Indian society is essentially a multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural society. There are many languages spoken here and the communicative function of a particular language gets restricted to a particular region or to a particular community. For interpersonal interaction and mutual enrichment, and in order to join the mainstream of national life, it is obligatory for every Indian to learn a language other than his own mother tongue, a language that is commonly shared by a majority of people. Today, no language other than English is in a position to serve this purpose. Moreover, the rapid rate of progress, the advancement in science and technology and the increasing globalisation today, have intensified the need for inter-group communication. One cannot afford to limit him/her self to one’s own nation. English has also acquired a new significance as an international language. In British ruled India, English had occupied a privileged position. It was the language of the government. In educational institutions, it was not only a compulsory subject, but the medium of instruction as well. Even after Independence, English remained an associate official language of the Union. English cannot be really done away with in the modern times.

Today, English is a compulsory feature of the Indian education system. Different state systems differ on when and with what intensity to teach English in schools. The dominant pattern, however, is one under which English is the Second Language taught after the first few years of schooling through the mother tongue. If English is taught as a second language emphasis is more on developing the passive skills rather than the active. It is true that for some people, English serves as the main tool for interpersonal interaction, but for the vast majority of our population, English is primarily meant to provide access to the world of learning and scientific scholarship.

The teaching-learning process of a second language is considerably different from that of the mother tongue. The habits in the mother tongue are acquired and confirmed quite spontaneously, and by the time, a child comes to the age when he becomes conscious that he is learning a language, he has already acquired it to a considerable extent. He can express his ideas and feelings to others and can understand theirs. Formal instruction in a native language is required only to teach him the written script of the language and to provide him experiences and the necessary vocabulary to be able English Self-learning Instruction at the Secondary Level to communicate in a wide variety of situations. The teaching of English, on the other hand, has to be a conscious effort, to be formally taken by an educational agency, where teaching of the language has to be taken up with definite objectives, and the materials
and methods of teaching judiciously selected and adapted so as to acquire the objectives with economy of time and accuracy of performance.

It is true that in these changed times, with increased need for international communication, for a large number of people, English serves as the main tool for interpersonal interaction, but for the vast majority of our population, English is primarily meant to provide access to the world of knowledge.

With this objective in view, the teaching-learning of English should provide support to conceptualisation and formation of abstract relations. As it is taught now, English does not always provide an adequate support towards the shared responsibility of serving as a basic tool for cognitive growth and academic achievement. As a result, even after studying English for 4-5 years and passing the Secondary School Examination with distinction, students fail to understand, in general, the Higher Secondary texts or the classroom lectures delivered in English. As for expression, it is almost non-existent in a large majority of cases. Taking cognisance of the low effectiveness of English Second Language instruction, numerous efforts have been made to improve upon it. As a result, new teaching materials are being developed, the existing ones are being revised, new teaching methods are being evolved and new evaluation procedures are being devised. Pre-service and in-service training is also being provided to the teachers. In spite of all these efforts, the achievement of our students in the language still remains poor. So, the question arises in our mind. Where exactly do we fail? What instructional strategy do we use for English teaching? Which strategy is more effective for teaching English? A look into the ESL instructional system is necessary to answer these questions. Since most of our students get little exposure of English in their environment and most ESL instruction takes place in a formal setting, the responsibility of its instruction rests heavily on the teacher. In fact, it is the teacher who is the central figure, around whom the whole instructional process revolves.

One of the prominent crises in the present day teaching phenomenon in all stages of education in our country is traditional follow-up, brings students into score-craze by rote memorization in most cases. In the present classroom situation, the process of instruction is partly a science of psychology and partly an art of teaching. But endeavour have been started to establish classroom instructions on the firm bases of learning. If a teacher is to facilitate learning in his/her classroom, he must acquaint himself/herself with the appropriate learning theory and teaching strategy and also the major variables, which may influence the success of the students learning tasks. But this is not an easy task as classroom teaching-learning process is a complex mixture of simultaneous conscious activities and events.
Effective classroom transaction is the most important aspect in teaching. The teacher uses different methods, strategies and techniques for teaching. ‘Model Approach’ to teaching is one of the innovations of the last century to the world of teaching. ‘Concepts’ are the building blocks of any academic subject. Unless the subject matters are related with structure of concepts of the contents, it would be difficult to make teaching an effective one. Among other subjects in the school, English is regarded as one of the main subject in the curriculum. In the present globalized world, the knowledge of English is very much essential for every Indian citizen. The teachers generally face difficulty to teach English before the learners because it is foreign language. In the absence of suitable instructional materials, it is not easy to teach.

Keeping this in view, this experimental study was conducted to identify an effective strategy for teaching English. An effort has been made to study the relative effectiveness of the different instructional strategy of teaching English in relation to students’ and their entry level knowledge in secondary class as well as retention of learnt subject matter.

The present study analysis the problem of the research in chapter-1, the need of effective instructions in teaching English at secondary level in chapter-2, analysis of the methods or strategy of teaching English in chapter-3, the problem has been specifically identified in chapter-4, the setting of objectives, assumption and hypotheses of the study are given in chapter-5 interpretation of results and analysis thereof are made in chapter-6 and finally findings and discussions are drawn in the last chapter.

The bibliography and other supporting materials in respect of the study have been given at the end. As the present study is restricted within the schools of Bengali medium under the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, the researcher has developed lesson plans on Direct Method, Grammar Translation Method and Functional Communicative Approach which are voluminous. To avoid the number of unnecessary pages of the report, only the sample lesson plan on those methods have been given in Appendices- (B, C, D, E, F and G).

It is by no means an end in itself by rather a means towards the end. If the future investigators come forward to share some fresh academic challenges on this area of study, this humble endeavour will be really successful.

Dated:
Place: Kalyani, Nadia

(SOBHAN BANERJEE)