Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Language Acquisition

Teaching and learning language has always been a matter of great interest both for the teachers and the learners. First language acquisition takes place in a very natural atmosphere. It is a general truth that the first language is acquired without the help of a teacher or without conscious application of intellect. Despite many differences between parent-child interaction patterns, it has been observed that between the age of 2 and 6 children acquire their mother tongue so rapidly that they become as competent users as their parents and other elder siblings are. This competence is almost developed effortlessly (Cole & Cole, 1993; Curtiss, 1977; Goldin-Meadow, 1982; Lindfors, 1991; McLaughlin, 1984; Newport, 1991). The second important thing that has been noticed in case of language acquisition is that apart from actual situations, children also use language metaphorically which shows that language is not only imitative but creative also (Lindfors, 1991; Winner, McCarthy, Kleinman, & Gardner, 1979).

Language learning is not a process that can be completed in a few years. Even in case of L1, it is generally seen that people keep improving their language throughout their life not only to fit themselves for different situations...
but to create ease in using language. Almost the same thing happens in case of children also. Till the age of five, they remain very active and interested in L1 acquisition and the most remarkable fact to notice is that they constantly modify their language according to their need. Beverly A. Clark (2000:p182) reviewed different studies (Garcia, 1994; Lindfors, 1991; Maclaughlin, 1984; Shatz & Gelman, 1973) on language acquisition and observed the same thing in his article *First and Second language Acquisition in Early Childhood* as he writes-

Children are constantly modifying their speech depending on their audience. An example of this behaviour is when children modify their speech when talking to younger children. As children develop their ability to use language, they become more and more understanding of social situations and learn how to control their own actions and thoughts. By listening to children's self-corrections, questions, and language play, we realize the extent of their knowledge of language structure. Those things that children can articulate give us an understanding of what they can comprehend. Their active, creative invention of language is amazing and unique to each child. Language development is a gradual process and reflects a child's cognitive capacities. Language is purposeful. As children play and work, they do so through language. (Clark, 2000:p182)
In order to understand first and second language acquisition, linguists have propounded a number of theories so far. Some of them are: learnability theory (The mathematical theory of language learning by E Mark Gold; 1967 based on exposure to language), behaviourist theory (B F Skinner; 1957 proposed this theory by saying that human linguistic behaviour is determined by two factors i.e. linguistic environment and history of reinforcement.), innateness theory (In 1959, Noam Chomsky reviewed Skinner's Verbal Behaviour and proposed that human beings are born with innate capacity of learning language), mentalist theory (In 1960, Chomsky extended his argument on innateness and further proposed the learner's innate knowledge of language governs the path of acquisition.), universal grammar, and so on and so forth.

The three foremost and important theories of language acquisition are behaviourist theory, innateness theory and interactionist theory. Behaviourism dominated the field of language acquisition throughout the first half of the 20th century. The behaviourists like J B Watson, Leonard Bloomfield, O.N. Mowrer, B.F. Skinner, and A.W. Staats proposed that the process of learning is based on stimulus-response phenomenon. The external environment of the learner serves as a stimulus for the process of learning. This makes learning as a habit formation which creates a link between stimulus and response. Therefore, the behaviourist theory emerged out of the following assumptions:

1. Like other habit formation in children, language learning is also a kind of habit formation.
2. Our surrounding or the environment plays a very important role in determining our behaviour either through association or reinforcement.

3. No other creature can learn language through habit formation.

Skinner in his book *Verbal Behaviour* (1957) produces the most influential version of this theory. According to Skinner, this theory emphasises upon several important factors but three of them, given below, are the most important of all.

1. Firstly, it is considered the immediately observable aspects of situational stimuli.

2. Secondly, it stresses the language behaviour.

3. Thirdly, the theory also emphasises the verbal and behavioural responses.

Therefore, the behaviourist model of language acquisition can be represented through the following illustration:

![Figure-1.1- Behaviourist Model of Language Acquisition](image-url)
This theory is based on the assumption that the more effective the language behaviour the more correct response to the stimuli. The link between stimulus and response is made by reinforcement. If the child is rewarded or appreciated by the parents after response it works as positive reinforcement and the child will give the same response in future also. But in case of inappropriate response, the child will not be appreciated by the parents and this creates the situation for no repetition of response in future even in similar situations. This works as negative reinforcement.

Behaviourism was propounded effectively in 1957 by B F Skinner, but just after two years, it had to face bitter criticism when Noam Chomsky (1959) presented a completely different view by saying that language acquisition is not the result of human linguistic behaviour but the fact is that every child has innate capacity of learning language. The innatist view proved to be a strong and direct challenge to behaviourism. This compelled the linguists to think and find out whether language exists in human mind by birth or not. The theory of innateness became the second largest theory greatly discussed by the linguists. This theory has the following assumptions.

1. Every child is born with knowledge of language structure which helps in the process of acquisition.

2. This unobservable linguistic knowledge is a kind of mechanism which constitutes Language Acquisition Device (LAD).
3. The LAD contains some sounds and structures which are common to all human languages.

4. Language learning is different from habit formation or cognitive capacities.

5. Children use grammatical rules without learning them in a formal way because of the exposition of language before them and presence of universal grammar in them by birth.

6. The child is exposed to language right from his/her birth. This exposition functions as a trigger for the LAD.

Therefore, Chomsky garnered some strong arguments against behaviourist approach of language acquisition. Like Skinner and his contemporary psychologists, Chomsky did not make psychology as the basis of studying verbal behaviour of children because he, as a genius linguist, was studying and analyzing syntax for reaching a conclusion on transformational theory of language acquisition and generation of extraordinary sentences despite limited input. Since language acquisition is the faculty of human mind, all studies in this regard will be related to psychology in some ways or the other. Chomsky (1957, 1959) is also not an exception. His study on syntax and language acquisition was also connected with psychology and it was categorized as the interdisciplinary field of psycholinguistics.
Chomsky in his review on *Verbal Behaviour* suggests that children learn language by using, developing and repeating rules rather than repeating the messages they hear from their parents and other people around them. He further says that children acquire rules and not the sentences. They develop the rules and come out with unlimited performance with finite set of rules which is already there in their mind. Chomsky's this perception was not beyond criticism. Howard Earl Gardener rejected Chomsky's view and stated:

His view is too dismissive of the ways that mothers and others who bring up children help infants to acquire language...while the principles of grammar may indeed be acquired with little help from parents or other caretakers, adults are needed to help children build a rich vocabulary, master the rules of discourse, and distinguish between culturally acceptable and unacceptable forms of expression. (Gardener, 1995; p. 27)

Gardener argued that people around children play an important role in enriching their vocabulary through interaction. This create scope for yet another theory of language acquisition based on interaction. Interactionists theory "assumes that language acquisition is influenced by the interaction of a number of factors – physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social." (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). The interactionists are mainly concerned with the environmental and biological factors in the process of language acquisition. In contrast to nativists approach, the interactionists emphasizes upon the
importance of both social support (from parents) and social context (where language is instructed). The interactionists argue that "parents provide their children a language acquisition system which is a collection of strategies that parents employ to facilitate their children's acquisition of language" (Jerome Bruner (1983). Stating further about the strategies, he says that scaffolding is one of the strategies which means the deliberate use of language slightly beyond the what children can comprehend. This strategy can lead the child to acquire more complex language than they acquire own their own.

Russian Psychologist Lev Vygotsky's work is generally considered to be the pioneering work in this connection. Vygotsky studied child behaviour and prepared a model of acquisition according to which:

1. First, the child observes the interaction between other people and then the behaviour develops inside the child. This means that the child first observes the adults around him communicating amongst themselves and then later develops the ability himself to communicate.

2. Vygotsky also theorized that a child learns best when interacting with those around him to solve a problem. At first, the adult interacting with the child is responsible for leading the child, and eventually, the child becomes more capable of problem solving on his own. This is true with language, as the adult first talks
at the child and eventually the child learns to respond in turn. The child moves from gurgling to baby talk to more complete and correct sentences. (Vygotsky, 1978)

The theory of interactionism was also not found complete in itself. Critics of this theory argue that scaffolding can hardly work in case of a toddler or in case of the children below school going age. (Ochs & Schieffelen, 1984; Schieffelin & Eisenberg, 1984; M A K Halliday, 1984, 1994). But nowhere do the critics reject the role of interaction and social atmosphere in language acquisition.

Hence, it can be concluded from the above explanation that verbal behaviour of a child is not enough without structural ability and help of the parents or caregiver. The process of acquisition is not a mere imitation, rather, it is a creative art which emerges out of innate linguistic capability and conversational environment. Beverly A Clarks quotes Lindfors view as given below:

In the average child, at whatever developmental stage we observe, language is alive and well. Children’s language development is a creative process that only needs a rich environment to thrive (Lindfors, 1991).
The role of the child in acquisition is not secondary. A child plays a major role both in language acquisition and in the process of interaction thereafter. Language influences both thinking and behaviour and make children feel socially competent. According to Vygotsky it also acts like a critical bridge between the socio-cultural world and individual mental functioning.

Despite decades long discussion and experiment on language acquisition, the linguists have not derived a universally accepted theory. One has to take several factors into account while developing language acquisition theory or language acquisition device such as the age of the learner, maturation issues, environment, information processing ability of the child, innateness of language, social requirement, social changes, need, the role of grammar and interaction and so on and so forth. The second main problem is that the theory which is framed for first language acquisition may not be suitable or completely applicable to second language acquisition. However, most of the theories about language acquisition are directly related to first language acquisition because of the two main reasons:

1. First language acquisition is a universally accepted and desired achievement of the children.

2. Linguists and researchers of second language acquisition take the process of first language acquisition as an ideal model.
Before Chomsky, no linguist or researcher could notice and analyse the way of syntactic development in child language. He gave a new way of studying syntax by focusing over grammatical development in children. Contemporary scholars of Chomsky applied his method in conducting many studies in different languages in the world. The result of all those studies was that the linguistic world gathered a remarkable amount to generate a common view about language acquisition. This database provided a solid ground for the development of theories of second language acquisition.

1.2 Second Language Acquisition

1.2.1 Theories

So far, a number of theories have been suggested to describe the process of first and second language acquisition which have helped the researchers, teachers and learners in understanding the nature of first and second language acquisition. Several comparisons, examinations and contrasts have also been made to make teaching learning process easy. During 1970s and 1980s, inter-language theory was developed (Selinker 1969, cited in McLaughlin, 1987). This theory defined inter-language as "the interim grammar constructed by second language learners on their way to the target language." (Hulya IPEK, 2009, p. 155). Inter-language gave some common characteristics of first and second language acquisition like developmental
sequence, acquisition order, input method, markedness, etc. The basis on which these similarities were pointed out later on prepared the solid ground for the existence of Universal Grammar.

With the passage of time two approaches of linguistic universals were developed. First by Joseph Greenberg (1966) and Rod Ellis (1994) who developed *Typological Universals* based on cross-linguistic comparison to discover common features of different languages. The second linguistic universal approach was put forwarded by *Generative School* of Noam Chomsky (1972) which aimed "to study individual languages in great depth in order to identify the principles of grammar which underlie and govern specific rules. This approach was later termed as Universal Grammar." (Ellis, 1994). Both the approaches of linguistic universals are having some relevant aspects as given below:

The most relevant aspect of both approaches that relates to L1 and L2 acquisition is that some features in a language are marked and some are unmarked. According to typological universals, unmarked features are those that are universal or present in most languages and which the learners tend to transfer. Marked rules are language specific features which the learner resists transferring. According to Universal Grammar, core rules, such as word order, are innate and can be arrived at through the application of general, abstract
principles of language structure. Peripheral rules are rules that are not governed by universal principles. Peripheral elements are those that are derived from the history of the language, that have been borrowed from other languages, or that have arisen accidentally. These elements are marked. Peripheral aspects are more difficult to learn (Ellis, 1994; McLaughlin, 1987).

Chomsky's theory inspired many linguists and they developed some important theories of second language acquisition. Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982 developed one such theory called creative construction theory based on the assumption that language acquisition is innately determined and all human beings are born with a particular system of language. Both these scholars and later on R Brown supported Chomsky's view that:

Each human being possesses a set of innate properties of language which is responsible for the child’s mastery of a native language in such a short time (cf. Brown 2002: 24). According to Chomsky, this mechanism, which he calls the ‘language acquisition device’ (LAD), ‘governs all human languages, and determines what possible form human language may take’ (Dulay, Burt, Krashen 1982: 6ff).

1.2.2 Second Language Acquisition Hypotheses
Krashen(1982) kept experimenting with the innatist theory and came with a series of hypotheses about second language acquisition which were accepted as the very basis of second language acquisition. In his theoretical analysis of SLA, he regards second language acquisition as second language learning (SLL) and also differentiates acquisition with learning. His five hypotheses are:

1. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis- According to Krashen there are two systems of second language performance i.e. the acquired system and learned system. The acquired system or acquisition takes place in subconscious state of mind and the learner is not at all concerned with the form of language but with the meaningfulness of communicative process. This process undergo when children acquire their first language. On the other hand the learned system or learning takes place under formal instruction. It is a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge. All grammatical rules are learnt through conscious learning. This hypothesis of Krashen was criticised on the ground of consciousness and unconsciousness. Critics say that it is very difficult to point out whether the user of a language is conscious or unconscious while using language in day to day conversation. (Mac Laughlin, 1987)

2. The Monitor Hypothesis -According to this hypothesis, the formal study of language helps in developing an internal grammar monitor which monitors the performance of the learner. The 'Monitor' watches the
output to ensure correct performance of the user. A person can use the 'monitor' but for this three conditions are necessary. Sufficient time, focus on grammatical form and explicit knowledge of rules are the three important conditions. This hypothesis focuses over communicative function of language.

3. The Natural Order Hypothesis - According to this hypothesis, children acquire the rules of a language in a particular order which is predictable. The acquisition of grammatical rules follow a certain order, some are acquired early and the other late. But this does not mean that all the learners acquire the same structures early. Acquisition and learning vary from person to person. In case of acquisition, grammatical sequence doesn't remain same, therefore, it is very difficult to design a syllabus for language learning classrooms.

4. The Input Hypothesis - Through this hypothesis, Krashen tries to explain how is second language acquired. This is completely concerned with acquisition rather than learning. According to this hypothesis, the learner should progresses in second language acquisition a bit beyond the competence level of the language he/she has acquired. for example if a learner is at stage 'i', the input he/she gets should be i+1

5. The Affective filter Hypothesis - In this hypothesis, Krashen says that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative but non-casual role in second language acquisition. Acquisition takes place easily when a learner is free from tension, anger, anxiety, boredom, etc. as these are the
problems which act as a strong filter in SLA. On the other hand, he asserts, motivation self confidence and a good self image play important role in SLA.

In the field of linguistics and language teaching since the 1980s, much heat has already been generated on the role of universal grammar in language acquisition. However, this thesis will not only review the theories available so far but also make an attempt to focus on the role of UG in SLA specifically in case of the learners having Hindi as their mother tongue. So far, the linguists and the researchers (Chomsky, 1965, 198b; Pinker, 1984, 1994) have proposed and affirmed that:

UG is proposed as an innate biologically endowed faculty which permits the LI acquirer to arrive at a grammar on the basis of linguistic experience (exposure to input). UG provides a genetic blueprint, determining in advance what grammar can (and cannot) be like. (Lydia White, 2003; p:2)

White (2003), further clarifies Chomsky's idea and says that, at the initial stage of language acquisition, UG take care of grammatical forms- syntactic, morphological, phonological, and semantic- and in addition it constrains grammatical functioning. Therefore, UG constitutes the knowledge which the child is equipped with right from his/her birth and like all other researches in
this regard, it is very necessary here also to through some light on the concept of UG and subsequent developments in this field.

1.3 Universal Grammar

Universal Grammar is a theoretical postulate in linguistics according to which certain fundamentals of grammar are shared by all languages, and their principles are innate in human beings. This grammar lays down principles of language acquisition in general without circumscribing them to a particular language. It also does not claim that all human languages are underlain by exactly the same grammar. It rather gives us a set of rules that helps us to understand how children acquire their language and how they construct some valid grammatical structures of their language. The theorists of UG consider that mere environmental input is not enough to acquire a language. White, for example, says:

If it turns out that L2 learner acquires abstract properties that could not have been induced from the input, this is strongly indicative that principals of UG constrain interlanguage grammar, parallel to the situation of L1 grammar. (Lydia White, 2003:22)

Mitchel and Myles (2004) also make it quite clear that universal grammar has nothing to do with the social being of a learner, it rather sees the
learner as a processor mind that contains language. This is a radically different way of looking at the process of language acquisition and the role of grammar which Chomsky mentioned time and again in his works on universal grammar. Krashen (1982) took this fact into account and came out with a notable difference between acquisition and learning. But, nowhere in his observation does he reject the role of presence and the role of UG both in acquisition and learning. There is little or no convincing evidence that grammar is concealed in human brain by birth and that it is also "the product of evolution" that came and developed into human brain with the passage of millions of years, but there is no option except accepting this theory and putting it under tests for its confirmation.

It is a well-known fact that we acquire our first language in a very informal way. Right from birth or, in fact, before birth, a child falls into the process of acquiring the mother tongue without being very conscious of the process of learning as such. However, in case of a second language, the terms and conditions are quite difficult if they are not entirely different. It needs a special kind of development and understanding of the human capacity for language. In the present study, the term 'acquisition' may seem to be confusing because it is actually learning and not acquisition in case of a second, third or fourth language. But the rationale in using the term 'acquisition' in place of 'learning’ derives from the inherent principles of Universal Grammar that hypothesize that certain linguistic rudiments are syntactically common to almost all languages. i. e. the basic structure of a sentence in every language
consists of a subject, a verb, an object, etc. though the order of the elements may vary across languages. Secondly, a learner of a language, either a child or an adult, is not conscious about the application of grammatical rules at the primary stage. This is cited as evidence to substantiate that in learning or acquiring L1 or L2 one has to apply some common methods. Therefore, learning and acquisition can be used synonymously. Moreover, acquisition also implies that language learning may be a conscious or a sub-conscious process.

Notably, this interchangeable use of 'acquisition' and 'learning' is preferred by linguistic scholars like William C. Ritchie and Tej K. Bhatia in their book, *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. In fact, the very title of the book lends substance to their conviction.

Like the other studies in this line, the present study also proposes to find out the extent to which UG plays any role in second language acquisition and the substantiation thereof. A number of research, Chomsky (1982:17); Ellis (1994:432); Zobl & Liceras (1994); Goldschneider & Dekeyser (2001), Mitchell & Myles (2004:258) have clearly shown that *There are some fundamental properties of all possible grammars that determine and characterize the linguistic capacities of particular individuals*. This study seeks to explore how much of the UG is transferred to SLA, especially in case of the adult learners of undergraduate classes in the Hindi speaking people. The issue of maturation in SLA has already shown that there are four major differences
between the child’s L1 and the adult’s L2 cases which were responsible for "the lesser achievements of adult language learners."

a. Few adults reach the level of tacit or unconscious knowledge of the grammar of their L2.

b. Adult L2 speakers typically produce a kind of variation not obviously attributed to the register variation one finds in the production of native speakers.

c. The adult L2 learner is not as equipotential for language acquisition as the child L1 learner is.

d. The adult L2 learner has prior knowledge of one language that has a strong effect in the adult's production of L2.

This is to assert that the concept of Universal Grammar is not entirely new as its existence can be traced back to Roger Bacon in the 13th century, who made a hypothesis that all human languages are built upon a common grammar. All the 13th century grammarians accepted the hypothesis that some universal rules underlay all grammars. After a slow progress till the 20th century, revolutionary changes were noticed in the second half of the 20th century when linguists like Noam Chomsky, Edward Sapir and Richard Montague added new dimensions to the idea of Universal Grammar in language acquisition. Chomsky (1981a, 1981b, 1982, 1988, 1991), in particular, adopts the hypothesis that there are certain phonological, syntactic and semantic units that are universal and they can be conceived of as
substantive universals. He also argues that the human brain contains a limited set of rules for generating all possible grammatical sentences Chomsky (1972) *Studies on Semantics in Generative Grammar*. It is due to some finite innate UG patterns that children acquire their first language without formal effort though the language acquisition system is quite complex. Lydia White in her article makes it clear that UG is the part of an innate biologically endowed language faculty, and according to Cginsjuab’s theory of Government and Binding, L2 acquisition includes principles and parameters approaches.

**1.3.1 Grammar and SLA**

Before the introduction of the Principles and Parameters theory, it is necessary to mention the role of grammar in second language acquisition. In the second chapter of this thesis, this issue has been discussed at length. But, it is worth mentioning here that right from the historical grammar translation method to the modern communicative approach, grammar has been the part of language learning classrooms. Despite great efforts of the researchers, no consensus could be achieved on the role of grammar in SLA. Rod Ellis (2006) discusses a number of key issues relating to the teaching of grammar in SLA classrooms and also raises and tries to solve the following key questions:

1. Should we teach grammar, or should we simply create the conditions by which learners learn naturally?
2. What grammar should we teach?

3. When should we teach grammar? Is it best to teach grammar when learners first start to learn an L2 or to wait until later when learners have already acquired some linguistic competence?

4. Should grammar instruction be massed (i.e., the available teaching time be concentrated into a short period) or distributed (i.e., the available teaching time spread over a longer period)?

5. Should grammar instruction be intensive (e.g., cover a single grammatical structure in a single lesson) or extensive (e.g., cover many grammatical structures in a single lesson)?

6. Is there any value in teaching explicit grammatical knowledge?

7. Is there a best way to teach grammar for implicit knowledge?

8. Should grammar be taught in separate lessons or integrated into a communicative activities? (Rod Ellis, 2006: 83-84)

Although Ellis has answered all questions very explicitly in his paper Current Issues in the Teaching of Grammar: An SLA Perspective yet there is a need to discuss this issue again in the light of some other research outcomes. This effort will be made in the second chapter to review the extent criticism and to
reach a consensus regarding the role of grammar in SLA so that teaching learning can be made easy.

1.3.2 Theories Concepts and Principles

It is still controversial to say that theories, concepts and principles govern the path of language acquisition because a child acquires his/her mother tongue without application of a set theory and sometimes performs much better than an adult learner (White, 1985a; Bley Vroman, 1990). But the case of SLA differs and even becomes more complex in case of the adult learners. In chapter three, this issue will be discussed at length. From Chomsky (1965, 1967) to scholars of this decades, the concept of UG has been explored and exploited in different ways to achieve the same target. This chapter will make an attempt to clarify whether UG is a rule based grammar or principle based grammar. The concept of UG which was given by the 17th and 18th century philosophers will also be taken up well and discussed extensively in this chapter.

Since the beginning of research in second language acquisition, many theories have been discovered, designed and applied to SLA. The development in the field of theories and their appropriateness will play a great role in completing this study in a scientific mode. Language transfer, Cognitivism, Behaviourism, the Government and Binding, X-bar and Theta, and the Movement and Case theory will be reevaluated and re-examined to check their
relevance and appropriateness. This chapter will also throw light on the presence of theories in human mind and their working mechanism. This discussion will further pave the way for discussion on the emergence of logical and developmental problems in SLA and their appropriate solution.

1.4 Problems of Second Language Acquisition

In order for this study to become holistic, the fourth chapter will be an attempt to review the logical and developmental problems in second language acquisition. The phrase, ‘the logical problems of language acquisition’ was coined by David Lightfoot (Hornstien and Lightfoot, 1981) which explains how the complex linguistic competence is found with the child learner of L1 in spite of limited input. Now the question is whether the logical problem of L2 acquisition is the same or altogether different for the different second languages. Many linguists argue that the adult L2 learner cannot acquire native like competence, and this very fact shows that logical problem is always there. While studying the case of the adult learners, the present research undertakes to prove that the logical problem is always there especially in case of a foreign or second language acquisition.

Besides the logical problem, Felix (1984) has found out the developmental problem also which addresses the question why natural languages are acquired the way they are. The so called satisfactory theory of L2 acquisition is beset by essential problem of how acquisition proceeds. This
problem has something to do with psycholinguistics and requires a transition theory which seeks to investigate questions like why does water expand when it freezes? Why opium makes people sleep? Therefore, this theory needs explanation and the present study attempts to answer the questions mainly arising out of the two problems. The complete acquisition theory that will help in finding out the presence of UG cannot be considered without seeking the solution to these problems. During the entire course of this study, the main emphasis will be on understanding and answering the question of the presence of UG in SLA.

1.5 Principles and Parameters

The Principles and Parameters Theory in language acquisition not only characterizes the native speaker's linguistic competence but also makes it clear how the acquisition of such competence is possible. The fourth chapter will enlighten the fact that it is by this approach that everyone comes to know about his innate competence which later takes the form of UG and thereby clarifies that input alone is insufficient and our linguistic competence goes beyond the input in various ways. Both children and adults can understand and produce sentences that they have never heard before. They can easily distinguish between explicit and ambiguous structures, possible and impossible structures, etc. Principles and Parameters Theory identifies universal properties of
grammars and explains how the innate principles and parameters of L1 play a role in L2 acquisition. But Lydia White suggests that UG is no longer available to adult L2 learners, and that "there is a fundamental difference between L1 and L2 acquisition."

Parameters in language specify how one language is different from the other. This helps both the learners and the teachers to distinguish one language from the other. The purpose of distinction is not to prove one language superior to the other, but to find out some common and uncommon features of different languages so that the path of acquisition or learning a second language can be made easier. Although there are more than a dozen parameters that make a cluster of differences, yet the study of everyone of them is not relevant to this research. In chapter five only relevant and necessary parameters will be discussed. Some critics (Newmeyer, 2004) of parameters think that linguistic differences are not determined by the parametric structures rather “language-particular differences are captured by differences in language-particular rules” (Newmeyer, 2004: 183). Such claim will also be examined in the fifth chapter of this thesis just to see whether the Newmeyer's claim is ill-convinced or it furthers our understanding to the level of making teaching and learning of second language result oriented. The test of parameters will be followed by some of the constraints of the principles and parameters theory which may lead this research to the conclusion that the progress in SLA is hindered by these
constraints. This may suggest some new ways overcoming the barriers and getting desired performance in SLA.

1.6 Methodology

Undoubtedly, acquiring or learning language is a complex human phenomenon. It always requires a method or technique in both the cases i.e. when we acquire language under informal situation without being conscious of the actual process of acquisition (as in the case of L1) and when we learn language under formal conditions following instruction and completely being aware of what we are learning. Chomskyan theory of UG has proved (1981, 1982) that a child who is unconscious of the acquisition process follows certain principles due to the presence of UG as innate competence. Methodology for second language acquisition is entirely different from inference. It also needs investigation because of a frequent shifting of codes even by the same person in different situations, consciousness as no two persons can think and speak alike, a certain process, and some stages.

Like the studies on the subject attempted hitherto, this research proposes to base itself on some experimental and analytical procedures. Since the study is confined to the case of adult undergraduate students, adequate sample-data from the specified learners has been the building material for the
project. The data collected has been scrutinized according to the theories of creative construction and contrastive analysis, principles and parameters, logical and developmental problems, and many more in the series which are relevant. The presence of UG patterns and principles inhering L1 acquisition transference of those parameters into acquiring the target language are subjected to rigorous analysis. It is a well accepted fact that there is interference of the mother tongue in some specific areas of L2 acquisition. An attempt will be made to find out the areas and compare them with the innate principles so that the role of UG can be made explicit.

No methodology in SLA can work unless the age of the learners is taken into account because SLA methodology not only varies from language to language but from age to age of the learners also. So far the linguists have been having different opinions regarding the age of the learners and their capacity to learn second language. There are three different opinions regarding age and SLA. The first (Scovel, 1988a) position is that only children and not adult can attain native like competence in L2 pronunciation. The second (Singleton, 1989) finds the data regarding age and L2 acquisition so confusing that no conclusion is given. The third (Harley, 1986) position reveals the result of a study that "the older learners enjoy an advantage over the younger learners." This was not the end of the problem and framing methodology with respect to the three opinions. Some recent researches in this regard show that the children who are exposed to two languages can successfully become bilingual
(Bialystok, 2001; Genesee, 2004; Hakuta & Pease-Alvarez, 1992). Therefore, in the present study it will be discussed whether age alters the route of language acquisition or not and simultaneously it will be carefully observed, if age has marked effect on the rate and ultimate success.

It has also be seen how adolescent learner perform in the field of grammar and vocabulary. This particular act requires a lot of focus to examine the difference between adult and non-adult learning so that the presence of UG in both the cases could be gauged. Researchers Dulay and Burt (1974 a,b) opine that there are some similarities between L2 and L1 learners. They reconstruct the language they are learning because they have experienced a language before their L2 experience. The whole lot of problems is sought to be investigated by a comparative method so as to reach the general facts with a formidable degree of authenticity.

This study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature and seeks to pursue a longitudinal approach. This sort of study requires, in its encompassment, data collection, a collection procedure, and data analysis. The data collection method may include elicitation, interviews, transcripts, questionnaire, case study, and introspection. All these analysis are conducted with the predominant framework of Universal Grammar and its role in acquisition of second language by the students of the undergraduate level.
1.7 Developments in the Field of SLA

Second Language Acquisition before the 1940s was entirely considered as a matter or a field of Applied Linguistics, but after a slow progress till the 1960s, it became an independent field of language teaching and language learning. However, the following developments have been made in the field of SLA:

During the 1940s, Fries (1945), the 1950s, Lado (1957), and the 1960s, River (1964) declared second language acquisition as the part of structural linguistics. Between the 1960s and 1970s, neuro-psychological, social psychological, and research methodological approaches came into existence which were regarded as theoretical approaches.

In 1960 in particular, Generative Approach advocated by a mathematician, psychologist, socialist, philosopher, and a linguist Noam Chomsky in his *Syntactic Structures* in 1957 marked the beginning of transformational generative grammar. According to him, grammar means a finite set of rules which generates an infinite number of sentences. A grammar must be scientific, logical, explicit, economic and predictive. Human beings are born with innate grammatical competence that helps in generating infinite utterances. Chomsky later worked for SLA and came out with many articles in 1965, 1975, 1981, and 1982.
There emerged two schools of learning or acquisition during the 1960s and 1970s i.e. Empirical or Behavioural, and Rationalistic or Mentalistic.

Behavioural Approach laid down that language acquisition is the result of experience; it is a stimulus-response, process and conditioned behaviour. Children learn language by imitation which is practice based and mechanical. The role of imitation, repetition, reinforcement, memory, motivation is very significant in language acquisition. Characteristics of this approach are summarized as below:

- Children come into this world with a *tabula rasa* (a clean slate bearing no preconceived notions about the world or about language) and that these children are then shaped by the environment and slowly conditioned through various schedules of reinforcement.
- Language is a fundamental part of total human behavior.
- This approach focused on the immediately perceptible aspects of linguistic behavior—the publicly observable responses— and the relationships or associations between those responses and events in the world surrounding them.
- A behaviorist might consider effective language behavior to be the production of correct responses to stimuli. If a particular response is reinforced, it then becomes habitual, or conditioned.
- This is true of their comprehension as well as production responses.
• The behaviorist view imitation and practice as primary processes in language development.

  Imitation: Word for word repetition of all or part of someone else’s utterance. e.g.

  Mother: Would you like some bread and peanut butter?

  Katie: Some bread and peanut butter

  Practice: Repetitive manipulation of form. e.g.

  Michel: I can handle it. Hannah can handle it. We can handle it

• Children’s imitation is selective and based on what they are currently learning.

Thus, the behaviourists feel that learning language is a behaviour and it can be learnt only through use or practice. Language cannot be learnt in isolation. The teachers or the trainers have to create some meaningful situations to get desired output. Learners' active participation is also needed to make them learn language better and faster. This approach also emphasises the fact language is basically speech and writing come much later. Receptive skills are needed to be developed before the productive ones.

Mentalist Approach challenged the behaviourist approach and put forwarded the principal that language acquisition is a condition, innate process.
Children learn language by application. Learning is rule based. It is analytical, generative and creative. The role of exposure is very important. It, therefore, is the result of nature. Celce-Murcia (1991) summarises cognitive approach as given below:

a. Language learning is viewed as rule acquisition, not habit formation.

b. Instruction is often individualized; learners are responsible for their own learning.

c. Grammar must be taught but it can be taught deductively (rules first, practice later) and/or inductively (rules can either be stated after practice or left as implicit information for the learners to process on their own).

d. Pronunciation is de-emphasized; perfection is viewed as unrealistic.

e. Reading and writing are once again as important as listening and speaking.

f. Vocabulary instruction is important, especially at intermediate and advanced levels.

g. Errors are viewed as inevitable, something that should be used constructively in the learning process.

h. The teacher is expected to have good general proficiency in the target language as well as an ability to analyze the target language.
First language acquisition, according to Chomsky, is assisted by a language acquisition device which is innate in every human being. This device can be equated with the UG comprises of innate grammar principles. UG also contains certain parameters which are set due to diverse and developmental nature of human languages. In 1981 and 1986, Chomsky came out with his Lectures on Government Building Theories in which he also talks in detail about Principles and Parameters theory in SLA. He distinguishes principles from parameters and says that principals are invariants of human languages whereas parameters are the major points of cross linguistic variation.

Lydia White, talking about principles and parameters in the research article Universal Grammar and Second Language Acquisition: Current Trends and New Directions (1989 b), also claims that some principles and parameters of L1 are available in L2 acquisition and suggested that divergent L1 grammars should be seen as a problem for L2 acquisition theory.

K R Gregg in his article The Logical and Developmental Problems in Second Language Acquisition (in 1996) discusses at length that the logical “problem is to explain how one comes to have the complex linguistic knowledge, or competence, one does, given the limited input one receives in the course of acquisition. This is a problem because the input vastly underdetermines the finally achieved competence.” The developmental
problem according to Gregg is due to the question of why natural languages are acquired the way they are, and how acquisition proceeds.

Adam Albright’s paper on Explaining *Universal Tendencies and Language Particular in Analogical Change* (2006) focuses over the fact that learners need to use limited information to learn how to produce and comprehend complex paradigms. The rules are reliable when they are general enough to have predictive power.

Tania Lonin, Maria Luisa Zubizarreta and Salvador Bautista Maldonado present one of the recent developments in their article *Sources of Linguistic Knowledge in Second Language Acquisition of English Articles* (2007). They propose that "L1-transfer, access to semantic universals through UG, and input triggers are relevant for the acquisition of English articles."

This brief review of the various works on the subject paves the way for further research in this vital area of language acquisition. It also makes it clear that every study proves to be a step in gathering relevant information and finding future prospects for any study in this series. Like all other in the series, this study will also be an endeavour to encourage the ELT trainers to apply certain new trends in their classrooms to get desired results. Although teaching of English has tremendously changed over the last two decades, yet numerous
changes and innovations are still required. Since the 1990s, English language has been teaching and learning in a different way and it has acquired a different shape because of liberalization and globalization. Globalization has given this language the status of a world language and also brought many challenges in the field of its teaching and learning. Many old methods declined with the entry of several new trends in ELT like, computer based technology, stream of web sites, books in the form of capsules, English as lingua franca, revolutionary developments in the field of information technology, bottom up and top down learning skills, and so on and so forth. The present study tries to incorporate all the recent trends in SLA and suggests solution for at least a part of the problem in teaching English as a second language.

******
References


