Chapter IV- Mother Tongue Influence (MTI)

4.0 Introduction

In SLA, one of the most inhibiting and inherent factors is the influence of one’s Mother Tongue. Its influence could not be wished away. Through strenuous and conscious efforts, one could try to avoid it provided the second language learner immerses himself in the target language and has the opportunity in using the target language constantly. The children who were born to English speaking parents and are brought up in the environment in which English is the only communication language or spoken medium, could speak English with excellent proficiency and fluency. This is true in the case of upper middle and middle class families in urban India. In the cosmopolitan and metropolitan cities, the children normally converse in English language only while their mother tongue may be different – in this case mostly Hindi.

4.2 Definition of Mother Tongue

What is the definition of mother tongue? Mother tongue is one’s native language which is learned by children and passed from one generation to another. It is his natural language or first language. Mother tongue is the language that one learns from his parents when he is a baby.

Another definition for mother tongue is that language which “denotes not only the language one learns from one’s mother, but also the speaker’s dominant and home language, i.e. not only the first language according to the time of acquisition, but the first with regard to its importance and the speaker’s ability to master its linguistic and communicative aspects. Mother tongue is closely associated with culture. Hence, it is the language community of the mother tongue, the language spoken in a region, which enables the process of enculturation, the growing of an individual into a particular system of linguistic perception of the world and participation in the centuries old history of linguistic perception (W. Tulasiewicz and A Adams, 2005).
Regarding mother tongue, there is another important perception that cultural power can backfire when the choices of those who embrace Americanness in language, accent, dress or choice of entertainment stir resentment in those who do not. Every time an Indian adopts an American accent and curbs his ‘mother tongue influence,’ as the call centers label it, hoping to land a job, it seems more deviant, and frustrating, to have only an Indian accent (Anand Giridharadas, 2010).

As for a mother tongue is concerned, myth is another important element which is vital to explain one’s first language. “The notion of ‘mother tongue’ is thus a mixture of myth and ideology. The family is not necessarily the place where languages are transmitted, and sometimes we observe breaks in transmission, often translated by a change of language, with children acquiring as first language the one that dominates in the milieu. This phenomenon concerns all multilingual situations and most of the situations of migration (Louis Jean Calvet, 2006). One’s Mother tongue may also be called in other words as first language, dominant language, home language, native tongue or native language.

In India there are thousands of languages spread across the length and breadth of the country. The scheduled languages are eighteen and Tamil language is one among them. There are more than 8,000,000 speakers who consider Tamil as their native tongue. In the state of Puducherry (Pondicherry) too, Tamil is used as the mother tongue. A considerable of people spread across the borders of neighbouring states of Karnataka, Kerala, and Andra Pradesh, also consider Tamil as mother tongue. Other than Tamil Nadu, Tamil is spoken as their mother tongue by millions of people spread across Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius and other parts of world including the United State of America. A significant number of migrants living in mainland Mumbai and the slums including Dharavi, still speak Tamil as their first language. All these people do not stop learning any other language. According to their need and necessities, they learn a second or a third language.
In Bangalore, many Tamil speakers are well-versed in Kannada while many Tamil migrant workers speak Telugu as their second language for business purpose. The same is the case with people living in Kerala, particularly in Munnar district. They are bilingual conversing in Tamil and Malayalam (Wikipedia, 2011).

In Tamil Nadu, English is learnt primarily as the second language for a long time and as it is the medium of instructions in schools, colleges and universities, SLA has become an important component of various studies for both research and academic purpose. In this dissertation, the researcher has embarked upon the study of impact of Tamil language on English learners from Government Arts and Science colleges in Madurai district.

4.3 History of the study of MTI

The impact of Mother tongue on a second language has been there for a long time. The impact or influence by a mother tongue on a second language or target language is not uniform and universal per se. There are variations based on many factors. The grammatical relationship between the mother tongue and the second language plays a vital role. If the two languages - the mother tongue and the target language - are from the same language families, there may be lesser impact. Attempts to explore the mother tongue influence in a scientific manner is only of recent origin especially after 1970s.

After a number of studies, these researchers have formulated some theoretical perceptions and ideas and have successfully brought in the impact into an ambit so that students, learners, researchers and teachers of second language could further develop the exploration about impact of MTI.

There are a number of studies about mother tongue influence across the globe in after the advent of SLA. After 1970s, mother tongue influence which is part of second language learning has been explored and continue to be explored by various second language experts and linguists for various reasons. As the knowledge of a second language – particularly English – has become an important factor in one’s interaction with the outside world, there is a flourish of activities in the academic institutions in the field of SLA.

In International Education Journal (Vol 1, No 1, 1999), Baljit Bhela of Flinders University School of Education, has extensively studies about the Mother tongue impact on second language. In his research paper, “Native language interference in learning a second language: Exploratory case studies of native language interference with Target Language usage”, Bhela says that the second language learning environment encompasses everything the language learner hears and sees in the new language. It may include a wide variety of situations such as exchanges in restaurants and stores, conversations with friends, reading street signs and newspapers, as well as classroom activities, or it may be very sparse, including only language classroom activities and a few books.

He also adds that regardless of the learning environment, the learner’s goal is mastery of the target language. The learner begins the task of learning a second language from point zero (or close to it) and, through the steady accumulation of the mastered entities of the target language, eventually amasses them in quantities sufficient to constitute a particular level of proficiency (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982 and Ellis, 1984).

This characterization of language learning entails the successful mastery of steadily accumulating structural entities and organizing this knowledge into coherent structures which lead to effective communication in the target language (Rutherford, 1987). If this is the case, then we would expect that well-formed accurate and complete target language structures would, one after another, emerge on the learner’s path towards eventual mastery of the language. If the learner went on to master the language, we could, in principle, tabulate the expansion of his/her repertoire up to the point where all of the well-formed structures of the target language had been accounted for (Beardsmore, 1982 and Hoffman, 1991).
In any case, the SL learners acquire ‘structural entities of the target language but demonstrate difficulty in organizing this knowledge into appropriate, coherent structures. There appears to be a significant gap between the accumulation and the organization of the knowledge. This then raises a critical question - what kinds of language do second language learners produce in speaking and writing? When writing or speaking the target language (L2), second language learners tend to rely on their native language (L1) structures to produce a response. If the structures of the two languages are distinctly different, then one could expect a relatively high frequency of errors to occur in L2, thus indicating an interference of L1 on L2 (Dechert, 1983 and Ellis, 1997).

In 1982, Dulay et al made a fine attempt to study the native or mother tongue interference on the target language. So how does one define this interference? Does all second language learners suffer from this obstacle? Mother tongue interference is termed as the automatic transfer for various reasons. The main element is due to habit. This automatic transfer happens on the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language. Interference is explained as “errors in the learner’s use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue” (Lott, 1983).

According to Dechert (1983), if the MT and TL are entirely different, then ‘the instances of errors made in L2 which bear traces of L1 structures’. Bhela (1999), through his findings, further adds that in both cases the interference may result from a strategy on the part of the learner which assumes or predicts equivalence, both formally and functionally, of two items or rules sharing either function or form. More advanced learning of L2 may involve a greater number of rules or marking features for distinguishing between the two languages.

Another researcher, Beardsmore (1982), says that many of the difficulties a second language learner has with the phonology, vocabulary and grammar of L2 are due to the interference of habits from L1. The formal elements of L1 are used within the context of L2, resulting in errors in L2, as the structures of the languages, L1 and L2 are different. Albert and Obler (1978) found that ‘people show more lexical interference on similar items. So it may follow that languages with more similar structures (e.g., English and French) are more susceptible to mutual interference than
languages with fewer similar features (eg English and Japanese). On the other hand, we might also expect more learning difficulties, and thus more likelihood of performance interference at those points in L2 which are more distant from L1, as the learner would find it difficult to learn and understand a completely new and different usage’.

The circumstances of learning a second language are like those of a mother tongue. **Second Language Learning (SLL)** is most productive when the situations in which the two languages (L1 and L2) are learned (**Faerch and Kasper, 1983**). One can not totally dismiss the structures of one’s mother tongue. In the SLA process, the L2 learner is supposed to often preclude the L1 structures from the L2 learning process, if the structures of the two languages are distinctly different. According to **Ellis (1997)** interference means ‘transfer’. He adds that this is the influence that the learner’s L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2. Transfer of one’s mother tongue’s structure and allied factors, are governed by learners’ perceptions about what is transferable and by their stage of development in L2 learning. Hence, with previous knowledge of mother tongue, the SL learners construct their own interim rules (**Selinker, 1971**). According to **Carroll,1964** and **Beebe (1988)**, learners of a second language always carry a trace of the structures of their mother tongue onto the target language.

### 4.4 Difference between Mistakes and Errors

The two terminologies mistake and errors may seem to be carrying synonymous meaning in any given sentence. The intensity of the meaning may vary according to the circumstances and the need. In linguistics, the entire gamut of the meaning of these two terms are given differentiated by **Ellis (1997)**. He says that errors reflect gaps in the learner’s knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows.

### 4.5 MT Interference in SL learning

The amount of knowledge of one’s mother tongue plays a vital role in deciding the proficiency level of the learner’s target language. A person who is illiterate in one’s own mother tongue with no theoretical knowledge of the
structures and sound pattern will have more difficulties in achieving any proficiency in a second language. Hence, the prior knowledge of one’s mother to a large extent determines the pace of approximate proficiency level in target language. Of course, many other factors apart from the prior knowledge weigh in the achieving some proficiency in target language. The L2 learner’s purpose in learning the target language is also important in this context. In this dissertation paper, the researcher, while attempting to study the impact and interference of mother tongue on a second language, studies the MTI in morphological, phonological, syntactic structural and semantic level also. The present study also identifies the effect of the differences and/or similarities between the structures of L1 and L2 on the target language.

4.6 Interlanguage fossilization

In SLA process, interlanguage fossilization is recognized as an important stage by many linguists. SL learners develop a linguistic system that is self-contained, independent and different from both the learner’s First Language (L1) and Target Language (TL) (Nemser, 1971). Selinker (1972) identified this system which is ‘approximate’ if not equal to the second language proficiency. This approximate system was named as interlanguage by Selinker (1972). Nemser (1971) himself called it ‘approximative system’ and Corder (1971) called this system as ‘idiosyncratic dialects’ or ‘transitional dialects.’

This transitional and changing grammatical system, called ‘interlanguage’, as constructed by the second language learners in the process of acquiring proficiency in target language, approximates the grammatical system of the mother tongue. These linguists suggest that in the process of L2 acquisition, internlanguage morphs into an ever-closer approximation of the target language and ideally should advance gradually until the system becomes equivalent or nearly equivalent to the target language.

In the long run, while the SLLs succeed to some extent in evolving their system of grammatical structures derived from their mother tongue, they reach a stage which is called interlanguage fossilization. This system may reach one or more temporary restricting phases when its development appears to be detaine
Nemser, 1971). Selinker (1972) calls this permanent cessation of progress toward the target language as fossilization.

According to Selinker (1972), this state will continue ever after all reasonable attempts at learning. Selinker adds that fossilization includes those items, rules, and sub-systems that L2 learners tend to retain in their IL, that is, all those aspects of IL that become entrenched and permanent, and that the majority of L2 learners can only eliminate with considerable effort (Omaggio, 2001).

Moreover, it has also been noticed that this occurs particularly in adult L2 learners’ IL systems (Nemser 1971, Selinker 1972, Selinker & Lamendella 1980). In reality, some L2 learners achieve 100% proficiency after the state of fossilization. This is because of repeated efforts done by the L2 learners. This is possible because of the factor called motivation which impels the L2 learners to go beyond the interlanguage fossilization.

Dr. Andrija (Zoran) Vujisic (2007) also conducted research regarding the role of motivation in L2 acquisition. Gardner, 1988 and some other linguists have conducted research on the impact of motivation to learning L2. But according to Guiora et al. (1972), adult L2 learners, unlike children, who are open to TL culture, do not have the motivation to change their accent and to acquire native-like pronunciation. Also they have more rigid language ego boundaries. Cultural and ethnic identity are important for the adult L2 learners.

4.7 An Introduction to Tamil Language

Tamil is one of the oldest languages from the Dravidian family. It has its script for its writing system. It follows non-Latin script writing with one of the oldest history in human civilization. It is being spoken in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, where it has official status; with significant minorities in Canada, Malaysia, Mauritius and Burma and emigrant communities around the world. At present, it has more than 80 million speakers across the world.
According to various internet sources (Wikipedia), Tamil (தமிழ்) is a Dravidian language spoken predominantly by Tamil people of the Indian subcontinent. It has official status in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and in the Indian union territory of Puducherry. Tamil is also an official language of Sri Lanka and Singapore. It is one of the 22 scheduled languages of India and the first Indian language to be declared as a classical language by the government of India in 2004. Tamil is also spoken by significant minorities in Malaysia and Mauritius as well as emigrant communities around the world.

It also adds that Tamil is one of the longest surviving classical languages in the world. Tamil literature has existed for over 2000 years. The earliest epigraphic records found on rock edicts and hero stones date from around the 3rd century BCE. The earliest period of Tamil literature, Sangam literature, is dated from the 300 BCE – 300 CE. Tamil language inscriptions written c. 1st century BCE and 2nd century CE have been discovered in Egypt, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The two earliest manuscripts from India, to be acknowledged and registered by UNESCO Memory of the World register in 1997 and 2005 were in Tamil. More than 55% of the epigraphical inscriptions (about 55,000) found by the Archaeological Survey of India are in the Tamil language. According to a 2001 survey, there were 1,863 newspapers published in Tamil, of which 353 were dailies. It has the oldest extant literature amongst other Dravidian languages. The variety and quality of classical Tamil literature has led to its being described as “one of the great classical traditions and literatures of the world” (Wikipedia, 2011).

Furthermore, Tamil belongs to the southern branch of the Dravidian languages, a family of around 26 languages native to the Indian subcontinent. It is also classified as being part of a Tamil language family, which alongside Tamil proper, also includes the languages of about 35 ethno-linguistic groups such as the Irula, and Yerukula languages. The closest major relative of Tamil is Malayalam. Until about the 9th century, Malayalam was a dialect of Tamil. Although many of the differences between Tamil and Malayalam demonstrate a pre-historic split of the western dialect, the process of separation into a distinct language, Malayalam, was not completed until sometime in the 13th or 14th century (Wikipedia, 2011).
Old Tamil

The earliest records in Old Tamil are short inscriptions from around the 2nd century BCE in caves and on pottery. These inscriptions are written in a variant of the Brahmi script called Tamil Brahmi. The earliest long text in Old Tamil is the Tolkappiyam, an early work on Tamil grammar and poetics, whose oldest layers could be as old as the 1st century BC. A large number of literary works in Old Tamil have also survived. These include a corpus of 2,381 poems collectively known as Sangam literature. These poems are usually dated to between the 1st and 5th centuries AD, which makes them the oldest extant body of secular literature in India. Other literary works in Old Tamil include two long epics, Cilappatikaram and Manimekalai, and a number of ethical and didactic texts, written between the 5th and 8th centuries.

Middle Tamil

Middle Tamil also saw a significant increase in the Sanskritisation of Tamil. From the period of the Pallava dynasty onwards, a number of Sanskrit loan-words entered Tamil, particularly in relation to political, religious and philosophical concepts. Sanskrit also influenced Tamil grammar, in the increased use of cases and in declined nouns becoming adjuncts of verbs, and phonology. The Tamil script also changed in the period of Middle Tamil. Tamil Brahmi and Vatteluttu, into which it evolved, were the main scripts used in Old Tamil inscriptions. From the 8th century onwards, however, the Pallavas began using a new script, derived from the Pallava Grantha script which was used to write Sanskrit, which eventually replaced Vattezhuttu.

Middle Tamil is attested in a large number of inscriptions, and in a significant body of secular and religious literature. These include the religious poems and songs of the Bhakthi poets, such as the Tevaram verses on Saivism and Nalayira Tivya Pirapantam on Vaishnavism, and adaptations of religious legends such as the 12th century Tamil Ramayana composed by Kamban and the story of 63 shayvite devotees known as Periyapuraṇam. Iraiyanar Akapporuļ, an early treatise on love poetics, and Nannuzh, a 12th century grammar that became the standard grammar of literary Tamil, are also from the Middle Tamil period.
Modern Tamil

The *Nannul* remains the standard normative grammar for modern literary Tamil, which therefore continues to base on Middle Tamil of the 13th century rather than on Modern Tamil. Colloquial spoken Tamil, in contrast, shows a number of changes. The negative conjugation of verbs, for example, has fallen out of use in Modern Tamil – negation is, instead, expressed either morphologically or syntactically. Modern spoken Tamil also shows a number of sound changes, in particular, a tendency to lower high vowels in initial and medial positions, and the disappearance of vowels between plosives and between a plosive and a rhotic.

Contact with European languages also affected both written and spoken Tamil. Changes in written Tamil include the use of European-style punctuation and the use of consonant clusters that were not permitted in Middle Tamil. The syntax of written Tamil has also changed, with the introduction of new aspectual auxiliaries and more complex sentence structures, and with the emergence of a more rigid word order that resembles the syntactic argument structure of English. Simultaneously, a strong strain of linguistic purism emerged in the early 20th century, culminating in the Pure Tamil Movement which called for removal of all Sanskritic and other foreign elements from Tamil. It received some support from Dravidian parties and nationalists who supported Tamil independence. This led to the replacement of a significant number of Sanskrit loanwords by Tamil equivalents, though many others remain.

Dialects: Region specific variations

The socio-linguistic situation of Tamil is characterized by diglossia. There are two separate registers varying by social status, a high register and a low one. Tamil dialects are primarily differentiated from each other by the fact that they have undergone different phonological changes and sound shifts in evolving from Old Tamil.
According to Kamil Zvelebil, the Tamil dialects can be segregated on the following ‘Centers of Prestige’:

a. Madras Tamil (Madras Bhashai)
b. Madurai Tamil
c. Coimbatore or Kongu Tamil
d. Tirunelveli or Nellai Tamil
e. KanyaKumari Tamil
f. Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli Tamil (Central Tamil Dialect)
g. Jaffna or Yazhpanam Tamil
h. Trincomalee or Tiriconamalai Tamil
i. Batticaloa or Mattakkalappu Tamil

Spoken and literary variants in Tamil

In addition to its various dialects, Tamil exhibits different forms: a classical literary style modelled on the ancient language (Sankattamizh), a modern literary and formal style (Centamizh), and a modern colloquial form (Kotuntamizh). These styles shade into each other, forming a stylistic continuum. For example, it is possible to write Centamizh with a vocabulary drawn from Cankattamizh, or to use forms associated with one of the other variants while speaking Kotuntamizh.

In modern times, Centamizh is generally used in formal writing and speech. For instance, it is the language of textbooks, of much of Tamil literature and of public speaking and debate. In recent times, however, Kotuntamizh has been making inroads into areas that have traditionally been considered the province of Centamizh. Most contemporary cinema, theatre and popular entertainment on television and radio, for example, is in Kotuntamizh, and many politicians use it to bring themselves closer to their audience.

The increasing use of Kotuntamizh in modern times has led to the emergence of unofficial ‘standard’ spoken dialects. In India, the ‘standard’ Kotuntamizh is based on ‘educated non-Brahmin speech’, rather than on any one dialect, but has been significantly influenced by the dialects of Thanjavur and Madurai. In Sri Lanka the standard is based on the dialect of Jaffna.
Tamil Writing system

After Tamil Brahmi fell out of use, Tamil was written using a script called the Vatteluttu amongst others such as Grantha and Pallava script. The current Tamil script consists of 12 vowels, 18 consonants and one special character, the aaytam. The vowels and consonants combine to form 216 compound characters, giving a total of 247 characters (12 + 18 + 1 + 12 x 18). All consonants have an inherent vowel a, as with other Indic scripts. This inherency is removed by adding an overdot called a pulli, to the consonantal sign. For example, ‘ṉ’ is ‘na’ (with the inherent a) and ‘ṉ’ is ‘n’ (without a vowel).

Many Indic scripts have a similar sign, generically called virama, but the Tamil script is somewhat different in that it nearly always uses a visible pulḷḷi to indicate a dead consonant (a consonant without a vowel). In other Indic scripts, it is generally preferred to use a ligature or a half form to write a syllable or a cluster containing a dead consonant, although writing it with a visible virama is also possible. The Tamil script does not differentiate voiced and unvoiced plosives. Instead, plosives are articulated with voice depending on their position in a word, in accordance with the rules of Tamil phonology.

In addition to the standard characters, six characters taken from the Grantha script, which was used in the Tamil region to write Sanskrit, are sometimes used to represent sounds not native to Tamil, that is, words adopted from Sanskrit, Prakrit and other languages. The traditional system prescribed by classical grammars for writing loan-words, which involves respelling them in accordance with Tamil phonology, remains, but is not always consistently applied.

Sounds in Tamil Language

Tamil phonology is characterized by the presence of retroflex consonants and multiple rhotics. Tamil does not distinguish phonologically between voiced and unvoiced consonants; phonetically, voice is assigned depending on a consonant’s position in a word. Tamil phonology permits few consonant clusters, which can never be word initial. Native grammarians classify Tamil phonemes into vowels, consonants, and a “secondary character”, the aaytam.
**Tamil Vowels**

Tamil vowels are called uyirezhuttu (உயிரேழுத்து) (uyir (உயிர்) - life, ezhuttu (எழுத்து) letter). The vowels are classified into short (kuril - கூறு) and long (nedil- நெட்டில்) (with five of each type) and two diphthongs, /ai/ and /au/, and three “shortened” (kurriyl) vowels. The long vowels are about twice as long as the short vowels. Tamil grammarians define that the diphthongs are usually pronounced about one and a half times as long as the short vowels, though most grammatical texts place them with the long vowels.

**Tamil Consonants**

Tamil consonants are known as ‘meyezhuttu’ (மேயேழுத்து), (mey (மேய்) body, ezhuttu (எழுத்து) - letters). The consonants are classified into three categories with six in each category:

a. Vallinam—hard (அழைக்கியம்)
b. Mellinam—soft or Nasal (அள்ளையில்லைமானம்)
c. Idayinam—medium (ஒளித்தம்)

Two important characteristics of Tamil language are:

1. Tamil language does not distinguish aspirated and unaspirated consonants.

2. The voicing of plosives is governed by strict rules in Centamizh.

In Tamil language the plosives are unvoiced if they occur word-initially or doubled. Elsewhere they are voiced, with a few becoming fricatives intervocalically. Nasals and approximants are always voiced.

**Tamil Grammar:**

Tamil employs agglutinative grammar, where suffixes are used to mark noun class, number, and case, verb tense and other grammatical categories. Tamil’s standard metalinguistic terminology and scholarly vocabulary is itself Tamil, as opposed to the Sanskrit that is standard for most other Dravidian languages. Much of Tamil grammar is extensively described in the oldest known grammar book for
Tamil, the **Tolkappiyam** (தொல்கப்பியம்). Modern Tamil writing is largely based on the 13th century grammar **Nannul** (னந்துல்) which restated and clarified the rules of the **Tolkappiyam** (தொல்கப்பியம்), with some modifications.

It is said that traditional Tamil grammar consists of five parts:

1. **Ezhuttu** - இழுத்து
2. **Col** - கொல்
3. **Poruzh** - பொருழ்
4. **Yappu** - யப்பு
5. **Ani** - அணி

It must be here noted that the last two parts given above are mostly applied in poetry. Tamil words consist of a lexical root to which one or more affixes are attached. Most Tamil affixes are suffixes. Tamil suffixes can be derivational suffixes, which either change the part of speech of the word or its meaning, or inflectional suffixes, which mark categories such as person, number, mood, tense, etc. There is no absolute limit on the length and extent of agglutination, which can lead to long words with a large number of suffixes.

**Tamil Morphology**

Tamil nouns and pronoun are classified into two super-classes (**tinai** -தினை) the **“rational”** (**uyartinai** -உயர்தினை), and the **“irrational”** (**akrinai**-அக்கினை) which include a total of five classes (**paal** -பால், which literally means ‘gender’). Humans and deities are classified as **“rational”**, and all other nouns (animals, objects, abstract nouns) are classified as irrational.

The **“rational”** nouns and pronouns belong to one of three classes (**paal** -பால்) masculine singular, feminine singular, and rational plural. The **“irrational”** nouns and pronouns belong to one of two classes: irrational singular and irrational plural. The **paal** is often indicated through suffixes. The plural form for rational nouns may be used as an honorific, gender-neutral, singular form.
Suffixes are used to perform the functions of cases or postpositions. Traditional grammarians tried to group the various suffixes into eight cases corresponding to the cases used in Sanskrit as follows:

1. Nominative
2. Accusative
3. Dative
4. Sociative
5. Genitive
6. Instrumental
7. Locative
8. Ablative

Modern grammarians argue that this classification is artificial, and that Tamil usage is best understood if each suffix or combination of suffixes is seen as marking a separate case. Tamil nouns can take one of four prefixes, i, a, u, and e which are functionally equivalent to the demonstratives in English. Tamil verbs are also inflected through the use of suffixes. A typical Tamil verb form will have a number of suffixes, which show person, number, mood, tense, and voice.

In Tamil language, the person and number are indicated by suffixing the oblique case of the relevant pronoun. The suffixes to indicate tenses and voice are formed from grammatical particles, which are added to the stem. It has two voices. The first indicates that the subject of the sentence undergoes or is the object of the action named by the verb stem, and the second indicates that the subject of the sentence directs the action referred to by the verb stem.

As far tenses are concerned, Tamil has three in numbers—past, present, and future—indicated by the suffixes, as well as a series of perfects indicated by compound suffixes. Mood is implicit in Tamil, and is normally reflected by the same morphemes which mark tense categories. Tamil verbs also mark evidentiality, through the addition of the hearsay cliticam.

Traditional grammars of Tamil do not distinguish between adjectives and adverbs, including both of them under the category uriccol, although modern grammarians tend to distinguish between them on morphological and syntactical
grounds. Tamil has a large number of ideophones that act as adverbs indicating the way the object in a given state “says” or “sounds”.

Tamil does not have articles. Definiteness and indefiniteness are either indicated by special grammatical devices, such as using the number “one” as an indefinite article, or by the context.[103] In the first person plural, Tamil makes a distinction between inclusive pronouns நம் nām (we), நமாது namatu (our) that include the addressee and exclusive pronouns நந்கள் nānkaḷ (we), நமாது ematu (our) that do not.

**Tamil Syntax**

Tamil is a consistently head-final language. The verb comes at the end of the clause, with a typical word order of Subject–Object–Verb (S+O+V). However, word order in Tamil is also flexible, so that surface permutations of the S+O+V order are possible with different pragmatic effects. Tamil has postpositions rather than prepositions. Demonstratives and modifiers precede the noun within the noun phrase. Subordinate clauses precede the verb of the matrix clause.

Tamil is a null subject language. Not all Tamil sentences have subjects, verbs, and objects. It is possible to construct grammatically valid and meaningful sentences which lack one or more of the three. For example, a sentence may only have a verb—such as mutintuvittatu (“completed”)—or only a subject and object, without a verb such as // athu en veedu// இது என் வீடு (“That [is] my house”). Tamil does not have a copula (a linking verb equivalent to the word ‘is’). The word is included in the translations only to convey the meaning more easily.

**Vocabulary in Tamil**

The vocabulary of Tamil is mainly Dravidian. A strong sense of linguistic purism is found in Modern Tamil, which opposes the use of foreign loanwords. Nonetheless, a number of words used in classical and modern Tamil are loanwords from the languages of neighbouring groups, or with whom the Tamils had trading links, including Munda, Malay, Chinese and Greek. In more modern times, Tamil has imported words from Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Marathi, reflecting
groups that have influenced the Tamil area at various points of time, and from neighbouring languages such as Telugu, Kannada, and Sinhala. During the modern period, words have also been adapted from European languages, such as Portuguese, French, and English (Wikipedia, 2011).

The strongest impact of purism in Tamil has been on words taken from Sanskrit. During its history, Tamil, along with other Dravidian languages like Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam etc., was influenced by Sanskrit in terms of vocabulary, grammar and literary styles, reflecting the increased trend of Sanskritisation in the Tamil country. Tamil vocabulary never became quite as heavily Sanskritised as that of the other Dravidian languages, and unlike in those languages, it was and remains possible to express complex ideas (including in science, art, religion and law) without the use of Sanskrit loan words.

In addition, Sanskritisation was actively resisted by a number of authors of the late medieval period, culminating in the 20th century in a movement called Tanit Tamizh Iyakkam (meaning “pure Tamil movement”), led by Parithimaar Kalaignar and Maraimalai Adigal, which sought to remove the accumulated influence of Sanskrit on Tamil. As a result of this, Tamil in formal documents, literature and public speeches has seen a marked decline in the use Sanskrit loan words in the past few decades, under some estimates having fallen from 40–50% to about 20%. As a result, the Prakrit and Sanskrit loan words used in modern Tamil are, unlike in some other Dravidian languages, restricted mainly to some spiritual terminology and abstract nouns. In the 20th century, institutions and learned bodies have, with government support, generated technical dictionaries for Tamil containing neologisms and words derived from Tamil roots to replace loan words from English and other languages. (Wikipedia, 2011)
Tamil Influence on English

English language borrowed a lot of words from other languages including Tamil. As the British ruled India for more than 200 years and they built their Empire from Madras (Chennai), Tamil has a moderate contribution to English language. Some of the words are as follows:

- **Orange**, via Sanskrit ‘naarannga நாராணங்கா’ from ‘nartankaay’ “fragrant fruit”.
- **Cheroot (Curuttu - குருடு meaning “rolled up”),**
- **Mango (from mangai –மாங்கை),**
- **Mulligatawny (from ‘milaku tannir- மில்கு தனியை meaning ‘pepper water’)**
- **Curry (from kari ),**
- **Catamaran (‘kattu maram’, “bundled logs”)**
- **Pandal (shed, shelter, booth)**
- **Tyer (curd) - தையர்**
- **Anicut (from anaikattu, meaning dam --உண்மைக்கடு),**
- **Coir (rope). கொயில்**

4.8 An Introduction to English Language

Even though English has been of recent origin compared - less than 500 years – it has acquired the unique distinction of the only communicative language among the comity of nations for various reasons. It is official language in a number of countries while it is the second language in tens of countries. It is the official language in many of world bodies and organizations. After the advent of the computer and mobile phone and digital television, it has pervaded into the living room of every citizen who aspires to excel in personal and professional life.

Now it has become the global language due to globalization. The third world countries have started to partake in the economic development in the 21st century mainly due to the development in school and higher education through English medium. Among the various reasons, the spread of english was not intentional on the part of the British. It was not mainly due to nationalistic and provincial attitude
from the rulers of England. It was the explorers and sea-adventurers, who, in pursuit of new lands, wealth, and thrilling experiences, sowed the seeds during 16th century for the spread of English language. In the course of time, they not only conquered lands, amassed wealth but also helped spread the language among the colonized. Later, it began to spread its tentacles far and wide i.e., from North to South and East to West – resulting in the old saying of ‘the Sun never sets in the empire of the British’.

While Tamil is from Dravidian family, English is a West Germanic language that developed in England during the Anglo-Saxon era. As a result of the military, economic, scientific, political, and cultural influence of the British Empire during the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, and of the United States since the mid-20th century, it has become the lingua franca in many parts of the world. It is used extensively as a second language and as an official language in Commonwealth countries and many international organizations (Wikipedia, 2011)

Further more English, historically, originated from several dialects, now collectively termed Old English, which were brought to Great Britain by Anglo-Saxon settlers beginning in the 5th century. English was further influenced by the Old Norse language of Viking invaders. At the time of the Norman Conquest, Old English developed into Middle English, borrowing heavily from the Norman (Anglo-French) vocabulary and spelling conventions. The etymology of the word “English” is a derivation from 12th century Old English: englisc or Engle, and plural form Angles; definition of, relating to, or characteristic of England. Modern English developed with the Great Vowel Shift that began in 15th-century England, and continues to adopt foreign words from a variety of languages, as well as coining new words. A significant number of English words, especially technical words, have been constructed based on roots from Latin and ancient Greek (Wikipedia, 2011)

Old English

Old English was a diverse group of dialects, reflecting the varied origins of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of Great Britain. One of these dialects, Late West Saxon, eventually came to dominate. One of the most prevalent forces in the evolution of the English language was the Roman Catholic Church. Beginning with the Rule of
St Benedict in 530 and continuing until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536, the Roman Catholic Church instructed monasteries and Catholic officials like Augustine of Canterbury to preserve intellectual culture within their schools, scriptoria, and libraries.

During the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church had a monopoly on intellectual property in British society, which they used to exert great influence on the English language. Catholic monks mainly wrote or copied text in Latin, the prevalent Medieval lingua franca of Europe. When monks occasionally wrote in the vernacular, it was common to substitute or derive English-like words from Latin to describe or refer to things in which there was no English word. Extensive vocabulary, a derivative of Latin vocabularium, in the English language largely comprises Latin word derivatives. It is believed that the intellectual elite in British society over the years perpetuated vocabulary that Catholic monks contributed to English. Furthermore, they continued the custom of deriving new words from Latin long after the waning of Catholic Church.

Old English vernacular was also influenced by two waves of invasion. The first was by language speakers of the North Germanic branch of the Germanic family; they conquered and colonized parts of the British Isles in the 8th and 9th centuries. The second was the Normans in the 11th century, who spoke Old Norman and developed an English variety of this called Anglo-Norman. These two invasions caused English to become “mixed” to some degree. Cohabitation with the Scandinavians resulted in a lexical supplementation of the Anglo-Frisian core of English; the later Norman occupation led to the grafting onto that Germanic core of a more elaborate layer of words from the Romance languages. This Norman influence entered English largely through the courts and government. Thus, English developed into a “borrowing” language of great flexibility and a huge vocabulary. With the emergence and spread of the British Empire, the English language was adopted in regions around the world, such as North America, India, Africa, and Australia. The emergence of the United States as a superpower has also helped the spread of English.
A survey by Joseph M. Williams in Origins of the English Language of 10,000 words taken from several thousand business letters gave this set of statistics:

a. French (langue d’oïl): 41%
b. “Native” English: 33%
c. Latin: 15%
d. Old Norse: 2%
e. Dutch: 1%
f. Other: 10%

Writing system in English

Since around the ninth century, English has been written in the Latin alphabet, which replaced Anglo-Saxon runes. The spelling system, or orthography, is multilayered, with elements of French, Latin and Greek spelling on top of the native Germanic system; it has grown to vary significantly from the phonology of the language. The spelling of words often diverges considerably from how they are spoken. Though letters and sounds may not correspond in isolation, spelling rules that take into account syllable structure, phonetics, and accents are 75% or more reliable. Some phonics spelling advocates claim that English is more than 80% phonetic.

However, English has fewer consistent relationships between sounds and letters than many other languages. It is estimated that the sound sequence /ough/ can be pronounced in 10 different ways. The consequence of this complex orthographic history is that reading can be challenging. It takes longer for students to become completely fluent readers of English than of many other languages, including French, Greek, and Spanish.

English Grammar

English grammar is here understood as the body of rules describing the properties of the English language. A language is such that its elements must be combined according to certain patterns. This article is concerned with morphology, the building blocks of language, and syntax, the construction of meaningful phrases, clauses and sentences with the use of morphemes and words.
The grammar of any language is commonly approached in two different ways. A descriptivist, usually based on a systematic analysis of a large text corpus and describing grammatical structures thereupon. A prescriptivist, which attempts to use the identified rules of a given language as a tool to govern the linguistic behaviour of speakers. Prescriptive grammar concerns itself with several open disputes in English grammar, often representing changes in usage over time.

There are a number of historical, social and regional variations of the English language. For example, British English and American English have several lexical differences; however, the grammatical differences are not equally conspicuous, and will be mentioned only when appropriate. Further, the many dialects of English have divergences from the grammar described here; they are only cursorily mentioned. This article describes a generalized present-day Standard English, the form of speech found in types of public discourse including broadcasting, education, entertainment, government, and news reporting. Standard English includes both formal and informal speech.

**Nouns in English**

Nouns are defined semantically as generally describing persons, places, things, or ideas. This notional definition does account for what are the central members of the noun lexical category. However, the notional definition fails to account for several nouns, such as deverbal nouns like jump or destruction. So, many grammatical descriptions of English define nouns in terms of grammar. Non-proper nouns, in general, are not marked for case or gender, but are marked for number and definiteness.

**Non-inflectional morphology**

English nouns may be of a few morphological types. They are simple nouns, nouns with derivational affixes, compound nouns and compound nouns with derivational affixes. Simple nouns consist of a single root that also acts as the stem which may be inflected. Hence, the word (or, more precisely, the lexeme) boy is a simple noun consisting of a single root (also boy). The root boy also acts as the stem
boy, which can have the inflectional plural suffix -s added to it producing the inflectional word-form boys.

More complex nouns can have derivational prefixes or suffixes in addition to a noun stem. For example, the noun archenemy consists of a derivational prefix arch- and a root enemy. Here the derived form archenemy acts as the stem, which can be used to form the inflected word-form archenemies. An example with a derivational suffix is kingdom which is composed of root king and suffix -dom. Some English nouns can be complex with several derivational prefixes and suffixes. A considerably complex example is “antidisestablishmentarianism” which has the root establish and the affixes anti-, dis-, -ment, -ary, -an, and -ism.

English compound nouns are nouns that consist of more than one stem. For example, the compound paperclip is composed of the stem paper and the stem clip. Compounds in English can be usefully subdivided (Bauer, 1983) into different classes according to the lexical category of the individual stems. According to a semantic classification into subtypes as follows:

1. Endocentric
2. Exocentric
3. Copulative
4. Appositional

Number in English

English nouns are typically inflected for number, having distinct singular and plural forms. The plural form usually consists of the singular form plus -s or -es, but there are many irregular nouns. Ordinarily, the singular form is used when discussing one instance of the noun’s referent, and the plural form is used when discussing any other number of instances, but there are many exceptions to this rule.

Determiners in English

In every language, the role of determiners are paramount in a sentence to convey correct meanings. Otherwise, the result will be chaotic and messy. There
will be a lot chances for misunderstanding. The following are the articles - both definite and indefinite articles:

1. **Articles** (e.g. the, a/an),
2. **Demonstratives** (e.g. this, these, that, those)
3. **Quantifiers** (e.g. all, many, some, any, each)
4. **Numerals** (e.g. one, two, first, second)
5. **Genitives** (e.g. my, your, his, her, its, our, their)
6. **Interrogatives** (e.g. which, what).
7. **Exclamatives** (e.g. what) that modify noun heads in noun phrase.

Determiners function as words that “determine” other nouns, where “determine” is generally conceived of as indicating information about quantification, grammatical (and/or semantic) number, issues involving reference, and noun subclass membership (i.e. count, noncount, and proper noun subclasses). These “determining” functions make determiners quite distinct from adjectival modifiers that generally provide qualitative information about nouns and cannot provide determining functions. Predeterminers include words eg **all, both, half, double, twice, three times, one-third, one-fifth, three-quarters, such, exclamative what**.
Examples with predeterminers preceding a central determiner:

a. all the big balloons  
b. both his nice parents  
c. half a minute  
d. double the risk  
e. twice my age  
f. three times my salary  
g. one-third the cost  
h. one-fifth the rate  
i. three-quarters the diameter  
j. such a big boy  
k. what a clever suggestion
Central determiners include words *eg the, a/an, this, that, these, those, every, each, enough, much, more, most less, no, some, either, neither, which, what*. Examples of central determiners preceding adjectival modified noun heads:

- **a. the** big balloon
- **b. a** big balloon
- **c. this** big balloon
- **d. that** big balloon
- **e. these** big balloons
- **f. those** big balloons
- **g. every** big balloon
- **h. each** big balloon
- **i. no** big balloon
- **j. some** big balloons
- **k. either** big balloon

**Gender in English**

A remnant of grammatical gender is also preserved in the third person pronouns. Gender is assigned to animate objects based on biological gender (where known), and to personified objects based on social conventions (ships, for example, are often regarded as feminine in English). "He" is used for masculine nouns; "she" is used for feminine nouns. and "it" is used for nouns of indeterminate gender and inanimate objects. The use of it to refer to humans is generally considered ungrammatical and impolite, but is sometimes used deliberately as a term of offence or insult as it implies the person is of indeterminate gender or sub-human.

Traditionally, the masculine he was used to refer to a person in the third person whose gender was unknown or irrelevant to the context; recently, this usage has come under criticism for supporting gender-based stereotypes and is increasingly considered inappropriate. There is no consensus on a replacement. Some English speakers prefer to use the slightly cumbersome "he or she" or "s/he"; others prefer the use of they (third plural) (see singular they). This situation rarely leads to confusion, since the intended meaning can be inferred from context, e.g. "This person has written me a letter, but they have not signed it." However, it is still
considered by some to be incorrect grammar. Spivak pronouns have also been proposed which are essentially formed by dropping the leading <th> from the plural counterpart, but their use is relatively rare compared to other solutions. For comparison, speakers of German distinguish between the homophonous sie (“she”), sie ("they"), and Sie ("you", polite) with little difficulty. The categorization of nouns is typically expressed by one or more of the elements called deictic, numerative, epithet, and classifier.

Case in English

Historically, English used to mark nouns for case, and the two remnants of this case marking are the pronominal system and the genitive clitic or the Saxon genitive). The genitive is marked by a clitic at the end of the modifying noun phrase. This can be illustrated in the following manner:

The president of the company’s daughter was married yesterday.

The ’s clitic attached to company does not modify company but rather modifies the entire noun phrase president of the company. This can be shown more clearly using brackets:

[The president of the company]’s daughter was married yesterday.

English pronoun forms vary with number, person, case, and notional gender (only in 3rd person singular). Number and case distinctions have collapsed in the 2nd person singular in the standard formal language, although informal dialectal forms have number distinctions.

4.9 A comparative study between Tamil and English

The basic difference between Tamil and English is their family origin. Tamil is a Dravidian language while English comes from Indo-Germanic root. These two languages have more differences than similarities. These two languages differ phonologically, syntactically, morphologically and semantically. They differ from each other orthographically- in the writing system, too. While English is from the Latin language family, Tamil is non-Latin language family.
While Sanskrit, an Indian language, is a Latin language, Tamil is not so. It has its own geographical boundary and the impact other language is not significant. Every language evolves unfailingly because change is the norm. No language can escape from this natural phenomena. English is in the centre of this change due to various reasons—its use for international communication, commerce, trade, geopolitical factors etc., Tamil language too faces changes in many aspects. But the writing and spoken system have not met any radical changes even after 2000 years. In spoken Tamil, the various dialects across Tamil Nadu and in other parts of the world where Tamil is either used as first language or as second language, there are some changes because of the modern factors such as language transfer and bilingualism, from which no language could escape.

The dissimilarities are abound in Tamil and English languages. The letter system and the basic rule of pronunciation mark the first major difference between these two languages. They are Alphabets, Sound pattern - Sound –Spelling Correspondence, Orthographic, Grammatical, Morphological, Phonological, Syntactic, Semantic, Stress, Accent, Intonation, Syllabification, Foreign words, Assimilation etc.,

Comparative linguistics (originally comparative philology) is a branch of historical linguistics that is concerned with comparing languages to establish their historical relatedness. Genetic relatedness implies a common origin or proto-language, and comparative linguistics aims to construct language families, to reconstruct proto-languages and specify the changes that have resulted in the documented languages. To maintain a clear distinction between attested and reconstructed forms, comparative linguists prefix an asterisk to any form that is not found in surviving texts. A number of methods for carrying out language classification have been developed, ranging from simple inspection to computerised hypothesis testing. Such methods have gone through a long process of development.

The fundamental technique of comparative linguistics is to compare phonological systems, morphological systems, syntax and the lexicon of two or more languages using techniques such as the comparative method. In principle, every difference between two related languages should be explicable to a high degree of plausibility, and systematic changes, for example in phonological or
morphological systems, are expected to be highly regular (i.e. consistent). In practice, the comparison may be more restricted, e.g. just to the lexicon.

In some methods it may be possible to reconstruct an earlier proto-language. Although the proto-languages reconstructed by the comparative method are hypothetical, a reconstruction may have predictive power. The most notable example of this is Saussure’s proposal that the Indo-European consonant system contained laryngeals, a type of consonant attested in no Indo-European language known at the time. The hypothesis was vindicated with the discovery of Hittite, which proved to have exactly the consonants Saussure had hypothesized in the environments he had predicted.

Where languages are derived from a very distant ancestor, and are thus more distantly related, the comparative method becomes impracticable. In particular, attempting to relate two reconstructed proto-languages by the comparative method has not generally produced results that have met with wide acceptance. The method has also not been very good at unambiguously identifying sub-families and different scholars have produced conflicting results, for example in Indo-European.

A number of methods based on statistical analysis of vocabulary have been developed to try and overcome this limitation, such as lexicostatistics and mass comparison. The former uses lexical cognates like the comparative method but the latter uses only lexical similarity. The theoretical basis of such methods is that vocabulary items can be matched without a detailed language reconstruction and that comparing enough vocabulary items will negate individual inaccuracies. Thus they can be used to determine relatedness but not to determine the proto-language.

The earliest method of this type was the comparative method, which was developed over many years, culminating in the nineteenth century. This uses a long word list and detailed study. However, it has been criticized for example as being subjective, being informal and lacking testability. The comparative method uses information from two or more languages and allows reconstruction of the ancestral language. The method of Internal reconstruction uses only a single language, with comparison of word variants, to perform the same function. Internal reconstruction is more resistant to interference but usually has a limited available base of utilizable words and is able to reconstruct only certain changes.(Wikipedia,2011).
In the twentieth century an alternative method, lexicostatistics, was developed, which is mainly associated with Morris Swadesh but is based on earlier work. This uses a short word list of basic vocabulary in the various languages for comparisons. Swadesh used 100 (earlier 200) items that are assumed to be cognate (on the basis of phonetic similarity) in the languages being compared, though other lists have also been used. Distance measures are derived by examination of language pairs but such methods reduce the information. An outgrowth of lexicostatistics is glottochronology, initially developed in the 1950s, which proposed a mathematical formula for establishing the date when two languages separated, based on percentage of a core vocabulary of culturally independent words. In its simplest form a constant rate of change is assumed, though later versions allow variance but still fail to achieve reliability. Glottochronology has met with mounting scepticism, and is seldom applied today. Dating estimates can now be generated by computerised methods that have less restrictions, calculating rates from the data. However, no mathematical means of producing proto-language split-times on the basis of lexical retention has been proven reliable.

Another controversial method, developed by Joseph Greenberg, is mass comparison. The method, which disavows any ability to date developments, aims simply to show which languages are more and less close to each other. Greenberg suggested that the method is useful for preliminary grouping of languages known to be related as a first step towards more in-depth comparative analysis. However, since mass comparison eschews the establishment of regular changes, it is flatly rejected by the majority of historical linguists.

Recently, computerised statistical hypothesis testing methods have been developed which are related to both the comparative method and lexicostatistics. Character based methods are similar to the former and distanced based methods are similar to the latter (see Quantitative comparative linguistics). The characters used can be morphological or grammatical as well as lexical. Since the mid-1990s these more sophisticated tree- and network-based phylogenetic methods have been used to investigate the relationships between languages and to determine approximate dates for proto-languages. These are considered by many to show promise but are not wholly accepted by traditionalists. However, they are not intended to replace older methods but to supplement them. Such statistical methods cannot be used to derive
the features of a proto-language, apart from the fact of the existence of shared items of the compared vocabulary. These approaches have been challenged for their methodological problems, since without a reconstruction or at least a detailed list of phonological correspondences there can be no demonstration that two words in different languages are cognate.

There are other branches of linguistics that involve comparing languages, which are not, however, part of comparative linguistics. Linguistic typology compares languages to classify them by their features. Its ultimate aim is to understand the universals that govern language, and the range of types found in the world’s languages is respect of any particular feature (word order or vowel system, for example). Typological similarity does not imply a historical relationship. However, typological arguments can be used in comparative linguistics: one reconstruction may be preferred to another as typologically more plausible.

Contact linguistics examines the linguistic results of contact between the speakers of different languages, particularly as evidenced in loan words. An empirical study of loans is by definition historical in focus and therefore forms part of the subject matter of historical linguistics. One of the goals of etymology is to establish which items in a language’s vocabulary result from linguistic contact. This is also an important issue both for the comparative method and for the lexical comparison methods, since failure to recognize a loan may distort the findings. Contrastive linguistics compares languages usually with the aim of assisting language learning by identifying important differences between the learner’s native and target languages. Contrastive linguistics deals solely with present-day languages.

**Pronunciation in English**

Pronunciation refers to the way a word or a language is spoken, or the manner in which someone utters a word. If one is said to have "correct pronunciation", then it refers to both within a particular dialect. A word can be spoken in different ways by various individuals or groups, depending on many factors, such as: the area in which they grew up, the area in which they now live, if they have a speech or voice disorder, their ethnic group, their social class, or their education. Syllables are counted as units of sound (phones) that they use in their language. The branch of linguistics which studies these units of sound is phonetics. Phones which play the
same role are grouped together into classes called phonemes; the study of these is phonemics or phonematics or phonology. Phones as components of articulation are usually described using the **International Phonetic Alphabet** (IPA).

### 4.10 First Language Acquisition (FLA)

Language acquisition has long been thought of as a process of imitation and reinforcement. Children learn to speak in the popular view, by copying the utterances heard around them, and by having their responses strengthened by the repetitions, corrections, and other reactions that adults provide. It is generally argued that children must be born with an innate capacity for language, in the sense that when the children are exposed to speech, certain general principles for discovering or structuring language automatically begin to operate. These principles constitute a child’s ‘language acquisition device’ (LAD). Language acquisition – whether it is first language or second language – is a cognitive process (Crystal, pp. 236-237).

For the language, the whole brain is brought into play. What one must not miss is that although neurobiologists now know a lot about the brain, there is also a lot that is not known. The brain is an extremely complex organism. Another important factor for language acquisition is that when the mothers, interact with their babies and infants, they use a special kind of language, and take great care to speak in full correct sentences to their children. But the wonderful linguistic thing to happen in language learning is that the rapidity with which children do learn their mother tongue does suggest that there may be some underlying mechanism that fits them for this task.

The neuropsychologist, **Eric Lenneberg (1967)** argues that the capacity to learn a language is indeed innate, and, like many such inborn mechanisms, it is circumscribed in time. If a child does not learn a language before the onset of puberty, the child will never master language at all. This is known as the critical period hypothesis. So, how does a child learn a language? Chomsky believes that language is an innate ability, built into the brain. Other linguists believe that speech is a skill like most other human skills, which we learn in much the same way as we learn other things. For the Chomskians, the environment has little importance, whereas for those who do not agree with him, it is of the utmost importance.
To further reinforce the language learning theory, Timothy Mason has brought new approach how a child acquires its mother tongue. As it was pointed out earlier about Chomskyian idea that sees language as a specific skill, its acquisition governed by an inborn programme, and requiring no direct intervention from parents or teachers, Tomothy draws support from Jerome Bruner and Lev Vygotsky’s theories of development, sees the behaviour of the child’s entourage as crucial. The child does not learn the language, but creates it anew.

Noam Chomsky propounded that the universal grammar is the basis upon which all human languages build. According to Chomsky, children are exposed to very little correctly formed language. When people speak, they constantly interrupt themselves, change their minds, make slips of the tongue and so on. Yet children manage to learn their language all the same. This claim is usually referred to as the Argument from Poverty of the Stimulus. Children do not simply copy the language that they hear around them. They deduce rules from it, which they can then use to produce sentences that they have never heard before. They do not learn a repertoire of phrases and sayings, as the behaviourists believe, but a grammar that generates an infinity of new sentences.

Children are born, then, with the Universal Grammar wired into their brains. This grammar offers a certain limited number of possibilities - for example, over the word order of a typical sentence. In contrast to Chomsky, the psychologist, Jerome Bruner, holds that while there very well may be, as Chomsky suggests, a Language Acquisition Device, or LAD, there must also be a Language Acquisition Support System, or LASS. He is referring to the family and entourage of the child. To support this view, he points out the fact that the child’s mother or father provide ritualised scenarios - the ceremony of having a bath, eating a meal, getting dressed, or playing a game - in which the phases of interaction are rapidly recognised and predicted by the infant.

4.11 Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Second language acquisition or second language learning is the process by which people learn a second language. Second language acquisition (often capitalized as Second Language Acquisition or abbreviated to SLA) is also the name
of the scientific discipline devoted to studying that process. Second language refers to any language learned in addition to a person’s first language; although the concept is named second language acquisition, it can also incorporate the learning of third, fourth or subsequent languages. Second language acquisition refers to what learners do; it does not refer to practices in language teaching.

The academic discipline of second language acquisition is a sub-discipline of applied linguistics. It is broad-based and relatively new. As well as the various branches of linguistics, second language acquisition is also closely related to psychology, cognitive psychology, and education. To separate the academic discipline from the learning process itself, the terms second language acquisition research, second language studies, and second language acquisition studies are also used. SLA research began as an interdisciplinary field, and because of this it is difficult to identify a precise starting date. However, it does appear to have developed a great deal since the mid-1960s. The term acquisition was originally used to emphasize the subconscious nature of the learning process but in recent years learning and acquisition have become largely synonymous.

Second language acquisition can incorporate heritage language learning, but it does not usually incorporate bilingualism. Most SLA researchers see bilingualism as being the end result of learning a language, not the process itself, and see the term as referring to native-like fluency. Writers in fields such as education and psychology, however, often use bilingualism loosely to refer to all forms of multilingualism. Second language acquisition is also not to be contrasted with the acquisition of a foreign language; rather, the learning of second languages and the learning of foreign languages involve the same fundamental processes in different situations.

There has been much debate about exactly how language is learned, and many issues are still unresolved. There have been many theories of second language acquisition that have been proposed, but none has been accepted as an overarching theory by all SLA researchers. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the field of second language acquisition, this is not expected to happen in the foreseeable future.
As SLA began as an interdisciplinary field, it is hard to pin down a precise starting date. However, there are two publications in particular that are seen as instrumental to the development of the modern study of SLA. First, Pitt Corder’s 1967 essay “The Significance of Learners’ Errors” and Larry Selinker’s 1972 article “Interlanguage.” Corder’s essay rejected a behaviorist account of SLA and suggested that learners made use of intrinsic internal linguistic processes; Selinker’s article argued that second language learners possess their own individual linguistic systems that are independent from both the first and second languages.

In the 1970s the general trend in SLA was for research exploring the ideas of Corder and Selinker, and refuting behaviorist theories of language acquisition. Examples include research into error analysis, studies in transitional stages of second-language ability, and the “morpheme studies” investigating the order in which learners acquired linguistic features. The 70s were dominated by naturalistic studies of people learning English as a second language.

By the 1980s, the theories of Stephen Krashen had become the prominent paradigm in SLA. In his theories, often collectively known as the Input Hypothesis, Krashen suggested that language acquisition is driven solely by comprehensible input, language input that learners can understand. Krashen’s model was influential in the field of SLA and also had a large influence on language teaching, but it left some important processes in SLA unexplained. Research in the 1980s was characterized by the attempt to fill in these gaps. Some approaches included Lydia White’s descriptions of learner competence, and Manfred Pienemann’s use of speech processing models and lexical functional grammar to explain learner output. This period also saw the beginning of approaches based in other disciplines, such as the psychological approach of connectionism.

The 1990s saw a host of new theories introduced to the field, such as Michael Long’s interaction hypothesis, Merrill Swain’s output hypothesis, and Richard Schmidt’s noticing hypothesis. However, the two main areas of research interest were linguistic theories of SLA based upon Noam Chomsky’s universal grammar, and psychological approaches such as skill acquisition theory and connectionism. The latter category also saw the new theories of processability and input processing in this time period. The 1990s also saw the introduction of sociocultural theory, an
approach to explain second language acquisition in terms of the social environment of the learner.

In the 2000s research was focused on much the same areas as in the 1990s, with research split into two main camps of linguistic and psychological approaches. VanPatten and Benati do not see this state of affairs as changing in the near future, pointing to the support both areas of research have in the wider fields of linguistics and psychology, respectively.

**Comparisons with FLA**

People who learn a second language differ from children learning their first language in a number of ways. Perhaps the most striking of these is that very few adult second language learners reach the same competence as native speakers of that language. Children learning a second language are more likely to achieve native-like fluency than adults, but in general it is very rare for someone speaking a second language to pass completely for a native speaker. When a learner’s speech plateaus in this way it is known as fossilization.

In addition, some errors that second language learners make in their speech originate in their first language. For example, Spanish speakers learning English may say “Is raining” rather than “It is raining”, leaving out the subject of the sentence. French speakers learning English, however, do not usually make the same mistake. This is because sentence subjects can be left out in Spanish, but not in French. This influence of the first language on the second is known as language transfer.

Also, when people learn a second language, the way they speak their first language changes in subtle ways. These changes can be with any aspect of language, from pronunciation and syntax to gestures the learner makes and the things they tend to notice.

For example, French speakers who spoke English as a second language pronounced the /t/ sound in French differently from monolingual French speakers. When shown a fish tank, Chinese speakers of English tend to remember more fish and fewer plants than Chinese monolinguals. This effect of the second language on the first led Vivian Cook to propose the idea of multi-competence, which sees the
different languages a person speaks not as separate systems, but as related systems in their mind.

**Learner language**

Learner language is the written or spoken language produced by a learner. It is also the main type of data used in second language acquisition research. Much research in second language acquisition is concerned with the internal representations of a language in the mind of the learner, and in how those representations change over time. It is not yet possible to inspect these representations directly with brain scans or similar techniques, so SLA researchers are forced to make inferences about these rules from learners’ speech or writing.

**Item and system learning**

There are two types of learning that second language learners engage in. The first is item learning, or the learning of formulaic chunks of language. These chunks can be individual words, set phrases, or formulas. The second kind of learning is system learning, or the learning of systematic rules.

**Interlanguage**

Originally attempts to describe learner language were based on comparing different languages and on analyzing learners’ errors. However, these approaches weren’t able to predict all the errors that learners made when in the process of learning a second language. For example, Serbo-Croat speakers learning English may say “What does Pat doing now?”, although this is not a valid sentence in either language.

To explain these kind of systematic errors, the idea of the interlanguage was developed. An interlanguage is an emerging language system in the mind of a second language learner. A learner’s interlanguage is not a deficient version of the language being learned filled with random errors, nor is it a language purely based on errors introduced from the learner’s first language. Rather, it is a language in its own right, with its own systematic rules. It is possible to view most aspects of language from an interlanguage perspective, including grammar, phonology, lexicon, and pragmatics.
There are three different processes that influence the creation of interlanguages:

a. **Language transfer**

   Learners fall back on their mother tongue to help create their language system. This is now recognized not as a mistake, but as a process that all learners go through.

b. **Overgeneralization**

   Learners use rules from the second language in a way that native speakers would not. For example, a learner may say “I goed home”, overgeneralizing the English rule of adding -ed to create past tense verb forms.

c. **Simplification**

   Learners use a highly simplified form of language, similar to speech by children or in pidgins. This may be related to linguistic universals. The concept of interlanguage has become very widespread in SLA research, and is often a basic assumption made by researchers.

**Sequences of acquisition : A typical order of acquisition for English -1**

**Plural -s**

1. Girls go.
3. Copula forms of be - Girls are here.
4. Auxiliary forms of be - Girls are going.
5. Definite and indefinite - Articles the and a
   The girls go.
6. Irregular past tense - The girls went.
7. Third person -s - The girl goes.

**Order of acquisition**

In the 1970s there were several studies that investigated the order in which learners acquired different grammatical structures. These studies showed that there was little change in this order among learners with different first languages.
Furthermore, it showed that the order was the same for adults as well as children, and that it did not even change if the learner had language lessons. This proved that there were factors other than language transfer involved in learning second languages, and was a strong confirmation of the concept of interlanguage.

However, the studies did not find that the orders were exactly the same. Although there were remarkable similarities in the order in which all learners learned second language grammar, there were still some differences among individuals and among learners with different first languages. It is also difficult to tell when exactly a grammatical structure has been learned, as learners may use structures correctly in some situations but not in others. Thus it is more accurate to speak of sequences of acquisition, where particular grammatical features in a language have a fixed sequence of development, but the overall order of acquisition is less rigid.

**Input and interaction**

The primary factor affecting language acquisition appears to be the input that the learner receives. Stephen Krashen took a very strong position on the importance of input, asserting that comprehensible input is all that is necessary for second language acquisition. Krashen pointed to studies showing that the length of time a person stays in a foreign country is closely linked with his level of language acquisition. Further evidence for input comes from studies on reading: large amounts of free voluntary reading have a significant positive effect on learners’ vocabulary, grammar, and writing. Input is also the mechanism by which people learn languages according to the universal grammar model.

The type of input may also be important. One tenet of Krashen’s theory is that input should not be grammatically sequenced. He claims that such sequencing, as found in language classrooms where lessons involve practicing a “structure of the day”, is not necessary, and may even be harmful.

While input is of vital importance, Krashen’s assertion that only input matters in second language acquisition has been contradicted by more recent research. For example, students enrolled in French language immersion programs in Canada still produced non-native-like grammar when they spoke, even though they had years of meaning-focused lessons and their listening skills were statistically native-level.
Output appears to play an important role, and among other things, can help provide learners with feedback, make them concentrate on the form of what they are saying, and help them to automatize their language knowledge. These processes have been codified in the theory of comprehensible output.

Researchers have also pointed to interaction in the second language as being important for acquisition. According to Long’s interaction hypothesis the conditions for acquisition are especially good when interacting in the second language; specifically, conditions are good when a breakdown in communication occurs and learners must negotiate for meaning. The modifications to speech arising from interactions like this help make input more comprehensible, provide feedback to the learner, and push learners to modify their speech.

**Social aspects**

Although the dominant perspective in second language research is a cognitive one, from the early days of the discipline researchers have also acknowledged that social aspects play an important role. There have been many different approaches to sociolinguistic study of second language acquisition, and indeed, according to Rod Ellis, this plurality has meant that “sociolinguistic SLA is replete with a bewildering set of terms referring to the social aspects of L2 acquisition”. Common to each of these approaches, however, is a rejection of language as a purely psychological phenomenon; instead, sociolinguistic research views the social context in which language is learned as essential for a proper understanding of the acquisition process.

Ellis identifies three types of social structure which can affect the acquisition of second languages: sociallinguistic setting, specific social factors, and situational factors. Sociallinguistic setting refers to the role of the second language in society, such as whether it is spoken by a majority or a minority of the population, whether its use is widespread or restricted to a few functional roles, or whether the society is predominantly bilingual or monolingual. Ellis also includes the distinction of whether the second language is learned in a natural or an educational setting. Specific social factors that can affect second language acquisition include age, gender, social class, and ethnic identity, with ethnic identity being the one that has received most research attention. Situational factors are those which vary between
each social interaction. For example, a learner may use more polite language when
talking to someone of higher social status, but more informal language when talking
with friends.

There have been several models developed to explain social effects on
language acquisition. Schumann’s acculturation model proposes that learners’ rate of
development and ultimate level of language achievement is a function of the “social
distance” and the “psychological distance” between learners and the second
language community. In Schumann’s model the social factors are most important,
but the degree to which learners are comfortable with learning the second language
also plays a role. Another sociolinguistic model is Gardner’s socio-educational
model, which was designed to explain classroom language acquisition. The inter-
group model proposes “ethnolinguistic vitality” as a key construct for second
language acquisition. Language socialization is an approach with the premise that
“linguistic and cultural knowledge are constructed through each other”, and saw
increased attention after the year 2000. Finally, Norton’s theory of social identity is
an attempt to codify the relationship between power, identity, and language
acquisition.

**Internal factors affecting SLA**

The meaning of things being communicated is more important for second
language acquisition than their form. There is a general agreement among
researchers that learners must be engaged in decoding and encoding messages in the
second language for the conditions to be right for second language learning.
Learners must also be engaged in creating pragmatic meaning in order to develop
fluency.

Some sort of focus on form does appear to be necessary for second language
acquisition, however. Some advanced language structures may not be fully acquired
without the opportunity for repeated practice. Schmidt’s noticing hypothesis states
that conscious attention to specific language forms is necessary for a learner’s
interlanguage to develop. This attention does not have to be in the form of conscious
grammar rules, however; the attention is on how each specific form affects the
meaning of what is being said.
Developing subconscious knowledge of the second language is more important than developing conscious knowledge. While conscious language knowledge is important for many aspects of second language acquisition, developing subconscious knowledge is vital for fluency. The knowledge that people use when they are speaking a language is mostly subconscious. It appears that learners can use conscious knowledge in speech if they have time and they are focused on form, but if these conditions are not met then they will fall back on subconscious knowledge. However, if learners have time to plan their speech, grammatical accuracy can improve.

It is not certain exactly how subconscious language knowledge is developed in the mind. According to skill-building theory, subconscious language knowledge is gained by practicing language until it becomes automatic. However, according to emergentist theories subconscious knowledge develops naturally from input and communication. The nature of the interface between conscious and subconscious language knowledge in the brain is also not clear; that is, it is not clear how conscious knowledge can develop into subconscious knowledge. It appears that conscious knowledge and subconscious knowledge are not completely separate, and practice at various aspects of language can lead to language knowledge becoming subconscious.

However, studies have found that the two types of knowledge are stored differently in the brain, and this has led to the idea that conscious knowledge merely primes language acquisition processes rather than being directly involved. Both of these issues are still under debate.

The way learners process sentences in their second language is also important for language acquisition. According to MacWhinney’s competition model, learners can only concentrate on so many things at a time, and so they must filter out some aspects of language when they listen to a second language. Learning a language is seen as finding the right weighting for each of the different factors that learners can process.

Similarly, according to processability theory, the sequence of acquisition can be explained by learners getting better at processing sentences in the second language. As learners increase their mental capacity to process sentences, mental
resources are freed up. Learners can use these newly freed-up resources to concentrate on more advanced features of the input they receive. One such feature is the movement of words. For example, in English, questions are formed by moving the auxiliary verb or the question word to the start of the sentence (John is nice becomes Is John nice?) This kind of movement is too brain-intensive for beginners to process; learners must automatize their processing of static language structures before they can process movement.

**Individual variation in SLA**

There is considerable variation in the rate at which people learn second languages, and in the language level that they ultimately reach. Some learners learn quickly and reach a near-native level of competence, but others learn slowly and get stuck at relatively early stages of acquisition, despite living in the country where the language is spoken for several years. The reason for this disparity was first addressed with the study of **Language Learning Aptitude (LLA)** in the 1950s, and later with the good language learner studies in the 1970s. More recently research has focused on a number of different factors that affect individuals’ language learning, in particular strategy use, social and societal influences, personality, motivation, and anxiety. The relationship between age and the ability to learn languages has also been a subject of long-standing debate.

The issue of age was first addressed with the critical period hypothesis. The strict version of this hypothesis states that there is a cut-off age at about 12, after which learners lose the ability to fully learn a language. This strict version has since been rejected for second language acquisition, as adult learners have been observed who reach native-like levels of pronunciation and general fluency. However, in general, adult learners of a second language rarely achieve the native-like fluency that children display, despite often progressing faster in the initial stages. This has led to speculation that age is indirectly related to other, more central factors that affect language learning.

There has been considerable attention paid to the strategies which learners use when learning a second language. Strategies have been found to be of critical importance, so much so that strategic competence has been suggested as a major component of communicative competence. Strategies are commonly divided into
learning strategies and communicative strategies, although there are other ways of categorizing them. Learning strategies are techniques used to improve learning, such as mnemonics or using a dictionary. Communicative strategies are strategies a learner uses to convey meaning even when she doesn’t have access to the correct form, such as using pro-forms like thing, or using non-verbal means such as gestures.

**Affective factors in SLA**

The learner’s attitude to the learning process has also been identified as being critically important to second language acquisition. Anxiety in language-learning situations has been almost unanimously shown to be detrimental to successful learning. A related factor, personality, has also received attention, with studies showing that extroverts are better language learners than introverts.

Social attitudes such as gender roles and community views toward language learning have also proven critical. Language learning can be severely hampered by cultural attitudes, with a frequently cited example being the difficulty of Navajo children in learning English. Also, the motivation of the individual learner is of vital importance to the success of language learning. Studies have consistently shown that intrinsic motivation, or a genuine interest in the language itself, is more effective over the long-term than extrinsic motivation, as in learning a language for a reward such as high grades or praise.

**SLA classroom research**

While the majority of SLA research has been devoted to language learning in a natural setting, there have also been efforts made to investigate second language acquisition in the classroom. This kind of research has a significant overlap with language education, but it is always empirical, based on data and statistics, and it is mainly concerned with the effect that instruction has on the learner, rather than what the teacher does.

The research has been wide-ranging. There have been attempts made to systematically measure the effectiveness of language teaching practices for every level of language, from phonetics to pragmatics, and for almost every current teaching methodology. This research has indicated that many traditional language-teaching techniques are extremely inefficient. It is generally agreed that pedagogy
restricted to teaching grammar rules and vocabulary lists does not give students the ability to use the L2 with accuracy and fluency. Rather, to become proficient in the second language, the learner must be given opportunities to use it for communicative purposes.

Another area of research has been on the effects of corrective feedback in assisting learners. This has been shown to vary depending on the technique used to make the correction, and the overall focus of the classroom, whether on formal accuracy or on communication of meaningful content. There is also considerable interest in supplementing published research with approaches that engage language teachers in action research on learner language in their own classrooms. As teachers become aware of the features of learner language produced by their students, they can refine their pedagogical intervention to maximize interlanguage development.

**Immersion method**

To integrate children in French as a Second language in Quebec, steps were taken to conduct classes based upon the idea that the best way to learn a foreign language was the ‘natural way’ - that is, in the same way that a child learns its mother tongue. This means that, instead of concentrating upon the grammar of the language, in specialized language classes, the young learner should be exposed to the foreign language in natural situations. Instead of learning French in French classes, they learnt mathematics, science, history and so on in French.

**Result of the experiments**

According the findings, the results of this experiment throw encouraging results. The abilities of the children in their mother tongue do not appear to suffer in any way – unless the written code for both languages is introduced simultaneously.

The next finding was that, the capacities of children who have followed this kind of course are far superior to the capacities of those who have followed traditional French classes. Their comprehension is, indeed, on the same level as that of young French-speaking children Further more it was found that these classes have deeper cognitive effects on the children, developing their mental flexibility.
However, we need to be fairly careful about such results - it is very difficult to know whom these children should be compared to.

4.11 Role of MT in SLA

The role of mother tongue has been recognized as major linguistic activity in SLA. The intermediate language or approximate system the SL learners produce is called interlanguge. In this approximate system, the SL learners commit errors which play an important in their learning curve. The SL learners move from error-making stage to some system between the first language and the second language.

The rules of mother tongue grammar naturally come into their second language process consciously and subconsciously. The morphological, phonological, syntactical and semantic systems of the mother tongue naturally creep into the second language system. And precisely these are the areas which have been dealt with in detail by many linguistic researchers such as Krashen, Corder, Ellis, Laughlin, Yule, Crystal etc.,

In all of these endeavours, what they have tried to explore and find out is the problems of SL learners while acquiring some sort of fluency and proficiency in the target language. In general, the influence of one’s native language to second language acquisition produce many types of linguistic errors. In the beginning, the errors committed by the SL learners were looked upon by the purists. Later due to strenuous efforts done by linguistic scholars such as Corder, the errors were considered with sympathy and empathy. Corder was the pioneer and champion of the cause of errors committed by the SL learners. Corder forcefully argued that the errors can be facilitative and provide information about one’s learning strategies. This view was reinforced by Claude Hagege(1999).

In his book “The Child Between Two Languages(1999)”, Hagege put forth his views in support of Corder with regards to errors committed by the SL learners. He argued that interference between L1 and L2 is observed in children as well as in adults. In adults it is more obvious and increases continuously, as a monolingual person gets older and the structures of his first language get stronger and impose themselves more and more on any other language the adult wishes to learn. In contrast, as regards children, interference features will not become permanent unless the child does not have sufficient exposure to L2.
If there is sufficient exposure, then instead of reaching a point where they can no longer be corrected (as often happens with phonetics features), interference features can be easily eliminated. Hagège stresses that there is no reason for worry if interference persists more than expected. The teacher should know that a child that is in the process of acquiring a second language will subconsciously invent structures influenced by knowledge he already possesses. These hypotheses he forms may constitute errors.

Then there came many votaries who gave credence to the errors of SL learners. Later the influence of L1 on L2 was examined by Lakki and Malak (2000) who concentrated on the transfer of Arabic prepositional knowledge to English by Arab learners. While spelling out the influence of Mother Tongue on SL,

Hagège discusses L1 transfer in order to convince readers that there is indeed a critical age for language acquisition, and in particular the acquisition of a native-like accent. He uses the example of the French language, which includes complex vowel sounds, to demonstrate that after a critical age, the acquisition of these sounds is not possible; thus, learners of a foreign language will only use the sounds existing in their native language when producing L2 sounds, which may often obstruct communication.

R Narayanan et al., has done significant research work on the mother tongue impact on Indian SL learners. They give example of The progressive tense in *stative* verbs: I am understanding it. She is knowing the answer. This is an influence from traditional Hindi grammar.

The MT influence on noun number and determiners has been brought out and the examples given are:

1. He performed many *charities*.
2. She loves to pull *your legs*
3. *Staffs* are requested to come in white dress.

They point out the typical MT influence on SL learners in the grammatical area preposition. The examples given are:
1. pay attention on
2. discuss about
3. convey him my greetings

They also point out that most of the prepositions in English are direct mental translations of the approximate postpositions in Hindi. Tamil language has influenced the SL learners to great extent in almost all areas – phonological, morphological, semantic, and lexical. Anglicization is now-a-days the norm. In Chennai, the influence of Tamil cinema is much. Adding “ify” to a local Tamil word has become a sort of cult now. Some examples are:

1. [En appa Thit ify] (Translit.)
   சொன் அப்பா ஥ிட் இற்கை (Tamil)
   (my father will scold)

2. En amma kopaduvaar (Translit.)
   ஏன் ஆம்மா கோபகுவார (Tamil)
   (my mother will get angry)

3. nee enna lovufiy, nan unna lovify – (Translit.)
   நீ என்ன லவுபடி, நன் உன்னா லவுபடி (Tamil)
   (If you love me, I will love you).

It is a style statement for some if the speakers add some non-linguistic terms along with regular Tamil spoken or written words. The researchers quote using of yaar, machaa, abey, arey, machi, machan, in English conversation, mainly by people of native Hindi-speaking origin; da, machaa are more frequently used in the South. Another mother tongue influence is overusing of the words “Actually I am not feeling well.”
4.12 Types of Mother Tongue Influence

There are two types of in Mother tongue impact. They are positive and negative language transfer. Mother tongue interference or linguistic interference or cross meaning refers to speakers or writers applying knowledge from their mother tongue or native language (L1) to Second language(SL) or Target language (TL).

Positive Transfer and Negative Transfer

How does positive language transfer happen in SLA process? This is possible if the structure or unit of the both L1 and L2 are similar, then linguistic interference an result in positive transfer. A common example most often cited in this respect in the use of cognates. As for language transfer is concerned, the linguistic experts point out that language interference is most often discussed as a source of errors known as negative transfer. Negative transfer occurs when speakers and writers transfer items and structures that are not the same in both languages. Within the theory of contrastive analysis (the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities), the greater the differences between the two languages, the more negative transfer can be expected. The results of positive transfer go largely unnoticed, and thus are less often discussed. Nonetheless, such results can have a large effect. Generally speaking, the more similar the two languages are, and the more the learner is aware of the relation between them, the more positive transfer will occur. For example, an Anglophone learner of German may correctly guess an item of German vocabulary from its English counterpart, but word order and collocation are more likely to differ, as will connotations. Such an approach has the disadvantage of making the learner more subject to the influence of “false friends”.

The earlier research on language transfer during 1950s brought out the proactive interference and negative transfer in psychology. According pscholinguistic theories, memory research began investigating interference theory. This refers to the idea that forgetting occurs because the recall of certain items interferes with the recall of other items. Throughout the 1950s, researchers provided some of the earliest evidence that the prior existence of old memories makes it
harder to recall newer memories and he dubbed this effect, proactive interference. In the same period, research about negative transfer was also started. According to them, negative transfer concerns itself with a detrimental effect of prior experience on the learning of a new task, whereas proactive interference relates to a negative effect of prior interference on the recall of a second task. Next the nature of transfer is both conscious or unconscious.

The research has brought out that learners or unskilled translators may sometimes guess consciously when producing speech or text in a second language because they have not learned or have forgotten its proper usage. The second language learners may not realize that the structures and internal rules of the languages in question are different. This could be an unconscious act on the part of the SL learners. So it is pointed out that such users could also be aware of both the structures and internal rules, yet be insufficiently skilled to put them into practice, and consequently often fall back on their first language. Hence, language transfer produces distinctive forms of learner English, depending on the speaker’s first language. Some of the common examples are:

1. Chinglish (Chinese)
2. Czenglish (Czech)
3. Denglish (German)
4. Dunglish (Dutch)
5. Engrish or “Japlish” (Japanese),
6. Finglish (Finnish),
7. Franglais (French),
8. Hinglish (Hindi),
9. Konglish (Korean),
10. Manglish (Malaysian),
11. Poglish (Polish),
12. Porglish (Portuguese),
13. Runglish (Russian),
14. **Serblish (Serbian),**  
15. **Spanglish (Spanish),**  
16. **Swenglish (Swedish),**  
17. **Taglish (Tagalog),**  
18. **Tanglish (Tamil) etc.,**

Code-switching, code-mixing, or borrowing (using loan words) come under the category of language interference. Other effects of language transfer may be that the L1 speakers may get affected by the L2 speakers if the former is in a minority status. In Canada, the English speakers are a minority in Quebec area. Naturally, language transfer happen vice-versa.

### 4.13 Advantages of MT (L1)

Multi-competence means knowledge of two or more languages in one mind. Compound bilinguals link the two languages in their minds. Coordinate bilinguals keep the languages apart. Reciprocal language teaching is a teaching method in which pairs of students alternately teach each other their languages.

The positive role of mother tongue on SL learning can not be dismissed out rightly. The SL experts always underline the positive effect L1 has on L2 learners in the right environment. If the SL teacher is judicious, then the use of L1 in L2 would benefit the SL learners. The frequency of using L1 in L2 must be minimal. In this regard, Howatt (1984, p.289), points out the positive side of the use of the L1 in the L2 in a controlled way as ‘the monolingual principle, the unique contribution of the twentieth century to classroom language teaching, remains the bedrock notion from which the others ultimately derive’.

In spite of vehement protests from some purist about the use of L1 in L2, there are some encouraging research output which support the view that limited use of L1 in L2 classrooms would be helpful in the teaching and learning environment. They have come out with some SL teaching theories which encourage the use of L1 in L2. They are Alternating language methods, Reciprocal language teaching, Tandem, Two-Way immersion: Alternating Days etc., Other methods which link L1 and L2 are the **New Concurrent Method, Community Language**
Learning (CLL), the Bilingual Method, Bilingual Presentation Method etc. In this respect, some linguistic experts have come out with clearly planned strategies. They have insisted on efficiency, learning, naturalness, external relevance.

The SL teacher may use L1 for conveying meaning of words or sentences. Furthermore, the SL teacher while using L1 in the L2 classroom, may use the former as a meta-language for explaining grammar. Then the merits or advantages of the mother tongue may be derived fully for the purpose of attaining linguistic goals. In addition, the SL teacher is encouraged to use L1 for managing the classroom. In this way also, the L1 may be of much use to the teacher. How the SL teacher can make use of the Mother tongue is that instructions for teaching activities may given in L1. For the purpose of testing also, L1 may be sparsely used. On the part of SL learners, it is pointed out that they may use L1 as part of main learning activity.

The L2 learners may also use mother tongue to their advantage within classroom activities but only incidentally. Using of MT in L2 classrooms can not be ruled out on the whole. The advantages of mother tongue for learning a second language should not be forgotten. There are many research findings which have supporting proofs for using mother tongue in L2 classrooms.

Howatt (1984) is one of the strong votary of mother tongue being used in L2 classroom. He argues that if there is another ‘language teaching revolution’ round the corner, it will have to assemble a convincing set of arguments to support some alternative (bilingual)?) principle of equal power’. Also Dodson’s Bilingual Method uses the student’s Mother Tongue to establish the meanings of the SL.

It is universally accepted that SLA and Mother Tongue can’t be separated. Vandana Singhal (2010) Mother Tongue(MT) is part of growing up from an infant into an individual. Learning additional language is known as second language acquisition. There is a significant relationship between second language acquisition and mother tongue language. This article discusses this aspect. Language is an essential tool for human growth. Language acquisition is a process which helps people to convey and exchange their views and thoughts to each other. During this process, we use certain words belonging to a particular language to understand and
communicate. This process involves learning and using syntax, phonetics, and a wide vocabulary.

**Mother Tongue**

The language an infant learns as part of growing up is referred as the mother tongue. In other words, it is the first language acquisition of their native language. The ability to pick and learn a language distinguishes human beings from other organisms. Infants learn their native language or mother tongue with only a little input.

**Second Language Acquisition (SLA)**

Second language acquisition is the process of learning a second language in addition to the mother tongue. For instance, a German-speaking person learns English as his second language. Second Language Acquisition is generally referred as SLA or L2 or L2A.

**Influence of Mother Tongue on SLA**

Linguists have long studied the relationship between second language acquisition and mother tongue. The focus of the studies and research is to discover the influence of the mother tongue on the process of second language acquisition and the role of the mother tongue in second language learning.

The latest comparative studies in this area have demonstrated that the learning of a second language has a positive result on the use of the mother tongue. According to one study, it was found that level of understanding of the mother tongue of multilingual persons is better than that of monolingual people. In addition, the proficiency in the mother tongue is demonstrated in a different manner if you are acquiring the second language in a natural environment or learning a foreign language in a classroom setting.
The process of second language acquisition is quite different from acquiring the mother tongue. Your knowledge of the mother tongue makes it easier for you to learn and acquire a second language. By the time you start learning a second language, you already have experience in language learning. You also have cognitive maturity which is important for acquiring a language. You can easily comprehend situations and words you have learned in your mother tongue. It helps you translate them easily into the second language vocabulary.

In a second language learning class room, it becomes easier for the teacher to teach grammar rules of the new language to students by directly associating them with everyday situations in the mother tongue, which becomes the medium of interaction at the initial level of acquiring the second language. However, to create a fluency in a new language, it becomes important to avoid the mother tongue for interaction at later stages of second language learning.

The mother tongue has influence on every aspect of the decoding process of the second language including acoustics, phonetics, serial perception, phonological level, lexical access, and sentence and text comprehension. If a child has weaker decoding abilities in the mother tongue, it will reflect low performance in second language acquisition as well. The main prerequisite for a successful learning of a second language is strong perception and comprehension capabilities in the mother tongue.

4.13. Disadvantages of MT(L1)

Mother Tongue Influence is one of the biggest inhibiting factors in acquiring a second language especially English language which has been around us for more than three centuries. In order to rule the Indians the colonists imposed English through every sphere of common people. They imposed in every conceivable way viz., Culturally, socially, educationally and judicially.

Due the explosion of mass media, learning English has become both easy and hard- easy because sources of learning materials are available but it is hard because this is not our mother tongue but an alien tongue with an entirely different distinct grammatical features. Hence, mixing native language and English is common in
India. How one can avoid MTI? A lot of people refer to mother tongue ‘influence’ on English, as mother tongue ‘influenza’ and have a good laugh at others’ expense. Of all the influences, the mother tongue influence is the most difficult to get rid of.

According to Chitra Jha (2011), in her Verbal Ability sessions, she invariably came across people who carry around an inferiority complex, just because they speak English with a mother tongue influence. When she told them that she too came from a vernacular medium school and couldn’t converse in English even while in college, the Second language learners refused to believe her. She also quotes words mispronounced with native tinge such as ‘measure’, ‘pleasure’, ‘treasure’, ‘support’, ‘develop’ etc.

Other words commonly mispronounced with mother tongue influence are ‘meayure’, ‘pleayure’, ‘treyure’ ‘sport’, ‘devolp’, ‘iskool’ and ‘jero’. Mistakes are being made in one’s own mother tongue. According to her the first step towards limiting this unwanted influence (it is difficult to overcome overnight) is by acknowledging the problem.

If the learners are ready to admit to ourselves and to others that we have a problem, and solicit everyone’s help in correcting us by pointing out our errors, our language will soon improve. But this effort requires a lot of courage, and deep willingness on our part.

She give tips to listen to English news, reading aloud (to hear your own voice), paying attention when others are speaking, and making continuous effort to correct yourself, go a long way in helping overcome mother tongue influence. The purpose of any language is to communicate. When we speak slowly and deliberately we can be understood better. In case someone still doesn’t understand a particular word, we can always spell it out for them.

We need to be willing to give ourselves and others time to learn these skills. We need to be patient with each other. In the history of language, standard words become non-standard words, some words acquire new meanings while some other lose their original meanings. Hence words which are considered to be having native influence, in the long run, might be accepted.
‘Curry’ is a north Indian word widely used in foreign countries and it has gained a place in standard English dictionaries. Words like ‘pre-pone’, ‘redressal’, and ‘wheatish complexion’, expressions like ‘I am understanding it’, ‘She is knowing the answer’, preposition usage like, ‘discuss about’, ‘pay attention on’ and frequent use of question tags like, ‘you are going, no?’ etc.

**Redundancy in English**

In the study of language, redundancy is the construction of a phrase that presents some idea using more information than is necessary for one to be able understand the idea. Oftentimes, redundancies occur in speech unintentionally, however, redundant phrases can also be deliberately constructed for emphasis, in order to avoid the possibility of others’ misinterpretation of a very important idea.

In rhetoric, the term “redundancy” tends to have a negative connotation and may be perceived as improper because of its use of duplicative or unnecessary wording (and some people expand the definition to include self-contradictory wording, similar to double negation); however, it remains a linguistically valid way of placing emphasis on some expressed idea. Through the use of repetition of certain concepts, redundancy increases the odds of predictability of a message’s meaning and understanding to others.

Redundancy typically takes the form of tautology: phrases that repeat a meaning with different though semantically similar words. Common examples are: “a variety of different items”, “an added bonus”, “to over-exaggerate”, “and etc.”, “end result”, “free gift”, “future plans”, “unconfirmed rumor”, “to kill, murder, or electrocute someone to death”, “past history”, “safe haven”, “potential hazard”, “completely surrounded”, “false pretense,” and so on. There is also the self-referential “joke organization” called “The Redundancy Society of Redundancy”, also rendered as “Society of Redundancy Society”.

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A subset of tautology is RAS syndrome in which one of the words represented by an acronym is then repeated outside the acronym: “ATM machine”, “HIV virus”, “PIN number” and “RAID array”. These phases expand to “automated teller machine”, “human immunodeficiency virus”, “personal identification number”, and “Redundant Array of Independent Disks Array”, respectively.

“RAS syndrome” is itself a tongue-in-cheek example of the RAS syndrome in action; it expands to “Redundant Acronym Syndrome syndrome”. another common one used especially by teenagers is the phrase “i ily you”, an ‘msn speak’ phrase which literally means I love you. On the phonological level, the redundancy of phonological rules may clarify some vagueness in spoken speech; “a speaker may know that ‘this rip’ must be ‘this rip’ and not ‘this rip’ because the English consonant cluster ‘sr’ is illegal” (Pinker, 1994, p. 178).

It is this feature of redundancy that has been said to be important in allowing humans to acquire a complex grammar system. A child acquiring language must abstract away grammatical rules based on the input which he hears. Redundancy in language allows the child’s inductions to be more stable by presenting more salient evidence upon which these inductions are based. Redundancy therefore provides the sufficient stimulus needed to acquire a complex grammar system.

A more general classification of redundancy is pleonasm, which can be any unnecessary words (or even word parts). Subsuming both rhetorical tautology and RAS syndrome, it also 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 (e.g., the French question “Qu’est-ce que c’est?” meaning “What’s that?” or “What is it?”, which translates very literally as “What is it that it is?”). The term pleonasm is most often, however, employed as synonymous with tautology.
The use of obfuscating, tumid linguistic constructions in vocally or graphically expressed communications (as in that phrase, which could more simply be expressed as “being longwinded”) is also a form of redundancy, with several names. Two rather formal names for it are prolixity and logorrhea. It is often done with manipulative intent, e.g. to confuse and mislead the audience, to disguise the actual nature of a position or fact, or to persuade in politics or religion. In such cases it is often also fallacious. Comedian George Carlin was famous for criticizing the politically—and socially—motivated abuse of logorrhea to hide the truth or manipulate public perception.

All of these forms of redundancy can be used intentionally, for positive artistic or rhetorical effect, frequently for humorous purpose, and for a number of other non-manipulative purposes, so their appearance in speech or writing is not automatically a fault. For example, duplicative language used as parallelism can have a strong rhetorical effect.

**Relationship between SLA and MT**

Mother Tongue is part of growing up from an infant into an individual. Learning additional language is known as second language acquisition. There is a significant relationship between second language acquisition and mother tongue language. This article discusses this aspect.

Language is an essential tool for human growth. Language acquisition is a process which helps people to convey and exchange their views and thoughts to each other. During this process, we use certain words belonging to a particular language to understand and communicate. This process involves learning and using syntax, phonetics, and a wide vocabulary.

The language an infant learns as part of growing up is referred as the mother tongue. In other words, it is the first language acquisition of their native language. The ability to pick and learn a language distinguishes human beings from other organisms. Infants learn their native language or mother tongue with only a little input.
Linguists have long studied the relationship between second language acquisition and mother tongue. The focus of the studies and research is to discover the influence of the mother tongue on the process of second language acquisition and the role of the mother tongue in second language learning.

The latest comparative studies in this area have demonstrated that the learning of a second language has a positive result on the use of the mother tongue. According to one study, it was found that level of understanding of the mother tongue of multilingual persons is better than that of monolingual people. In addition, the proficiency in the mother tongue is demonstrated in a different manner if you are acquiring the second language in a natural environment or learning a foreign language in a classroom setting.

The process of second language acquisition is quite different from acquiring the mother tongue. Your knowledge of the mother tongue makes it easier for you to learn and acquire a second language. By the time you start learning a second language, you already have experience in language learning. You also have cognitive maturity which is important for acquiring a language. You can easily comprehend situations and words you have learned in your mother tongue. It helps you translate them easily into the second language vocabulary.

Experience tells us that individuals differ from one another as to their ability to pronounce English correctly. At least six factors have been identified by teachers of TESOL. These are:

1. The influence of the learner’s native language.
2. The learner’s age.
3. The learner’s exposure to English – length and intensity of exposure.
4. The learner’s innate phonetic ability.
5. The learner’s attitude and sense of identity.
The socio-economic class of the learner, whether he comes from a family in which members already know and use some English, and whether there are opportunities available in the community to continue to practice English outside the classroom, may also have an impact upon the level of proficiency attained in the pronunciation of English. The socio-political attitudes towards learning and teaching English which prevail in the nation appear to influence the performance of students in the rural areas.

**Suprasegmentals and MT**

The TESOL teacher should have a good knowledge of how the suprasegmentals are employed in English. Suprasegmentals are those sounds which are overlaid on segmental. These do not occur without the segmental which carry them. Stress, rhythm, and intonation are the three important elements of the suprasegmental system used in English. Some syllables may be produced with more force or intensity than others.

This is called **stress**. English is a free stress language, unlike French in which the stress always falls on the last syllable of the utterance. In English the stress can be placed on any syllable of the utterance in order to achieve a variety of purposes. The meaning of single words can be changed by shifting the stress. Words which are not ordinarily stressed may be stressed for emphasis. It should be remembered that recognition (and production) of vowels and stress in English is very difficult for the second or foreign language learners of English.

Some rules have been identified to explain why, where, and when the stress falls in a word in English. Unfortunately, there are no infallible rules for determining which syllable of a word should be stressed. Many times you will need to turn to the dictionary unless you hear the word spoken by someone familiar with it. Certain observations, however, should be of help. The great majority (at least three out of four) of two syllable words are accented on the first syllable: never, breakfast, Monday.
Compound expressions:

Compound nouns ordinarily have a primary accent on the first component and secondary accent on the second: drugstore, thoroughfare, weatherman. In compound verbs the reverse is true; there is usually secondary accent on the first component and a primary on the second: understand, overlook, outrun. In the intensive-reflexive pronouns the stronger accent also falls on the last syllable: myself, yourself.

Numbers ending in -teen may receive primary stress on either syllable, but it is best for a student learning English as a second language to put it on the last syllable, so as to distinguish clearly between thirty and thirteen, forty and fourteen. A large group of words, which may be used either as nouns or verbs, have a difference in stress to indicate the difference in usage. In such cases, the noun has a primary accent on the first syllable, the verb on the last (compare 2a and 2b above).

Since there is much variation between spelling and pronunciation, it is better to teach these together. When a new sound is learned, give the various spellings of that sound. For example, the learners should recognize that the letter combinations kn, gn, mn, pn, in initial positions have the sound /n/ and that the spelling e has various sounds in different words.

Teach first the common usual spelling of the sound, then follow this with less common spellings, sight words and homophones in that order. Sight words are those words which have a pronunciation different from other words with a similar spelling (Paulston and Bruder 1976:104).

For example, look, took, book, shook, good, and wood all form a pattern which is not shared in words such as too, food and mood. These words need to be taught as sight words, as exceptions to the general pattern.
Homophones are words with different spellings which are pronounced the same (two/too/to, night/knight) (Paulston and Bruder 1976:105). Homographs are those words with the same or similar spellings with different pronunciation: conduct/conduct, present/present; simply/imply. Fortunately for us, enterprising teachers of TESOL have published several insightful manuals to teach pronunciation of English which carefully grade the sound-symbol correspondences and provide hierarchically well-organized exercises. The method of Pronunciation Pairs is recommended by Baker and Goldstein (1990) to develop spelling-pronunciation correspondences. There are several books available which follow the “phonics” method linking sounds with letters.

The characteristics of errors committed by the South Asian learners of English are listed in several publications. Professor B. Kachru's book length treatment of the subject in the Current Trends in Linguistics, South Asian Languages volume, is a very significant milestone in this discipline.

It is important to avoid technical explanations. Instead, provide exercises using words which would be of immense practical value to the students in their day to day use of English. Rules of pronunciation should not be memorized, but taught through abundant practice so that the learners will internalize these rules and the exceptions in their own way, in an unconscious manner.

It must also be remembered that teaching correct and appropriate pronunciation of English to adult learners of English is indeed a very difficult task. It is advised that one should not expect to eliminate all traces of their native language from their English utterances. The goal is to make them speak English in a manner that their speech, though with the accents of their language, will still be understood fairly well by the native speakers of English.
4.14 Conclusion

The mother tongue has influence on every aspect of the decoding process of the second language including acoustics, phonetics, serial perception, phonological level, lexical access, and sentence and text comprehension. If a child has weaker decoding abilities in the mother tongue, it will reflect low performance in second language acquisition as well. The main prerequisite for a successful learning of a second language is strong perception and comprehension capabilities in the mother tongue.