis and apply it to improve language competence. These studies, among many others, show that thanks to Corder’s work, researchers recognized the importance of errors in SLA and started to examine them in order to achieve a better understanding of SLA processes, i.e. of how learners acquire an L2. Error Analysis has come to stay in the SLA process. It covers the entire gamut of linguistic fields. In second language acquisition, error analysis studies the types and causes of language errors.

3.15 Grammatical Errors

During the process of SLA, errors may occur in reported speech, agreement, articles, progressive tenses, prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries, simple tenses, perfect tenses, and passive construction etc. Induced errors arise in learner language when learners are led to make errors that otherwise they would not make by the nature of the formal instruction they receive. Global errors are errors that affect overall sentence organization (for example ‘wrong word order’). They are likely to have a marked effect on comprehension. Local errors are errors that affect single elements in a sentence. For example, errors in the use of inflections or grammatical factors. They contrast with global errors. Intralingual errors are errors in learner language that reflect learner’s transitional competence and which are the results of such learning processes as overgeneralization. Error evaluation involves a set of criteria and procedures for evaluating the effect that different errors in learner language have on addressees, both native speakers and non-native speakers. Error evaluation results in an assessment of error gravity. Error gravity concerns the seriousness of an error. This can be determined with reference to such criteria as intelligibility, acceptability, and irritation (Khalil 1985).
3.16 Error treatment

Error treatment concerns the way in which teachers (and other learners) respond to learner’s errors. Error treatment is discussed in terms of whether errors should be corrected, when, how, and by whom. The general form of a system of knowledge is fixed in advance as a disposition of the mind and the function of experience is to cause this general schematic structure to be realized and more fully differentiated (Chomsky, 1965:51-52).

3.17 Procedures of Error Analysis (EA)

The procedures for EA are figured out by Corder as follows:

a. Collection of a sample of learner language
b. Identification of errors
c. Description of errors
d. Explanation of errors
e. Evaluation of errors

Types of Errors

The first distinction we should make is mistakes and errors. A mistake refers to performance error that is either a random guess or a “slip”, which are caused by the lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, etc. The latter refers to systematic errors of the target language. Corder also makes distinction between overt and covert errors. “An overt error is easy to identify, because there is a clear deviation in form. A covert error occurs in utterances that are superficially well formed but which do not mean what the learner intended them to mean. Another division that is widely agreed on is that interlingual errors and intralingual errors believed by linguists. An error that results from language transfer, which is caused by the learner’s native language, is called interlingual errors. Intralingual errors refer to those produced in using the target language in own terms. They result from faulty or partial learning of the target language, rather than from language transfer.

3.18 Classification of errors

According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), people cannot learn a language without first systematically committing errors. Mother Tongue (MT) interferes and influences SL learners greatly. The SL experts underline that like the
L1 learners’ errors, most of the errors L2 learners make indicate they are gradually building an L2 rule system. Errors can be classified based on the areas of language as follows:

1. **Lexical errors or morphological errors** - they occur in the area of vocabulary.
2. **Phonological errors** – they occur in pronunciation, accent and modulation.
3. **Syntactical errors** - they occur in the structure of sentences.
4. **Imperative errors** – they occur because of the misunderstanding of learner’s intention of meaning.
5. **Pragmatic errors** – they occur because of wrong communicative effects when the learner practises what he has learnt in SL.

### 3.19 Nature of errors

**Corder (1972)** classified the errors according to its nature:

1. **Errors of Omission** – omitting required elements in sentences
2. **Errors of Addition** – using unnecessary or incorrect elements.
3. **Errors of Selection** – making a wrong choice of the elements.
4. **Errors of Ordering** – the failure in ordering the lexical and syntactical elements.

Other than the above classification, **Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982)** further classified the errors as follows:

1. **Omission of errors** – omitting grammatical morphemes which are items that do not continue much to the meaning of sentences as in he hit car.
2. **Double Marking** - double marking a semantic feature when only one is required as in she did not went back.
3. **Regularizations** - regularizing rules as in womans for women
4. **Using archiforms** - one form in place of several such as the use of her for both she and her as in I see her yesterday. Her dances with my brother.
5. **Using two or more forms** in random alternation eventhough the language requires the use of each only under certain conditions as in the random use of he and she regardless of gender of the person of interest.
6. **Misordering**: misordering items in constructions that require a reversal of word order rule that had been previously acquired as in what you are doing.

The above types of errors occur in the L2 students during SLA. The errors are accounted on the basis of linguistic items, which occur in the language components or linguistic constituents. Language components include phonology (pronunciation), syntax and morphology (grammar), semantics and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary) and discourse (style). Linguistic constituents include the elements that comprise each language component like clause, phrase etc., (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982). Omission, addition, misforming and misordering are the commonly found types of errors while ESL is learnt by non-native speakers.

**Errors of omission**

Omission errors occur while the SL learners are not supposed to omit certain grammatical morphemes like auxiliaries, prepositions, articles etc.,

* e.g.,

* how you do?

* When you come?

**Errors of Addition**

Errors of addition are committed by the SL learners at the later stage their SLA. There are three major types identified by SL experts. They are:

a. **Double Marking**

b. **Over-generalization**

c. **Simple Addition**

**Double marking**

In this type of errors, the SL learners fail to delete some letters or fail to make necessary changes in auxiliaries. This is a common error usually committed by the SLLs.

* e.g.,

a. He likes apple

b. I likes apple

c. They likes apple
3.20 The Errors of Overgeneralization or Regularization

This error occurs while the SL learners fail to adhere to the rules of exceptions. In English language, there are a number of exceptions which the SL learners fail to notice. There are regular and irregular verbs and numbers.

e.g.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular Verbs</th>
<th>Irregular Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ball</td>
<td>balls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kerchief</td>
<td>kerchiefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make</td>
<td>made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shake</td>
<td>shade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Simple Addition

It is neither regularization nor double marking as it is simply adding unnecessarily some words like articles or preposition etc., For example:

a. The Madurai is a temple city.
b. I am studying in class XI.

3.21. Misformation and Misordering

Misinformation errors are characterised by the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure. There are three types of misinformations:

a. Regularizations
b. Archiforms
c. Alternating forms

The selection of one member of a class of forms to represent others in the class is a common characteristic in SL learning. As the learner’s vocabulary and grammar grow, the use of archiforms often gives way to the alteration form.

E.g.,

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proper Form</th>
<th>Misformed Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>that dog</td>
<td>that dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>these dog</td>
<td>this dog</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. When word to word translation is attempted, misordering errors occur.
3.22 Code-switching

Code- is a speech variety or dialect is language. The study of Code-switching arises in social contexts. Code-switching is defined as a change by a speaker or writer from one language or language variety to another one (Richard Jack, 1985). Code-switching can occur during conversation and also in other language behaviour. A person may start his conversation in language and then switch to another for various reasons. The influence, knowledge and exposure to more than one language makes a person to practise code-switching. In code-switching, there are code-mixing and code-shifting.

Kinds of Variations in Code-Switching

There are three kinds of variations in code-switching:

a. Dialectical Code-Switching

b. Diglossic Code-Switching

c. Bilingual Code-Switching

a. Dialectical Code-Switching

This includes code-mixing and code-shifting. It occurs in monolingual situations. From a dialect to another dialect, the speaker switches eventhough the speaker is bilingual.

b. Diglossic Code-Switching

This is common even in casual conversation. When the speakers switch to high variety, this occurs. When the speaker talks to elders or superior officers, he changes to high variety language.

c. Bilingual Code-Switching

Bilingual code-switching comprises of English and Tamil or any other native language. The reason for switching from English to Tamil or from Tamil to English, may be because the knowledge and fluency of the speaker or the hearer. Inadequacy of technical terms warrant code-switching. When English is considered to be a prestigious language.

Types of Code-Switching

There are four levels or types of Code-Switching:

1. Word level
2. Phrase level
3. Syntactical level
4. Grammatical level
In word level, single words are shifted here and there. This is also called as code-mixing which is a common language activity in daily life. In the second level, it takes place in phrase level while the third level takes place when one switches between one language to another language. The fourth level is not very common but is used by speakers who know two languages while the second one is not necessarily a foreign language or a second language. Instead, the speaker may use two languages because of contiguity like speakers living on the borders of states linguistically divided.

3.23 Fossilization

Fossilization refers to a learner’s interlanguage which is closer to his target language with the improvement of his linguistic capacity and fewer and fewer linguistic mistakes, but some mistakes still remain not overcome, which are called “fossilizations”. This also refers to these mistakes as differences between mother tongue and target language of learners. Corder classifies linguistic mistakes into three stages:

1. As those before the formation of the system
2. Those of the system
3. Those afterwards.

To correct various types of mistakes committed by the SLLs, the teacher should adopt diverse tactics of teacher error-correcting, self-error-correcting of students, and mutual error-correcting between students (Tomas, 1983). So the teachers are not supposed to treat with students’ linguistic mistakes very seriously.

3.24 Redundancy

In SLA, the terminology ‘redundancy’ is meant that the ‘construction of a phrase that presents some idea using more information than is necessary for one to be able understand the idea. They occur in speech unintentional and can also’ be deliberately constructed for emphasis, in order to avoid the possibility of others’ misinterpretation of a very important idea. By using repetition of certain concepts, redundancy increases the odds of predictability of a message’s meaning and understanding to others. Examples of redundancy are very common in SLA. "an added bonus", "to over-exaggerate", "and etc.", "end result", "free gift", "
"future plans", "unconfirmed rumor", "safe haven", "potential hazard", "completely surrounded", "false pretense," etc., "ATM machine", "HIV virus", "PIN number" are some of the other examples in this category. Redundancy includes dialectal usage of technically unnecessary parts, as in "off of" vs. "off", "onto" vs. "on", "know that it happened" vs "know it happened", etc. Pleonasm can also take the form of purely semantic redundancies that are a part of the de facto standard usage in a language and "transparent" to the user.

3.25 Conclusion

This chapter explores some of the most influential theories of second language acquisition. The first part of the paper outlines some general distinctions and categorizations concerning the different theories as well as criteria for the evaluation of the various theories. A critical overview follows the description of each theory and its contribution to second language acquisition research. In addition, the error analysis is done in detail. The types of errors and the nature of errors have also been taken up discussion. The difference between performance and competence and mistakes and errors were dealt with in detail with reference to various linguists and language experts including Corder, Dulay, Krashen, Chomsky and Selinker.